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The General Election

[The following address to our people on their responsibilities in connection with the forthcoming General Election was drawn up by the Religion and Morals Committee and approved by the Synod.]

Since the present Parliament is drawing near the end of its lifetime, the responsibility of voting in a General Election will soon devolve upon our people in the United Kingdom. It is of course no part of our Church's function to engage in political debates. However, it is part of our duty as a Church and as individuals to do what we can to see that the nation in which we have our lot in the Divine Providence, is ruled and regulated by the Word of God. The nation that will not serve God will perish and for this reason, if we love our nation, we will wish that it should serve God.

In our system the laws by which we are governed are principally determined by Parliament although responsibility for administration of these laws is laid upon Judges, Sheriffs, magistrates, the police and others. It follows that much depends on the character of the persons elected to Parliament. In these circumstances we would like to draw the attention of our people to the need to take care for this matter when they are electing their M.P. The choice of candidates in any particular constituency is limited but even although none of the candidates may come up to what we would desire in the way of religion we would ask our people to enquire from their candidates where they stand in regard to the issue of religion and morality, making clear when they do enquire that they are interested to promote the cause of true religion and morality in the land. Although this may not alter the views of the candidate in question it may well give them some impression of the strength of religious conviction in their constituency and at least in this way help to advance religion and morality in our society, and prevent the cause of true religion being lost sight of, by our failure to display our banner.

Above all we would entreat our people to pray earnestly in connection with the forthcoming election that we as a nation would be given legislators who would discharge their functions in the fear of God. We may be ready to think this is a hopeless prayer, but this is to give way to unbelief. With God nothing is impossible: Ask and it shall be given you.

An Obedient Heart

**"O that they would keep all my commandments always."
Deut. 5: 29.**

The children of Israel declared at Mount Sinai not only their willingness to hear the words of God from Moses' lips but also their readiness to do them. "Go thou near," they said to Moses, "and hear all that the Lord our God shall say; and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it and do it." Deut. 5: 27. They gave their solemn promise that they would serve the Lord and do His will. Henceforth they were under covenant obligations to fulfil His will and were duty-bound to obey Him. How solemn it is to consider that after engaging so unreservedly in the service of the High God they should afterwards have failed so miserably to fulfil their promise. Instead of becoming renowned for their faithfulness they became notorious for their sin and disobedience. "They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in His law." Ps. 78: 10.

How necessary and desirable is obedience to the will of God. Israel could not hope to prosper without it. Obedience to the law of God is a clear mark of a renewed heart and will. Men may have an outward regard for the law of God, and it is good that it should be so, but none can truly delight in the law of God but the one who delights in it after the inward man. In the keeping of God's commands is great delight — but not to the unrenewed soul! It is through a Spirit-wrought faith in us that we begin to delight in God and in His law, and begin to walk at liberty. The living in Jerusalem are those who walk uprightly and walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called. "If ye love me," said the Saviour, "keep my commandments." John 14: 15. The child of God has this seal — "let him that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." 2 Tim. 2: 19.

The Christian, however, is distinguished, not only by his keeping of God's commands, but by his keeping of them always — at all times, and in all places, and in all circumstances, and preservingly. The hypocrite will not always call upon God nor always obey

Him, but only when it suits him. The true believer desires to walk humbly with his God at all times and seeks to honour God by a life of faith and obedience. It is such who are enabled, not only to begin the Christian course, but to persevere in it to the end. In the heart of true Christians there is increasing hatred to sin. They obey the injunction of God's Word — "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil." Ps. 97: 10. They desire to be holy as He is holy. 1 Pet. 1: 15-16. They desire to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. How far short they come of what they would desire to be! Yet in the strength of Divine grace they wage a ceaseless struggle against the flesh within and the world and Satan without, trusting in the Lord to give them ultimate victory over all their enemies.

Let us now apply these things to our own souls. How is it with us? Are we still like Israel, disobedient and unwilling to be taught, refusing to obey God's commandments? Or have we begun to serve God with a willing mind and heart? Are we still rebels against the God of eternity? Or have we been so brought into loving subjection to God's law and into opposition to all evil that we can say with the Psalmist:

"I at thy word rejoice, as one
of spoil that finds great store.

Thy law I love; but lying all
I hate and do abhor." ?

Psalm. 119: 162-163.

His name shall be called Wonderful

by Rev. William Dyer

(continued from page 13)

Is it so, that a believer's Saviour is a wonderful Saviour? Then it informs us of eight things.

First: My first inference is this, that Christ's sufferings are what He endured from men in His body, and what He suffered from God in His soul: He did not only endure pain in His body, but agony in His soul. Oh the sea of sufferings, the sea of sorrow, the sea of blood, the sea of tears that our blessed Saviour waded through to come and bring peace to our souls, salvation to our souls, grace and glory to our souls! He suffered from devils; He suffered in His name, He suffered in His members, He suffered in His body, He suffered in His soul: the cause was our sins, the effect our salvation. If you look through the chronicle of His life you will find that His whole life was full of sorrow and misery:

He was persecuted, He was tempted, He was reproached, He was falsely accused, He was apprehended, He was betrayed, He was crucified. What shall we say more? What can be said more? He was full of sorrow: He took His name from sorrow: our Lord Jesus Christ is called a man of sorrows — "A man of sorrow, and acquainted with grief." Isa. 53, 3. Now, judge whether Christ's life was not full of sorrows: He took His name from sorrow. O sweet Jesus! Thy sufferings were truly great.

Secondly: Jesus Christ suffered by Himself. He was alone in His sufferings; neither angels nor saints bore any part with Him in them; no, He drank the bitter cup alone; He alone purged our sins: "He alone by Himself purged our sins." Heb. 1, 3. Christ had none to help to bear His heavy burden with Him; He bore it Himself alone. But, my beloved, though our Lord Jesus Christ suffered by Himself, yet He did not suffer for Himself: He suffered for us, He suffered for that which we deserved: "He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." Do you see here, Christians, how many 'ours' are here? Our griefs, our sorrows, our transgressions, our iniquities, our peace. So again, "For our sakes He became poor." 2 Cor. 8, 9. Mark, "for our sakes." Beloved, He was born for us: "Unto us a child is born"; He was given for us: "to us a son is given." Isa. 9, 6. "He was made a curse for us." Gal. 3, 13; the text tells, He was made a curse but it was for us; He was delivered up for us. Rom. 8, 32. "Who spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." Oh, all these things were for us — given for us, made a curse for us, made sin for us, delivered up for us, and is now in heaven interceding for us. Heb. 7, 25. So that, my brethren, all that our Lord Jesus suffered, it was not for Himself, but it was for us: our blessed Saviour suffered for us, that we might not suffer.

Thirdly: It is more for Christ to suffer anything than for all men and angels to suffer all things. Pray mark, if all the kings and emperors should have left their thrones, their crowns, their kingdoms, their sceptres, their glory, their honours and princely robes, and have come and took upon them a poor Lazarus condition, to go on poorly, and fare hardly, and die shamefully, why, all this had not been so much as for Jesus Christ, the Son of God, to suffer the least thing He did suffer. Now further, I say, if all the angels in heaven and men on earth had come and suffered, and died ten thousand deaths, it had not been so much, put all together, as it was for Christ to suffer anything. They are creatures, He is the Creator; they the servants, He is the Master; they are the subjects, He is the Prince; they are mean, He is mighty; He is the King of kings and Lord of lords: "He thought it not robbery

to be equal with God." Phil. 2, 6. It would not have been half such a wonder if all the angels in heaven and men on earth had come and suffered, as it was for the Son of God. Oh! this is a wonder of wonders; His sufferings were wonderful, His humility was wonderful, His patience was wonderful, His love was wonderful: greater love could no man show; He loved us so that He died for love. Now, I beseech you, consider this inference, which was this. That it is more for Jesus Christ to suffer anything than for all men and angels to suffer all things. And, indeed, I want words to express it or set it forth; for there is both want of words, and want in words to express this matter.

Fourthly: In what miserable case lay we, that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ must endure all this, undergo all this, for poor sinners? Certainly the misery of man was very great, that man should need such redemption as this. Oh what a breach had sin made between God and us, that the Son of God must come from heaven to earth to suffer all this! Oh! mischievous sin hath undone us; sin hath robbed every one of six jewels, every one of which jewels are more worth than heaven and earth. Would you know what jewels they are that sin hath robbed us of? I will tell you, and then you will say with me that we were in a very miserable case. (1) It robs us of the image of God. Was this a precious jewel, think you? I say it robbed us of the image of God, and drew in man the devil's picture: Malice is the devil's eye, oppression is the devil's hand, blasphemy is the devil's tongue, and hypocrisy is the devil's cloven foot. (2) Sin robs us of our sonship, and makes us slaves to the devil, slaves to sin, or slaves to the world, and slaves to ourselves. (3) It robs us of our friendship with God, and makes us enemies to God and enemies to Christ, enemies to our own soul and enemies to all that is good. (4) It robs us of our communion and fellowship with the Father, Son, and Spirit, and makes us strangers and aliens. (5) It robs us of our rights and privileges, of heaven, and heavenly things, and makes us children of wrath, and heirs of hell. (6) It robs us of our honour and glory, and makes us vile and miserable, as you may see: "There is no soundness in us; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores." Isa. 1, 6. Put all this together, and then see whether or not we are not miserable, and whether we did not need a Saviour to come and deliver us from this misery into which our souls were plunged. Now here is our happiness, Christians; in Christ we have these jewels again that we lost in the old Adam; the glorious image of God, our sonship, our friendship, our fellowship, our privilege, and our glory and honour, we have all again by Jesus Christ.

Fifthly: Jesus Christ brought life to us, — a life of grace, a life of comfort, a life of glory, but we brought death on Him; He brought glory to us, but we brought shame on Him; He brought

riches to us, but we brought poverty on Him; He brought joy to us, but we brought sorrow to Him — sorrow upon sorrow: we put the crown of thorns upon His head; He put the crown of glory upon our heads. We thought the earth too good for Him, and would not let Him live here, but put Him to death, but He thinks not heaven too good for us; we are ashamed to own Him before men, but He is not ashamed to own us before His Father and His holy angels; we condemn Him, but He justifies us. Oh think of your unkindness to Him, and let the considerations of His infinite love and favour to you draw out your affections after Him!

Sixthly: All believers have exceeding great cause to bless God for Jesus Christ. God the Father gave Him to us, who were not His friends, but enemies: to us, who were not sons, but slaves: to us, who were not angels, but men: to us, who loved not God, but hated Him. Oh! have we not cause to bless God for Jesus Christ? "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3, 16. Oh what a gift is Jesus Christ!

Seventhly: If Jesus Christ be so wonderful, then how vile, how base a thing it is for the hearts of men to prefer anything before Jesus Christ! I beseech you, and beg of you all to mind this inference. Surely if Jesus Christ be so wonderful, so precious, so lovely, so rich, so sweet, so rare, it is a most abominable thing, a wicked thing, a vile thing, to prefer anything before Jesus Christ. Oh! I speak it with grief of heart, there are too many in the world that set light by Him, and make nothing of Him, and love Him not, and prefer every base lust before Him: though there is nothing more cursed than this, there is nothing more common than this — for men prefer the vilest things before Christ. The wicked worldling prefers the trash of the world before Jesus Christ; he can leave hearing and praying, reading and fasting, to follow the world: he prefers gold before God, earth before heaven, gain before glory, his corruptible silver before his Saviour. Oh! thou wicked worldling, thou wretched worldling, can thy riches save thy soul? Let me ask thee, Can thy riches deliver thee from hell? Can thy riches bring thee to heaven, that thou preferrest them before Christ? Oh! the Lord Jesus will come in flames of fire to take vengeance on such, and then thou wilt know to thy cost, and pain, and torment, that thy riches cannot keep thee out of hell, much less bring thy soul to heaven: then thou wilt see thy folly when it is too late.

The wicked drunkards prefer their drunkenness before Christ; the drunkard prefers his pots before Him, the drunkard wades through the sea of drink to his grave; he can sit a day or a whole night in the ale-house, and think it a little time; but an hour in the service of God, oh how tedious is that! O thou drunkard, that

turnest off thy cups so fast, God Almighty has a cup for thee, but not a cup of sack, or a cup of beer, but a cup of wrath, which thou shalt drink to eternity! which is worse than to drink scalding hot lead down thy throat. He hath so much liquor here; not only drink to quench his thirst, but to drink to excess, till he say and do he knows not what; but in hell he shall have little enough; there is never a tavern or ale-house there; no, there is not a drop of water to be got all hell over. O thou wretch! thou shalt live in burning flames, and thy tongue shall cleave to the roof of thy mouth, and if thou wouldest give a thousand worlds for one drop of water, thou shalt not have it. And therefore I beseech you, if any such there are here, in the name of God hear and fear, and do no more wickedly. Oh! I would not be in thy condition for ten thousand worlds; and yet I cannot but have bowels of pity towards thee, which constrains me thus to speak, knowing thy condition better than thou dost thyself. Oh! couldest thou but speak with thy fellow-drunkards that are now in hell, what a dreadful story would they tell thee of their agonies, and suffering, and pain, and torments! Some are in hell already for the same sins you live in; and if you live and die without Christ, you shall be ere long with them.

The swearer, the blasphemous swearer, prefers his oaths before Christ. Many can swear by their Creator and Maker, and speak proudly, and look highly, and walk contemptuously, as if there were no God to punish, no devil to torment. Well let me tell thee, O thou swearer, that now delightest in cursing, thou shalt be ere long sent with a curse to a cursed place: "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire!" will Christ say to such persons. The proud person prefers his pride before Christ: if a fine suit did lie on the one hand, and Christ on the other, the proud would rather put on the suit of clothes than Him. Oh, I beseech you, consider what a vile and abominable thing it is, to prefer anything before Christ! "Consider this," saith the Psalmist, "ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you." O poor wretch! consider of that text. Thou liest open to all the judgments in this life, and to all the torments in the life which is to come, all ye wicked ones that prefer anything before Jesus Christ.

Eighthly: If Jesus Christ be so wonderful, then every one that heareth of Him should think it a most dreadful thing to miss Him. O Christians and friends, consider of it! Certainly that man or woman's condition must needs be sad indeed, that lives and dies without Jesus Christ. O poor sinner! the devil looks but for a look from God to come and rend thee in pieces, and draw thy soul to hell. Poor soul, thy soul is in danger every hour of being arrested by death, and carried prisoner to hell. Oh, I beseech you, do you think and consider with yourselves what a sad thing it is to miss Christ! Until a man is in Him, he hath nothing, he knows

nothing, he enjoys nothing, can do nothing, and is fit for nothing, and is worth nothing. Prov. 10, 20.

Oh, I beseech you, that you would consider seriously, that of all miseries that is the greatest of miseries to miss Christ! We are never able to lament the loss of the poor soul that loseth Jesus Christ: all losses be wrapt up in that one loss. And therefore I beseech you all, both good and bad, bethink with yourselves what a sad condition that person is in who misseth Christ.

The Diary of Dugald Buchanan

Period II — From twelve years of age to twenty-four.

When about twelve years of age, I was called to a family for the purpose of teaching the children to read, for at that time I was sufficiently qualified to read the Bible. This family into which I came was singular for every species of wickedness, each one of its members exceeding the other in cursing, swearing, and other vices, with the exception of the mistress, who, I believe, feared the Lord. She was like Lot in Sodom; for every thing that looked like seriousness was ridiculed and set at nought.

I was scarcely a month in this family when I learned to speak the language of Ashdod; yea, in a short time I exceeded every one of themselves, so much so, that I could not speak without uttering oaths and imprecations: and my conscience being lulled into a sleep, I sinned without restraint, except occasionally, when I would think of death; then I would become dejected and sad, concluding that I was undone, and that to refrain from sin now was unavailing. To relieve my mind from this despondency, I would set the evil day far away, and take comfort from the distance I conceived it to be from me.

It happened, however, one Sabbath night that the mistress of the house began to exhort us, and to speak of a judgment to come. Hearing these things, like Felix, I trembled, my former fears revived, especially when she began to describe the manner of the day of judgment and of the coming of Christ: namely, that He would in a moment break out of the third heavens, attended with power and great glory; and that it was the opinion of some divines, that this would take place upon a Sabbath night and in the winter season; and that some time before He would appear there would be great thunder and lightning with much hail.

All this I heard with great attention, and my conscience gnawed

me bitterly for my cursing, swearing, Sabbath-breaking, and other sins. I endeavoured, however, to comfort myself in the thought that the time in which all this would happen, was far distant.

But that night after we had gone to bed there came on the greatest storm of thunder, lightning, and hail, of which I have any recollection; and the windows being open, the hail poured into the room, while its walls were incessantly brightened by the vivid flashes of lightning. I trembled with apprehension that this was the beginning of sorrow, for every thing came to pass after the description the mistress had previously been giving; and the unfrequency of such storms in the winter season, confirmed me the more in my opinion, that it was the last day indeed. My trembling increased to such a degree, as to attract the attention of my companions who were in bed with me, who inquired the cause of my uneasiness; to which I answered, that the day of judgment was come, adding, at the same time, what would we do? They mocked me for my cowardice, and said that it was not. Yet I could not believe them, for I looked every moment that Christ would appear and cry to the dead to rise.

O how happy I thought I would be if I could but lie under the ruins of the house, so that I might be hid from the face of the Judge! O the horror that siezed me! And repentance I thought was too late. I remembered part of Mr Gray's sermon, in which he describes the torments of the damned, and the consternation in which they shall be at the coming of Christ. O I thought if I had my life to begin again, how I should read, and pray, and keep the Sabbath! but alas! I was too late. A little after this, however, the tempest began to abate, and I was exceeding glad for space to repent of my sins, if so be there might be repentance for me; and heartily resolved against my sins, but my resolutions were soon at an end; for in less than eight days I was just what I was before. "When he slew them, then they sought him, and they returned and enquired early after God." (Psalms 78: 34).

I remained in this family five months, and increased daily in sinful practices. I remember my being, one day while here, with some other people in a boat, upon a large loch, which was at some little distance, and where to all appearance, in consequence of a great storm which arose, we were in danger of being drowned; but the Lord who is kind to the unthankful brought us safe to land, after we had despaired of our lives. "Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord." (Isaiah 26: 10).

Soon after this I came home to my father's house, with whom I lived for some time. Here I was obliged to abandon my cursing and swearing; especially when in my father's presence; but no sooner could I get out of his sight, than I was as bad as before.

About this time I met with a remarkable providence which I will here relate. Having gone with some other children to bathe in a river which was at some distance from my father's house, I went too near the deep, and the sand being loose gave way under me. Finding myself sinking in the water I cried for help, which the other children not being able to give, and seeing my perilous situation, all fled for fear, except a little girl who remained on the bank of the river crying for assistance, but could herself render none. And if the Lord, who has the seas and the winds at his command, had not appeared for my deliverance, I would certainly have perished in the stream. But the Lord in His adorable providence caused the current of the water to drive me near the shore, when the little girl who stood all the time at the river's side, having got a hay rake laid hold of me and dragged me out of the water.

In a short time I recovered my senses, and was able to go home. Yet all these remarkable providences were never laid to heart by me; but I still continued as before. "I have guided thee though thou hast not known me."

When I was about fourteen years of age, I went to Stirling, where I remained for some time with Mr R.D. While with him, I fell sick of a fever, and death beginning to stare me in the face, all my sins came fresh into my mind. Language would fail me in describing the anguish of my soul at this time; my bodily trouble was great; yet it was as nothing when compared to the trouble of my soul. A man will sustain his infirmities, but a wounded spirit who can bear? I looked for no mercy from God, since I had been disobedient all my days. O but the issues of sin lay heavy on my conscience! Then I prayed to the Lord that He would spare me that I might have space to repent; and began to make vows and to bind myself to serve the Lord, if He should spare me: and it pleased the Lord to grant me deliverance from this sickness, and to bring me again from the gates of death.

But I was scarcely recovered from my sickness, when I turned sick of my vows. "Nevertheless they flattered him with their mouths; for their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant." (Psalms 78: 36, 37).

Not long after this I met with a book called "Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners". The title page suited me very well, for I thought that was surely I. In reading this book I found that its author had been a great sinner, and yet obtained mercy. Then I said, peradventure the Lord will be merciful to me also, since mercy is offered to the chief of sinners. This encouraged me greatly to go to the Lord in prayer and confess my sins; in doing which, I found such great meltings of heart, that sometimes I would be in a flood of tears, and resolved never to forsake the Lord all my days. I thought that Scripture, "My grace shall be sufficient for

thee," made a sweet impression on my mind. These affections, however, continued but for a season, for afterwards, both to my own apprehension and to that of those who knew me, and who despaired of my conversion and the sufficiency of God's grace towards me, they ceased to affect my heart and my actions; yet I trust in the Lord who hath in his own time made the sufficiency of His grace appear to me in a remarkable manner (and it is upon the sufficiency of His grace alone that I desire to depend, and not upon anything done by me or wrought in me by His grace), the grace that is in Christ Jesus is that in which I desire to trust.

As far as I can remember I continued in this way of duty for three months, and took great delight in good books, to which I had ample access as well as time to peruse them, in the family in which I lived; but some books, such as Romances and Play-books, which had a very different tendency, fell into my hands: and in a little time I began to lose any relish I had for reading good books, and to spend my time wholly in reading works of fiction and frivolous amusement, by which I became neglectful of prayer, and turned seven times worse than before. My old habits of swearing and other secret sins also revived, and I took great delight in telling idle tales to those with whom I associated, which gave me such a habit of lying, that rather than want stories of that kind I would endeavour to invent them myself, which practice ultimately led me to such an awful state that I could scarcely speak a word of truth.

I was now become openly profane, and so dreadful was the custom of swearing I had acquired, that I could not even walk the way alone without cursing those who had become the objects of my animosity, because I could get no other revenge. I remained here for two years, and notwithstanding all my unparalleled provocations, must remark the Lord's kindness to me during that period. First, in recovering me to perfect health and strength after I had been at the gates of death. And secondly, another act of divine providence towards me: — One day as I was coming up one of the streets, there was a drunken soldier going before me, whom some boys were annoying by throwing an old rag in his face. When I saw him, being ignorant of what the boys had been previously doing to him, I heedlessly took up the rag to cast it out of the way, which he seeing, and thinking that I was one of those who had been throwing it at him, he drew his bayonet and ran after me. Having no other place of safety to betake myself to, I went into a close, and just as I was entering and he about to thrust his weapon through me, the Lord, in His adorable providence, ordered it so that he fell headlong and for some time lay in a state of insensibility, by which I was enabled to escape.

A third instance of God's providence towards me while in this place, I must not omit recording here. While coming one rainy day in the month of November from Edinburgh, and having made some stay on the way, I was benighted at Falkirk. When I came to the River Carron, I rashly entered the ford without considering the great quantity of rain which had fallen during the day; but no sooner did I get into the middle of the current, than the horse I had under me began to lose his footing, and the night being exceedingly dark I was at a loss whether I should go forward or return; upon consideration, however, I returned and crossed by the bridge which was at a little distance, and thus got home in safety. The first intelligence I received thereafter was, that a man had been drowned that night in attempting to cross by the same ford on horseback.

I went from Stirling to Edinburgh, where I remained six months with Mr S. Here I added to all my former wickedness, for I met with corrupted youths like myself, and we added one sin to another; and in whatever actions we were employed I was almost the foremost man. Yet, even in the midst of my foolish merriment, I had great awakenings of conscience, and greatly dreaded the wrath of God; but thought it was in vain to repent. "Thou saidst, There is no hope, no; for I have loved strangers and after them will I go." (Jer. 2: 25).

Rev. A. Toplady: A Sketch of His Life

by Rev. John Colquhoun, Glendale, Skye

Though the subject of this sketch is well-nigh forgotten in this degenerate age, except by a few who prize the "old days", yet in the age in which he lived, and for many generations afterwards, he was reckoned a master in Israel. Many who know his hymn, "The Rock of Ages", could tell little or nothing of his life or the place he occupied in evangelical circles in his own time. Very little is known of his parents or the schools which he attended in early life, and as little known of his progenitors. His father, Richard Toplady, was a Major in the army and died at the siege of Carthage soon after the birth of his son. There was another son, Francis, who died in infancy; and so Augustus was brought up without the guidance of a father or the companionship of a brother. Yet the Lord was his guide and breaker up of his way in

all things. His mother, who was a pious and prudent woman, trained him up in the way in which he should go, and when he grew up she had the reward of being the object of his solicitude as long as he lived. He was a boy of vigorous intellect and powers of intense application, and soon outstripped many of his compeers, so that when he left Westminster School he had acquired such proficiency as to be capable of teaching others, and was often employed by some of the children of the nobility to do for them what, through indolence or inability, they were unable to do for themselves. While he was still very young he accompanied his mother to Ireland when she went there to prosecute a claim to a title which she seems to have had to an estate there.

Shortly afterwards young Toplady became a student of Trinity College, Dublin, and, owing to the thoroughness of his previous preparation he soon graduated Bachelor of Arts. As a form of relaxation from more severe studies he began to write poems, and a small volume of these was published in Dublin when he was only in his nineteenth year. These poems were judged by competent judges to be highly creditable to his genius, but they are now little known. These poetical effusions were only, as stated, indulged in by way of relaxation. More serious and exacting studies claimed his attention. Being destined for the ministry of the gospel, he devoted his attention to the original languages in which the Bible was written. It was during this time in Ireland that he began to realise the import of the Saviour's language to Nicodemus, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." It was when he was about sixteen years of age that he wandered into a barn, at a place called Codymain, where he heard a man who, perhaps, could not write his name, preaching from the text, "But now in Christ Jesus, ye, who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ." (Ephes. ii, 13). From that night Mr Toplady dated his effectual calling. Through reading Dr Manton on John xvii. he came to see the scripturalness of Calvinism as opposed to the tenets of Arminianism. The latter he hated to his last breath with an inveterate hatred.

In 1762 he was a candidate for holy orders, and having passed his examinations he was ordained a deacon. Shortly afterwards he was inducted to the living of Blagdon in Somersetshire. This living was procured for him by friends in a manner of which he was not aware at the time but when he came to know of it, his tender conscience was troubled, and he had no peace until he relinquished it. We find him next in the living of Fen-Ottery and Harpford, where he preached to a numerous and attentive congregation. That he was not a mere place-seeker itching after the applause of men is shown by the following entry in his Diary at

this time: "O my Lord, let not my ministry be approved only, or tend to no more than conciliating the esteem and affections of my people to thy unworthy messenger; but do the work of thy grace upon their hearts: call in thy chosen; seal and edify thy regenerate; and command thy everlasting blessing on their souls! save me from self-opinion, and from self-seeking; and may they cease from man, and look solely to thee!"

Arising out of a mutual arrangement between him and a Mr Luce, who was the incumbent of Broad-Hembury, Mr Toplady became the vicar of the latter place and Mr Luce the incumbent of the former. Shortly after the translations were agreed upon the vicarage of Harpford was burned to the ground, but as every transaction had been agreed upon before this took place, Mr Toplady was inducted at Broad-Hembury, and Mr Luce, the following day, was inducted at Harpford. In prospect of his transference to Broad-Hembury Mr Toplady says: "There is one thing that pleases me much, about Broad-Hembury, and makes me hope for a blessing upon the event, viz. that it was not, from first to last, of my own seeking: and every door, without any application of mine, has hitherto flown open, and all seems to point that way. As a good man somewhere says, 'A believer never yet carved for himself, but he cut his own fingers'. — The all-wise God, whose never-failing providence ordereth every event, usually makes what we set our hearts upon unsatisfactory; and sweets what we feared: bringing real evil, out of seeming good: and real good, out of seeming evil to show us what short-sighted creatures we are, and to teach us to live by faith upon his blessed self." That Mr Toplady could show himself a workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the truth, goes without saying. At the beginning of his ministry he wrote out his sermons in full and slavishly read them to his congregation, but as time advanced he, by and by, discarded his reading of them. His knowledge of theology, which was Calvinistic, his familiarity with the original languages in which the Bible was written, and his acquaintance with Latin and the writings of those theologians who wrote in that language made him more than a match for the enemies of truth. A writer of his Life says: "Even from the commencement of his ministry, Mr Toplady distinguished himself as a judicious, evangelical, and eloquent preacher. Short as was the period of his incumbency at Blagdon, he had, before he left it, collected an overflowing congregation. His popularity and usefulness increased on his removal to Broad-Hembury; and it continued till that which was his last and best removal, at least, for himself, — his removal from the earthly sanctuary, to the heavenly Zion. Nor was it in obscure country parishes only, that his pulpit eloquence electrified his audience. So highly was he esteemed in the metropolis, that

the churches, in which he preached there, could not contain the immense multitudes that crowded to hear him. Even on week-days, when he preached, he was always sure of a large audience."

This was high praise, but it shows the abilities of one who when little more than a boy translated and digested the work of Jerom Zanchius on 'Predestination'. This, with his other works, earned for him the hatred of those who were of the Arminian persuasion, especially the followers of John Wesley, who opposed him bitterly, and misrepresented him unfairly. In contending with Wesley and his followers he was led to use language which cannot be excused, but to use his own expression, he would never try to "hew such millstones with a feather," and yet he could pray for Wesley in the following language: "O, that He in whose hearts the hands of all men are, may make even this opposer of grace, a monument of its almighty power to save! God is witness, how earnestly I wish it may consist with the divine will, to touch the heart and open the eyes of that unhappy man. I hold it as much my duty to pray for his conversion, as to expose the futility of his railings against the truth of the gospel." Among his literary works is his 'Historical Proof of the Doctrinal Calvinism of the Church of England', which has been said to have been the most learned and laboured of all his works. He commenced the new series of the Gospel Magazine in 1774, and it was edited by him from December 1775 till June 1776. He himself was responsible for a considerable number of the articles appearing in that periodical during that time.

Mr Toplady's health was never robust but its condition became aggravated by symptoms of consumption, which made him consider a change from the moist atmosphere of his parish to the south of England but this did not materialise. His medical advisers suggested London and he removed there, but he was busier there than ever. His friends secured for him the use of the French Calvinistic Chapel of Orange Street in Leicester Fields, where he held services from April 1776 till April 1778, along with fulfilling many appointments in connection with services of a charitable nature. This aggravated his affliction, so that it could be seen that he was rapidly descending to his grave. He became unable to preach, and when, to all appearances, it became evident that he would never enter a pulpit again a false and malicious report was circulated, commonly attributed to John Wesley and some of his followers, that he wished to recant from his Calvinism. In spite of the warnings of his physicians that he might die in the attempt, he entered the pulpit of Orange Street Chapel, two months before his death, and gave a full and emphatic denial to this false report. This was published afterwards under the title, 'The Rev. Mr Toplady's Dying Avowal of his Religious Sentiments'. He died

on 11th August 1778, in the thirty-eighth year of his age, and was buried in Tottenham Court Chapel.

This doughty champion of Calvinism was the subject of false and malicious reports, not only during his life, but after his death. These reports had their origin, as far as can be traced, in Wesley and his associates, and represented him as blaspheming on his death-bed and dying in black despair. The fact that Wesley, after having many opportunities, did not dissociate himself from them, when confronted with them, or even answer the letters of those who wrote to him on the matter, clearly points to his guilt. The Editor of the 1825 edition of Toplady's Works, says, in reference to Wesley's silence, as far as answering these letters were concerned: "Those who have read the preceding letters, astonished as they must have been at their contents, will be yet more astonished to hear, that, to the loud and repeated calls, thus given him to speak for himself, Mr Wesley answered not a word. Nor is it too much to say, that, by maintaining a pertinacious silence, in such circumstances, the very vitals of his character were stabbed by himself. He thus **consented** to a blot remaining on his name, among the foulest that ever stained the reputation of a professed servant of Jesus Christ. The truth or falsehood of those principles, however, which it was the object of his long and laborious life to propagate and defend, cannot be considered as at all affected by his unhappy, and unmanly, and ungodly conduct, in reference to this matter."

Obituary

The late Edward Morrison, Elder, North Harris

The subject of this short obituary, Mr Edward Morrison, was born in 1893, and passed to his eternal rest on 13th July, 1966. His birthplace was 1 Carrigrich, in the parish of North Harris.

Edward Morrison was well-known throughout the Church. He frequently attended communion seasons on the mainland and in the Outer Isles.

From his early youth he was circumspect in his walk and conversation. He would often tell of a particular time in his experience when he felt God's displeasure with him, because of his sins, pressing him down to the very dust.

The late Rev. D. N. Macleod, of revered memory, was at that time the minister of the Free Presbyterian congregation of Harris. Mr Morrison was very attached to Mr Macleod, as could be

understood when he spoke of Mr Macleod's preaching. It was at the church at Tarbert that Edward Morrison received the liberty of the Gospel, when the worthy minister preached from Isaiah, chap. 53, verse 8. This was in the year 1919. Shortly after this, while working in Glasgow, he made a public profession. He had the highest respect for the Rev. Neil Cameron, who was at that time minister of St. Jude's, Glasgow.

In the early twenties Edward was ordained to the eldership. He was naturally cheerful, generous and sympathetic. Thus his company was sought after and enjoyed by his brethren. He was appointed a missionary in the early thirties. He fulfilled his duties faithfully. Always careful and watchful, he was an acceptable speaker at all times. He excelled as a man of prayer.

His last illness was not of long duration. After being ill at home for some time, when he was attended by his sister, Mrs Macdonald, he was removed to the Lewis Hospital, where he passed away the following day.

The North Harris Congregation is weaker as a result of the departure of Edward to his everlasting rest.

"The memory of the just is blessed."

A. McK.

Report on Mission to Italy

"As sheep having no shepherd."

by Rev. Malcolm MacInnes, M.A., Ullapool.

When Jesus saw the multitudes He was moved with compassion on them because they fainted and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd. He saw the multitudes not merely as men and women going about their lawful calling; He saw them as souls destined to eternity, whose greatest need was not that of bread and of water, but of the Word of God which was able to make them wise unto salvation. If we lived in a deeper sense of the needs of our own souls and the souls of our fellows we would all the more fervently engage in the prayer Christ taught His disciples on that occasion. He taught them saying "The harvest truly is plenteous but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth labourers into his harvest."

Since my last report of our work in Italy in the pages of this magazine, October 1968, I have visited Fornaci di Barga twice. In July last year, and again last April, I went to Italy as Church Deputy. The work in which I engaged on both of these visits followed a similar pattern to that of my first visit, apart from one

or two new items to which I shall refer in this report. The numbers attending our services are small, and it is extremely difficult to effectively persuade others to come. To devout practising Roman Catholics the Protestant Church at large does not present an attractive front. These factors, coupled with local difficulties, have kept our numbers low. However, there are sufficient to plead the promise Jesus gave when He said, "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

During my time in Italy I held two services every Sabbath, one on a Wednesday evening, and on other evenings whenever arranged. As formerly, discussions on the subject of the sermon accompanied each service. During my visit in April we read through the Heidelberg Catechism, and I tried to answer questions raised from it. The copies of the Catechism in Italian, with full Scripture-proof, were generously provided by the Spanish Evangelical Mission, Holland, who had previously supplied very attractive wall-texts. This interest shown by the Spanish Evangelical Mission in our work in Italy is stimulating, and ought to arouse in our people at home increasing interest in spreading the Gospel among those deprived of the Truth as it is in Jesus. The other new item to which I may refer is the possible distribution of Bibles and sound Christian literature. During my visit in April I attempted the distribution of a few Bibles, wall-texts and booklets, and I found that this can be an effective way of bringing the Gospel to the people. The wall-texts were from Holland; the booklets were portions of Scripture in 'booklet form' by the Trinitarian Bible Society, and the Bibles were purchased likewise from the Trinitarian Bible Society with a contribution kindly given by a young friend in Inverness. To any who may feel disposed toward helping the cause in Italy this might be a fruitful way of doing so. On the 'fly-leaf' of the Bibles and booklets I wrote a brief reference to the way of salvation, citing texts, and also gave my name and address offering more information should it be requested. At some houses the people were reluctant at first to accept, and then appeared amazed and perhaps, even suspicious, when it was impressed upon them that there was nothing to pay! However, I met with no absolute refusal, except from one elderly man who would not accept a small booklet.

The few to whom I was ministering in Fornaci di Barga are meeting with opposition, mostly from relatives. They are in difficult circumstances and need constant instruction and encouragement, and a regular ministry. They are 'as sheep having no shepherd', and it should be the prayer of the church at home, and abroad, that the Lord in His grace and mercy would give these people a pastor, not only to feed them with knowledge, but also to try to reach the thousands under the darkness of idolatry and

superstition. Remember Fornaci di Barga in your petitions at the Throne of Grace. "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth labourers into His harvest." (Matthew 9, v. 36-38).

Posadh an Anama ri Criosd

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

(Air a bheantuinn bho t.d. 22)

1. 'S e so a cheud phrionnsabal soisgeulach, na misneachd do chreidimh, leis am bu chòr dhuit t-anam a chumail suas, agus a bhi tric a beachd-smuainteachadh air — gu'm bheil lànachd shaoibhir, ghlòrmhor, agus a cur thairis, dhe'n a h-uile mhaith air a thasgadh suas ann an Criosd, air son pheacach bhochd; agus gu'm bheil a ghràs gu pailte os ceann ar falamhachdan agus ar peacaidhean. 'S e obair agus nàdur an eas-creidimh a bhi beagachadh agus a cur crìochan roimh'n lànachd a th'ann an Criosd do shùil an anam. Nochdaidh e do'n anam lionmhorachd a pheacaidhean agus fhalamhachdan, ach folaichidh agus glasaidd e suas ionmhasan agus lànachd Chriosd. Agus ge b'e air bith a chumas sinn a mach, is e bunait ar diùltaidh air Criosd, na co dhiubh aon shònraichte so, gu'm bheil e a cur an teagamh a lànachd, cha'n eil sinn a faicinn gu leoir ann an Criosd gu bhi coinneachadh ri ar falamhachdan uile, agus gu bhi fuasgladh air ar 'n eiginnean; an t-eas-creidimh a toirt oirne a bhi creidsinn nach e Criosd an Criosd a tha na Sgrìobturann a cumail a mach a tha E. Ach anam, cuir air falbh na beachdan sin agus socraich thusa air a bhi beachd-smuainteachadh air lànachd neo-chrìochnach Chriosd. Amhairc Ris mar a Neach a tha gu neo-chrìochnach comasach air a bhi coinneachadh ri t-fhalamhachdan, a bhi maitheadh do pheacaidhean, a bhi leigheas t-euslaintean, a bhi ceannsachadh t-ana-miannaibh, a bhi naomhachadh do chridhe, agus a bhi saoradh t-anam gu sìorruidh. Amhaire Ris mar a tha na Sgrìobturas dha chumail fodh do chomhair: tha'n a Sgrìobturann ag innse dhuit gu'n do thoilich e'n t-Athair "gu'n comhnuicheadh gach uile iomlanachd ann-san." Col. I. 19. Gach uile iomlanachd gràs agus beatha, agus gach uile iomlanachd sìth agus maitheanas, gach uile iomlanachd fireantachd agus slàinte. Tha ann an Criosd, cha'n e mhàin iomlanachd de phailteas, ach am barrachd 's a dh'ffheumas sinn, lànachd a tha cur thairis, lànachd a tha gu neo-chrìochnach os ceann ar peacaidhean agus ar falamhachdan. Tha na Sgrìobtuirean ag innse dhuinn gu'm

bheile e “mar an ceudna comasach air an dream a thig a dh’ionnsuidh Dhé trid-san a thearnadh gu h-iomlan, do bhrìgh gu bheil e beo gu sìorruidh gu eadar-ghuidhe a dheanamh air an son.” Eabh. vii. 25. A tearnadh, comasach gu tearnadh, comasach gu bhi tearnadh gus a cheum is fhaide a mach! Agus cha’n e sin aon na dithis, ach na h-uile thig a dh’ionnsuidh Dhé Trid-san. Tha na Sgrìobtuirean a labhairt mu shaoibhreas Chrìosd nach fheudair a rannsachadh. Ephes. III. 8. Cha ghabh cuan a ghràis a bhi air a thomhas leis an riaghailt is fhaide a bhuineas do’n tuigse is motha a tha air a cruthachadh. Dh’aithnich Pòl lànachd cur thairis a ghràis, agus dh’fhàg e sgrìobhta e a chùm ar misneachadh; “Agus ri gràdh a tha ann an Iosa Crìosd.” 1 Tim. i. 14; bha barrachd agus gu leoir ann. Thuair mì barrachd gràis ann an Crìosd, mar a tha neach àraidh dha chur, na b’aithne dhomh cìod a dheanain ris. Agus gidheadh, cìod a bha’n so a Phòil? Tha e fein ag innse dhuibh, anns an rann a tha air thoiseach agus os a dheigh: bha e’n a fhear-labhairt toibheum, na fhear-geurleanmhuinn, agus na cheann-feadhna pheacach; na dhuine, anns gach dòigh, aig an robh uibhir de pheacaidhean agus a dh’fhalamhachdan riutsa. A reir sin, gabh beachd air, agus cùm suas t-anam ri aghaidh gach mì-mhisneachd. Reusanaich mar so riut fein: Gu cinnteach tha mo shuidheachadh duilich, tha m’fhalamhachdan anabarrach lionmhor, agus mo pheacaidhean anabarrach mòr. Ach cìod e’n sin? Am bheil ioc-shlàinte ann an Gilead? Am bheil leigh an sin? Nach eil Crìosd comasach air mo shaoradh, agus sin a dh’ionnsuidh a cheum is fhaide a mach a dh’aindeoin sin uile? Amhairc O m’anam, an sin tha Iosa milis air a rìgh-chathair, aig deas-laimh an Athar, làn gràis agus firinn; amhairc Air, agus thoir fa’n ear — Cìod e t-uile fhalamhachdan fodh chomhair a shaoibhreas agus a lànachd-san? Cìod e t-uile thruaighean agus t-àmhghairean fodh chomhair innigh a thròcairean-san? Cìod e do pheacaidhean uile fodh chomhair toilteanas fhala-san? do bhrosnachaidhean-sa fodh chomhair a shàsachadh-san? Ged an robh t-fhalamhachdan-sa ni’s lionmhor agus ni’s motha na tha iad, b’urrain a lànachd-san an lionadh uile. Ged an robh do pheacaidhean-sa ni’s motha agus ni’s an-tromaichte na tha iad, b’urrain fhuil-san do ghlanadh bh’uatha uile. “Glanaidh fuil Iosa Crìosd a Mhic sinn o gach uile pheacadh.” 1 Eoin i. 7. Tha luach gu neo-chrìochnach ni’s motha na thoilteanas gu bhi maitheadh do pheacaidhean agus dha t-fhìreanachadh, na tha de olc ann a d’pheacaidhean gu bhi dha do dhamanadh agus dha do sgrios. Is firinneach gu’m bheil tobar peacaidh agus cionta, agus bàis, annam: ach an so tha tobar ni’s doimhne de ghràs, agus de bheatha, agus de fhìreantachd Ann-san. Faic, O m’anam, faic cho neo-chrìochnach agus cho mòr ’s a tha ionmhasan a ghràis agus a ghlòir, agus cùm thu fein suas orra-san. Oh, na’n gabhadh

peacaich còmhnuidh ni's motha ann an sealladh air mòrachd ghlòrmhor Chrìosd, bhiodh iad ni bu mhotha ann an gràdh Air: agus le so, sheasadh iad an aghaidh, agus chladhaicheadh iad fodh'n eas-creidimh ann a innleachdan is cuilbheartaich leis am bheil e cumail anamaibh bho Chrìosd. Cuiridh mi sìos ann an so, air son do mhisneachadh a mhàinn, briathran diadhaire urramach: "Is urrainn Chrìosd," tha e'g ràdh, "agus thig e Dhà gu maith, a bhi toirt ni's motha na's urrainn do m'anam cumhann a bhreithneachadh. Na'm biodh deich mìle, mìle muillean de shaoghail ann, agus urrad sin do neamhan ann làn de dhaoine, agus de dhaoine agus de dh'ainglean, cha bhiodh Chrìosd air a theannachadh gu bhi deanamh suas am falamhachdan, agus an Ìonadh uile. Is e tobar beatha a th'ann an Chrìosd; ach co is urrainn a ràdh cia cho domhain 's a tha e gu ruig a ghrùnnd?"

(R'a leantuinn)

An Extravagant Claim ?

by Rev. John Colquhoun, Glendale, Skye

In the April issue of the **Free Church Monthly Record** there is a comment entitled "An Extravagant Claim" which deals with a statement made by a writer over the initials J.C. in the **Free Presbyterian Magazine** for January, in which the writer says of the Free Presbyterian Church that it is "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." Though the writer of the Comment looks upon the assertion as "preposterous", nevertheless it is a fact that cannot be altered by all the sophistries which have been used since the Free Presbyterian Church took up its separate existence in 1893. It may well be asked, Where was the present Free Church from 1893 till 1900 or, for that matter, till they rescinded the Declaratory Act after the House of Lords made over the property to them in 1905? In the Free Church Case the contestants were the United Free Church and the minority who refrained from going into the Union. The Free Presbyterian Church was not in the field in that struggle, and why should it be? Both the majority and the minority had joined hands in depriving the Free Presbyterian Church of

every stick of property, though these churches and manses were built for the express purpose of proclaiming the doctrines which were the very opposite of those doctrines protected by the Declaratory Act. It is very evident that the Free Presbyterian Church was more interested in maintaining a witness for Christ in Scotland than in stone and lime, for how else would that Church go out with no resources to depend on but what was not of this world? That Church had a far better claim to the property than those who remained under the Declaratory Act; and, in fact, the minority contested the case, not on their own position, but on what was the position of the Free Presbyterian Church, and even sat silently listening to the falsehood of the United Free Church Counsel when, after consulting his clients, he stated that those who were put out of their churches and manses were put out, not because of the Declaratory Act, but for heresy. I may say that I am the writer of the paragraph over the initials J.C. in the **Free Presbyterian Magazine**, and I have no intentions of donning a sheet of repentance, either white or black, for writing it, or for making the claim contained in it.

The Free Church writer of the Comment in question takes refuge in the fact that the Authorised Standards and ordination vows imposed upon their office-bearers prove their identity with the Free Church of 1843. It does nothing of the kind. I grant that the Authorised Standards and ordination vows of the Free Church today are identical with the standards and vows of the Church of 1843, but their practice is vastly different. It is a fact that cannot be forgotten that it was the same Authorised Standards, modified by the Declaratory Act, that were in use from the time of the passing of the Declaratory Act till the Union of 1900, and yet any who wished could take refuge under the Declaratory Act; and even office-bearers who were against it would have to take part in the ordination and induction of men who had "difficulties and scruples" with regard to the contents of the Westminster Confession of Faith. The fact that the Questions and Formula were not changed did not afford any relief to those who were opposed to the Declaratory Act. Where, for example, can the present Free Church find any authority in these Standards for prayers at the grave, Boys' Brigades, the sitting posture at prayer, which are to be found in some Free Church congregations, as is the singing of paraphrases as a part of public worship. It is a notable fact that an eminent minister of the present Free Church, now deceased, publicly deplored the Arminianism which was to be found in Free Church pulpits; this was not sanctioned by the Calvinistic Standards of the Free Church of 1843. We have no doubt but that the minister in question was writing about what he was painfully conscious of, but we have not heard of cases of discipline on that

score in the present Free Church since he published his statement. In fact, despite the orthodoxy of the Authorised Standards, his voice was seldom, if ever, heard again in the Free Church Assembly. One may ask the question: Did he find encouragement or hostility in the Supreme Court of the Free Church?

These matters and many other instances which could be culled from the public press show that the House of Lords decision, allocating the property to the Free Church, comes far short of making the Free Church the sole heir of the Church of the Disruption, as has been so frequently claimed over the years. On the issue of the Establishment principle and the holding of the doctrine of Predestination the House of Lords came to their memorable decision, but there are other matters, such as above referred to, which make the Free Church come far short of the Disruption position. A friend was telling the present writer that he remembered hearing the late Dr Kennedy, Dingwall, preaching in the Gaelic Free Church, Greenock. After he had given out his text, the first words that came from the Doctor's lips were, "Men, do not look at what a man says. Look at where his feet are going." The reference was to a previous discourse by one who made a great profession of his fidelity to the truth and the standards of the Church. That remark of Dr Kennedy can be applied to individuals and to churches, and, as the Free Church does not seem ever to tire of laying the charge of schism at the door of the Free Presbyterian Church, the foregoing matters may not be out of place as evidence of the difference between the two Churches; for while these excrescences of the flesh are to be found in the Free Church, none of them are to be found in the Free Presbyterian Church.

The Free Presbyterian claim that she alone is the representative of the Disruption Church is spoken of in the Comment in question as "absurd" and "preposterous". These are epithets that are very often used without any foundation, and in this particular case are used in connection with a Church which took up its separate position in order to be consistent with the Constitution of the Free Church of the Disruption, while those who make free use of them remained under the Declaratory Act which vitiated that Constitution. The claim of the early disciples of our Lord was expressed in the words of Philip to Nathaniel: "We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." This was an "absurd" and "preposterous" claim in the eyes of the chief priests and Pharisees as seen in their reprimand to their own officers: "Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed." The claim of the Apostle Paul would, no doubt, be "absurd" and "preposterous" in the

estimation of the leaders of the Jews when he said, "We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh"; yet the Holy Spirit has put the seal of His inspiration on these same words. At the Disruption there were many who remained in the Erastian section of the Church of Scotland, who would maintain the claim of the Disruption Church to be the Church of Scotland Free to be "absurd" and "preposterous", but that did not invalidate that claim, although the House of Lords would not allow it should an appeal have been made to it. The House of Lords is not an infallible court, and is liable to make mistakes, or to act in a manner inconsistent with previous decisions. In the Free Church Case its decision was come to without the Free Presbyterian position being presented to it, for that position was never before it. If it had, no one can guess how it might have materially affected the decision, and thus have left the present Free Church no room for proclaiming that the highest tribunal in the land had declared them to be the Free Church of Scotland.

In fact that Court was most careful not to make any decision as to the doctrinal position of either Church concerned in the litigation before them. They merely decided that as there was no provision for a change in the Constitution of the Free Church no change could be made. The minority maintained that it was **ultra vires** on the part of the Assembly to make the change, and so did the Free Presbyterian Church, but that a change had been made no one with a modicum of knowledge of the whole question will deny. It was this change, of which the House of Lords took notice, that caused the Free Presbyterian Church to take up a separate position, though it never contested the property. It was only when Union took place in 1900 that the minority took up a separate position, and in 1906, when they rescinded the Declaratory Act that, in the preamble of the Rescinding Act, they gave vent to the most "absurd" and "preposterous" claim of which any set of persons, acting as a Church Court with the eye of the Lord upon them, was capable of, that is, the statement with reference to the Free Church: "as she has always adhered". This ignores the part some of her ministers took in Church Courts in matters which were ruled purely by the Declaratory Act, as well as the share members of the minority took in depriving the Free Presbyterians of churches and manses. These are matters which the rising generation of Free Presbyterians should be well versed in; and the present writer feels obliged to the writer of the Comment to which exception has been taken for writing in a way which gives an opportunity to the young of our Church to see that there is a way of seeing the position of the Free Presbyterian Church other than through Free Church spectacles.

A Charge Refuted

by Rev. Fraser MacDonald, M.A., Portree

Our attention was recently drawn to certain unfounded, impertinent and objectionable remarks on page 14 of a booklet entitled "More about the Work of the Pastor", by William Still, Aberdeen. These remarks relate to the supposed attitude of Free Presbyterians to the Fourth Commandment and to the Decalogue as a whole. The author's comments are by no means original or charitable, but have been frequently used by the ungodly in their attempts to slander those who love the Lord's Day, and as a sop to their own guilty consciences. What prompts us to expose the injustice of these statements is the fact that coming from the pen of a professed minister of the gospel, they may well be received by the unwary with unsuspecting confidence. If Mr Still thinks that to caricature the children of God is part of the pastor's work, he is not serving the Master, but the devil.

In his satirical attack, on what he ignorantly denominates 'the early nineteenth century Free Presbyterianism of my native Scotland', Mr Still alleges that for Free Presbyterians the whole law is summed up in the legal keeping of the Sabbath. He is allowed to go further still and reveal his own animosity to Free Presbyterians and the Sabbath, by stating that 'you can sin as much as you like against all the other nine Commandments outwardly and inwardly, as long as you preserve twenty-four hours of the week inviolate of any constructive activity, vacuous of any creative purpose, and certainly devoid of any joy'. What an extravagant and ridiculous charge! Mr Still is evidently grossly, and we fear, wilfully ignorant of the teaching of the Free Presbyterian Church. We can assure this self-righteous critic that Free Presbyterians place a similar emphasis on all the Commandments of the Moral Law, nor were they EVER encouraged by precept or example to break any one of the Divine Commands. If the Fourth Commandment is emphasised, or more frequently referred to than the others, it is far from sound logic to infer that such teaching gives anyone liberty to play fast and loose with any of the remaining nine Commandments. Such an evil and unnecessary inference is patently the product of prejudice, and the carnal mind which is enmity against God. Surely the reason for any special stress being laid on the observance of the Fourth Commandment, quite simply arises from the fact that this Commandment, possibly more than any other, is flagrantly and openly violated by both the world and the Church.

Let Free Presbyterians in Aberdeen and elsewhere beware of 'evangelical preachers' who have no love nor respect for the Lord's Day.

Book Review

The Four Gospels by David Brown. Banner of Truth Trust.
Price 35/-.

This truly great Commentary by David Brown has been in constant use for more than a century. The fact that the Banner of Truth Trust has seen fit to re-publish it in one volume, is in itself a tribute to its worth and merit, and would seem to indicate that there is still a demand for such a production. By this we are encouraged, for as long as preachers continue to refer to such a Commentary we may well hope that the risk of their auditors being subjected to empty sentimental discourses will be considerably reduced.

In his Introduction to the Commentary, Dr Brown expresses his personal appreciation of the unique place and importance of the Four Gospels as the central portion of the Divine Revelation, and indicates the proper line of investigation, stating briefly the leading facts on the different branches of the subject, and drawing the conclusions which these justify and demand. The following quotation, is, we think, most revealing and interesting, and may well serve as an inducement to the perusal of the entire work. On the subject of Inspiration dealt with on page 24 of the Introduction, the author has this to say: "Every thoughtful reader of the Gospels must at times have asked himself how the evangelists were able to report as they have done, so much of what our Lord said and did. As mere memory would plainly have been inadequate to the production of such narratives, there remains but one other explanation of them; some 'prompting' from above — enabling the Evangelists to re-produce the scenes and circumstances, discourses and actions, as we have them. Yet so little can one safely rely on mere conjecture or theory in such a case, that had we no explicit information in the narratives themselves as to the source of their proper authority, we should never have felt satisfied that we had solved the problem. But happily, that information we have, and the solidity which it imparts to our faith in these Four Gospels, and by consequence in the rest of Scripture, is complete and reassuring.

" 'These things have I spoken unto you,' said Jesus to His disciples, in the upper room, the night before He suffered, 'being yet present with you. But the Comforter which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.' So imperfectly did the Apostles apprehend what Jesus said to them, that they could not be expected to remember it, even as it was spoken; for nothing is harder than to

recall with precision, any but the briefest statement, if not comprehended. But while Jesus here promises them a Prompter from heaven, it was not to recall His teaching simply as it fell on their ears from His lips. This would have left them the same half-instructed and bewildered — weak and timid men as before — all unfit to evangelise the world, either by their preaching or their writings. But the Spirit was to teach as well as to remind them, to reproduce the whole teaching of Christ, not as they understood it, but as He meant it to be understood. Thus we have a double promise, that through the agency of the Holy Ghost, the whole teaching of Christ should stand up in the minds of His disciples, when He was gone from them, in all its entirety, as at first uttered, and in all its vast significance, as by Him intended. Before the close of this same Discourse, our Lord announces an extension even of this great office of the Spirit. They were not able to take in all that the Lord had to tell them. He had accordingly expressed much in but a seminal form, and some things He could hardly be said to have spoken at all. But when the Spirit should come, on His departure to the Father, He should 'guide them into all Truth', filling up whatever was wanting to their complete apprehension of the mind of Christ. On these great promises rests the credibility — in the highest sense of the term — of the Gospel History, and so its Divine Authority."

The Commentary itself, for all its scope and depth, is not intended for specialists only. It is drawn up in a style well suited to commend itself to the learned and the unlearned. Unlike some commentators, the author does not disappoint his readers by giving so many interpretations of a passage, while leaving the reader without definite guidance. Although thoroughly acquainted with the best works on his subject, he is evidently an independent thinker, and one cannot but be impressed by the conscientious fairness of his exegesis and the richness and definiteness of the theological training based upon its results.

Several features combine to enhance the value of this volume: thorough and extensive scholarship, so often abused in the service of Satan, is here put to its highest and noblest use; the results of mature judgment and accurate thinking are expressed in a most lively and reverential manner, and serve to make the smallest details full of interest and instruction. To bring out clearly the general scope, the character, the meaning of each passage is the chief aim of the author. As he expounds the Word, we are furnished with a substantial body of doctrinal, practical, and experimental truth. Enlightened, enriched, satisfied and delighted with Dr Brown's explanatory comments on each verse, we are further treated to his 'remarks' at the close of each section. These are evidently the reverent and devout reflections of a meditative mind,

imbued with the spirit of truth and holiness. Indeed, each and every part abounds with terse, meaningful, thought provoking observations and comments all ready for expansion and amplification.

This Commentator does not waste the reader's time by allowing himself to be drawn into the region of vain speculations regarding what, at best, can only be conjectural. To illustrate this feature of the work, we may quote what the author has to say on the controversial, much-vexed subject of the star which led the wise men to Bethlehem. With prudence, he remarks, "Much has been written on the subject of this star; but from all that is here said, it is perhaps best to regard it as, simply a luminous meteor, which appeared under special laws, and for a special purpose."

Finally, this Commentary has many other virtues which we must leave readers to discover for themselves; but to us the most pleasing and impressive merit of all, is the thoroughly devotional strain in which it is written, and which pervades and perfumes every page.

F. MACDONALD.

Letter

by Rev. John Berridge

With a melancholy pleasure, and at the same time self-abasement, I heard your lectures on man's heart as fallen by original apostacy and the dreadful epidemical disease of sin which has spread itself over the whole soul. When you dissected and anatomised the heart of man as before and after conversion, you went into the private closet of my heart and the underground vaults, where you have dug up some of the bones of the old man that have long lain rotting there.

Here is the general exchange for corruption, Mark 7 : 21, here the world and the devil often meet together, here they correspond, trade and traffic; and Satan well knows this is the best place for vending his contraband goods, having so many friends that court the heart and recommend his wares, namely vain thoughts, worldly imaginations, evil and impure sensations, earthly affections, inordinate desires, ambitious views, highmindedness, riches and sinful pleasures or pharisaical righteousness, moral confidence, unscriptural hopes, formal sanctity, uncovenanted mercy.

Satan takes a turn round these walks and pays his compliments, if I may say so, to the inmates of my soul who are his good friends, every day, aye every hour. He tries all ways to find out the constitutional sin, what the Apostle calls my besetting sin (Hebrews 12). He has baits for all sorts of corruptions and he endeavours to time his assaults. Sometimes he bids good-morrow

to one lust or corruption, sometimes to another, and so makes his cruel visits from one place of the soul to the other all day long and never bids good-night, for even when I go to bed he lies down with me, and sometimes in my sleep he haunts and awakens me.

If I go into my closet in order to lock myself up from the busy world this impertinent intruder, the devil, will break in there, without asking my leave; and so in the family, and even in the sanctuary, the house of God, I am dogged by this roaring lion. (1 Peter 5 : 2; Romans 7 : 21). Sometimes he snatches the preached word from me in a way of forgetfulness, sometimes presents other objects to my view, and sometimes would have me make an ill use of it by misapplying it. Sometimes I pray as if I were praying to a wooden god without a proper sense of His divinity and omniscience, and so only word it with God. By the way, I would not charge the devil with more than his just due for I know my own corrupt heart sometimes invites Satan to come in and has often entertained and bidden him welcome. Oh, how I ought to be humbled that I have so often fetched a chair for Satan, the tempter, to sit down in it, while he has entertained himself upon the lusts and affections of my soul; and has he not had the insolence sometimes to tempt me to sin from the aboundings of grace? Oh, horrid injection! And sometimes such cogitations have worked upon the imagination and the heart in and under ordinances. What power Satan's temptations have had, and how often the seeds of sin have sprung up and blossomed and budded and brought forth to my sorrow, as well as shame. I cannot express but I would open the matter with soul abasement to the eye of Him who looks down into my heart and sees all the workings of iniquity within me.

Respecting what you are now upon it is pleasing to find experience answers experience as face to face in a glass. (Proverbs 27 : 19). There is a prodigious alliance formed by the empire of hell, the god of this world and by unbelief, with all its train of sins, in the heart of every natural man and the unrenewed part of every true believer. This is the three-fold cord that is not easily broken, this is the grand alliance. Sir, thus the case stands, and on these accounts my soul has often bled: afraid of myself, afraid of the devil, afraid of everyone and sometimes even afraid of my God. (Job 22 : 15, 16). I have had sometimes that grace had enthroned itself in my heart, and I have had, as it were, a cessation from corruption, but Satan has called up all his forces and fired again and with his fire-balls has set the whole city of my soul into a flame and there has been a resurrection of the monster of sin again.

Oh, pity me, all you combatants in the field of battle, that know the force of temptation and are haunted as I am with these ghosts

continually. The devil sometimes gets me down and buffets me with the sin that most easily besets me, and then turns accuser, and brings railing accusations against me; and if he cannot keep me from the throne of grace he makes me go limping and halting there, afraid to open my mouth; and sometimes I can only hold up my hand at the bar and cry, Guilty, guilty, guilty.

And now Sir, let me ask you, is there balm in Gilead for an old stinking sore as well as for a constant running one, a sore that I had thought had been healed long ago but breaks out again and again with its bloody issue? Is there a physician? What for such a nauseous, defiled, stinking, as well as weak and sin-sick, soul as mine?

I truly need a physician within as well as without. Christ and His blood, and righteousness to justify and acquit and the blessed Spirit to sanctify and cure the inward diseases of my soul; for would it avail a condemned malefactor to be pardoned and acquitted of his crimes if he had the jail-distemper upon him and were to die by it?

Indeed, God never justifies but He sanctifies. Election is God's mark to know His own children by. Calling and sanctification are our marks by which we come to know that we ourselves are His elected children. Oh then set forth the work of the Spirit in a rebellious will, a blind understanding, a hard heart, a stupid conscience, and vile affections, renewing and sanctifying all these powers and so proving it to be the work of God and not of man. This Gospel sanctification I need and earnestly desire, and if you can help me in the present prospect of the eye of Christ scanning the hidden parts of man, it would be doing a good piece of service not only to me, but perhaps to many others who may be in the same case.

Dear Sir, may you be helped to lay open the inward powers of the soul, and the deceitful arts of the body, for alarming and rousing the stupid and careless and for the search and inquiry of every real Christian both with regard to the principle, growth and activity of grace, or the decay and witherings of it. What interest God has in the heart, and how much sin and Satan have; what advances heavenward, or what loitering, backslidings or falls there are found too often in the way to glory.

Notes and Comments

The Common Market

As negotiations for the entry of Great Britain to the Common Market are expected to begin soon, we would urge our readers to make this serious question a matter of earnest prayer to the Lord

that He would intervene, if that is His will, and prevent such an outcome. Already, through the backsliding of our own nation, the Protestant constitution of our country has been put in jeopardy but how much more so if we were brought into an economic, political or federal union with the predominantly Roman Catholic countries of Europe. The fact that the first attempt to enter the Common Market failed so unexpectedly should be encouragement to us to plead with the Lord that He would again intervene on our behalf.

Violence on Television

Earlier in the year both Mr Callaghan, the Home Secretary, and Mr Stonehouse, the Minister of Posts and Telecommunications, expressed concern about the amount of violence on television and its effect on those who saw it. The B.B.C., through Mr Kenneth Lamb, its Director of Public Affairs, have now announced that it is to carry out a survey to try to establish how people are affected by the violence which they see in television programmes. As this survey is to take from 12 to 18 months to complete, it seems to us a wholly inadequate way of dealing with such an urgent problem. If the B.B.C. itself showed a greater sense of responsibility in the programmes which it screened, there would be no need of this survey and much of the violence and other objectionable matter now shown, would automatically disappear from the screen.

Road Deaths

The number of deaths on the roads in 1969 was 7,383, nearly 600 more than in 1968. We cannot but deplore this colossal slaughter on the roads year by year. It is solemn to think of so many souls ushered into eternity, many of them suddenly and unprepared. These figures ought to be, on the one hand, a salutary warning to drivers of the great need to exercise the utmost care on the roads and, on the other hand, a warning to all of the need of being prepared for the great eternity when we may be ushered into it so suddenly.

Church Notes

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Northern Presbytery: At Inverness on Tuesday, 23rd June at 3 p.m.

Southern Presbytery: At Glasgow on Tuesday, 23rd June at 6 p.m.

Outer Isles Presbytery: At Stornoway on Tuesday, 23rd June at 3.30 p.m.

Readers' Questions

We again invite readers to send in questions to be answered in the Magazine. The response to our former appeal for questions was too limited to justify us beginning this feature. Questions should be sent to the Editor, 13 Prince of Wales Mansions, London, S.W.11. The name of sender, not for publication, must be included.

Acknowledgment of Donations

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

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