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APOLOGY

In the August issue of the FREE PRESBYTERIAN MAGAZINE there was published an article entitled "The Hasson Trial" which contained a number of statements which we now know to be untrue. Rev. Hasson's legal representative, Mr Joseph Beltrami, informs us that his client never fled from Scotland to Canada on a charge of embezzling funds, nor was any such allegation made by the Police authorities.

We are pleased to withdraw unreservedly all inferences, suggestions and allegations which imply that Rev. Hasson was a criminal fleeing from justice, that he ever misrepresented his ministerial status, that he ever bought guns and equipment for guerilla warfare against the Israeli, or that he at any time during the trial and thereafter admitted to being guilty. In fact, it has been brought to our attention that in the highest Court in the land, the High Court of Justiciary, Rev. Hasson on Appeal was completely cleared of all charges and allegations made against him, by the Appeal Court Judges on 14th July, 1971.

We deeply regret that we were betrayed by inaccurate newspaper reporting into idle speculation about Rev. Hasson's racial origins and childhood associations, and we apologise to Rev. Hasson's foster-parents in Kiltarlity, Tiree and Portree for any embarrassment caused to them by our publication of such ill-advised comment. We further regret that we accepted without examination a newspaper allegation that Rev. Hasson had carelessly repudiated his ministry within the Christian Church, an allegation which Rev. Hasson vehemently denies.

In conclusion Rev. Hasson wishes us to remind all believing Christians of the Divine Commandment found in the Word of God in Exodus, chapter 20, verse 16, and re-affirmed by the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew's Gospel, chapter 19 at verse 18.

Therefore, for our part, we unreservedly withdraw all imputations against the character and the conduct of Rev. Alan G. Hasson which were contained in the August 1971 issue of our magazine.

Britain's Destiny

During this month the British Parliament is due to make a fateful decision either for or against entry into the European Common Market. The decision, particularly if it is for entry into the Common Market, will be a momentous one. From then on Britain's interests will be inextricably bound up with the interests of those nations of Europe which form the European Economic Community. It would appear as though the issue is already decided, as it is confidently expected that a majority of Members of Parliament will support entry when the vote is taken at the end of the Common Market debate.

On the face of it, an alliance of nations to promote economic gain and stability seems most desirable. Some might be ready to say—Surely when nations are drawing together in this way, the Millenium—that longed for and looked for period when nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more, and when they shall beat their swords into plow-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks—cannot be far away. Why then are we so fearful about a decision which seems so full of hope and promise? We will try to answer that question.

Britain's history from the period of the Reformation has been that of a Protestant nation; a nation in which the principles of truth and righteousness have increasingly held sway; a nation intolerant of the deceitful, debasing and persecuting principles of Romanism; a nation jealous of its prized possessions of liberty and justice; a nation peculiarly blessed of God for the furtherance of His Cause and Kingdom in the world; a nation possessing often as its leaders in Church and State men of high principles and worth who would not bow to expediency when vital principles were at stake; a nation containing many who had the true fear of God in their hearts and for whose sake the Lord greatly blessed and enriched the land.

Is not such a land, then, eminently fitted to lead Europe into an era of unparalleled prosperity? That might have been so if Britain's Protestantism was as virile as it was in former generations. However, that Protestantism has been eroded by the progressive abandonment of the true Gospel of God's grace in the Churches of the land, which has resulted in recent times in such an unprecedented decline in moral standards that God can now address us as "ye rulers of Sodom" and "ye people of Gomorrah". Is this the nation—a nation at the nadir of religious and moral decline—which is to be a partner in the rejuvenation of Europe? Is our quest in

applying for entry into the Common Market not rather a last ditch attempt to save ourselves from the consequences which our own sins have brought upon us? Will Europe save us? Let the history of Israel be sufficient warning to us—"Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help".

The history of Britain over many centuries has been one in which one nation after another in Europe has sought to overthrow our land, the present century witnessing two such attempts. From these attempts the Lord preserved us. Once and again, as is writ large on the page of history, the Lord intervened on our behalf, sometimes miraculously when everything appeared to favour our destruction. What more could I have done for you that I have not done for you, the Lord might well say concerning our nation. If these things, then, are indubitably so—and what man in his sane senses would dispute them—can we not even at this juncture in our history look to the Lord for the help we so much need and ask Him to appear for us? And if He will not appear for us, of what use is it looking to Europe for help?

The history of Romanism shows only too clearly that one of its principle aims in the further extension of the Pope's kingdom is the overthrow of Protestant Britain. To this end no effort has been spared. Informed Protestants are well aware of its infiltration of the Foreign Office and other departments of government with men loyal to the papacy, its infiltration in the same way of the Royal household and Court circles, its control of the mass media in this country, its increased activity in the ecumenical field, and its exploitation of the apathetic attitude of so many nominal Protestants towards the Church of Rome. Will Britain's entry into the Common Market be likely to hinder or accelerate the Roman Catholic Church's expressed intention to win Britain over to the Roman fold? The answer is obvious, and the special interest the Church of Rome has in the Common Market consequently apparent.

In conclusion we may ask the question—In whose hands is the destiny of Britain? Is it indeed in the hands of our rulers, or for that matter in the hands of a parliamentary majority? In view of the Lord's sovereign dealings with us as a land, we must answer with an emphatic—No! Our destiny is in the Lord's hand. It is a little thing with the Lord, in whose hand are the hearts of all men, to secure a parliamentary majority against entry into the Common Market, should that be His will. It may please Him, however, to intervene in a more palpable way, as it has pleased Him to do in the past, so that the most sceptical will have to acknowledge that the Lord has done this. "When the Lord turned again the captivity

of Zion . . . then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them."

Our rulers are concerned with how we may get out of the present impasse by our own endeavours, but the Bible makes clear that the way to true prosperity is in a nation's return to God. "O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity." The Spirit being poured out from on High is the answer to all our needs. This is the answer we so desperately need. It is by pleading for it that we will procure this blessing—"I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them." Let us plead for it now, and more earnestly than we have done before, asking the Lord that He would give us, as a token of spiritual blessings to come, temporal deliverance at this time even by a miraculous deliverance if that is His will, for His own Name's sake.

Address on Preaching the Gospel

By the late Rev. John Duncan, L.L.D.

Professor Duncan said, that in desiring and aiming at the conversion of sinners and the edification of saints, it was of great importance that they should have a distinct idea of what the conversion of a sinner means. He thought it was, in a great measure, owing to the want of this that a number of those disorders in practice and errors in doctrine, to which Dr. Cunningham had referred, might be traced. Next to, and closely connected with, an earnest desire for the salvation of souls, and a constant expectancy (which cannot be too strongly inculcated), was the right and Scriptural understanding of what they aimed at when they desired and expected a sinner's conversion.

Conversion was not merely to be understood as a turning from one thing to another, but as the turning of an absolutely lost sinner to the God of free and sovereign grace. It was therefore of great importance in existing circumstances, and at all times, that their minds and spirits should be under the sober regulation of revealed truth. And while different suggestions had been thrown out as to the means of promoting these ends, one deeply important question for them to consider was, what was the improvement or the amelioration of those means which they were already employing under the authority of the Word of God, which ought to be adopted in their present circumstances? The question

was not only, should there be more preaching, but should there be better preaching. Here he begged to refer to the earnest admonition given by Dr. Malan at the Assembly in Glasgow, to beware of Arminianism. He (Dr. Duncan) did not believe that Arminianism existed in their own Church. But he could not disguise from his own mind, that of late years, at least previous to the Disruption—he knew not how it may have been since, for they could not expect to get rid of all these evils in a day—since evangelism had become more fashionable, it had become more indefinite and diluted; and if this does not amount to Arminianism, it is a rounding off the corners of that which is called Calvinism, but which I believe to be Jehovahism; it was a rubbing off and a smoothing down of the salient points of Calvinistic doctrine into something which, if it was not Arminianism, was a kind of doctrine with which all who are called Calvinistic evangelicals and Arminian evangelicals could agree. Now this was just the beginning of the evil—it was the letting in of waters—the dilution of the gospel; and the dilution of the gospel would very soon lead to the perversion of the gospel. He remembered an anecdote of a poor man and his wife in England, who were labouring people. They attended a dissenting minister, who, in the course of his ministrations, recommended a Commentary on the Bible. These poor people accordingly laboured to be able to purchase one, and were at last able to do this. After perusing it for some time, the man asked his wife what she thought of the Commentary. “Why,” said the wife, “we used to read the Bible in the evening, and it seemed to do us good; and now that we have got the Commentary—it is very good, no doubt, but I do not think it does us so much good. The Bible did us good like a glass of wine, but the Commentary does us good like the same glass of wine in a pailful of water.”

Dr. Duncan reminded them that zeal for God’s glory should be ever uppermost in the minds of His servants. When they urged sinners to repentance, the character and claims of Jehovah should be laid as the basis for it. This was the basis of all revelation—Jehovah, He is God. That was a doctrine not only of the Old Testament, but set forth and explained in the New Testament, where He was set forth as working all things after the counsel of His own will.

The doctrine of man’s fall—his total fall, not merely from virtue and righteousness, but his total alienation, from Jehovah, and the consequent loss of all internal good—his entire separation from Jehovah God, out of which came the doctrine that the fall was a total ruin—ought to be much insisted on. The doctrine, too, of *the*

Trinity, ought not only to be referred to, but set forth in their whole preaching, in its relation to the manifestation of God's glory in the salvation of sinners. Their preaching should be the gospel of the Triune God. The doctrine of the Trinity should be ever taught, though not ever formally taught. The doctrine of the person of Christ, which gives glory and excellence to the work of Christ, should be brought forward—not salvation merely, but the glorious Saviour Himself, and that not only for the sake of guilty sinners' salvation, but for the exhibition of the Divine character—that it was worthy of God to save sinners by such a Saviour. Man's total apostacy from God—his total depravity—would lead to the exhibition of what alone can be, in an apostate's condition, any comfort or support—the *love of Jehovah*. It opened such a deep wound that nothing but a Saviour—as a Saviour for an absolute sinner, dead in trespasses and sins—could heal it.

God should be proclaimed as the sole Creator, Christ as the entire Saviour—not the Redeemer only, but the quickener also, not the author of faith only, but the perfecter and finisher of faith. The doctrine of *man's impotency*—of his total inability to bring himself back to God, should be held up. The opposite doctrine, the doctrine of man's ability to convert himself, countenances the absurdity that man is to return to a dependence on Jehovah by the belief of a certain independence, which is not only absurd, but also dishonourable to God. It would not do to tell a man that he *may* come to Christ, but that he *must* come. Some, indeed, would have man to do all, though he could do nothing; and others would have him to do nothing, because all was done for him. As long as I am told that I must come to God, and that I *can* come, I am left to suppose that some good thing, or some power of good remains in me, and I arrogate to myself that which belongs to Jehovah. The creature is exalted, and God is robbed of His glory. If, on the other hand, I am told that I cannot come to God, but not also that I must come, I am left to rest contented at a distance from God, I am not responsible for my rebellion, and God Jehovah is not my God. But if we preach that sinners *can't* come, and yet *must* come, then is the honour of God vindicated, and the sinner is shut up. Man must be so shut up that he must come to Christ, and yet know that he cannot. He must come to Christ, or he will look to another, when there is no other to whom he may come; he cannot come, or he will look to himself. This is the gospel vice, to shut up men to the faith. Some grasp at one limb of the vice and some at the other, leaving the sinner open—but when a man is shut up that he must and cannot, he is shut up to the

faith—shut up *to* the faith, and then would be shut up *in* the faith. God is declared to be Jehovah, and the sinner is made willing to be saved by Him, in His own way, as sovereign in His grace.

Many may dislike this doctrine as harsh and severe, but it is because they view God's sovereignty apart from His grace. They spoke of the sovereign God, but why not of the sovereignty of grace? For himself, he felt comfort when shut up to this truth, that God was sovereign, and His grace sovereign; for though he was a sinner—an absolute sinner, Jehovah had said, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." This doctrine came like heaven's own thunder, and struck down all human dependence. It came upon a man as lost, as the very chief of sinners, and depending solely on God's will; and then, oh how blessed to know the sovereignty of grace! It struck him down when he read, "The Son quickeneth whom He will." His mind fixed on the "whom He will," and he was undone, because it did not depend on his own will, but on the will of another. But he read again and found that it was the Son that quickeneth whom He will, and this raised him from the dust, because the Son, on whose sovereign will his salvation depended, was the same "Jesus Christ who came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."

It was of importance that the truth which gave such glory to God, which alone could comfort, because it alone brought man down, be declared; that Jehovah's glory be exhibited; and that men be made to feel their own emptiness, so that they may see Christ's sufficiency, and Christ's yearning heart over sinners. On what had been said as to the mode of preaching, he should say not a word, as he was sure all were convinced that it was not by might nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord. If God gave the desire, and sent His servants forth with His glorious word impressed on the heart and conscience, He, who had given His Word for that very end, would accompany it with demonstration of the Spirit. Having appointed these means, and ordained them, He would give grace to apply them; and he (Dr. Duncan) believed that Jehovah had this end in view, and the more so when they were feeling their infirmities and sins.

A holy life is a life of light; it is a shining light, to let a blind world see the Glory of God.

Thomas Boston.

The Diary of Dugald Buchanan

Period V—From March 1743 to May 1744

I set apart the 26th of March, 1743 for fasting and humiliation in private before God for my unsuitable carriage since He loosed my bands, and also because I intended to go to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper at Glasgow; the Lord gave me a sight of my sins, and being humbled in some measure, I resolved against them for the future. I enjoyed much of the divine presence in every thing that day, and my eyes were opened to read something of my interest in Christ, as being the propitiation for my sins. I found great comfort from these words: "No man cometh unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw Him". The Lord shewed me that I had come to Christ, and that, by virtue of His Holy Spirit drawing me. But there came some business in the way, which to all appearance seemed likely to detain me at home, therefore, I was afraid to go hither, lest the mouth of the wicked should be opened to speak evil of religion, but it pleased the Lord to order matters so, that in His providence I got full freedom to go and attend the ordinance of the Supper; I had, however, very little comfort, because of the darkness and deadness, which put me quite out of order. I stayed two days in this place after the dispensing of the ordinance, when a certain friend told me that I was rather too free in my conversation to some people about what the Lord had done for my soul, which made me afraid lest any one should make a wrong use of what I had said, and increased the distress of my mind so much that I could scarcely walk home.

Satan then began to assault me again with his horrid temptations, and said, "You have given such a wound to religion as you will never be able to repair; the longer you live the more your trouble and infamy will increase; and who can endure such a burdensome life as you now bear?" and, therefore, that I would do well to shorten my trouble by laying violent hands upon myself. He tried me with this temptation in a thousand ways, and at length would compel me to go immediately and throw myself into some pit or other. Then I cried to the Lord to rebuke the enemy, my strength having departed from me, and being no

longer able to resist Him. The Lord heard, and quieted my mind a little by this consideration, namely, that I had never intended to give occasion to any evil speaking of His ways by what I said; that passage of Scripture came also into my mind: "On their part He is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified." After I came home I was taught the following things from this temptation:

First—I saw that all this trouble arose from a misinformed conscience, for afterwards I got notice that none ever heard my good evil spoken of, and from this learned to inform my conscience always aright before I received a challenge from it.

Secondly—Upon due examination of my heart, I find that the dishonour God's ways would sustain, did not so much grieve me as the discredit my own name would undergo, which made me say with Jonah, it is better for me to die than to live. Oh! what praise and thanks are due to the Lord, who did not suffer me to make an end of myself, when all my troubles sprang from this corrupt root of pride.

Thirdly—The secret pride that formerly wrought in me, was now brought to light, that I might know the seven abominations of my heart. I can say to the praise of God, that I never met with temptation since I was awakened, from which, before it left me the Lord did not make me to get some good or other. I was now humbled and brought to submission, and to justify the Lord in all His dealings with me. I was helped to act faith on that Scripture, Romans viii. 28, "And we know that all things work together for good to them who love God." But I was so rooted in the conceit of my own will, as being the best for me, that if any thing did not come to pass in the way which I had chalked out, I could not see how I could be right. Thus I have employed my thoughts for whole days and nights together, in chalking out a way for my own happiness; but I was busy contriving my own ruin, while the Lord was bringing about my true happiness. "That which cometh into your thoughts shall not at all be" (Ezek. xx 32). I found, however, when I came to have one serious reflection, that after my imagination had gone abroad upon a thousand schemes, I had not advanced my temporal or spiritual state one hair-breadth.

Now the Lord was graciously pleased to bring all my counsels to nought, for whatever I proposed to myself, the Lord disposed as He saw proper; for not one thing which I ever proposed came to pass in the way which I expected; the Lord crossed all my inclinations in everything. His counsel and purpose stood firm, and mine came to nought. The Lord caused me to cease from my foolish imaginings, in ordering my own lot in the following way; I saw by experience, that my soul and body had been ruined, if the Lord had given me

my lot in the world according to my desire. O with what sweet admiration and wonder, did I consider the particular providence exercised towards me, from my infancy till this very moment, and saw the Lord's hand in every step of my life!

The things which in my estimation tended to ruin me for ever, were the means, though awful, whereby I was convinced of my miserable state under the first covenant, and made me flee to a better; and I was likewise convinced of the deceit of my heart, and that I had no free will of my own to do good. Sometimes when overcome with temptation, I learned to depend more upon the grace of Christ to enable me to stand. O! with what delight and comfort did I look back upon the providence that seemed to contradict the promise, when I saw the issue, and was constrained to say, that "all things work together for good to them that love God." These cups which I thought were full of wrath and confusion I see now had nothing in them but what divine wisdom and boundless love mixed. The Lord has done all things well.

After I had considered the dark steps of providence with which I met, I could not understand their language till the event made it appear; "What I do, thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter" John xiii. 7. Then I said, O my soul, if thou canst say from experience, that God hath done all things well in times past, what reason hast thou to doubt of His providence in time to come? Then I saw that it was my unspeakable advantage to submit to the Lord's holy and blessed will in all things, however cross they might seem to reason. Therefore I renounced my own will in every respect.

By this submission to God's will, I enjoyed a solid and unspeakable peace of mind, which took the very sting out of trials and afflictions, and made them easy and sweet, though very grievous in themselves, and quieted my spirit anent future events. That is a comprehensive Scripture, Psalms cxix. 165 "Great peace have they indeed who submit to thy will, and nothing shall offend them." Let the trouble be whatever God pleaseth, I am resolved in the strength of His own grace to say, there is a need-be for it, and to believe that God is the disposer of all those things, who giveth no account of His matters. "whose way is in the sea." "He is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working." O! it is a proper exercise to let faith be reconciling God's providence with His promise, when they seem to contradict one another, and to behold the wondrous works of Him who is perfect in knowledge. From these considerations, I was led to see much of the evil that there is in murmuring against God, in straits, difficulties, or corrections, and how it strikes against all the divine attributes. First, against

His love, as if His love would not give a better condition; and if His love would give, yet it strikes against His power, as if His power could not affect the same, etc. "Hear now, O house of Israel, is not my way equal, are not your ways unequal?" (Ezekiel xviii.25). It must sure be a great sin when it kept the children of Israel out of the land of promise, and provoked the Lord to slay them in the wilderness. After the Lord brought me to submit to His holy and righteous will, He shewed that all His perfections were engaged in my behalf, and that in a covenant way. His infinite wisdom contrived my welfare, and His boundless love bequeathed what infinite wisdom had contrived, etc. Hence, I am resolved in the strength of God's grace, whatever lot or condition He may appoint me, that that only and no other under the whole heavens is best for me, although I had my own choice of all the conditions under the sun. And though I had all the men on earth, and all the angels in heaven to help me in making a right choice for myself, yet I saw that the present state was better than any I could make, and that it was God's choice for me, who certainly knew what was best. "The Lord will withhold no good thing from them who walk uprightly. He will give grace and glory."

I was now about the middle stage of life, and looked back to that day in which I was first cast upon God's care, which I am sure was done from the womb by my parents, who early dedicated me to be the Lord's; and viewed God's special and common providence towards me in every step of my life; and experience obliges me to say, that the Lord hath done all things well. Again, I look forward, even as far as the valley of the shadow of death, to the swellings of Jordan, and my faith saith he will do all things well. "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." (Jer. xxix. 11). Yet a little further experience in the world, and some more knowledge of the mystery of unbelief, and other hidden wickedness of the heart, soon made me fret and murmur again.

I walked now in the light of God's countenance, and could read God's love to me in every providence; for these scriptures quieted my mind, "What I do, thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." "All things work together for good to them that love God." I thought it was my duty in these days of plenty, to provide for the days of famine, if they should come; since I was commanded to hear for the time to come, and also to prepare for the clouds returning after the rain. I saw that it was the ordinary course of nature, that the day should succeed to the night, and the night to the day; and that seed time and harvest, winter and summer, should succeed one another, till time should be no more;

then I saw that my own experience, and indeed the experience of the saints in all ages, taught me to lay my account with changes in my lot, days and nights, while I was in the body, and if I had as much faith in the new covenant, where God says, "Nevertheless my loving kindness will I never take from Him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail," as I had in the promise that God made to Noah after the flood concerning the seasons of the year, that I would not at all be cast down under the darkest providences.

First—When I considered the course of the weather, I saw what uncertain judgement sense could form of it, as for instance, in a dark rainy day, when the heavens are overcast with clouds and storms so that neither sun nor star appears, what judgement can sense make of this, while looking to the present aspect of things? It is a mystery unknown to sense where so many clouds may be carried, so that the heavens may become clear again; yet common belief and experience taught me to look beyond the present storm, and their language was like that of Elihu's, "And now men see not the bright light which is in the cloud; but the wind passeth and cleanseth them". (Job xxxvii 21) Then I saw what an uncertain judgement sense could make of my state in an hour of temptation, or in a day of darkness. When all my sins, like black clouds, might be separating between my soul and the light of God's countenance, and His just wrath hanging over my head, and, as it were, ready to fall down upon me, what sense could judgement form of such a day as this? Surely the language of it would be, how can such sins be pardoned? how can such dry bones live? how can grace dwell with a power of sin as this? how can God be just and the justifier of the like of me? and the conclusion of all would be, He hath in anger shut up His tender mercies. But I saw that faith had another kind of language, something like that of the prophet's, "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine, etc.; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation". (Hab. iii 17, 18).

Secondly—I saw that, in a clear morning when the sun arose, he, with his bright and shining beams, dispelled and clouds, so that the whole sky was clear and serene. In this case, my sense could not see from whence any clouds could arise. My former experience, however, of some days which were clear and bright in the morning and in the afternoon dark and rainy, taught me that such might happen. I also observed that vapours arose out of the earth, by which the air was darkened again; even a little cloud like a man's hand, in a very short time covered the heavens with blackness (1 Kings xviii. 44) In the same way I saw that there was a time on which the Sun of Righteousness arose with His glorious beams of light upon

my soul, dispelling all the darkness and mists wherein I wandered, and clearly showing me my way, so that I could not see any thing that was ever likely to make me doubt again, and that I could boldly say, "My beloved is mine and I am his." The conclusion that sense would draw from such discoveries would unquestionably be, that "my mountain stood strong, and that I should never be moved." Not long after this, however, I found, by experience, that some vapour or other arose from my earthly and carnal heart, which soon darkened my evidences and brought confusion again into my soul. Therefore I saw the necessity of faith, "which is the evidence of things not seen," and judgeth not according to the present state of matters.

Again, I saw, that in a dark and misty day in which the sun does not appear, sense was entirely at a loss to know whether the sun was going backward or forward, and also that it could not tell, by the dial, what o'clock it was; yet, common belief taught me that he never went backward, although I could not see his light by reason of the fogs and mists which arose from the earth. In like manner I observed that my scriptural sense was altogether at a loss, except when the Sun of Righteousness shone upon my tabernacle, and that faith believed under the darkest dispensations of providence, that God was still accomplishing His purpose toward me, which, in His own time and way, He would make manifest to my unspeakable wonder and comfort.

These considerations were some of the provisions I made against the days of famine if they should come, and oblige me to live by faith. All this was well resolved upon, but how did I perform? Certainly not so well as I promised or resolved. "And the Lord said unto me, I have heard the words of the voice of this people which they have spoken unto thee, they have well said all that they have spoken; O that there were such an heart in them that they would fear me and keep my commandments alway, that it might be well with them and with their children for ever." This was my case, I resolved well and promised fair; but, alas, I had an "evil heart of unbelief in departing from the Living God." whom, notwithstanding the signs and wonders He had done, I often limited as to the time to come.

The Lord saw it meet that I should be tried with the hidings of His face, that I might learn to live by faith as I had formerly resolved to do; and also that I might know more of my own heart, and truly I find new deceits in it every day, "for the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it? (Jer. xvii, 9)

I was left now to walk in darkness having no light. For sometime, however, I had to put the best construction upon the Lord's

withdrawing Himself; but, after this darkness had continued a little, I began to despond and doubt of the reality of a gracious change having been wrought upon me. There was nothing of all my former experience that offered any comfort, except some of those sweet impressions which I found in my heart when first I was made willing to accept of Christ in all His offices, being sure that I had received Christ as my wisdom, who would not suffer me to be greatly deceived.

I found the truth of that Scripture on both sides, Job xxxiv 29, "When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble; and when he hideth his face, who then can behold him? whether it be done against a nation, or against a man only."

I continued in deadness and darkness for the space of two months, but after that I was enabled to pour out my soul before God in prayer, spreading out all my wants and necessities before a God in Christ. My soul was also greatly comforted by that Scripture, "but my God shall supply all your need, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." I rejoiced in this promise as one who had found great treasure, and got a fresh view of all the fulness in Christ as being suitable to supply all the needs of my soul and body, believing that there are a great many wants in my soul which were not as yet discovered to me, and undiscovered fulness in Christ to supply them all; therefore I was made to rejoice in my Redeemer, having no confidence in flesh.

John Wycliffe

The value of Wycliffe's work is beyond estimation. Of course there were others who initiated the movement towards reformation before Wycliffe was born. But progress was slow, and Wycliffe was raised up by God to give that movement impetus. His work, in fact, was carried out with such vigour and consistency that he has been called "a Reformer before his time". When his biography has been imperfectly sketched, one cannot but discern in it the shades of England's Luther, England's Calvin and England's Knox.

The sad truth is, however, that Wycliffe's biography can be but imperfectly sketched. History is reticent, even about some of the outstanding events in Wycliffe's life. This reticence is specially marked in relation to the earlier part of his life. The following introductory article, therefore, contains less of personal detail than

we would have wished. It is hoped, however, that it will provide something of a background to Wycliffe's life-work.

"Wy" is an old word for a river, or brook. "Wycliffe" means "cliff by the water", or river. The name John Wycliffe, then, can be rendered "John of Wycliffe", meaning that it was from Wycliffe that he came. This place got its name because it was situated by a river that was flanked by limestone cliffs. It appears to have been near Richmond in Yorkshire. Doubtless the area presented much the same aspect in the fourteenth century as it does now—these woods and fields and hills would have provided many a welcome walk for a thoughtful child.

But the atmosphere of Richmond was not always so peaceful as its surroundings might suggest. At times, Wycliffe even witnessed the alarms and excursions of war. So it seems to have been, about the time when John Wycliffe's close predecessors owned the area. At the risk of alienating patriotic readers we mention that Richard de Wycliffe, in conjunction with three others, raised a contingent of 50 horse and 500 foot to help the king of England in his wars with Scotland.

In the region of Richmond, then, John of Wycliffe was born. We know that the death of God's saints is precious in His sight, and we can safely assume that their birth will be marked by Him as well. For ourselves, however, we cannot be sure of the year of Wycliffe's birth. Some say he was born in 1324, though it may have been as early as 1320.

Abbeys and Monasteries were the only places where children of that time could receive their early education. As Egliston Abbey was the nearest to Wycliffe, probably it was there that young John first attended school. It was a lonely hillside road, from Wycliffe to the Abbey, but the little boy would thus have walked it many times. It is interesting that the receptive pupil did not escape the impress of the Northern Yorkshire dialect of his day—a fact attested by an incident from modern times. Centuries after Wycliffe's day, a group of Yorkshire men were gathered in their parson's house. One of them picked up a copy of Wycliffe's ancient translation of the New Testament and read some passages aloud. "Why", his audience exclaimed, "here is the Bible in the speech of our own folk".

Oxford was famous, even in those days, as a place of learning. Of course there were few Universities then, and Oxford was taxed to the limit. From one source we are told that there were thirty thousand students at Oxford before the Plague (1348). Whether or not there were so many as this, John of Wycliffe must have found Oxford a very crowded place. Certainly it would have presented a

sharp contrast to the lonely solitude of his northern home. And he could not console himself with the thought that he would soon be able to choose some country village where he might earn a living. For a full training in divinity, a student had to settle for seventeen years of study—after that he could afford to call himself a Doctor of Theology! Wycliffe is thought to have gone to Oxford in 1340. He became a Fellow of Merton College in 1356, then Master of Balliol College in 1360, though resigning that office after two years. The future Reformer thus devoted twenty-two consecutive years to his university education.

Wycliffe was to make an outstanding witness at Oxford to the truth of the Scriptures. But his witness did not stand alone; it was strengthened by the testimony of a few who had gone before.

The first of these was Robert Greathead: he was one of the chief professors at Oxford in the early part of the previous century. Having taught students for thirty-five years Greathead became Bishop of Lincoln in 1235. After a time, the Pope attempted to secure for his own grand-son a canonry in Lincoln Cathedral. Greathead, now eighty years of age, strongly resisted the Pope's interference, and drew from the Pontiff the exasperated demand: "Who is this crazy and foolish old man who has the effrontery to sit in judgement thus upon my doings?" It was in 1253 that Greathead successfully struck this blow at the papal supremacy in England.

Another great name among Wycliffe's precursors is that of William of Occam known as the "Invincible Doctor". He, too, lifted his voice against the papal supremacy, maintaining that Christ is the only Head of His Church. Occam died in 1347.

Richard Fitzralph is the name of another illustrious witness to the truth before Wycliffe came on the scene. He was Chancellor of the University of Oxford in 1333, and became Archbishop of Armagh in 1347. He is most famous for his outspoken attacks on the wretched practices of the Mendicant Friars. This was in fact a theme which Wycliffe himself was later to pursue with relentless vigour.

But the most outstanding witness to the grace of God that was raised before Wycliffe's voice was heard in Oxford was given by Thomas of Bradwardine. He was for a time a Doctor of Theology in the University, though he later left to become Chancellor of St. Paul's in London. In Bradwardine's time, Palagianism was the plague of the theological world. This is a scheme of salvation which centres on man, maintaining that he is able to save himself. Against this scheme, Bradwardine levelled his full spiritual and intellectual powers, and gained for himself the title, "extoller and champion of

the grace of God". He became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1349, and those who feared God must have rejoiced at the appointment. This rejoicing, however, was destined to be short-lived—in a few weeks Bradwardine lay lifeless, struck down by the Black Death.

This plague came in 1348 to an England of three or four million people. By 1349, more than fifty thousand corpses had been interred in one burial ground alone, outside London. By its repeated visitations, the plague swept away more than half the people of city, town and country.

Wycliffe was at the time a comparatively young man, secluded in Oxford. But no one, however secluded, could remain unaffected by the Black Death. It knocked at every door. We have no record of the feelings of the sensitive young scholar, but we can be sure that his mind and heart were indelibly impressed. Surely, as he saw thousands fall at a stroke. Wycliffe yearned to serve his fellow-countrymen in the gospel. What exactly that service was to be, I suppose he might not then foresee. But as we shall see, John of Wycliffe was destined to lead England in her struggle to banish from her shores the pernicious Plague of Popery.

J.T.

The Church in Scotland and its Constitution

by Rev. John Colquhoun, Glendale

The Declaratory Act of 1892

The Westminster Confession of Faith remained the confession of faith and constitution of the Church of Scotland till after the Disruption of 1843. There were men in the pre-Disruption Church who quarrelled with some of its doctrines, such as Thomas Erskine of Linlathen, a layman, Rev. John MacLeod Campbell, the parish minister of Row or Rhu, and others. These believed in and set forth a universal atonement. In the case of Rev. John MacLeod Campbell the matter went to the General Assembly, and he was deposed. However, the number of influential members of the Assembly who took his side and did all that they could to turn the Assembly from giving a just decision was remarkable. The first organised opposition by a constituted church to the Confession of Faith came from the United Presbyterian Church. For years prior to passing their Declaratory Act of 1879 there were men among them who did not

believe in an atonement limited to the elect; and it is probable that it was in order to suit their views that this Act was passed. The same class of people were found in the Free Church, who had "difficulties and scruples" with respect to many of the doctrines of the Confession of Faith. If these men had been honest they would have come out frankly and said that it was with the Bible, upon which the Confession is based, that they had the quarrel. After a great deal of evil work among the students of the Free Church some of these professors (such as Professors Robertson Smith, Marcus Dodds and F.B. Bruce) began to come out more openly with their heretical views. Others succeeded them who had drunk the heretical poison of these men, with the result that practically the whole Free Church had been polluted. Under such conditions it was an easy matter to pass such an Act as the Declaratory Act of 1892.

This raises the question: What was the attitude of those who objected to this Act? Prior to the passing of the Act, and when it was under the consideration of the Presbyteries under the Barrier Act, there was a meeting of those who objected to it, held in Glasgow on Thursday, 18th February, 1892. The speeches delivered then were afterwards published in pamphlet form, and the present writer was favoured with the loan of a copy recently. At that meeting the Rev. Murdo MacAskill, Dingwall, in referring to the Disruption, said, "The Free Church came forth from the Establishment, claiming to be the Church of Scotland *free* and carrying with her all the Scriptural polity, all the doctrines of grace, and the simple Scriptural worship, which had so long characterised, and are so legibly written in the constitution and standards of the true Reformed Church of Scotland. It was our boast then to call ourselves the Church of Scotland *Free*. We do not hear much of that proud claim now, and for the very good reason that several important items belonging to that claim have long ago been surrendered, and even controverted as having ever formed an essential part of the claim. And if ever this Declaratory Act becomes part of our constitution, what remained of our former principles is wholly obliterated, and anyone who pleases may pronounce the funeral oration of the once noble Free Church of Scotland. None of her children can contemplate such an event without keenest sorrow, and hence we are here tonight, resolved, if possible, to avert such a dire calamity. But if, in spite of our opposition, this injustice is perpetrated, then the once noble name, with all its endearing associations, becomes to some of us a mere mockery. She is no longer the Free Church of our early love and loyal adhesion, but a false claimant to honours and dignities which she has wilfully and shamefully

forfeited. Her pristine glory has gone, and the finger is already upon the wall writing her doom, and her kingdom given to the motley Medes of religious equality, and the fierce Persians of Political Voluntaryism. But will the leaders who *mislead* her, dare do it in the face of the earnest opposition now given? Can they legally do it while so many of her office-bearers and members protest against her action? I do not believe they can. But stern and vigorous opposition is needed, if the determined purpose and diplomacy of those leaders are to be successfully opposed."

In this Mr MacAskill spoke the truth, although he himself did not adhere to it and proved himself a nuisance and an enemy to those who afterwards refused to enter the Union of 1900. This was but a sample of what was said at that meeting. The Rev. D.J. MacCulloch, afterwards Principal MacCulloch, who also spoke at the meeting, said with reference to the Declaratory Act that "accuracy of statement was one of the most conspicuous attributes of the standards produced by the Westminster divines. He had no wish to say anything uncomplimentary regarding anyone, but he took the liberty of holding as his own opinion that the accuracy of the Confession of Faith was its great cause of offence. If there was anything characteristic of the present time it was the desire to have no limits to their thoughts or to their speech. They had drawn largely from German sources—and one of the characteristics of the German minds was that they liked large liberty in their thinking; they did not wish to be cribbed and confined to creeds or confessions, or anything of that kind. One can easily understand how some like to meander along the boundless prairie instead of walking on the king's highway. Whereas a man was apt to lose himself on a prairie, or be overtaken by some unfriendly individual, there was safety on the highway. It would be an evil day for the church when they travelled the boundless expanse of undefined theological prairies, instead of keeping to the well-marked paths and lines wherein the church in all ages had been treading. The inference to be drawn from the action of those who were bringing forward the Declaratory Act was that because men could not comprehend all truth, they must have everything at large. Surely although they did not know everything, they might assume that they knew something, and although they could not confine all knowledge—or the Most High himself—within limits, they might see what God has made plain, that he who ran might read. There had been illustrations within the last three years—without a Declaratory Act—of what might be expected if the Act were passed. The doctrine of the Divine Personality of our Lord had been tampered with, and

yet the majority of the Assembly had declared that there was no cause for discipline."

What, it may be asked, caused these men to forget their language against the Declaratory Act, so that Principal MacCulloch remained under the Declaratory Act for seven years until it was rescinded by the minority at the end of that period, and Rev. Murdo MacAskill remained under it for the rest of his life, and entered the Union in 1900? This certainly emphasises the truth, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?" Isaiah 11:22.

On the evening of the day on which the Declaratory Act was passed by the Free Church General Assembly a meeting of some of the Constitutional Party was held in the New College, Edinburgh, at which Dr William Balfour presided, and made a statement to the following effect—"It has come to this pass now in the Free Church that only two alternatives are left us: (1) We must separate from those who are responsible for passing the Declaratory Act immediately and declare ourselves the Free Church as this Church was settled in 1843; or (2) if we remain in this Church, and, if we continue to fight for the creed and Constitution of the original Free Church we shall be kicked out one by one." At this meeting Rev. Murdo MacAskill got up and said, "I never thought or dreamt of a disruption." This was the language of one who was not to submit to the Declaratory Act on any account.

After all hope of rescinding the Declaratory Act was gone, the Rev. Donald MacFarlane, then of Raasay and afterwards of Dingwall, read a protest against the passing of the Declaratory Act, in his own name and in the names of all who would follow him, claiming his civil and sacred rights as a minister of the Gospel, and walked out of the Assembly, thus separating himself from the Declaratory Act Free Church. Dr Rainy characterised the Protest as "an express repudiation of the authority and validity of the final act of the General Assembly in this matter as far as the Assembly was concerned." *Free Church Assembly Blue Book*, 1893, p. 183.

(To be continued)

In heaven believers shall have a full, a satisfying, and never ending sight of God, and of all His glorious perfections and excellencies, and they shall be ravished with the view thereof for ever.

Thomas Boston.

Obituary

JOHN GRANT, INVERNESS

This godly man, a brother of Rev. Wm. Grant, now in retirement in Dingwall, was born in Dornoch, Sutherland more than 90 years ago into a home where God-fearing parents gave their family sound instruction in the doctrines of God's Word and careful training in the duties of God's Law. The home attracted the pious people of the district and in his last years John Grant's conversation often turned to those days of his youth when he loved to recall the old elders, David Ross and Angus Murray, who greatly influenced him by their public exercises in the House of God during the long vacancy till a minister was settled over them, and especially by conversation in private. As a young man he helped in the building of the first Free Presbyterian Church to be erected at Evelix, Dornoch which stood for many years till destroyed by a storm and has since been replaced by a smaller but more compact church. It was not till later years that he came under the power of the Gospel and experienced the great change which takes place under the Spirit's gracious operations when the soul passes from death to life. He entered the banking profession in 1893, and served in such places as Dornoch, Dumbarton, Haddington and Inverness. In the latter town he married and settled down for what remained of his banking life, resisting every offer of preferment which would have removed him from the public worship of his own church, and after retirement from bank service he continued to live in Inverness, presiding over a most hospitable home where an open door was kept for all who loved the Lord.

While at Haddington, John Grant came to know for himself the Gospel of salvation. Since he was so isolated from his friends and the services of his Church, he was cast to a large extent upon his own resources, and when he could not attend any sound place of worship in the neighbourhood, he profited greatly by the study of the works of the eminent Samuel Rutherford, after whom he named one of his sons, of Halyburton, and of John Brown whose name will always be linked with Haddington as the scene of his remarkable labours. At this time he found the words of the psalmist Psalm CXVIII, verses 22, 23, very precious to his soul: "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes." Often at family worship on Sabbath mornings in later years he would give

these verses to be sung, which reminded him of the Lord's gracious dealings with his soul at that early time. At the communion in St Jude's congregation, Glasgow he was received into membership by the kirk session in 1913. He related two incidents as belonging to this period, which although they relate to what happened in dreams of the night, nevertheless indicate plainly how his mind was exercised with spiritual realities in his waking hours. Living amidst the scenes of the godly John Brown of Haddington's ministry, he longed to read the works of this eminent divine, which even then were difficult to come by. One night he dreamed that he saw a light shining on a shelf of books in a certain second-hand bookshop in Edinburgh, and among them a small work by Brown. So vivid was the impression left upon his mind that on awakening he determined to ascertain if the book could be found in the bookshop indicated. As soon as he could do so, he visited the shop and there in the exact spot on the shelf in the window where in his dream he had seen the light, stood one of John Brown's books, a small volume little known today, called, "A Christian Journal." This little work is rich in the reflections of a spiritually minded servant of Christ, when surveying the changes which take place in the natural world on the return of each of the four seasons of the year, together with an account of a communion Sabbath in the home and congregation. The book is characteristic of John Brown's well known style, and teems with allusions to the Word of God and to ancient and modern history. How greatly our friend valued this little volume is seen in the directions written upon the fly-leaf in John Grant's own hand, that it be returned to the owner, and bears evidence that it was often loaned out to friends to read. The other incident occurred in the Glasgow manse of the late Rev. N. Cameron, where John Grant often went up to spend a weekend with the minister. He spoke of one Saturday evening in the manse study in Glasgow, when Mr Cameron confessed that he was at a loss for a text for the following day. On retiring to rest, John Grant dreamed that he saw a man sowing seed in a field, and when he drew near he recognised the sower as Mr Cameron. On the Sabbath he was amazed to hear the text given out in the congregation: "Behold a sower went forth to sow," and we may imagine the feelings of pleasure and delight with which he listened to Mr Cameron discoursing on these words. He considered it a great privilege to sit under the preaching of this faithful ambassador of Christ, and between these two godly men there was a strong bond of friendship which lasted unbroken throughout their lives. Another minister of his early days to whom John Grant was greatly attached was the saintly Rev. D. MacDonald, Shieldaig, to whom he often listened

with profit and enjoyment to his soul, and was present at the communion at Wick in 1894, when he listened to the sermon preached by Mr MacDonald from the words of the Song: "I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys"—Song of Solomon chapter 11, verse 1, and Mr MacDonald's frequent references throughout the sermon to "Sharon's sweet and lovely Rose." Others besides John Grant recalled this remarkable communion season at Wick, and the sermon just referred to, during which Mr MacDonald, time and again, during its delivery uttered the peculiar high pitched cry, which expressed the preacher's own enjoyment of the Lord's presence and of the intense delight he felt in preaching upon the subject which lay close to his heart, the lovely person of the Redeemer. There were some fastidious critics who spoke disparagingly of this striking characteristic of Mr MacDonald's preaching, but he himself in reply simply remarked: 'I wish I experienced it more often.'

John Grant's services to the Free Presbyterian Church will long be remembered with gratitude to the Most High. On the death of Mr MacGillivray, the Church's General Treasurer, John Grant was appointed to succeed him by the Synod in 1924, and thereafter for the long period of 36 years, till failing powers decided him to retire in 1960, he gave ungrudging, skillful and faithful attention to the Church's finances, wisely investing to the best advantage her funds, and maintaining the friendliest and most harmonious relations with all the Church office-bearers and courts, during his years in office. What endeared the General Treasurer to the wide circle of friends was the fact that he never sent out a communication in carrying out his duties, but invariably inserted a short, friendly note of enquiry and good wishes, and these friends he retained to the end of his life. For some years after retirement he acted as Hon. Treasurer of the Church's publications. He was many years an elder of the Inverness congregation, and took his full share of the work on the Church's committees on which he served. He was genial and friendly, and when necessary, knew how to administer a rebuke in the spirit of the Gospel, which completely overcame any resentment that might be aroused. He was accosted one rainy day with the words: 'It's a dirty day.' He answered the thoughtless remark with the words: 'It is not a dirty day, it is a day of mercy,' and the man, arrested by these words, became his firm friend, and in his last will remembered the Church of which our friend was the treasurer.

In his last illness, some time before the end when lying unwell in bed, he asked specially that the verses should be read to him: "My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away," and then asked that the remaining verses of

this second chapter of the Song be read. A verse that he loved to quote in the last year of his life was: "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord"—John XX, v. 20. In the hospital to which he was taken, two days before the end he very peacefully quoted the last verse of Psalm XXIII: "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." He loved to have the scriptures read to him and friends who visited him were asked to do him this small service, even the nurses were enlisted to read to him whole chapters at one time. He could hardly hear enough of the Word of God, and thought it a pity to stop, so much did he delight in the Word of Life. The last words he was heard to utter were: "Trust in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength"—Isaiah XXVI, v. 4. So closed with these appropriate words the life of this lovable servant of Christ to join the company of the Lord's redeemed and now perfected saints, many of whom he knew and with whom he held fellowship in his wilderness journey on earth. The facts related above we received from our friend's daughter, Miss Isobel Grant, to whom we are indebted for her affectionate remembrances, and to the family may the Lord continue to be the widow's stay and a father to the fatherless. John Grant, passed to his eternal rest on 18th August 1967.

A.F.M.

Book Review

The Puritan Hope by Iain H. Murray—Banner of Truth Trust—£1.20

Obtainable from: F.P. Church Bookroom, 160 Pitt Street, Glasgow C2 and other religious bookshops.

The hope in the title is that cherished by a majority of the Puritans that the cause of Christ would yet flourish so greatly that it would ultimately become the dominant influence in the world. The subject of this book is therefore one worthy of Rev. Iain Murray's pen, and one to which we think he has done justice. The author's interest in the teachings of the Puritans is well known, and is reflected in many of the books published by the Banner of Truth Trust of which he is the leading member.

As a young Christian Mr. Murray held the pre-millenarian view that the Gospel would make only a slight impact on the world until the second coming of Christ, but after that it would enjoy world-wide success and secure a thousand years of peace and blessing until the last judgement. He came to see, however, that Scripture makes Christ's return and the end of the world coincide,

and later still he realised that God's Word does appoint the Church of Christ a great future prior to these events. This hope Mr. Murray found to abound in the sermons and writings of the Puritans, springing from a theology which emphasised the ability of the Holy Spirit to enthrone Christ in the hearts of men from Gentile nations and the Jews alike, so that the Redeemer's glory would fill the earth.

The first two chapters are devoted to showing how in England and Scotland those awakened and saved through the Reformation and Puritan movements, understood that the power behind it all was that of the Holy Spirit. He revives, gives life where there was death, and when poured out, even nations can be affected as did happen at the Reformation. What had been seen of the Spirit's reviving power in the apostolic era and at the Reformation could be expected again as God in sovereign grace willed. This was the Puritan outlook, a hopeful one resting on the truth of God's Word and a full belief in the power of his Spirit.

Thus Mr. Murray next turns his attention to the Puritans' interest in unfulfilled prophecy and the place given in that to the ingathering of the Jews as a forerunner of the blessing to be enjoyed by the whole world. A minority belief in the pre-millennial appearance of Christ in order to all this is noted. Another chapter is devoted to an examination of Paul's words concerning the Jews in the eleventh of Romans, and the next to the piety which the hope of future blessings for all nations stirred up in the Puritans, so that they longed and prayed for the extension of Christ's Kingdom.

Then the revival of true religion which affected the English-speaking world from around 1740 is shown to have given rise to the missionary activity which sent a stream of devoted missionaries to India, America, Africa and The South Seas. Interesting remarks are made on the missionary strategy of Scotland's pioneers in this sphere. And so the book comes to what it calls the eclipse of the hope brought about by the re-emergence of pre-millennial teaching. The part played in the 1820's by Edward Irving, that "shooting star of a preacher", and also by the Brethren, the followers of J.N. Darby, makes extremely interesting reading. Any who lean towards Dispensationalism should give good heed to what this book reveals of its pernicious effects upon the Church at large and its missionary efforts in particular.

The proper place which Christ's second coming should occupy in the Christian's thinking is then indicated, and the book closes with a chapter called, "The prospect in history—Christ our life" The Church's hope remains what it always has been, that through

the faithful, scriptural preaching of Christ crucified, in complete dependence on the Holy Spirit's power to make that teaching life to dead souls, God will yet give his Son the world-wide domination which He promised. "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession". (Ps. 2 v 8) This and the earnest, importunate prayers of his people that his kingdom would come is what is required.

This is a good book; interesting, stimulating and well printed. We wish it a wide circulation and a large one. Mr. Murray's views on this topic are similar to those held by ourselves except that he does not commit himself to the belief that Christ's cause will greatly prosper for a millenium. Thus he cannot be described as a post-millenarian. In the last chapter Mr. Murray refers to the rapidity with which the Disruption Free Church declined, and gives the credit for preserving the Free Church testimony to the 27 ministers who refused to enter the United Free Church in 1900. We cannot but regret this overlooking of the two ministers and their followers who in 1893 really kept the Free Church in being, albeit they had to adopt the slightly different name of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

A. McP.

Colossians, by William Hendriksen.

Banner of Truth Trust. 237pp. Price £1.20

In the Commentary on Colossians and Philemon, Dr Hendriksen has succeeded in maintaining the standard, as well as following the pattern of his previous productions. The Epistle to the Colossians is perhaps, in some parts, the most difficult of Paul's Epistles, dealing not only with the profound and magnificent statements regarding the Person and Work of Christ, but also with certain subtle and bewitching errors with which the church in that area was infested. It is to the credit of the author, that he has not been daunted by these difficulties, but has laboured to resolve and explain them.

A fascinating feature of the book is the author's ability to demonstrate the relevance of the contents of the two Epistles to the era in which we live, with its peculiar problems and questions. He shows us the definite place in, and relation of the Saviour to the 'space age,' to the ecumenical age, with its minimal emphasis on doctrine, and its readiness to call in question the very idea of the finality of the Christian religion; and to the all-sufficiency of

Christ, which stems from His Eternal Deity. The present undue stress on pragmatism, the equality of all men in the sight of God, and the much vexed and increasingly complex problem of human relationships, are all dealt with in a clear, orthodox, contemporary and devotional manner.

No ordinary measure of exegetical skill combined with an understanding of the times in which we live, make this commentary worth reading and perusing. The remarks, however, on chapter 3 verse 16 of Colossians should be read with caution.

F.M.

Fornaci di Barga — July 1971

By Rev. Malcolm MacInnes, Ullapool

The Lord Jesus has given us in His Word many promises which should encourage us to cry to Him that these truths be fulfilled. Often it is when we are placed in singular circumstances we begin to realise and to value the message of His words. Faith seeks to lay hold of Christ in the promise, and to hope that the Lord will stretch forth His hand to heal, 'that signs and wonders may be done by the name of his holy child Jesus'. No matter the country, no matter the congregation, if the power of the Lord be not present to heal, there is no lasting work for eternity. We are encouraged to ask for His power to accompany His word. This is needed in Italy as in other places. Hoping for such favour from the Master, I spent the month of July in Italy—in Fornaci di Barga.

During my time there I held a service in the Fini/Campani house twice each Lord's Day, on Wednesday evenings, and on a few other evenings as well. The numbers present were very small, and, were it not for the promise of Christ that where two or three are gathered together in His name He is there in their midst, we would soon faint and be weary. Many were personally invited to the services, but either did not come at all or came but once or twice. However dark and disappointing this may appear, we persevere in the prayer and hope that the Lord will yet pour His Spirit down, bless His word, and gather sinners to Christ. When I was in Fornaci di Barga last year I distributed a few tracts and Bibles. This year I took a large supply of tracts with me for distribution. I put a copy of the tract into almost every house in Fornaci di Barga and into the houses in the surrounding villages, and I was often pleasantly surprised at the reception it was given. This was

not always the case, but there were encouraging incidents. One of the most encouraging was in a village nearby where a number of elderly ladies were sitting out in the sun, and having received a copy of the tract, one of them began to read it aloud to the others. On my return she had moved to another audience and was engaged in the same good work. Others asked for a tract for a friend. In this way I was encouraged, that although people did not come to the services they were receiving the message of the Gospel in the tract and I pray that the Lord will bless His word in this way. The tract had printed on it the offer of more information should any wish to have it.

I again press upon anyone who may read this to pray to 'the Lord of the harvest' that He would provide someone to labour constantly among these people. The work is difficult and there is much opposition of different kinds. A regular ministry is needed. We pray that the Lord in His mercy will provide for this part of the vineyard; the duty is ours to pray to Him for such help.

I would here acknowledge the interest shown by the friends of the Spanish Evangelical Mission (Holland), in their generous gifts for Fornaci di Barga and in their regularly inquiring after the prosperity of the work there. It is proper also to thank the friends in Scotland who have shown a similar interest, and the Blythswood Tract Society for supplying the tract which was distributed.

'A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the Lord will hasten it in his time'. Isaiah Ch60 v 22.

Church Notes

Church Standing Collections, May 1971-72

1. *Organisation Fund*—To be taken in June. Notice to be sent by Rev. R.R. Sinclair.
2. *College and Library Fund*—To be taken in December. Notice to be sent by Rev. Lachlan MacLeod.
3. *General Building Fund*—To be taken in April. Notice to be sent by Rev. D. MacLean.
4. *Home Mission Fund*—To be taken in October and May (and if convenient by book in May). Notice to be sent by Rev. D. MacLean.
5. *Foreign Missions Fund*—To be taken in August (and if convenient by book). Notice to be sent by Rev. J. Colquhoun.
6. *Aged and Infirm Ministers' Widows' and Orphans' Fund*—To be taken in February (and if desired by book). Notice to be sent by Rev. D. MacLean.

7. Dominions and Overseas Mission Fund—To be taken in September. Notice to be sent by Rev. D. Campbell.

Students in Aberdeen

The Aberdeen Kirk Session will be very grateful for information about University students coming to Aberdeen for the ensuing session or about other young people coming to the City of Aberdeen to work. If their names and addresses are forwarded to the Interim Moderator, Rev. D.B. Macleod, F.P. Manse, Lairg, Sutherland, every effort will be made to contact these young people when they arrive in the city.

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Outer Isles: At Stornoway on Tuesday, 12th October at 3.30 p.m.
Northern: At Dingwall on Friday, 22nd October at 5.30 p.m.
Western: At Kyle of Lochalsh on Tuesday, 2nd November at 11 a.m.

Aberdeen Church Opening and Communion

The Church recently bought by the Aberdeen Congregation will be opened (D.V.) on Friday, 15th October, at 7 p.m. Rev. R.R. Sinclair, Wick, is expected to preach.

The Aberdeen Kirk Session also wish to intimate that a communion will be held in Aberdeen on the first Sabbath of November (D.V.). (For times of services, phone Aberdeen 40085).

Tours to the Holy Land 1972

I have consented to the general idea of leading a tour—such as Rev. D. Maclean did in May this year—to the historic land of Israel this coming year, the Lord willing. Provisional arrangements have to be made now and the dates suggested are 7th July to 21st July 1972 at an inclusive price of £135.00 per person (from London). I will be happy, therefore, to hear from those who may be interested in this proposed tour so that we may make up a party of 20-30 persons.

Free Presbyterian Manse,
Applecross, Kyle,
Ross-shire. (Tel. Applecross 207).

(Rev.) Alexander Murray.

Ballifeary Home Appeal

The extension to the Ballifeary Old People's Home, Inverness, is now about complete, adding a well equipped wing to the Home which will provide living quarters for Matron and staff and additional rooms for residents, bringing the number which may now be received into the Home up to 22, a most gratifying development for which the Committee and our Church have great reason to thank the Most High. The enlarged Home which merges inconspicuously into the lovely countryside on the banks of the Ness amid wide spreading trees and a well tended lawn is a real credit to the building firm, Campbell Construction Co., Inverness, who did the work, and an acquisition to our Church, of which we may justly be proud.

The heavy expense of this very necessary work has now to be met, and is expected to be in the region of £22,000. In this sum is included work on the original building, new boiler house and central heating plant, renewal of electrical fittings, etc., and together with the furnishings for the extension accounts for about £7,000. Already £15,000 at full interest rates has been obtained from the Inverness Building Society and may be repaid as money comes to hand, but the remaining sum must be paid almost immediately and there is therefore some measure of urgency in raising the necessary funds.

We, therefore, appeal to our people to send what contributions they can to meet these heavy expenses, and venture to suggest that, if any of our people who are able to do so, feel inclined to make interest free loans to the Committee faced with these heavy financial responsibilities, these offers of help would be gladly received and would bring, in a very material sense, greatly needed support to a most worthy cause. Contributions and any other funds may be sent to Mr Angus MacKenzie, C.A., Treasurer, 1 View Place, Inverness.

A.F.M., Convener of Committee.

Items for Publication in the Magazine

The editor requests that all items for publication in the Magazine (with the exception of donations), be sent directly to him—and not to the printers. This will save the printers unnecessary trouble and expense in contacting the Editor for advice regarding items sent directly to them, and will make it possible to plan the magazine before it reaches the printers' hands.

The Editor regrets that the dates given on the inside cover of the Magazine for receipt of articles and other items must be adhered to in order to ensure that the Magazine is out promptly at the beginning of each month.

Acknowledgement of Donations

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

Sustentation Fund: J.K. Hogg, Berkhamsted, £3; Mrs A.M. MacLeod, Brora, £3.

Jewish & Foreign Mission Fund: Anon., £10; Miss C. Murray, Golspie, £2; Mrs A.M. MacLeod, Brora, £2.

Home of Rest Fund: Miss I. MacDonald, Eston, Sask., £19.92; Mr and Mrs A. MacLeod, Bayhead, Harris, £2 per R.W.M.M.

College & Library Fund: "Stockbridge," £20.

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

Free Distribution Magazine Fund: Miss B.F., Lairg, 67p; Mr and Mrs A. MacLeod, Bayhead, Harris, £1; Skye Friend per W.D.F., £3; J. MacLean, Northton, Harris, £1.60.

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

Applecross: Mrs K. MacLeod, Vancouver, £20; In memory of her loving parents and aunts, for Congregational Funds, per C. Gillies.

Fort William: Friend, Geocrab, £1; Friend, North Uist, £5; Friend, Northton, £5; all per Rev. J.A. McDonald.

St Jude's, Glasgow: Mrs A. Walker, 2 donations of £1; Mrs F.D. Piper, 25p; both for Church Bus.

Glendale: Mrs E. Kirkham, Leeds, £5 for Sustentation Fund, £3 for Home Mission Fund and £2 for Foreign Mission Fund.

Greenock: Mrs G. Boyle, £100 for Church Funds.

Kinlochbervie: Miss J. MacKay, Ingwenya, Staffin, Isle of Skye, £5 for Kinlochbervie and Scourie Congregation, per W.D. Fraser.

North Harris: Mr Angus MacLeod, Leakea, Stockinish, £3; Friend Stornoway, for years teaching in Tarbert School, £5; Friend, Tarbert, £5; Friend, Stockinish, £3; all for Manse Central Heating per Rev. A. MacK.

Portree: Tunbridge Wells Friend, £5; Husabost Friends, £5; Tolsta Friend, £2; all for Congregational purposes per F.M.; Envelope initialed A.W.N. in Church Plate, £5 for Communion Expenses; Anon., £11.24 for Manse Maintenance. Envelope in Church Plate, £2 for Church Bus.

Raasay: A. MacLennan, Glasgow, £5; A. Gillies, Glasgow, £5; Anon., £2; Friend, Fort William, £1; A.G. Glasgow, £5; all per J.M. MacLeod. Anon, £20 per Rev. D. Nicolson; Glasgow Friend, £2; M.M.L., Raasay, £3; all for Manse Extension. A Righteous Man's Memorial, £1 for Manse extension, £1 for Sustentation Fund, £1 for Foreign Mission, £1 for Trin. Bible Society, £1 for Home Mission; Mr and Mrs Nicolson, 22 Inverarish, £5 for Manse Extension, £5 for Sustentation; Friend Raasay, £1 for Sustentation, £1 for Foreign Mission.

Staffin: Envelope in Church Plate, £5 for Foreign Mission Fund; J. MacDonald, Stewscholl, £3 for maintenance of Minister's car, per Rev. J. McD.

Stratherrick: Mr and Mrs D.J. MacKintosh, Lethbridge, Alberta, £3 for Communion Expenses.

Stornoway: Two Friends, Inverness, £10 for congregational purposes.

Tomatin: Well-wisher, Inverness-shire, £1 for Sustentation Fund.

Aberdeen Church Fund: Alex. Forgie, Redding, £50; Mrs M.J. Salmon, Inverness, £1; R.W.H.K., Inverness, £10; E.E. Fulton, Richmond, £1; all per Wm. MacKenzie. Friend, £1; Miss B. Angus, £1; both per Rev. A.F.M. Anon, Inverness, £3; Anon, Inverness, £50; Anon, Stevenston, £10; M.G., £2; From Alexandria, £2; MacKenzie, Inverasdale, £2; Friend, North Coast, Applecross, £2

Bracadale Church Renovation: Anon, Lairg, £2; Friend, North Tolsta, £5; both per Gen. Treasurer. Mrs MacLean, Buccleuch Street, £20; Mr and Mrs Peter Campbell, £50; Friend, £20; Raasay Friend, £2; Friend, £2; all per A. Beaton. Friend, Fort William, £3; Wellwisher, Stornoway, £3; Wellwisher, £5; M.G. (2nd donation) £2; Miss D.M. Neilson, £5; D.M., Portree, £2; Mrs MacLeod, Lochinver, £5; Friend, Strathy, £2; Wick Congregation, £20; Mr and Mrs Peter Campbell, £20; Anon, Inverness, £1; Anon, £20; all per Rev. D.J.McD. Friend, per W.C. Balgown, £5; In affectionate memory of our late Father, K.C. MacKinnon, £8; Friend, Portree, £5 per Mrs C. McK.; Friend, £5; Friend £1; Two Friends, £2, per D.McA. Friend, £2 per M. MacInnes, Staffin; Friend, £2 per Rev. A.M., Applecross; Mr and Mrs MacKay, Flashadder, £5; No 1 Flashadder, £10; Friend, £2.

Broadford Manse Building Fund: Friend, £5 per Mrs L. MacKinnon; Mrs Finlay MacQueen Corry, £5; Miss J. MacKay, Staffin, £5 per Gen. Treasurer; Sister C. MacKinnon, Luib, £3; Wellwisher, £1 per D. MacKay.

Home of Rest Fund: Alloa Visitor, £3; Friend, £2 for petrol; Resident, £1; London Friends, £5, Aberdeen Friends, £10.

Tain & Fearn Manse Fund: Anon, Ayrshire, £10; MacKenzie, Inverasdale, £2.

Wick Church Fund: In memory of Rev. Donald Beaton of Wick, £10 from Friend, Easter Ross per Rev. R.R. Sinclair.