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Go Ye into all the World

The Saviour commissioned His disciples to go into the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. How very comprehensive, how all-embracing was that command. By it the Apostles were directed to go everywhere preaching the gospel of the kingdom. No longer were the Gentile nations to be left out. By the coming of Christ and His death on Calvary the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile was broken down. By Him both Jews and Gentiles were now to have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

How fully the disciples obeyed their divine Master the subsequent New Testament history reveals. The task to which they were sent — the evangelisation of the nations — would have been impossible had not the Lord sent them and promised to bless them. With the Lord, however, nothing shall be impossible. In the strength of Divine grace they went forth and by the blessing of the Lord this small band of Christ's followers fulfilled their commission to earn at the end of the day their Master's approval: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

But why did the Lord command His servants to go into all the world? It was because the purposes of God with regard to the salvation of sinners had respect to all nations and kindreds and tongues. There was to be a people gathered out of all nations who would be to the praise of the glory of His grace eternally. Again, they must go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature because there was but one Saviour provided for all mankind. Christ was to be a light to lighten the Gentiles as well as the glory of His people Israel. Only by faith in the Divine Redeemer could sinners, Jew and Gentile alike, be saved from their sins. The gospel therefore must be preached for the obedience to the faith of all nations.

But let us ask ourselves — Is the commission divinely given so long ago still to be obeyed or are we to regard it as of no binding force in the

20th century on the Christian Church? It is still binding; and if it is to be fulfilled by the Church of God in this present age, it is necessary that faithful servants of the Lord be raised up, men burdened with a genuine concern for the souls of their fellowmen, and for the dark places of the earth.

In the light of this how should we be exercised? We ought to plead with the Lord that He would raise up witnesses for Himself in this dark day — "The harvest truly is great but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He would send forth labourers into His harvest." When the Lord will raise up faithful servants for Himself in answer to the prayer of His believing people, then also will He fulfil the promises of His Word concerning the extension of His kingdom among all nations.

"All ends of th' earth remember shall,
And turn the Lord unto:
All kindreds of the nations
to him shall homage do."

Ordination Sermon

by Rev. Robert Murray McCheyne

(Ordination of Rev. P. L. Miller, Wallacetown, Dundee, 1840).

"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom, preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and doctrine." 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2.

I. Where faithful ministers stand — "Before God and the Lord Jesus Christ." There is not a more awfully affecting situation in the whole world than that in which a faithful minister stands.

(1) **Before God** — This is true in two ways:

1st. As a sinner saved by grace — He was once far off, but is now brought nigh by the blood of Jesus. Having "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh," he draws near. He stands within the veil — in the holiest of all — in the love of God. He is justified before God. A faithful minister is **an example to his flock of a sinner saved**. God says to him as He did to Abraham, "Walk before me, and be thou perfect." He can say with Paul, "I was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, but I obtained mercy." A faithful Minister is like Aaron's rod, that was laid up beside the ark of God and budded there.

2nd. As a servant — In the East, servants always stand in the presence of their master, watching his hand. The Queen of Sheba said to Solomon, "Happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee and hear thy wisdom." So it is said of the angels, that "they do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." Even when most engaged in the service of the saints, they feel under his all-seeing, holy, living eye. So *ought* faithful ministers to feel. They should feel constantly in his presence — under his soul-piercing, gentle, guiding, holy, living eye. "I will guide thee with mine eye." "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous." Ah! How often we feel we are before *man*. Then all power withers, and we become weak as other men; but oh! how sweet to feel in the presence of God, as if there were no eye on us but God's.

In prayer, how sweet to feel before Him; to kneel at his footstool, and to put our hand upon the mercy-seat — no curtain, no veil, no cloud between the soul and God! **In preaching**, how sweet to say, like Elijah, when he stood before Ahab, "I stand before the Lord God of Israel!" To stand at his feet, in his family, in his pavilion, oh believers, it is then we get above the billows! The applause of men, the rage and contempt of men, then pass by us like the idle wind which we regard not. Thus is a minister like a rock in the ocean; the mountain-billows dash upon its brow, and yet it stands unshaken.

(2) **Before Jesus Christ** — This also is true in two ways:

1st, The faithful minister has a present sight of Christ as his Righteousness. He is like John the Baptist. Seeing Jesus coming unto him, he saith, "Behold the Lamb of God!" Or like Isaiah, he saw "his glory, and spake of Him." His own soul is ever watching at Gethsemane and at Golgotha. Oh brethren, it is thus only we can ever speak with feeling, or with power, or with truth, of the unsearchable riches of Christ! We must have the taste of the manna in our mouth, "milk and honey under our tongue," else we cannot tell of its sweetness. We must be drinking the living water from the smitten rock, or we cannot speak of its refreshing power. We must be hiding our guilty souls in the wounds of Jesus, or we cannot with joy speak of the peace and rest to be found there. This is the reason why unfaithful ministers are cold and barren in their labours. They speak, like Balaam, of a Saviour whose grace they do not feel. They speak, like Caiaphas, of the blood of Christ, without having felt its power to speak peace to the troubled heart. This is the reason why many good men have a barren ministry. They speak from clear head-knowledge, or from past experience, but not from a present grasp of the truth — not from a present sight of the Lamb of God. Hence their words fall like a shower of snow — fair and

beautiful, but cold and freezing. The Lord give us to stand in the presence of the Lord Jesus.

2nd. The faithful minister should feel the presence of a living Saviour. A minister should be like the bride in the Song; "Leaning upon her beloved." This was Jeremiah's strength (i.8): "Be not afraid of their faces, for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord." So it was with Paul (Acts xviii.9, 10): "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee; for I have much people in this city." So Jesus told all the disciples: "Yet a little while, and the world seeth me not; but ye see me; because I live, ye shall live also." And again He says expressly: "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." Yes, brethren, Christ is as truly walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, as truly in this place today, as if you saw Him with your bodily eyes. His humanity is at the right hand of God — appearing in the presence of God for us. His Godhead fills all in all. Thus He is with us — standing with our right hand, so that we cannot be moved. It is sweet to know and feel this. Thus only can we be sustained amid all the trials of the ministry. Are we weary? we can lean, like John, upon his bosom. Are we burdened with a sense of sin? we can hide in the clefts of that Rock of Ages. Are we empty? we can look up to Him for immediate supply. Are we hated of all men? we can hide under his wings. Stand before the Lord Jesus Christ, and then you may smile at Satan's rage, and face a frowning world. Learn here also the guilt of refusing a gospel ministry: "He that refuseth you, refuseth me; and he that refuseth me, refuseth Him that sent me."

(3). Within sight of judgment — "Who shall judge the quick and dead." Ministers and their flocks shall meet together before the throne of the Lord Jesus. That will be a solemn day. They have many solemn meetings on earth. An ordination day is a solemn day. Their meetings from Sabbath to Sabbath are solemn meetings; and sacrament days are very solemn days. But their meeting at the judgment-seat will be by far the most solemn of all. Then,

1st. The minister will give in his account, either with joy or with grief. He will no more meet to plead with the people, or to pray with them, but to bear witness how they received the word. Of some he will give account with a joyful countenance — that they received the word with all readiness of mind — that they were converted and became like little children: these will be his joy and crown. Of most with grief — that he carried the message to them, but they would not come — they made light of it; or perhaps they listened for a while, but drew back into perdition. He will be a swift witness against them in that day. "Depart, ye cursed."

2nd. Then the people will give in their account of the minister. If he was faithful; if he made it his meat and drink to do the will of God; if he preached the whole truth with seriousness, urgency, love; if he was holy in his life; if he preached publicly, and from house to house; then that minister shall shine like the stars. If he was unfaithful; if he fed himself, but not the flock; if he did not seek the conversion of souls, did not travail in birth; if he sought his own ease, his own wealth, his own praise, and not their souls; then shall the loud curses of ruined souls fall on that wretched man, and God shall say, Take the unfaithful servant, and bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness. Oh! believers, it is the duty of ministers to preach with this solemn day in their eye. We should stand, like Abraham, looking down on the smoke of Sodom; like John, listening to the new song and golden harps of the new Jerusalem. Would not this take away the fear of man? Would not this make us urgent in our preaching? You must either get these souls into Christ, or you will yet see them lying down in everlasting burnings. Oh! brethren, did I not say truly that the place where a minister stands is the most solemn spot in all this world?

II. The grand business of the faithful minister — described in two ways: **First**, Generally — Preach the Word; **Second**, More in detail — Reprove, rebuke, exhort.

(1). **Preach the Word** — The grand work of the minister, in which he is to lay out his strength of body and mind, is preaching. Weak and foolish as it may appear, this is the grand instrument which God has put into our hands, by which sinners are to be saved, and saints fitted for glory. It pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe. It was to this **our blessed Lord** devoted the years of his own ministry. Oh, what an honour has he put upon this work, by preaching in the synagogues, in the temple, and by the blue waves of Galilee, under the canopy of heaven! Has He not consecrated this world as preaching ground? This was the grand work of Paul and all the apostles; for this was our Lord's command: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel." Oh! brethren, this is our great work. It is well to visit the sick, and well to educate children and clothe the naked. It is well to attend presbyteries. It is well to write books or read them. But here is the main thing — preach the word. The pulpit is, as George Herbert says, "our joy and throne." This is our watch-tower. Here we must warn the people. The silver trumpet is put into our hand. Woe be unto us if we preach not the gospel.

The Matter — The Word — It is in vain we preach, if we preach not the word — the truth as it is in Jesus.

1st. Not other matters — "Ye are my witnesses." "The same came to

bear witness of that light." We are to speak of nothing but what we have seen and heard from God. It is not the work of the minister to open up schemes of human wisdom or learning, not to bring his own fancies, but to tell the facts and glories of the gospel. We must speak of what is within the word of God.

2nd. Preach the word — the most essential parts especially. If you were with a dying man, and knew he had but half an hour to live, what would you tell him? Would you open up some of the curiosities of the word, or enforce some of the moral commands of the word? Would you not tell him his undone condition by nature and by wicked works? Would you not tell him of the power of the Holy Spirit? These are the essential things which a man must receive or perish. These are the great subject-matters of preaching. Should we not preach as Jesus did when He went to Emmaus, when He began at Moses and all the prophets, and expounded to them the things concerning himself? Let there be much of Christ in your ministry, says the excellent Eliot. Rowland Hill used to say, See there be no sermon without **three R's** in it: Ruin by the fall, Righteousness by Christ, and Regeneration by the Spirit. Preach Christ for awakening, Christ for comforting, Christ for sanctifying. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

3rd. Preach as the word — I would humbly suggest for the consideration of all ministers, whether we should not preach more in the manner of God's word. Is not the word the sword of the Spirit? Should not our great work be to take it from its scabbard, to cleanse it from all rust, and then to apply its sharp edge to the consciences of man? It is certain the fathers used to preach in this manner. Brown of Haddington used to preach as if he had read no other book than the Bible. It is the truth of God in its naked simplicity that the Spirit will most honour and bless. "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."

(2). **Reprove, rebuke, exhort** — The first work of the Spirit on the natural heart is to **reprove the world of sin**. Although He is the Spirit of love — although a dove is his emblem — although He be compared to the soft wind and gentle dew — still his first work is to convince of sin. If ministers are filled with the same Spirit, they will begin in the same way. It is God's usual method to awaken them, and bring them to despair of salvation by their own righteousness, before He reveals Christ to them. So it was with the jailer. So it was with Paul; he was blind three days. A faithful minister must lay himself out for this. Plough up the fallow ground, and sow not among thorns. Men must be brought down by law work to see their guilt and misery, or all our preaching is beating the air. Oh! brethren, is this our ministry? Let us do this plainly. The most, I fear,

in all our congregations, are sailing easily down the stream into an undone eternity, unconverted and unawakened. Brethren, they will not thank us in eternity for speaking smooth things — for sewing pillows to their arm-holes, and crying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace. No, they may praise us now, but they will curse our flattery in eternity. Oh for the bowels of Jesus Christ in every minister, that we might long after them all! **Exhort** — The original word means to comfort — to speak as the Comforter does. This is the most difficult part of the Christian ministry. Thus did John: "Behold the Lamb of God." Thus did Isaiah: "Comfort ye, comfort ye." Thus did our Lord command: "Go, preach the gospel to every creature." It is true this makes the feet of the gospel messenger beautiful on the mountains. He has to tell of a full, free, Divine Saviour.

And here I would observe what appears to me **a fault in the preaching of our beloved Scotland**. Most ministers are accustomed to set Christ before the people. They lay down the gospel clearly and beautifully, but they do not urge men to enter in. Now God says, Exhort — beseech men — persuade men; not only point to the open door, but compel them to come in. Oh to be more merciful to souls, that we would lay hands on men and draw them in to the Lord Jesus!

III. The manner.

(1). **With long-suffering** — There is no grace more needed in the Christian ministry than this. This is the heart of God the Father towards sinners: "He is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish." This is the heart of the Lord Jesus. How tenderly does He cry, "Oh! Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I," etc. This is the mind of the Holy Spirit in striving with men. He will not always strive, but oh how long He does strive with men! Dear believers, had He not striven long with us, we would this day have been like Lot's wife, monuments of grace resisted. Now, such ought ministers to be. Above all men we need "love that suffers long and is kind." Sometimes, when sinners are obstinate and hard-hearted, we are tempted to give up in despair, or to lose temper and scold them — like the disciples calling down fire from heaven. But, brethren, we must be of another spirit. The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Only be filled with the Spirit of Christ, and it will make us patient toward all. It will make us cry, "How often would I," etc.

(2). **With doctrine** — Some good men cry, Flee, flee, without showing the sinner what he is to flee from; and again, they cry, Come, come, without showing plainly the way of pardon and peace. These men act as one would do who should run through the streets crying, fire, fire, without telling where. In the preaching of the apostles you will observe the clear and simple statement of the truth preceding the warm and pathetic

exhortation. This has always been followed by the most judicious and successful divines.

It behoves ministers to unite the cherub and the seraph in their ministry — the angel of knowledge and the angel of burning zeal. If we would win souls, we must point clearly the way to heaven, while we cry, flee from the wrath to come. I believe we cannot lay down the guilt of man — his total depravity — and the glorious gospel of Christ too clearly; that we cannot urge men to embrace and flee too warmly. Oh for a pastor who unites the deep knowledge of Edwards, the vast statements of Owen, and the vehement appeals of Richard Baxter.

(3). **With urgency** — If a neighbour's house were on fire, would we not cry aloud and use every exertion? If a friend were drowning, would we be ashamed to strain every nerve to save him? But alas! the souls of our neighbours are even now on their way to everlasting burnings — they are ready to be drowned in the depths of perdition. Oh! shall we be less earnest to save their never-dying souls, than we would be to save their bodies? How anxious was the Lord Jesus in this! When He came near and beheld the city, He wept over it. How earnest was Paul! "Remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn everyone night and day with tears." Such was George Whitfield; that great man scarcely ever preached without being melted into tears. Brethren, there is need of the same urgency now. Hell is as deep and as burning as ever. Unconverted souls are as surely rushing to it. Christ is as free — pardon as sweet as ever! Ah! how we shall be amazed at our coldness when we do get to heaven!

(4). **At all times** — Our Lord went about continually doing good; He made it his meat and drink. "Daily in the temple." So should we. **Satan is busy** at all times; he does not stand upon ceremony; he does not keep himself to Sabbath-days, or canonical hours. **Death is busy**. Men are dying while we are sleeping. About fifty die every minute; nearly one every second entering into an unchangeable world! **The Spirit of God is busy**. Blessed be God, He hath cast our lot in times when there is the moving of the great Spirit among the dry bones. Shall ministers then be idle, or stand upon ceremony? Oh that God would baptise us this day with the Holy Ghost and with fire, that we might be all changed as into a flame of fire, preaching and building up Christ's church till our latest, our dying hour!

"I know I ought to fit myself in the best manner I can for public service; but this is my misery — I study and prepare, that I may consume it upon my own pride and self-confidence."

David Brainard.

A Minister of God

The late Rev. D. N. MacLeod

(Continued from page 312)

After referring to certain hardships that were peculiar to those serving on the Mission field he went on to speak of particular hardships which those who laboured in the home country had to meet with: "These hardships are, to mention one or two of them, first, the sad fact of having to preach the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ year in and year out, from one Sabbath to another without seeing any fruits . . . The man in the pulpit . . . feels that he has been endeavouring in the strength of grace to proclaim the gospel of salvation; to offer that salvation freely to whomsoever is willing to accept it, and to present to sinners the most glorious Person of all persons in heaven and on earth — after that, to have to leave the pulpit with the feeling that all that has been in vain, fruitless; that sinners have listened, and attentively listened, have worshipped orderly; but it is a matter of striking their ears and the Word rebounding from their ears to oneself . . . There is again . . . the people . . . now turning their backs upon the House of God and the House of Prayer, preferring to spend the Sabbath Day at home, or if not at home, abroad on the road and on the streets and leaving the House of God almost empty . . . There are, if they cared to take the trouble, what would comfortably fill our Houses of Prayer at all the services on Sabbath and week-day.

Knowing that, and yet having to stand and speak to empty pews is a hardship that one cannot really find words to express. The only consolation is this — at least, I think it is the only consolation — that it is known to the Lord Himself. It is known to Him why His house is so empty as well as what those who should be there are doing when absent from it. He knows also the grief it causes His servants and He knows how hard it is upon them to bear it. They may well rest assured that they have His full sympathy, and having His full sympathy, that goes a long way towards meeting the hardship of it and enabling them to bear it and to persevere in their work. But, if things go on as they are, (and they will go on as far as men are concerned), let us not be so foolish as to look to men as though the remedy is to come from men . . . The remedy must come from above; must come from the Lord. As the Forerunner said: 'A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.' This must come from heaven; it must come from the Lord who sits at His right hand . . . We must just do as the Psalmist did in the strength of His grace: lift our eyes to the hills whence cometh our aid; lift our eyes heavenward and set

them upon Himself and plead earnestly with Him that He would arise again according to His promise which He has been pleased to fulfil more than once: 'Thou shalt arise and mercy have upon Thy Sion yet.' And in confirmation of that, we have this, 'Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin; He shall see his seed, He shall prolong His days and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand.' Let us not be despondent after all. Let us not be disheartened; let not our hands be weakened; but let us be strong in His grace and confide in Him and keep our eye on that promise itself, with the full assurance that it shall be fulfilled in the letter and spirit of it, to the extent that the day will come in which He will present His people as a whole before the Father, saying, 'Behold me now and the children which Thou has given me'."

It might well have become a rarity for a sinner to be awakened under the preaching of the Word but nevertheless from the Ullapool Free Presbyterian pulpit the same unchanging gospel which is the power of God unto salvation continued to be, over the years, uncompromisingly declared. The prevailing cry was for a more popular gospel; but there was not to be detected here any modification of gospel doctrines to make them more palatable to the world and more comfortable to the new and fashionable liberal views of men. But whatever Mr Macleod's own feelings might have been, others can say that there were times even at the close of his public ministry when, under his preaching, the Lord's people were enabled to rejoice with no small measure of that joy which is unspeakable and full of glory, while there were also occasions when careless sinners were made to tremble. A Sabbath evening in Ullapool comes to mind: His text was, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." He began by saying that he laboured under the difficulty of hardly knowing how to add anything to words which were of themselves so unspeakably solemn. As far as pity and compassion for souls was concerned there never was, nor could there ever be, anyone to be compared to the tender-hearted Jesus of Nazareth and He, knowing the eternal world, spoke often of hell as a dreadful reality: it was from His lips that we have such awful expressions as, "Where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." With, it would seem, every ear in the congregation attentive to him, Mr Macleod went on to say that he was as sure of the existence of hell as he was of standing in the pulpit at that moment and was only endeavouring to do what his master had done before him — warn careless sinners of their danger of being eternally cast into it. One young woman in the assembly that evening was more visibly affected by the minister's words than others around her and was observed to shed copious tears — a rare spectacle, for Mr

Macleod was not one to play on the emotions — but alas! her goodness hitherto has proved itself to be no better than Ephraim's, "as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away." How often have such convictions been stifled by young sinners at the most impressionable time of their lives and in many cases never to return!

Mr Macleod continued to preach until the weakness and frailties incident to old age came to prevent him. If our memory serves us right his last appearance in the church was on a prayer meeting evening when he based his address on the words: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." From then on, for the remaining six years or so of his life, he was confined to his own home — prevented from waiting on God in the courts of His house, but not from waiting on Him at the throne of grace. Among the hidden things that shall be revealed hereafter, we believe, will be the fact that his own prayers — those of a righteous man — availed much, and were often answered in ways beyond our knowledge and understanding here. Although often heard lamenting his own leanness and barrenness we believe he was himself no stranger to the experience of having prayer answered, and that there were occasions during his life when he could wholeheartedly sing with David, "I love the Lord, because my voice and prayers he did hear." In this connection one of our older ministers retains yet in his memory what he heard him say many years ago. "One of the most precious tokens of the Divine favour that a believer can receive in this world from the Lord is an answer to prayer." To draw near to God was no light matter as far as he was concerned — he regarded himself as being then on holy ground — and the reverent manner in which he was wont to invoke the name of the Most High, especially in Gaelic will long be remembered by those who were accustomed to hear him do so. Some of the choicest expressions that were heard from his lips were heard when he was in the act of addressing God and seemed as if oblivious to the presence of men. With what feeling and unforgettable poignancy, for instance, would he often at family worship towards the end of his life pray for the "poor parish" of Lochbroom and, mourning the fact that the Saviour was so great a stranger in the land, would often give utterance to the words, "Lord, how long will thine absence last?" For "all in danger on land, sea, or in the air" he invariably prayed. When the tempest would rise in haste, the fishermen plying in and out of Ullapool were not forgotten and his voice would be lifted up on their behalf to the One who reigns even over the raging sea. In public it was at times noticeable that if the theme of his discourse was to be some aspect of the severity of God, then, in his opening prayer his mind would dwell on the goodness of God and his

petitions would be framed accordingly. The opposite was also true. Another noticeable feature was that for a number of consecutive Sabbaths he would preach exclusively from texts with a bearing on the sterner aspects of the truth as for instance, the natural condition of man and his imminent danger of perishing in his sins; then, for an equal number of Sabbaths he would similarly lay the emphasis on the gospel provision so altogether suitable to meet man's need. In the one case, to borrow the language of the well known anecdote, he seemed to go out with "a quiver of arrows;" in the other, with "a cruse of oil."

(To be continued)

An Evangelist's Confession

Mr Brownlow North, the well known evangelist, was at one time — indeed, all through his early life — a very marked specimen of the thoughtless and dissipated aristocratic worldling. He was for many years supposed to be the heir to a noble title, but a late and unexpected marriage came between him and his hopes. When he was no longer a young man, he and a friend were staying at a shooting-lodge in Scotland. Their day's sport was usually followed by an evening's debauch; and in one of these his friend dropped down dead. The terrible event was God's message to the heart of this hardened profligate. The awful thought laid hold of him: "If I had been called away instead of my poor friend I should have been damned."

This led him to think seriously about his soul, and, after passing through many agonising experiences he was brought into the full light of the Gospel. No sooner did he feel himself to be a changed man than he began to set about trying to win others to realise the same blessedness. In process of time he became one of the most noted preachers of that period.

It happened on one occasion that he was to preach in Inverness. Just as he entered the building a note was put into his hand, the contents of which were somewhat to this effect:— "Brownlow North you miserable hypocrite. Do you remember what took place at ——— on such a date, and the part you played in it; also at ——— on such a date, and again at ——— on such a date, and the part you took on each of these occasions?" Pretty full details of what did happen were given, and then the letter concluded: "Now you wretched hypocrite, you know that every word in this letter is true; will you, after reading it, dare to go into that pulpit and rant and rave, and preach what you call the Gospel?"

Poor Mr North felt the force of the letter keenly, but he put it into his pocket, and when the time came he read the familiar words: "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." He paused, and then with deepest feeling added: "Of whom I am chief." "My friends," said he "when I entered this building tonight a letter was put into my hand. I do not know who the writer may be, but he is evidently one who knows a great deal about my career in the past. This letter refers to three distinct occasions on which it charges me with participating in scenes of riot and wantonness. I will not pollute your ears by referring to the contents of that letter further than to say as much as this. And the writer concludes his most painful communication by saying, "Now you wretched hypocrite you know that all this is true; will you, after reading this letter, dare to go into that pulpit and rant and rave, and preach what you call the Gospel?" Dear friends, there are three things that I have to say about this letter: First, it is all true. Would to God I could deny the charges it makes! Would to God I could undo the past, but that is even beyond the power of God Himself. God knows it is true and I confess with sorrow and shame that it is true. And the second thing I have to say is this, that it's all forgiven. And the third thing I have to say is that, if God for Jesus Christ's sake, can forgive the sin of such a sinner as Brownlow North, there is not a sinner in Scotland, there is not a sinner in this wide world, too great for God to forgive him all his sins." There were few dry eyes among those present as he uttered these words with the most intense feeling.

Reader, your sins may or may not be as glaring as Brownlow North's, but they can be forgiven freely by the same pardoning God, if you but come to Him in true repentance. Should you die unforgiven, there remaineth nothing for you but the blackness of darkness for ever. Now, His mercy would fain woo you for Himself. Be wise in time.

"Those who extenuate and encourage sin, and discountenance and put contempt upon strictness in religion and serious devotion, are the dregs of the Church."

Matthew Henry.

"It becomes us, in many cases, to be gentle toward those that come under suspicion of having offended, to hope the best concerning them, and make the best of that which at first appears bad, in hopes it may prove better."

Matthew Henry.

Free Presbyterian Practice

by Rev. A. MacPherson

(Paper read at the Young People's Conference on 24th July, 1974.)

Our Church Magazines bear the legend, "Reformed in Doctrine, Worship and *Practice*." By this the Free Presbyterian Church publicly claims to practice Christianity after the manner of the Reformation Church. The contrast, of course, is with the practice of the Church of Rome. First, however, let us try to define "practice" as used here. I suggest this definition; "Free Presbyterian practice is the observable form that our religion takes." Note the adjective "Observable." Not only does our pattern of life as Christians benefit ourselves and the Church, and give glory to God, but it also conveys to observers some idea of what Christianity is. It has therefore a connection with our next subject, "Christian Witnessing." But, leaving that aside just now, let us just keep in mind that the practice of Christianity specially refers to the way a Christian lives, his conduct in the sight of others.

Returning to the contrast on the magazine cover, Free Presbyterian practice is opposed to Romish practice. You will know that on the religious side Roman Catholic practice consists mainly of submission to priestly authority, and the practice of such duties as attendance at Confession, the Mass, (and for faithful Roman Catholics) upon preaching also. Penance is done; images, crucifixes, etc., are venerated. On the moral side there is no command of the moral law which the Romish system does not allow to be broken when expediency requires. As one would expect, the Romish practice of what they call Christianity agrees with the doctrines they teach. Since with them salvation is achieved by a combination of priestcraft and men's works, a system which ignores the state of the heart in God's sight, the practice of their religion is marked by an adherence to forms and rules framed by men. The resemblance to the Pharisees' way of life is very great.

True Christian practice, on the other hand, has its roots in a renewed nature, a heart brought back by the Holy Spirit to the genuine (even if imperfect) love of God and man, and to a cordial obedience to the Saviour. The saved sinner is one who brings forth "fruits meet for repentance," and by patient continuance in well-doing seeks for glory, honour and immortality. Other relevant scriptures are John 14:21; Gal. 6:8; Eph. 2:10. The Christian life is not one forced into certain channels by human rules or general opinion, but rather one prompted by an

inward constraint to live according to the will of God.

Yet, when we consider Christian practice among ourselves, we find that its beginnings are usually learned by way of obedience to rule. There is great benefit in this, but there is a danger also to be marked. Most of us learn what we might call basic Free Presbyterian practice from our parents and other church people. Much that makes up Sabbath observance is learned that way, as are also patterns of behaviour, abstinence from sinful amusements, etc. The usefulness of this way of learning cannot be denied. It is approved by God in His Word, e.g., "And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." (Deut. 6:6, 7).

Children in Israel learned the practice of godliness from their parents and teachers. The habits formed under teaching of this kind are seen to be scriptural, and are approved by conscience. They enable the individual to fit in comfortably with the behaviour of family, relatives and those who belong to the Church. Many have been preserved from forsaking the means of grace, going off with the world, and committing open sins by following Free Presbyterian practice to the extent that an unconverted person can do so. And with many the practice of the Church has been so carefully observed that they have given others occasion to hope that their behaviour was the outcome of grace rather than just a good habit. For the truth, alas, is that anyone can through habit live agreeably to much recognised Free Presbyterian practice; be moral, religious, loyal to the Church, generous to Christ's cause, and friendly and hospitable to Christ's people; yet in fact be ignorant of God and a rejector of Christ. So we see that Christian practice must be rightly motivated in order to be genuine, spiritual, and eternally profitable.

The expression "Free Presbyterian practice" may well raise the question, Why call it that, and not just Christian practice? It is for the same reason as we have to call our Church the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and not the Church of Scotland or the Church of Great Britain. The visible Church in this land today consists of many denominations representing so many grades and kinds of departure from the scriptural pattern of a pure Church. Their practice likewise varies. Need I tell you that the practice of religion by the average Church of Scotland member is very different from ours? And over the border, among those called evangelicals in England and Wales there are differences especially in connection with the Sabbath and so-called Holy Days.



I have indicated that differences in practice arise out of different degrees of conformity to the pattern of Christian behaviour given in Scripture. Now I would say that along with our claim to be Reformed in the matter of practice, can go a parallel claim to be scriptural, which just means that we claim for our practice that it is Christian in the truest sense of the term. "To the law and to the testimony," etc., is the Christian test for practice just as for doctrine.

Our Church's practice does not date from 1893 in the way that the strange conduct of certain groups of Brethren can be dated. In our practice we follow the same principles as the Disruption Free Church and the Church of Scotland before that. Our practice in its general lines goes back to that of the Church established by Christ and his apostles. So, having mentioned principles, I come to the main point which has to be made on this subject, namely, that our Church's practice is a manner of life according to Christian, that is, scriptural principles. At the root of this way of life is the new nature implanted by the Holy Spirit which expresses itself agreeably to the will of God. As Paul says in Hebrews 8:10, quoting a promise in Jeremiah 31, "I will put my laws into their mind and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." If you think about the various features which characterise our practice, you will find them to be the outworking of some scriptural principle, or obedience to some plain Biblical precept.

Five Guiding Principles

1. The most obvious is the moral law. Its first table teaches us the shape which the religious side of the Christian life should take. The worship of God in public and private is seen to be an essential element of the practice of Christianity. It is our practice. Because of the first commandment, public worship is given the main place in our Sabbath observance and engaged in also during the week. For the same reason we worship privately morning and evening, and at mealtimes. There is no denying that in this respect our practice is different from that of many who also call themselves Christians. (Note that the duties of this commandment, and all the others, are urged all through the Scriptures, and examples in plenty given of their being performed by the godfearing).

Then, from the second commandment originates the form that our worship takes, and here also we differ from the will-worship that is almost universal today. (Will-worship is any form of divine worship that differs from the simple, scriptural pattern). Next we learn from the third

commandment that reverence is to be the keynote of all our handling of the things of God. It is not difficult to discern differences between Free Presbyterians and others in this; and then in the Sabbath observance required in the fourth commandment we come into an area where there are great differences between our practice and that of others.

In the same way we could go through the second table of the law, those commandments which govern our conduct toward our fellows, and find the grounds of one point of Free Presbyterian practice after another. The discipline and order which today still distinguishes many Free Presbyterian households from others, derives from the keeping of the fifth commandment. And reasons, though not all the reasons, for abstaining from novel-reading, the theatre and the cinema with their radio and T.V. counterparts are supplied by the sixth, seventh and eighth commandments. One would go on and on in this vein, but enough has been said to stress the fact that as Free Presbyterians we base much of our practice squarely on the moral law. It is surely tragic that this should contrast with the many calling themselves Christians, who increasingly ignore that divine code of conduct.

2. Another scriptural principle by which our practice is guided is that of non-conformity to the world. By the world here we mean its inhabitants in their alienation from God and concentration on worldly interests, pleasures and aims. Remember that every person whom Christ has not chosen out of the world and joined to Himself in a spiritual union, is of the world. Bear in mind also that the world is the province of the devil. He is the prince of this world, its goal, and his realm is evil. So that even in its less vicious aspects, even in those moods where it seems harmless enough and not apparently opposed to God and Christ, the world is still potentially the enemy of such as follow Christ because it hates Him. He says this. (John 15:18).

Therefore, because there is such a difference between Christ's kingdom and Satan's between the Church and the world, the Saviour in his Word warns his people, "Be ye not conformed to this world." (Rom. 12 v. 2). Again He says, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father but of the world. The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." (1 John 2 v. 15-17). Of these fleshly lusts Peter says, "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul." (1 Pet. 2 v. 11). And Paul tells us that,

“denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.” (Titus 2:12).

What then do these plain directives to live unworldly lives mean when translated into Christian practice? It means the avoidance of pleasures, interests, attitudes, customs and fashions which are characteristically worldly and denote membership of Satan’s kingdom. No-one who loves and seeks to honour the Saviour could frequent the theatre or cinema, the dance-hall or billiard room, the casino or bingo-hall, or whist-drive, because, apart from other reasons, they are utterly worldly. So too with the public bar and the race-track, the football stadium and the shinty-match. They are all the pleasure haunts of the world.

Then there are the fashions of the world which have their origin in the attempts of worldly persons to be different and so draw attention to themselves. Now, careful thinking is required in this matter. I am aware that there are various reasons for changing fashions in clothes, and some of them not to be condemned. Materials, colours, designs, all change for one reason or another, and no-one need be concerned about it, for it is probably better that we all should not appear identical. But if someone, simply to draw attention to himself or herself, sets a new fashion in some way that does not fulfil a reasonable function, that is worldly. It is not beyond possibility in a day like ours that some designer, supported by an army of fashion reporters, and aided by a galaxy of stage stars, might startle the world with a garment extending to the ankles and closed at the foot with two holes close together for the feet to come through. Some would be bound to follow it and would be worldly in doing so. To illustrate the point further, this time from real life rather than the imaginary — footwear which raises the wearer on platforms several inches from the ground, and is thus non-functional and even dangerous. These are irrational fashions whose worldliness cries out, and no follower of the holy Saviour could innocently adopt them.

There are, of course, fashions in female clothing which are immodest, such as the mini-skirt and the low neck. And men’s clothing can also exemplify worldliness; its wearers show clearly what camp they belong to when they take up with fashions which very often are set first by theatrical performers and next worn by vain-minded teenagers. Changing one’s appearance in other ways, hairstyle, etc., in obedience to current fashions is a following of the world that is unworthy of a Christian. Whoever will copy the world in its speech, mannerisms, habits and customs in order not to be odd or different, is disobeying the command, “Be not conformed to the world,” and is not likely to endure much for

Christ's sake when called upon to do so.

3. Following naturally upon the principle of non-conformity to the world is the positive one of taking Christ for our example. We must distinguish the Christian way of doing this from two other very different things. One is the idea that 19th and 20th century liberalism promoted so strongly, that Christianity consists of following the example and moral teaching of Christ. In this view sin is just a defect which can be eliminated by living a better life after the pattern of Christ's life and not the supreme evil needing to be atoned for by a divine Mediator, and overcome and eventually cast out of the soul by the Holy Spirit. The other thing is Roman Catholic moral theology in which the imitation of Christ by the individual and society is scientifically set out on the assumption that man can co-operate with God's grace, and that sin has not left him totally unable to do good in the sight of God.

So, when we come to the true following of Christ's example, we have to stress that in God's Word it is connected with spiritual union with Christ and the faith which evidences that. In proof of this read 1 Peter 2:20-23, and then v. 24: also John 15:12-14. Now, what guidance to our Christian practice do the biblical references to Christ's example give us? They require meekness and humility of manner, speech and conduct; "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me who am meek and lowly in heart." Many humble and self-denying actions will have to be performed in service to brethren and fellow-creatures. Then, when we think again of 1 Peter 2:20-23, we find that the patient endurance of injury and blame is part of Christian practice. This undoubtedly has a bearing on the whole subject of labour relations, pay disputes, strikes, etc.

Again, we find the example of the Saviour given in connection with a strong call to holiness in the entire range of the Christian's activities; "He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also to walk even as He walked." Couple these words with others, "As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." Think also of the words, "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, etc." (Titus 2 v. 11-14).

4. Another principle for our guidance is that of example. There are two sides to this. One is the guidance afforded us by the actions of believers which God has approved. A selection from the Old Testament with their works that proceeded from faith is given in Hebrews 11, and from the recorded actions of some in the New Testament, valuable

instruction may be gathered. The footsteps of the flock should be followed. They may be traced down to our own age, and they represent the accumulated wisdom and experience of the Church in this matter of practice. The way of life of those who are known and honoured as spiritually-minded, godly, and well-balanced Christians can well form an example for young Christians to follow.

The other side of this principle is that we should so live that our own example will harm no-one. Bad example is a powerful influence, as the wise men of the Persian court were quick to tell Ahasuerus. See Esther 1:17 for what they considered was a bad example. Solomon says, "One sinner destroyeth much good," (Eccles. 9 v. 18). And Paul says, "Evil communications corrupt good manners," (1 Cor. 15 v. 33). So we should ask ourselves on occasions when we may be considering whether it be right to do something; "Will my action, though it result in no harm to me, encourage someone else to do what will almost certainly harm him?" That is a subject which Paul treats at length in 1 Corinthians, Chapters 8 to 10.

5. The last principle I shall mention is perhaps the most comprehensive. It is that all should be done to the glory of God. This test may often resolve perplexity as to what we should do. "Will this be to the glory of God?" The Word says, "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Cor. 10 v. 31). As a result of redemption, the Christian is a saint, a separated person; "Ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Cor. 6:19, 20). So we find Paul in holy love to his Saviour saying, "Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." (Phil. 1:20, 21).

Will my actions tend to God's glory? Will they be a shining forth of God's grace within me in the form of words and deeds, in a way of life that cannot be condemned and which will glorify the Father which is in heaven? Either we thus reveal ourselves as children of the day, or we shall be seen to be children of the night. Our way of life will show whose servants we are, whose colours we march under, whose kingdom we belong to. Any mingling of light and darkness is offensive to God, so let us seek by grace to be Christians, and to live like Christians to the glory of the triune God.

"The disciples of Christ must not muffle themselves up in privacy and obscurity, under pretence of contemplation, modesty, or self-preservation, but, as they have received the gift, must minister the same."

Matthew Henry.

Gathan Gloir na Diadhachd

Lels an Urr. Eldeard Pearce

(Air a leantuinn bho t.d. 315)

4 Bho neo-chaochlaidheachd Dhé tha sinn a tarruig am feum do-sheachainte a tha air atharrachadh ann am peacaich, ma bhios iad gu Bràth sona, ma bhios iad gu bràth air an saoradh, agus air an deanamh gu siorruidh sona, feumaidh atharrachadh a bhi aon chuid ann an Dia na annt a-san. Nis ann an Dia cha'n urrain caochladh a bhi, feumaidh, uime sin, an caochladh a bhi annt a-san. Is e dòigh argumaideachadh reusanta agus nach eil cur na aghaidh, do pheacach a bhi'g argumaid agus ag ràdh, Tha Dia neo-chaochlaidheach; agus do-bhrigh gu'm bheil Dia neo-chaochlaidheach feumaidh mise atharrachadh na dhol a bith, atharrachadh na bàsachadh, atharrachadh na bhi truagh gu bràth. Oir, gabh beachd, cha d'rinn Dia, agus cha dean E gu bràth, duine air bith a shaoradh na pheacaidhean. Tha E ann an Criosd neo-chriochnach toileach, ullamh, agus comasach air a bhi saoradh dhaoine bho am peacaidhean; chuir E agus sheulaich E agus sheulaich E Mhac a dh'aon ghnathach gu bhi saoradh dhaoine bho'm peacaidhean agus uime sin thug E Dha ainm freagarach a chum sin, eadhon Iosa, ni a tha ciallachadh Slànuighear; Goiridh tu Iosa mar ainm dha, do-bhrigh gu'n saor e shluagh bho'm peacaidhean. Mata i.21, Ach cha d'rinn e riamhm agus mar a h-atharraich E, cha dean E gu bràth, daoine a shaoradh 'n am peacaidh-ean, gu'n atharrachadh, uime sin, annan-ne, agus aoirne, tha sinn dheth gu siorruidh. Ach beagan ùine air adhart a chùm a bhi leigeil fhaicean dhuibh neart a ni so, agus reusantachd a leithid sin de dh-argumaid, a chùm agus gu'n tuiteadh e leis an tuilleadh cudthrom agus dearbhadh air 'ur n'anamaibh uile, gu'm bu toil leibh a thoirt fa'n ear, gu'm bheil e gu tur an aghaidh, agus gu'n a bhi Cùmta ri fhocal, nàdur, comhairle, agus mionnan Dhé, gu'n tearnadh E peacaich gu'n atharrachadh a thighinn orra; oir tha iad so gu tur agus gu sònraichte an aghaidh sonas agus slàinte anamaibh air nach d'ràinig atharrachadh; anamaibh a tha fathasd a fuireach 'n am peacaidhean, fathasd ann an staid nàduir.

1. Tha focal Dhé an aghaidh sonas agus saorsa anamaibh neo-atharraichte; tha focal Dhé ag agradh gu sònraichte, gu'n atharrachadh, nach urrain daoine, nach bi daoine, agus nach gabh iad a bhi air an saoradh. Tha focal Dhé ag ràdh, "Cuirear na h-aingidh gu h-ifrinn, na cinnech uile nach cuimhnich Dia." Salm ix17. Tha focal Dhé ag ràdh, ni air bith a steach, ni air bith a shalacheas na a dh'oibricheas gràinealeach,

na ni breug, Tais. xxi, 27. Tha focal Dhé ag ràdh nachsealbhaich luchd deanamh na h-eucorach rioghachd Dhé, I. Cor. vi, 9. Tha focal Dhé ag ràdh, as eugmhais naomhachd cha'n fhaic neach air bith an Tighearn. Agus air eagal gu'm biodh e air a smuainteachadh nach eil so uile a ciallachadh ach daoine aindiadhaidh agus mi-mhoralta, cuiream so ris, Tha Dhé ag ràdh, nach teid feoil agus fuil a stigh do rioghachd Dhé, 's e sin, daoine ann an staid nàdur. I. Cor. xv, 50. Seadh, tha focal Dhé ag ràdh, agus sin le cudthrom, "Mar a beirear duine e ris," mar a bi e air athnuadhachadh leis an Spiorad, "nach urrain e dol a stigh do rioghachd neamh." Eoin iii. 3, 5. "Gu deimhinn, deimhinn,)a deir Criosd(mar a beirear duine a ris, etc. Agus a rise," Gu deimhinn, deimhinn, tha E dha ràdh thairis agus thairis, agus dha chur an ceill, ann a' nithean eile, mar chudthrom na firinn a tha E daingneachadh, mar sin tha ar duilgheadasan agus ar cion toil a bhi dha chreidsinn agus a sleuchadh Dha. Mar sin tha Focal Dhé an aghaidh a ni so.

2. Tha nàdur Dhé an aghaidh sonas agus saoradh anamaibh nach eil air an atharrachadh. Tha nàdur Dhé neo-chriochnach fìor-ghlan agus naomh, agus cha cheadaich E do pheacaich còmhnuidh a ghabhail maille Ris. "Oir cha Dia thusa aig am bheil tlachd ann an aingidheachd, agus cha chòmhnuich an t-aigidh maille riut." Salm v. 4. Cha seas an t-amadan "(agus mar sin tha na h-uile dhaoine mar a tha iad a thaobh nàdur(a'd làthair; is fuath leat luchd deanamh an uilc." rann 5. Mar sin tha Eabh. . 13. "Tha thù ni's gloine na do rosgan na gu'n amhaire thù air peacadh;" 's e sin, gu'n ghràin agus sgreamh. Tha nàdur Dhé naomh, seadh, 's e naomhachd fein a th'ann, agus tha cho furasda Dha sgur a bhi na Dhia, agus sgur a bhi naomh. Tha nàdur gu neo-chriochnach an aghaidh gach seorsa peacaidh, agus tha e gu neo-chriochnach, gu do-sheachainte, agus gu sìorruidh a fuathachadh gach uile pheacadh. 'S e'm peacadh gu dearbh, gu sònraichte agus gu h-àraidh an aon ni a tha Dia a tuathachadh. Tha ghràdh air a leigeadh a mach air iomadh cuspair, ach 's e'm peacadh an aon chuspair is fuathach Leis, agus nach eil nàdur an Dia so an aghaidh slàinte gu'n atharrachadh? Feumaidh Dia an toiseach sgur a bhi neo-chriochnach naomh, agus mar sin sgur a bhi na Dhia mas urrain E peacaich a tha fanntuinn ann an staid neo-atharraichte a bhi air an tearnadh.

3. Tha comhairle Dhé an aghaidh tearnadh anamaibh air nach d'ràinig atharrachadh. 'S e lagh comhairle Dhé, gu'm bi sinn naomh, ma bhitheas sinn sona. Gu'm bi sinn air gairm, air 'ur fìreannachadh, air 'ur naomhachadh, ma'm bi sinn air ar glòrachadh: mar sin gheibh sibh anns an t-shlabhraidh òir sin (mar a theireir ris) 4 Rom. viiim 29, 30. Gabh

beachd, tha comhairle, na mar a tha e air a ràdh ris an so, ro-òrduchadh Dhé, ag innse dhuinn, gu'm feum sinn a bhi air ar n'atharrachadh, air 'ur gairm, air ar fìreanachadh, ma bhios sinn air ar glòrachadh. Mar sin gu sònraichte ann an II. Tesalonianach ii, 13. "Do bhrìgh gu'nm do thagh Dia sinn a chùim slàinte." Ach cia mar? Am bheil feum air bith air atharrachadh? Thà. Toghnaich sinn air a leithid de dhoigh agus gu'm bheil atharrachadh air a chiallachadh. Toghnaich E sinn chùim slàinte tre naomhachadh an Spioraid, agus creidsinn na firinn. Seadh tha comhairle Dhé a comharrachadh a mach naomhachd, agus gu'r siamachadh a mach air son naomhachd. Roghnaich e sinn a chùim agus gu'm biodh-mid naomh. Feumaidh Dia uile chomhairlean a bha bho shean, ar neo feumaidh peacaich a bhi air an atharrachadh, ma bhios iad gu bràth air an tearnadh.

(R'a leantuinn.)

Book Reviews

John Calvin's Sermons on Ephesians. Banner of Truth Trust £2.50

This volume of Calvin's sermons is unique. Calvin's sermons have remained the rarest and least-known of all his works. It is stated in the Publisher's Introduction — dated Jan. 1973 — that this volume is the first republication of an entire volume of Calvin's pulpit work in English since the 17th century. When John Knox lay dying in Edinburgh, it was the French edition of this present volume, which he had beside his bed, and from which his wife read to him. Years before, he had found in Switzerland, "The maist perfyte schoole of Chryst," and it was the preaching, which nourished him then, which he treasured most at the last. So let us add, if John Knox treasured the truth of these sermons so much, may we be blessed likewise!

These searching, evangelical sermons of Calvin were intended for his pastorate, that is, the congregation which gathered in the Cathedral Church in Geneva. They were delivered without notes, and without any written record of what was said. From 1549-1560, a group of French and Waldensian refugees employed Denis Raquenier, one of their number, to take down the sermons in a form of shorthand. Later, assisted by others, they were transcribed into longhand copies. In them we hear Calvin as he spoke from the pulpit, "We can move into the actual tempo and ethos of the great years at Geneva." (Introduction p.xi).

The present volume was translated into English from the French

edition by Arthur Golding and published in 1562. The edition of 1562 was revised, and in a number of places a retranslation is given. This was done by Rev. Leslie Rawlinson, Loughborough, and by Mr S. M. Houghton. We have thus presented here a reliable edition of these sermons of Calvin.

As to the forty-eight sermons, it is needless, and indeed out of place, to do much more than direct the attention of any interested reader to this book. It would have been well if Calvin had been able to revise it personally, but evidently, owing likely to pressure of work, he was unable to do this.

In the sermons on portions of the first chapter of the Epistle, a reader will find much light given on foreknowledge, on predestination to the adoption of sons, and onwards, to the subject of the Saviour's Headship of the Church, and over all things for the Church. The second Chapter of the Epistle is especially well-known, at least in the letter of it. Paul was led to bring solemnly and lovingly before them their depraved state by nature, and yet — that believers in Ephesus, saved by grace and through God-created faith would in the ages to come show forth the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward them through Christ Jesus. An insight into the truths set forth can be got by a patient perusal of the sermons. We pass on to point out how, in the third chapter, Paul puts on record that he was raised up and set apart by the Lord to preach the unsearchable, or untraceable riches of Christ. To know Calvin's meaning, one requires to follow what he preached on vv 9, 10 and onwards. All were now, owing to the coming of Christ, welcome to have as their spiritual, refreshing portion, the mystery which was hidden in God. This 'Mystery' may be compared to something hid in a vessel covered with a lid. When one lifts the lid, the secret is out for all to see. Now, the unsearchable riches of Christ are preached to Gentiles, as the 'iron curtain' is broken down, and the very angels in glory have made known to them by the Church — that is the church according to Eph. 2:18-21 — the many-coloured, or variegated, wisdom of God. A number of quotations from Calvin's sermon on Eph. 3:10 might be supplied, but it is better for a reader to seek to follow and grasp Calvin's meaning by a first hand prayerful use of the book.

Calvin handles in a very full way such subjects as God's ordinance of marriage — the relations of parents and children, also that of masters and servants. A master in those days of the Roman Empire might have a large number of slaves. All those referred to are given counsel as to how to conduct themselves in their circumstances for the glory of God. The

closing sermons are occupied with the spiritual armour supplied by the Lord for His poor and needy people.

May such as are able to get a copy of this book be as those Huguenots, and Waldensians, and Germans, and Italians, who were glad at heart to get even scraps of these sermons, and send them to their relatives and acquaintances. May each one of us be imbued with their spirit of love for Christ's Zion.

“Now, for my friends' and brethren's sakes,
Peace be in thee, I'll say,
And for the house of God, our Lord,
I'll seek thy good away.”

In a re-issue of Calvin's book, note might be taken of p.13; line 10 fr ft., — also p.258, lines 9-10 fr top. Here Ps. 119:2 is quoted, but reference appears to be Ps. cxi:2. D. A. Macf.

Exposition on Psalm 119 by Charles Bridges. Banner of Truth Trust £1.80.

It seems that Charles Bridges who was a Minister of the Church of England in the last Century issued his exposition of Psalm 119 in 1827, when he was only thirty-three years of age.

The writer says in the preface that the design of the exposition was “to furnish a correct standard of Evangelical sincerity for the habitual scrutiny of his own heart,” and if it had the same effect upon his fellow-christians in calling them to this neglected duty, he would not consider his labour in vain.

His commentary takes the form of a brief exposition upon each verse of the Psalm which is in twenty-two parts, corresponding to the letters of the Hebrew alphabet; each part consisting of eight verses.

The richly devotional spirit of these meditations make them profitable reading and, in our view, the author is a workman who need not “be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.” The Psalm is one in which the Psalmist treats of various matters, but there are two main themes running through the whole Psalm; namely the exhorting of the people of God to follow holiness and godliness, and prescribing the rule which is the Word of God. The author observes that the Word of God is brought before us in this Psalm under ten different names; way, law, judgments, words, statutes, commandments, precepts, testimonies, righteousness, truth, and these are expounded with much clarity.

In his opening remarks on the undefiled who walk in the way and law of the Lord, he shows that this is the true way to happiness and peace,

and we feel that this is a lesson to learn, and a message especially for this present generation, who seek satisfaction and happiness in material things and the pleasures of sin. Holiness, peace and happiness are joined together in the Word of God — so is sin, misery and bitterness, and cannot be separated.

We may be allowed to give a brief quotation from this exposition before we conclude this short review.

In commenting on verse fifty-nine where the Psalmist is resolved to consider his ways — where he says, "I thought on my ways," it may not be out of place to give Dr Adam Clarke's note on the explanation of the Hebrew word used here: 'Chasabti.' He says "the word used here is a metaphor taken from embroidering, where the figure must appear the same on the one side as it does on the other: therefore, the cloth must be turned on each side every time the needle is set in to see that the stitch be fairly set. Thus, narrowly and scrupulously did the Psalmist examine his conduct; and the result was a deep conviction that he had departed from the way of God and Truth."

And now we may give the quotation from the author in expounding the passage, "The Psalmist's determination lately mentioned to keep God's Word was not a hasty impulse, but a considerate resolve; the result of much thinking on his former way of sin and folly.

How many on the other hand seem to pass through this world into eternity without a serious thought on their ways. (Multitudes live for the world, forget God and die). This is their history. What their state is is written as with a sunbeam in the Word of Truth, 'the wicked shall be turned into hell and all the nations that forget God'." Ps. 9:17.

We would commend Bridges' Commentary on the 119th Psalm to stimulate interest in the study of this precious Psalm.

Obtainable from Banner of Truth Trust.

D.N.

"Can we conceive of an effective preacher, if he be not a man of prayer? Was not the secret of Apostolic success hidden in the resolution — 'We will give ourselves continually unto prayer, and to the ministry of the word.' The man of prayer will shine forth in the pulpit with a full reflection of his Divine Master's likeness — 'grace poured into his lips.' Gifted with a wise and understanding heart — he will produce clear and luminous masses of truth — putting into his sermons all that he finds in his Bible in its correct harmony and proportion; while his own spirit will be suitably moulded into the spirit of his messages — bold — wise — simple — fervent — diligent — single-minded — full of love."

Charles Bridges.

Notes and Comments

School Text-books in America

In Charleston, West Virginia, a dispute has broken out between parents and school authorities over anti-christian text-books used in classes. The parents, mostly members of Fundamentalist Churches have protested against the use of books by revolutionary and anti-God authors, as well as to offensive references to sex, drugs and violence, according to a Daily Telegraph report.

The situation so far as education in our own country is concerned is following a similar trend and the time may be at hand when only strong protest action by parents will recall school authorities to their responsibilities in this matter. How sad it would be in a country still nominally Protestant if children were to imbibe from School text books views which were wholly anti-christian. There is need for parents in this country to be alive to the danger of anti-christian literature just as parents in America appear to be on the alert against influences of this kind.

Rise in Scottish Divorce Rate

The Statistics just released by the Scottish Home and Health Department show that there were 7,475 divorces in Scotland in 1973 — 30 per cent more than in 1972. These figures make sad reading and are indicative of the low moral state of the nation. What need there is of a day of the Lord's power throughout the nation. Only this will restore our land to a state of moral purity in national and in family life.

Television

The Independent Broadcasting Authority has come out strongly against many of today's cinema films which, with their emphasis on sex and violence, are unsuitable for family viewing. It is encouraging to know that the Independent Broadcasting Authority is adopting this line. It is a wholly responsible attitude and is to be commended. We hope that the B.B.C. will act in a similar way and decline to show such films also. What an influence for good the medium of television might become if it was purged of much of the filth which is presently screened. What a benefit it would be to the nation if it was directed to elevating the moral and spiritual life of the nation instead of debasing it.

Honduran Hurricane

In September a hurricane struck the Honduras causing disastrous flooding and high loss of life along much of the country's northern coast,

while other parts of the world, too, have experienced disasters of one kind or another.

On hearing of calamities such as these, we may be ready to ask the question, Suppose ye that they were sinners above all men because they suffered such things? What has the Saviour to say in reply to this? "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." We ought on the one hand to have a fellow-feeling with those who suffer in this way — whose homes are ravaged and their loved ones killed or drowned; while, on the other hand we ought to take warning from these calamities and flee from the wrath to come.

Lord Chancellorship

Early in July a Bill making it possible for a Roman Catholic to hold the office of Lord Chancellor passed through its final stages in the House of Commons in the space of two minutes — this was the time taken for the second reading, committee stage and third reading, following which the Bill received Royal Assent.

This fact clearly indicates that there was no opposition to the move from any quarter, a fact upon which Roman Catholic MP Mr Norman St. John Stevas commented: "Without the faintest cheep of protest the Bill to remove the alleged bar of a Catholic becoming Lord Chancellor having passed all its stages in the Lords received the approval of the Commons."

Thus history was made, without anyone apparently realising it! Great issues sometimes turn upon the tiniest of hinges, and this may well prove to be such an instance. Few seem to realise the possible implications of decisions lightly taken, inside the House of Commons and outside it. The legalising of abortion is surely a case in point, and the same would be true if ever euthanasia was made legal.

Some will argue that placing legal disabilities upon men and women of the Roman Catholic faith belongs to bygone centuries, rather than to the 1970's. If Rome had long ago ceased to meddle in political matters and now contented herself with being a purely religious body this would probably be true.

But from time to time evidence springs to light which suggests that Rome is still at work, seeking to further her own interests and extend her influence by pulling strings behind the scenes, and by employing many methods which have nothing to do with ordinary church life and worship!

From Protestant Truth Society paper, "British Citizen."

Church Notes

Ballifeary House, Inverness

Our Church Home of Rest at Inverness is presently under the care of a temporary Matron whose services the Committee are very thankful to have. It is desirable however that someone to hold the post on a permanent basis should be appointed soon. If there is anyone in the Church who feels attracted towards this essential and, we believe, rewarding task, the Home of Rest Committee would like to hear from her. It could well be that someone who feels she lacks certain formal qualifications may in fact be well suited to the post, and consideration would be given to a married couple who might feel inclined to offer themselves on the understanding that the husband would follow his own employment.

At the present time there is no waiting list of applicants for admission as Residents in the Home and the opportunity is taken now of drawing this matter to the attention of persons who may be contemplating coming into the Home.

In the meantime however, it would be very much appreciated if anyone who feels disposed to taking up the duties of Matron would get in touch in the first instance, in a completely private and informal way, with the Convener of the Home, Rev. A. F. MacKay, 11 Auldcastle Road, Inverness (Phone: Inverness 31979) or with the Clerk to the Committee, Mr Angus A. MacKenzie, C.A., 1 View Place, Inverness (Phone: Inverness 35171 or 37711) or indeed with any member of the Committee.

A. F. MacKay,
Convener, Home of Rest Committee.

Church General Secretary

“The Synod at its meeting in May agreed in principle to the appointment of a Church General Secretary to attend to the general secretarial work of the Church and to assist the General Treasurer etc. The exact functions of this Secretary would be determined after interview with the Church Interests Committee.

The Committee has examined a proposal that one of the rooms in the new Church now purchased by our congregation in Glasgow should be used as a General Office and Bookroom and found this satisfactory.

Having obtained suitable premises, the Committee have now decided to advertise this post in the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* and will be pleased to hear from anyone, male or female, who would desire to serve

the Church in this capacity. There is a small but commodious flat in the Church building consisting of two bedrooms, a living room, kitchen and bathroom. It is proposed that this flat would be made available to the General Secretary, if so desired. As several alterations to the proposed Office and Bookroom have to be made and extensive renovations have to be carried out to the Church itself, an approximate commencing date for this appointment would be June 1975 (D.V.).

Applicants who wished to be considered for this post should write to the Clerk of the Committee, Rev. R. R. Sinclair, Free Presbyterian Manse, Wick, Caithness."

Church Deputies to Canada

Rev. J. A. and Mrs MacDonald who left this country on Friday, 4th October, for Toronto, Canada, are expected to return on Monday, 18th November (D.V.). We trust that, in the Lord's good providence, they will be brought back again in safety. Rev. Moshe Radcliff who had been supplying Winnipeg for the past three months returned home safely a week before Mr MacDonald left for Canada. Rev. Douglas Beattie continues to supply Vancouver. We pray that the Lord may richly bless the labours of the Church Deputies in Canada.

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Western — At Sheildaig on Tuesday, 5th November, at 10.30 a.m.

Southern — At Glasgow on Tuesday, 12th November, at 6 p.m.

Northern — At Lairg on Tuesday, 3rd December, at 2.30 p.m.

Suicides

According to a report given in to a meeting convened by the Royal Society of Health, it is claimed that in recent years there was a considerable drop in the number of suicides in this country. It is also claimed that this was due to the counselling and advice service of the Samaritans.

If this report is correct then it is an encouraging one indeed, as previously there was every indication that suicides were increasing. The Samaritans are doing a good work if through their counselling they have been able to prevent a large number of disturbed people from taking their own life. This sin of self-murder appears, however, in some areas at least, to be on the increase and is a sign of the withdrawal of restraining grace from men. May the day not be too far distant when sinners will be so aware of the realities of the eternal world that there would be nothing they would dread more than hurrying themselves into a lost eternity.

A PARABLE: Getting ready to move.

The owner of the tenement which I have occupied for many years has given notice that he will furnish but little or nothing more for repairs. I am advised to be ready to move.

At first this was not a very welcome notice. The surroundings here are in many respects very pleasant, and were it not for the evidence of decay. I should consider the old house good enough: but a light wind causes it to tremble and totter, and all the braces are insufficient to make it secure. So I am getting ready to move.

It is strange how quickly one's interest is transferred to the prospective home. I have been consulting maps of the new country and reading descriptions of its inhabitants. One who has visited it has returned (Paul), and from him I learn that it is beautiful beyond description. Language breaks down in attempting to tell of what he heard while there. He says that in order to make an investment there he has suffered the loss of all things that he owned here, and even rejoices in what others call making a sacrifice. Another, whose love to me has been proven by the greatest possible test, is now there. He has sent me several clusters of the most delicious fruits. After tasting them, all food seems insipid.

Two or three times I have been down to the border of the river that forms the boundary, and have wished myself among the company of those who sing praises to the King on the other side. Many of my friends have moved there. Before leaving, they spoke of my coming later. I have seen the smile on their faces as they passed out of sight. Often I am asked to make some investment here, but my answer in every case is, "I am getting ready to move."

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." 2 Cor. 5:1.

Acknowledgment of Donations

The General Treasurer, Mr Wm. D. Fraser, F.C.M.A., 20 Daleview Avenue, Glasgow G12 0HE, acknowledges the following donations with sincere thanks:—

Sustentation Fund: Anon., Glasgow postmark £30.

Home Mission Fund: Anon., Glasgow postmark £15.

Jewish and Foreign Mission Fund: Anon., Glasgow postmark £20; Anon., Inverness postmark £36; A.F. £25; John 3: 16 £100 per R.W.M.M.

Aged and Infirm Ministers', etc. Fund: M.G. £1; A.F. £25; Anon., Glasgow postmark £7.

College and Library Fund: M.G. £1; Anon., Glasgow postmark £7.

Organisation Fund: Anon., Glasgow postmark £5.

General Building Fund: Anon., Glasgow postmark £6.

Dominions and Overseas Fund: Anon., Glasgow postmark £10.

China Mission Fund: Anon. £10; Anon., Lairg postmark £5.

Home of Rest Fund: 'May the Lord bless', Greenock postmark £12; Resident £20.

Magazine Free Distribution Fund: Inverness postmark £3.

The Treasurers of the following congregations acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:—

Aberdeen: A.F., Falkirk £20; K. & A. £2, both for Manse Fund.

Applecross: Anon. in appreciation of Rev. A. Murray's services as a Faithful Minister of the Gospel £20, for Applecross Sustentation Fund.

Glasgow: Tolsta Friend £1; Anon. £10; Anon. £10; Anon. £1; all for Sustentation Fund; A Friend £7; Anon. £5, both for St Jude's Development Fund per Rev. D. McL.; Anon. £5 for Dr Tallach's expenses to Taiwan.

Greenock: Anon. £12 for Minister's car (in collection plate).

Lochcarron: Gairloch Friend £2; From the will of Miss May Gillies £100; In loving memory of my husband £50, all for Church Funds; From the will of Mr Roderick Matheson £100 for Church repairs; Friend £5 for Communion expenses; Envelope in plate £5 for Foreign Mission; Friend £1 for Manse and Church Funds; D.N.C. £5 for Building Fund.

London: Anon., John 3: 16 £100 for London Church and Manse Building Fund per Mr R.W.M. MacKenzie, Fearn.

North Harris: Mrs A.M., Meavag, South Harris £5; Mrs E.C., Leverburgh, Harris £5, both for Communion expenses; Friend, Tarbert £5; Friend, Tarbert £1, both for Sustentation Fund; Two friends, Kyles Scalpay £10 (£8 for church and manse repairs, £2 for minister's car expenses); Friend, Tarbert £1 for minister's car expenses; Two friends, Tarbert £10 for manse kitchenette; Two friends, Kyles Scalpay £5 (£3 for manse kitchenette and £2 for minister's car expenses); Friend, Glasgow £1 for manse kitchenette; Two friends, Leacklee, Stockinish £5 (£3 for church and manse repairs and £2 for minister's car expenses); Friend, Leacklee, Stockinish £10 (£5 for church and manse repairs and £5 for minister's car expenses); Friend, Leacklee, Stockinish £2 for church and manse repairs; Friend, Scrote, Stockinish £5 (£3 for church and manse repairs and £2 for minister's car expenses); Friend, Scrote, Stockinish £2; Friend, Tarbert £5 (£3 for church and manse repairs and £2 for minister's car expenses).

North Tolsta: A friend, Ardaneaskan £10 for Congregational Funds; Faithful friends, North Tolsta £4; Friends North Tolsta £2, both for car expenses.

Plockton/Kyle: Friends, Inverness £5; Friend, Drumbuie £1, both for Manse Building Fund.

Portree: Anon. £5 for Church bus; Anon. £5; Anon. £2, both for Church Property Maintenance Fund; Anon. £10 for Church Renovation, all in Church plate; Harris Friend £2 for Church renovation.

Raasay: Mrs M. Ardineaskin, in memory of a dear husband and son £7; D. MacS., Glasgow £5.25; D.J.M., Bishopton £2; Friend, Fort William £2; J.C., Glasgow £2; Friend (late of Raasay) £3; Friend, Inverarish £2; Friend, Inverarish £1, all for Manse extension per J.M. MacLeod; Friend, Raasay £1; Friend, Inverarish £3, both for Manse extension per Treasurer; MacL., Edinburgh £5 for Sustentation Fund per J.M. MacLeod.

Shieldaig: Mrs M., Shieldaig £2.50 for Shieldaig Sustentation Fund and £2.50 for Foreign Mission, in memory of loving Parents.

Staffin: Friend, Inverness £5 for Congregational purposes per M.M.I.; Two friends £10 for Congregational purposes per Rev. J.McD.

Stirling, Perth and Dundee: Friend, N. Tolsta £3; John 3: 16 £100, both for Church Extension per Rev. I.R.T.

Tain and Fearn: Anon. £75 for Ministers' Widows and Orphans; Anon. £25 for Missionary's Widows (Home Mission); Anon. £5; Anon. £5; Anon. £5, last three for Manse Fund.