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Our Eyes Are Upon Thee

When King Jehoshaphat was told that a great multitude was coming to fight against him, we read that he "feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah". Accordingly, the people of Judah gathered themselves together to ask help of the Lord, and Jehoshaphat prayed for them in the house of the Lord. In his prayer he acknowledged that the Lord was their God and that He had power to deliver.

In that prayer Jehoshaphat appeals directly to the Lord for the overthrow of their enemies saying, O our God, wilt Thou not judge them. At the same time he acknowledges their own helplessness before these numerous foes of Moabites, Ammonites and others. He says, "We have no might against this great company that cometh against us," confessing in this way that their own arm could not save them. So, too, does he acknowledge the insufficiency of their own wisdom to meet the crisis that has arisen, when he says, "neither know we what to do." Yet he does not stop there but goes on to say — "but our eyes are upon Thee."

It is obvious from this where Jehoshaphat's help lay. It was not in his own strength or in the strength and power of the armies of Judah, but in the Lord his God. He is the alone Deliverer. He is the help of His people in their time of need. When all other refuges fail, there is One who never fails and in whom His people can safely trust and look for deliverance from all their enemies.

What a formidable alliance of Judah's enemies at this time confronted Jehoshaphat. So it is with the Church of God at different times in her history. It is not just one single foe with which she is faced but many foes allied together and seeking her destruction. Her preservation from generation to generation notwithstanding her numerous enemies, is a

standing miracle, and an evidence of the outputting of Divine power on her behalf. Self-help has no place in her preservation or deliverance. She is closed in to dependence upon her God — “our eyes are upon Thee.” This is a Source of help which will never fail, notwithstanding her many fears. Hath He said it, and shall He not do it? He who is the Preserver of Israel, the One who slumbers not nor sleeps, will sustain His own Church and Cause in the world in the darkest day and preserve her from all the onslaughts of the enemy.

So is it also with the individual believer. The enemies that beset him or her about are no less numerous. The Lord’s people, like Jehoshaphat, are confronted with enemies altogether too formidable for them. What a combination of mighty foes are found in the alliance between the world, the flesh and the devil, all intent on the destruction of the child of God! How hopeless their case if their deliverance was in their own hand! They have to look outwith, and beyond themselves for deliverance — even to the mighty God of Jacob, who is an almighty deliverer. He is engaged on their behalf. Because they have trusted in Him, they shall never be put to shame. They have to say, “If it had not been the Lord who was on our side . . . then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us.” But they have also to say with the Psalmist, “Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth.”

Let the Church of God and the people of God, then, not be afraid. So long as they make the God of Jacob their refuge, they have nothing to fear. While they exercise dependence upon the Lord for their deliverance, saying, “Our eyes are upon Thee”, their safety is assured. It is honouring to Him, it is God-glorifying to acknowledge dependence upon Him, and He will glorify His own Name in their preservation and deliverance.

Let Israel’s help from Zion come:
when back the Lord shall bring
His captives, Jacob shall rejoice,
and Israel shall sing.”

Christ’s Request To His Hidden Ones

by Rev John Colquhoun

(Continued from page 286)

“Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice: cause me to hear it.” — Song 8:13.

This morning, in endeavouring to speak from these words, we brought before you a little concerning I. The One speaking in our text, and showed that it was Christ. II. The Gardens referred to, and III. The One addressed.

IV. We now proceed in the fourth place to say something about "The Companions."

(1) All who truly profess Him in the world may be said to be Christ's companions. "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Luke: 22, 28, 29, 30. In the days of His flesh He was falsely charged with having a devil and being mad, and with being in league with Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. Whatever effect these charges might have on many who were not His true followers, His real disciples remained with Him, and acknowledged Him as their Lord. This is one of the marks of the Lord's true people in every age of time. Christ may be evil spoken of as He is in the present generation, and many will turn their backs on Him. Churches may put Him outside the door, as they do when they bring into the worship of God what He has not commanded, but His real disciples will go out with Him, and in the strength of God-given grace will be His companions through "evil report and good report." "Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." Heb. 13:13.

(2) All who fear the Lord are companions to each other. There is a bond of union between them such as David speaks of. "I am a companion to all them that fear thee, and of them that keep they precepts." Psalm 119:63. Neither nationality, race, nor colour, is a bar to this union, for "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Gal 3:28.

(3) As companions to each other it is true concerning the Lord's people that they have the same interests, and what these interests are, which are characteristic of them all, manifest how they are ruled by the spirit of self-denial. It is true concerning them all that they seek the glory of God more than anything else. The Holy Spirit opened their eyes to behold the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ in His Person, and in His sufferings, and they were brought to realise that they ought to glorify Him in every thing that they do, and that all things were to be made use of in subordination to the glory of God, and that their use of the means of grace ought to have respect to the glory of God. "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." I. Cor. 10:31.

They, as companions, have the same interests with respect to the advancement of Christ's Cause in the world. They are bound up with His Cause so much that its prosperity gives them great joy, while anything that will hurt it gives them great sorrow. They seek to advance it by their example in attending the means of grace in public, and by a walk consistent with their profession. They endeavour to advance it by their means by contributing to its support as liberally as the Lord will lay to their hand. These outward signs that they have a unity of interests with respect to the Cause of Christ are supported by what no eye sees but the eye of God. They resort to secret prayer to plead with God Himself that He would come and advance His own kingdom. "Arise, O God, plead thine own cause: remember how the foolish man reproacheth thee daily." Psalm 74:22.

They have the same interests as regards the good of never-dying souls. They continually watch for tokens that sinners are returning to the Lord, and this also causes them many a visit to a Throne of Grace in secret, and even the smallest tokens are received by them with joy. It may be said of them that they are companions with David when he said, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." Psalm 122:1. Those of them whose duty it is to speak publicly to their fellow-creatures plead with them as Christ's ambassadors, earnestly to seek Christ and His salvation. "We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." II. Cor. 5:20; and those who are not speaking in public, in secret join their petitions with those whose duties are more public, and they can both say with respect to those with whom they come in contact as the Apostle Paul says, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." Gal. 4:19.

(4) They are companions in tribulations. The Apostle John, writing from Patmos, could refer to himself as, "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ." Rev. 1:9. They all know, more or less, of tribulations in connection with faithful witnessing on the side of their Saviour. The world is hostile to such witnessing and will do everything that it is permitted to do to suppress it, and to persecute those who would witness for Christ. The devil will give them plenty of tribulations because he knows that they are the Lord's people, and that they disturb his kingdom, and that their endeavours, however weak, have the effect of making uncomfortable those whom he is lulling to sleep. Further, they have tribulations because of the flesh in themselves. Many a bitter hour they have with the motions of the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life, and none

of them will escape that as long as they are in this world, but there is encouragement for them in the words of the Lord Jesus, "In this world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." John 16:33.

(5) It is true concerning these that they have fellowship with each other, and as creatures having fellowship, they love each other. This is given as a mark on them that they are no longer spiritually dead. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death . . ." I. John 3:14. This love manifests itself in many ways. They delight in each other's company, and when they have a measure of liberty together the hours pass all too quickly. Their love to each other is manifested by their endeavours at hiding each other's faults. The world will do its best to expose the faults of God's children, but the true Christian will try to cover them up. Further, their love to each other is seen in their rebuking of each other when anything worthy of censure appears. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend." Prov. 27:6. No less clearly is this love seen in accepting rebuke in the right spirit. "Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head: for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities." Psalm 141:5.

They who have fellowship with each other bear each other's burdens. Literally, when one member of the body suffers, all the members suffer with it, so it is with those who are members of the mystical body of Christ. Their sympathy goes out to each other, and they do everything in their power to help the sufferer. They bear each other, and each other's burdens on their spirits at a Throne of Grace, thus making things easier for those who feel their need, when they know that those whom they believe to be the Lord's true people are remembering them before their heavenly Father. Such a bond of union and fellowship will cause those who are in it to speak freely to each other concerning spiritual matters, and this is a great benefit. "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name." Mal. 3:16.

Further, it may be said concerning those who have fellowship with each other that they know each other. They know each other on their walk. They are "journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you." Numbers 10:29, and thus, they are strangers and pilgrims in this world. They are seeking, though they themselves feel that they are not successful in it, to lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily

beset them, and to run with patience the race which is set before them. They are known to each other by their language. The hypocrite may pronounce Shibboleth so successfully that it will take him out of a tight corner at times, but these habitually speak the language of Canaan with a warmth and a savouriness which will cause it to be known on them that they had been with Jesus. They are known by their love to the Lord's people and how that love finds expression in deeds where no ostentation is displayed, and they are known by their love to God's house. "Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth." Psalm 26. Those who thus know each other are bound up together by the bands of God's love.

V. We have to consider now, in the fifth place, what is here asserted. "The companions hearken to thy voice." We have here an assertion that those who are Christ's companions, and who are companions to each other hearken to the voice of the one who is addressed by Christ.

(1) The voice of the one addressed can be heard in her manner. It is said of the late Dr Kennedy, Dingwall, that he often said that there were three marks on a young person who has been brought under the power of the truth, that is, a closed mouth, a sharp ear, and a warm eye towards the Lord's people. When the Holy Spirit comes to work savingly in a sinner, by showing him what he is in himself and what is true of Christ, that sinner will have a sense of his own ignorance and inexperience, and will be "more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools." Eccles. 5:1. He feels, that whatever he might know, he is only a babe in knowledge and in Christian experience, and that it is most unnatural for a new-born babe to begin to speak.

Their voice is heard by their having a sharp ear. They have now realised the importance of eternal realities and they have begun to hear as for eternity. They love to hear concerning the glory, majesty and excellency of Christ, and their souls burn within them when He is exalted in the preaching of the gospel, or the subject of a conversation between the Lord's people. They desire to hear of His dealings with His own, and they will be mentally comparing notes to see if in their own experience there is something of what they are hearing. This is profitable for them as they are thus led to guard against what might be injurious to them and hurtful to the Cause of Christ. It also prepares them, in a measure, to expect hard experiences in following Christ. It would be well in our day if professors of religion were known more by a closed mouth and a sharp ear than they are.

They have a warm eye towards the Lord's people, and this in itself

speaks volumes. Ruth did not follow Naomi for any natural beauty in her, or for material gain, but the secret of her attachment to her mother-in-law was that she herself had become an heir of eternal life, and her love now went out to the Lord's people in general and to Naomi in particular as one in whom she saw the image of Christ shining brightly. Thus she was constrained to say, "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me." Ruth 1:16, 17.

(2) Their voice is heard in their walk, for all who fear God walk according to a rule. In the Shorter Catechism we are told that "the word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him." Those who take it as a rule are continually consulting it. As a sailor, who, when sailing in dangerous waters, continually consults his chart, so the one who is alive to the dangers of the way in which he is travelling through this world must, with the Psalmist, say of God's Word, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Psalm 119:105. They cannot do without it, and frequent consulting of it has a sobering effect on them, and increases their desire to be more and more consistent with the Word of God.

As their walk is according to the rule of God's Word it is not an aimless walk. They have an object in view, and they keep their eye continually on that object and seek to be rid of everything that would distract their attention. "... Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Hebrews 12:1, 2. They experience the drawing power of Christ, and are drawn to Him. Though they often conclude that they are hypocrites, yet their walk betrays them, for they desire to be where He has promised to be, and where His people are. They get a sweet savour among the Lord's people which causes them to be often in their company, and this is no wonder, for it is the sweet savour of Christ. In their aims in this world they seek to have the glory of God in view in everything. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." I. Cor. 10:31.

(3) The companions hearken to the voice of these as that is manifested

in their desire. The language of their souls is that which the Greeks, who came to the feast, had when they came to Philip, "Sir, we would see Jesus." John 12:21. They desire to see the matchless beauty and transcendent excellency that is in Christ and this is one of the reasons why they dwell in the gardens. In the preaching of the gospel there is an unfolding of the Person of Christ as the God-man. He is at the same time very God and very man, the everlasting Father and the Child given, the Governor among the nations and the Servant of His poor ones, the One who can never die and the dying Saviour. There they also see His beauty and His excellencies in His offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, and are enabled to see that there is none so suitable for them as Christ, yea, when He is mentioned, all others go out of sight.

They desire after holiness. In this world they are harassed by being joined to a body of sin of which they desire to be rid. At one time they thought that if they would live for some time in the world they would become very holy, and probably one of the reasons why some are delaying to make a public profession on the side of Christ is, that they hope that in course of time they will be more fit for witnessing on His side. However, to their dismay, they are finding out that instead of attaining to the holiness which they looked for, their experience is that they are getting more unlike what they desire to be. Sins, which they thought were dead and would never again trouble them, are lifting their heads; the old man whom they were endeavouring to crucify is more lively than ever, and there is nothing that they find themselves less conformed to than the Scripture which says, "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." Gal. 5:24. The effect of this on them is to pant and cry more and more after holiness.

Their voice is to be heard in their desire after fellowship with Christ. This often causes them to go to their knees in secret in the hope that He will grant them His presence. They know that they will have to part with their nearest and dearest in the world but they cannot do without Christ. When they cannot get a glimpse of his gracious countenance the language of their hearts, and often of their lips too, will be, "How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me? How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? how long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?" Psalm 13. This will send them from place to place looking for Him. They will come to the public means, and go from one place to another at Communion seasons in the hope that He will reveal Himself to them in another way than He does unto the world, and the language of their soul will be, "O that I knew

where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat." Job 23:3. Their going about in this way, speaks plainly to the "companions" saying, "Saw ye him whom my soul loveth."

Again, their desire after God's Word is a speech which the companions understand very well. In the journals of a well-known missionary there is a record of a savage who came under the power of the truth, and whose desire after God's Word is expressed in his own simple words, "Missi, make the Book speak to me." Those who can read God's Word, and who desire after that Word, often have an errand to the Throne of Grace, pleading that the Holy Spirit would "make the Book speak" to them. They know well that a mere head knowledge of the Word will avail them nothing. It is the Holy Spirit alone who can make the Scriptures the Word of life to their souls.

Those in whom the companions are so interested that they hearken to their voice, speak in a wonderful way in their desire after God's house. The Rev. John MacRae (MacRath Mòr) used to say that there were two kinds of cripples in the world. There were the Devil's cripples and Christ's cripples. The Devil's cripples would be at their lawful calling during the whole week, each day from morning till night, but when Sabbath came they would be sick and would not rise from their beds. Christ's cripples would often be weak in body, and often not able to take an active part in the affairs of the world because of affliction and weakness, but when the Sabbath came their place would never be empty in the House of God if they could help it. There are many such who are not making a public profession of religion, but whose efforts, in the face of difficulties, to be where God's worship is kept, loudly proclaim that to them, "a day in thy courts is better than a thousand." Psalm 84:10.

Again, these speak volumes by their activity on behalf of Christ's Cause in the world. Jerusalem is their chiefest joy. They do not rush forward as if none but they were fit to help the Cause of Christ. A modest restraint and sense of their own unfitness is characteristic of them, but they will never let down the Cause by withholding a helping hand when needed. They do it quietly and without ostentation, and would rather not hear anyone speak of what they do. If they allow that they are servants at all, they look upon themselves as unprofitable servants, and may be classed with those to whom Christ will say, "I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison and ye came unto me." In unfeigned surprise they will say, "When saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we

thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked and clothed thee? Matt. 95:35-39. In this the "companions" hearken to their voice, and in this, as in other points taken up they must respect it as the voice of living souls.

VI. This leads us in the sixth place to notice the request — "Cause me to hear it."

(1) Christ loves to hear His people's voice and this shows His wonderful condescension. He is the high and holy One who inhabits eternity, but who dwells with him who is of a poor and contrite spirit, and who trembles at His Word. His hidden ones are before His eyes continually. It further shows His delight in doing them good. It would be to their good, by way of strengthening and comforting them, that they would raise their voice to Christ for then they give Him an opportunity of answering their prayers, and making Himself known to them. The disciples in the storm caused Him to hear their voice when they wakened Him, crying, "Master, carest thou not that we perish." Mark 4:38. Though He answered them in a way which administered a rebuke to their unbelief, yet they got a view of Him which they never had before, so that they were constrained to say, "What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" Verse 41.

(2) He desires to hear their voice in confession. They must confess to Him their sinfulness and unworthiness. They find themselves to be nothing but lumps of sin and corruption. "From the soul of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores." Isaiah 1:6. The Scriptural way for them to act in this connection is to go to Himself, in order that He, as the Great Physician, will use His knife to let out their corruption prior to applying the balm which is able to heal their sin-sick souls. In thus causing Him to hear their voice they confess that there are no grounds, on their part, for which He would look upon them in mercy. Unworthiness is written on every fibre of their being, and on their life and conduct in the world.

He loves to hear their voice in confessing that His mercy is great. "For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever: thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens." Psalm 89:2. Those who love Christ have a deep sense of His mercy. They view their own sinfulness and unworthiness as a reason why He should not look near them, but over against that, His mercy is magnified in not visiting them according to their sins. "He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." Psalm 103:10. He manifests His pity as that of a loving Father unto His children.

(3) Another way in which He desires them to cause Him to hear their

voice is in making their requests known to Him. They are often harassed with a sense of a prayerless spirit. They at times may have words, but often they have not words itself. "Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak." Ps. 77. A sense of the sinfulness and unworthiness already referred to makes them afraid that it is vain for them to present their requests. Thus they are doing injustice to the One whom they desire to love, for they act as if it were not His pleasure to grant their petitions. He has, however, clearly expressed in His Word that the contrary is the case. "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." John 16:24. He loves to hear their faltering petitions, and their groanings that cannot be uttered. In this connection it may be pointed out to those to whom Christ is saying, "Cause me to hear thy voice," that they should not rest content with asking small things, for the greater the things are which are asked in the name of Christ, the greater is the honour put on Christ, for it manifests a clearer sense of what inexhaustible riches are in Christ, and a sense of His willingness to bestow out of these riches.

(4) "Cause me to hear thy voice" in praise. The Lord's true people have reason to mourn over how little they are exercised in this branch of God's worship. Christ would not have it so for He is continually affording matter for praise in His great bounties which He is continually bestowing upon unworthy sinners. When there is a great manifestation of His mercy in connection with some signal deliverance we do sometimes at such times utter words of praise, but, even then, there may be more words than there is of real praise from the heart. If this is so in connection with special mercies, O how liable we are to accept His common mercies without thinking of rendering Him any praise. For everything that we receive in this world praise is due to Him. It is pleasant and "a comely thing" to all who are the subjects of the saving work of the Holy Spirit. It is the delightful employment of the spirits of just men made perfect in Heaven. Alas! that we should be so little employed in this world in what is the employment of saints and angels in glory.

(5) They are to cause Him to hear their voice in commending Him to others. This is what ought to animate every one of the Lord's true people. It is the spontaneous outcome of the Holy Spirit's gracious dealings with them. It is a taste of the pardoning mercy of God, applied by the Spirit of Truth, and a consciousness of the freeness of His mercy that will cause them to say to other poor sinners, "O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him." Psalm 34:8. And an oft-repeated exercise of the Spirit's power in removing contracted guilt will cause them



to say, "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy." In this they afford Him pleasure in what He solicits so earnestly in our text — "Cause me to hear it." With the woman of Samaria they can say, "Come see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" John 4:29. When such language is supported by a consistent walk in the world it is a commendation of Christ which speaks volumes, and is bound to make an impression on some. In the case of not a few it has been known to have been the means of turning them from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God.

(6) He delights to hear their voice in witnessing for Him in the world. Many would wish to be like the woman who was cured of the issue of blood. They would like no one to hear that they had received a cure. If she had got things her own way she would have gone back to her own home and never said anything publicly about her cure. It might be noticed that she had ceased to go to her physicians, who never bettered her but rather made her worse. The neighbours also might notice that she was better in health and appeared happier, and that the fretfulness, which was the direct result of her disease, had given place to a spirit of love and goodwill towards them, but they would never know that she had received a cure through the Great Physician of soul and body. But Christ would not have it so. "Who touched me?" This was not a question that sprang from ignorance; it was well-known to Him who was the needy creature, and what was her motive in touching Him. Yea, He knew what, probably, she was ignorant of, herself, the great faith which prompted her to touch Him, and that faith and what it procured, must be brought out to the gaze of a wondering multitude, many of whom had no real union with Christ, but they must be made to see the wonderful works of God, and, therefore, she must cause Him to hear her voice in acknowledging publicly what He did for her. Thus He is speaking to you who would live as a private Christian, and who would wish to steal into Heaven without anyone knowing it. He will make all such to know the great things which they must suffer for Him. May He bless anything said consistent with His Word. Amen.

To bless God for mercies is the way to increase them; to bless Him for miseries is the way to remove them.

William Dyer.

Missionary Meeting at Zwolle, Holland

The annual public meeting of Mbumba-zending was held as usual on 30th April when the official birthday of the Queen of the Netherlands conveniently provides a public holiday. This year the place of meeting was Zwolle on the eastern side of the Zuider Zee and some 70 miles from Amsterdam. It had been thought that the somewhat distant venue would deter some of the friends from attending but all such fears were soon allayed as, in company with our hosts, Mr and Mrs N. Nieuwenhuis of Hoofddorp and Rev. Donald Maclean, Glasgow, the guest speaker this year, I arrived to find the spacious "games hall" full to almost total capacity. 7,500 persons were present and many of them came from that part of the Netherlands.

Ds. C. Smits, Chairman was absent due to his engagement in a preaching tour in South Africa and a message of apology from him was read. Ds. F. Mallan, vice-Chairman presided and gave the opening address based on Psalm 86 vv 9, 10. There followed the singing of Psalm 89 vv 9-11 & 47, 48 when the first collection which realised 62,000 guilders was taken. Rev. D. Maclean then suitably addressed the large assembly from Psalm 91 v 1, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." Mr Scholten provided the translation into Dutch. In thanking the deputies from Scotland Ds. Mallan referred to the happier state of things in Zimbabwe as compared with the time when he, himself had visited these parts. He then addressed himself to Miss Peta van de Ridder who was seated in the front row and was soon to take her departure for nursing duties at Mbumba Hospital. He wished her success and Divine preservation in her work.

After lunch Ds. Dorsman gave an address from Psalm 29 v 11b followed by the singing of Psalm 102 vv 13, 14 & 22, 23 when the second collection was taken, amounting to 49,000 guilders. Then Ds. de Waard spoke from Revelation 7 vv 9, 10 and the concluding address was briefly given by Ds. de Jong from Isaiah 57 v 1.

The singing of Psalm 138 vv 7, 8 ended the meeting at 3.30 pm. It had begun at 11 am and once more the enthusiasm and Christian love of the people of the Netherlands for the Church's Mission in Zimbabwe had been amply demonstrated, — "It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are" (Rom 15:27a). With the addition of children's mission boxes etc. contributing a further 87,000 guilders, the final sum realised

came to 198,000 guilders, a truly amazing result! It was a pleasure to see Mr van Waveren in sufficiently good health to be present at Zwolle, and Mr van Vliet is due my thanks for the many courtesies he showed me. The concluding words of the final Psalm sung at Zwolle may suitably end this report of proceedings there, —

“Lord, still thy mercy lasts; do not
thine own hands’ works forsake.”

ALEXANDER MURRAY

Injunctions to Ministers¹

by W.G.T. Shedd D.D.

Gentlemen of the Graduating Class: The object of an address from a Seminary Faculty to a class of young men just leaving the institution for the serious work of their life must be, to speak if possible a few words that shall be “the words of the wise, which are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies.” Eccl. 12:11. There is little time for the expansion of ideas, and no call for laboured instruction. Let me, then, in the briefest manner possible, bring to your thought two or three injunctions that are suited to all times, and specially to this time.

1. In the first place, remember that your special work among mankind is, *to teach revealed truth*. You have not studied ten or fifteen years in order to conduct trade, to invent arts, to manage politics, but to convey ideas. Your function is that of instructors. And it is instruction of the highest order: that which relates to the immortality of man and the infinite part of his existence. Let nothing divert you from this kind of labour. If you are asked to leave it, and take the government of a kingdom, or the control of immense material interests, say with Nehemiah, “I am doing a great work; I cannot come down.” Nehem. 6:3. Devote your entire future life, be it ten years or forty, to the instruction of your fellow-men in the doctrines of the Christian religion, so that at the close of it you can say: “I have not accumulated wealth, I have not swayed senates, but I have taught the Word of God.” “I have preached righteousness in the great congregation; I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, Thou knowest.” Ps. 40:9.

2. In the second place, remember that he who teaches revealed truth to mankind, *glorifies God in the highest degree possible to a feeble*

¹ An Address delivered in Union Seminary.

instrument like man. He who erects a temple for divine worship honours God. He who founds a university or builds a hospital from Christian love for man, honours God. He who performs any kind of Christian service, be it a gift of cold water, honours God. All such service is accepted and rewarded. But the very highest service which any human creature can render here upon earth to the Triune God, is to preach his Word. When Christ chose twelve men to be the teachers of mankind in the truths of his religion, he exalted them above all the Cæsars. What emperor, what poet, what philosopher, to-day, stands so high in the scale as St Paul? When Christ calls a man to the ministry of the Word, he calls him to do a work for which he is himself personally more concerned than he is for any other.

The secret of the interest which God takes in the truths which you are to teach, lies in the fact that they centre in the redeeming work of the Son of God. Redemption is a Trinitarian transaction. God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost originate and execute it. Hence their infinite concern for its success. We forget, in our puzzle over the problem of sin, that the dreadful effects of sin are not confined to man the sinner. The permission of evil has not only ruined man, but has involved the merciful Godhead in an immense self-sacrifice. The entrance of sin into this lower world, *has cost God the holy more than it has cost man the sinner.* Not all men together have suffered so much, or will suffer so much, for their own sin, as God incarnate has vicariously suffered for it. The Lord Jesus Christ can say to every sinner upon earth: "You have not resisted unto blood, striving against sin. You have not in anguish cried, If it be possible, let this cup pass from me. You have not in agony exclaimed, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

This stupendous self-sacrifice on the part of one of the Trinitarian persons, accounts for the Divine zeal for that system of truth connected with the crucifixion of the Lord of glory, and explains God's interest in the preaching of the gospel. God infinitely desires the success of it; and the success of it he has made to depend upon the teaching of it to all the world by the Christian ministry. Whoever, therefore, preaches Christ the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, does a human act, than which there is none higher in the Divine estimation. In the great day, there will be many rewards of varying value for varying services. Our Lord will speak an applauding word to every faithful disciple. But to that minister of the Word who, utterly unknown to the busy secular world, lived and died among the benighted heathen, he will address a plaudit to which the mass of the church is not entitled: "Well done; for thou hast

preached my cross and passion; thou hast, instrumentally, sprinkled my blood upon human souls." "I saw," says St. John, "the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived and reigned not, until the thousand years were finished." Rev. 20:4,5.

3. In the third place, remember that he honours God most highly, who *preaches God's truth most truly*. When Dante reaches the ninth and last heaven of Paradise, he hears from Beatrice a vehement denunciation of certain theologians and preachers of those days, whose ignorance or avarice induced them to substitute their own inventions for the pure word of the Gospel. She then tells him that:

"Christ said not to his first conventicle,
'Go forth and preach impostures to the world.'
But gave them truth to build on; and the sound
Was mighty on their lips: nor needed they,
Beside the gospel, other spear or shield,
To aid them in their warfare for the faith."

Paradise, xxix, 115-19.

All truth is powerful in proportion as it is thoroughly stated. A half-truth is weaker than a whole-truth. Dilutions are not pungent. The secret of intellectual power is intellectual intensity. When there is a zeal for God's house, the zeal eats up both the speaker and hearer. This was that devouring energy that made the Son of God so earnest, when, on the way to Jerusalem and the bitter cross, he strode on before the disciples and "they were amazed." Mark 10:32. The Redeemer never stated truth languidly or hesitatingly. His double, "Verily, verily, I say unto you," implies that his perception was thorough, and his belief undoubting.

Now, this must be the style of his ministers. They are ambassadors in his place, and they must not appear before men querying and doubting, but asserting and demonstrating. They cannot, indeed, speak with that almighty and overwhelming power that belonged to their Divine Lord; and he does not require this of them. The Lord Jesus Christ was never foiled in an argument; and he always silenced his opponent. He spake as never man spake. But the minister of Christ can possess some of his Master's power. If he follows him closely, if he studies him closely, if he communes with him closely, he will derive from him some of that spiritual energy, that sincere downrightness, and that holy boldness, which compels the attention and respect of the human mind.

Endeavour, then, during the twenty or forty years that you shall be giving religious instruction to your fellow-men, endeavour to present the *whole* truth. Adopt no hesitating and half-way views. Make no hesitating and half-hearted statements. Preach the truth *truly*.

4. In the fourth place, remember that *revealed truth must be preached exclusively*. When the Emperor Galerius lay dying in the hope that the God of the Christians might possibly give him the help which all his supplications to the heathen divinities had not succeeded in obtaining, he issued an edict abolishing the persecuting laws against the Christians, permitting them to erect their sacred edifices, and to perform their public worship unmolested. But with this condition: that they should do nothing to weaken the old religion of the Roman Empire, and should not attempt to convert any one from the religion of his ancestors to the new Christianity. (Mosheim's Commentaries, ii., 452.) The requirement was, that Christianity should be only one of several religions: *e pluribus unum*. The Christians could not accept such a deliverance from persecution as this. They had received a commission to preach the gospel to every creature under heaven, and to proclaim to the wide world, with all its nationalities and religions, that there is no other name, under heaven, given among men, whereby they must be saved, but the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. They understood Christianity to be an exclusive religion. They were not willing to place the bust of Jesus Christ in the Pagan pantheon with those of Jupiter and Apollo. They would go to the stake, rather than promise not to endeavour to convert men from paganism to Christianity.

Now, this must be the spirit of Christ's ministers in all time. They cannot consent to put the Christian gospel among the *religiones licitae*, the allowable religions. This is the demand now made upon the Christian church, in some quarters. A class of popular but superficial writers are actually proposing to Christendom that it receive religious instruction from Boodha, and get divine illumination from the "Light of Asia." Naturalism, both in literature and science, denies the exclusiveness of Christ's gospel, and with Pope, in his Universal Prayer, calls upon the

Father of all, in every age,
In every clime adored,
By saint, by savage, and by sage,
Jehovah, Jove, or Lord.

To grant this demand, is to destroy Christianity. Because it proceeds upon the assumption that man has no sin that requires atonement and

remission, and no corruption that necessitates regeneration. This theory of one universal religion made up of a conglomeration of all religions, supposes the essential soundness of human nature, and denies the doctrines of man's guilt and Christ's vicarious sacrifice. It implies that humanity, by means of its natural religious sentiment and its progressive tendencies, can lift itself up from lower to higher grades of character and condition.¹

Now if there is any one postulate more antagonistic than another to the claims of Christ and his religion, it is this. And if there is any one demand made by this portion of the educated classes that is to be more determinedly repelled than another, it is this. "Think not," said the Founder of Christianity. "that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace but a sword." Matt. 10:34. Let no man think that those cardinal doctrines and facts of the Christian religion which are grounded in the assumption of the fall and ruin of all mankind, can be made to harmonize with any schemes that deny or overlook this. Christianity will recognize whatever elements of ethical truth there are in the natural ethnic religions, expelling the large amount of error mixed with them, but will never stoop to be classified with them, or to be put upon an equality with them.

But some man will say: "This will make the Christian minister haughty and intolerant. This will bring back the middle ages, and the tyranny of the Papal church." Not so, if the Christian minister counts himself as the mere servant, and an unworthy servant, of his divine Lord and Master. If he regards himself as teaching the results of his own investigation, and the product of his own discoveries in religion, then, indeed, to proclaim an exclusive religion will be the height of vanity, and also of absurdity. But if he sinks and buries out of sight his own feeble and fallible personality, in the wisdom and authority of divine revelation, and of the high command: "Go, preach my gospel to every creature," he will not be a proud man, but a very lowly one. When Moses and Aaron, in a moment of egotism, said to the people: "Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?" (Numbers 20:10), their pride wakened the divine displeasure, and they were chastised by not being permitted to bring the people into the promised land. But when Moses said to Jehovah: "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence" (Ex. 33:15), he was the meekest of men.

¹ The proposed Congress of All Religions at the Columbian Exposition looks in this direction, and tends in its practical influence to equalize the ethnic religions with Christianity.

Neither need the minister of the Christian religion be feared on the ground of intolerance. The days of bloody persecution are over. The conflict now is that of ideas and opinions. Every creed is tolerated. The atheist can blaspheme his Creator to his heart's content on a public platform, with none to molest him or make him afraid. A polygamous community dwells unharmed in the midst of Christian institutions. He who wants more toleration than this, wants, in the phrase of Sancho, "better bread than can be made of wheat." But some men do ask for more. They require that opinions upon the grave and solemn subjects of human responsibility and destiny which clash with their own, be surrendered. They call it intolerance, when a Christian denomination holds a strong creed, and insists that its clergy hold it, and preach it. They denominate it bigotry, when Christian churches refuse to accept certain tenets, or to do anything that will promote their extension among men. Now if this is intolerance, it must be tolerated. Opinions must be left free. Every man must be permitted to think for himself, and form positive and fixed views if he please. And so must every *association* of men. It is too late for the "liberal" theologian to say to an ecclesiastical denomination, "You shall not be Calvinists, nor require that those who voluntarily join you shall be so likewise or be expelled from the body."

When, therefore, great and influential masses of men organize themselves into churches founded upon creeds derived in their opinion from an infallible revelation, they are not to be charged with an intolerant and persecuting spirit. The conflict between them and their opponents is largely intellectual, though not wholly so, because the heart is concerned as well as the head. It is a question of logic as well as faith. The closest reasoner, not the inquisitor with thumb-screw and rack, will carry the day. If Celsus argues more powerfully than Origen, Hume than Butler, Strauss than Neander; if in the long sweep of the ages skepticism evinces a purer reason and a deeper intuition than faith, then skepticism will conquer the human intellect, and take it captive. Let both grow together, then, until the harvest, and as the Christian church brings no charge of bigotry and intolerance against the disbeliever, so neither let the disbeliever bring this charge against the Christian church.

Gentlemen of the Graduating Class: You stand now on the threshold of ministerial life. The years of preparation and public irresponsibility are behind you. Before you, are those of leadership and accountability. You are now to guide opinions, and particularly the religious opinions of men. Upon the clergy, depends very greatly the mode of thinking, and the tone of feeling, in the Christian church. If you are clear, bold, and firm in your

statement of divine truth, you can be tracked by the positive and energetic churches which will respect you, and cling to you with hooks of steel; and you will be remembered long after this brief life is over, by the transmitted vigor and force of your ministry. St. Paul exhorted Timothy to "make full proof" of his ministry. This meant a concentration of his power; a full performance of the duties of his calling. Those of us who can look back over forty years of intellectual and spiritual service can see a failure in this respect. If called to pass over it once more, they would endeavour to live a more simple, a more sincere, a more undivided life. The glory of God, the honour of Christ the Lord, is the one motive that simplifies and concentrates human service. There is no scattering of energy, when that end is before a man. We are not our own. We did not create ourselves; we do not uphold ourselves; and we do not redeem ourselves. But we live and labour too much as if we had a private and independent existence of our own. We do not lose ourselves in God, and hence our work is mixed with subtle references to self. This makes us anxious; and anxiety weakens and discourages. Endeavour to discharge your coming ministry in simplicity and godly sincerity. Then you will not be cast down by seeming failure, or elated by success. Your ministerial life will be calm; the close of it will be eternal peace; and the result of it a far greater amount of usefulness than can be reached by any other method.

"The Lord bless you, and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace." This ancient benediction your instructors utter with all their heart, as they now bid you a most hopeful, and a most affectionate, Farewell.

Address to the Mbuma Missionary Society

By Rev. Donald MacLean, Glasgow.

The Word of God tells us that "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty" (Ps 91:1.). This secret place is undoubtedly the Mercy-seat or the Throne of Grace. This the place where the child of God desires to abide, where he can pour out all his needs and complaints to the Most High believing Him to be the Hearer of prayer. It is the place where he can have soul communion with

the One Who loved him with an everlasting love. It is in the nature of the love of God to seek communion with those who are the objects of His love and it is in the nature of the grace of love in the regenerated soul to seek such communion with God — the great object of love. "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee" (Ps. 73:25).

Those who come to the Throne of Grace feel their need of the blessings to be obtained at this Throne. These blessings are described as "mercy and grace to help in time of need." (Heb. 4:16). All who dwell in the secret place feel their need of mercy. They did not always feel this need. When they were dead in trespasses and sins, they had no sense of their need of mercy. But when they were awakened by the Holy Spirit to believe that God was, they also believed that they were sinners in the sight of God. Like David, they confessed, "My sin is ever before me". (Ps. 51:3). Like David, they found themselves in the horrible pit and in the miry clay, utterly unable to deliver themselves (Ps. 40:2). They did feel their need of mercy then, but how was mercy to be obtained?

The mercy seat inside the Most Holy Place was sprinkled with the blood of atonement. This blood spoke of justice having been satisfied because judgment against the sins of Israel had been executed in the death of the sacrifice. The shedding and sprinkling of this typical blood pointed to the Lamb of God. "God will provide himself a lamb for the burnt offering," (Gen. 22:8) said Abraham to Isaac. God did indeed provide this Lamb in the Person of His beloved Son in our nature. John, the Baptist, declared, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," when he spoke of Jesus of Nazareth. It was in this glorious Person that divine justice was satisfied because the judgment of death was executed in Him against the sins of His people. He bore their sins in His own body on the tree of Calvary and in the shedding of His blood was atonement made. It is through this Person and His shed blood that mercy comes to the sinner. "Justice and judgment are the habitation of Thy throne". That is, justice has been satisfied because judgment has been executed against the sacrifice. It, therefore, follows, "Mercy and truth shall go before Thy face" (Ps. 89:14). Mercy, then, flows forth through the broken body and the shed blood of the Lord of Glory. Those whose prayer at the throne of grace is, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner," know this to be the case and this is their salvation.

The people of God not only need mercy at the time of their union to Christ but need mercy all their days in this world. They also need grace to help in time of need. They are a poor and needy people and their times of

need are many and various. In those times, they are taught to come to the throne of grace to seek needed grace in the name of the One Who said, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2. Cor. 12:9). "Out of His fulness have all we received and grace for grace" (John. 1:1).

Those who are in the secret place seeking such blessings are said to abide under the shadow of the Almighty. The wings of divine love and power cover them and protect them. The mighty God of Jacob is on their side and no foe can finally overcome them. Ruth was safe there when she came from the darkness of Moab to trust under the wings of the Lord God of Israel (Ruth 2:12). So are all the poor and needy who belong to Christ. "But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: Thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God" (Ps. 40:17). Therefore we are told in Psalm 91 that the language of those who dwell in the secret place is, "I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress; my God; in Him will I trust" (Ps. 91:2).

This is what is needed above all things in the Mission in Zimbabwe — that ministers and people would dwell in the secret place of the mercy seat. We, too, who pray for them in Scotland, Holland and other places must dwell in this secret place pleading on their behalf. We read that a security fence has been put round Mbumba Mission. This is right and proper. But they need the wings of the Almighty to cover them from all their enemies and to keep them faithful to the Word of God in the midst of affliction. Thus, they may enjoy the promises in this Psalm, "Thou shalt not be afraid of the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday — There shall no evil befall thee; neither shall any plague come near thy dwelling." (Ps. 91:5,6,10).

The Church in Scotland and Zimbabwe are most grateful to the Mbumba Zending and its supporters in Holland for their continued generosity and thank you most sincerely. Two students, Mr Alfred Mpofu and Mr Zororai Mazwabo have completed their theological course in Scotland and have now returned to their own country. They should be ordained at an early date, the Lord willing, to preach the gospel of the glory of the blessed God to their own people. It was a great encouragement to us all, that the Lord, in the midst of the terrorist war, should have called these two men to the work of spreading the Word of God. May we not firmly believe that He has a purpose of mercy towards the people of that sunny but troubled land when He is still sending out His ambassadors?

Although we, in Scotland, are at a distance from you, in Holland, and

although Zimbabwe is still further away, we can all meet in the secret place of the Most High and pray that the Church of God may prosper. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee" (Ps. 122:6).

Obituaries

Neil MacDonald, Inverness

The removal of the Lord's people in a day of great declension in the professing church is an event that may pass unnoticed by a godless, unheeding age, but nevertheless speaks loudly to this sinful generation of the Lord's wrath. It is an ominous indication of coming judgments. Their witness against prevailing sins and their prayers, now ceased, and their places empty in the courts of God's house and in the congregation of the righteous can only sadden the hearts of the Lord's people. "The righteous perisheth and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come" — Is. 57 v. 1.

The subject of this brief notice was born at Stockinish in the Isle of Harris in June 1908 and passed away in his home in Inverness in April 1979 after a short illness. His father, Roderick MacDonald, was a godly man who belonged to the Tarbert congregation and when elected to the eldership of the congregation, his lowly view of himself prevailed with him to refuse office. Neil, after the regular course of preparation at Portree and Aberdeen University, entered the teaching profession. It was a time of depression in the educational world which affected the schools and young graduates found it hard to get work. He did relief work in the Harris schools till appointed in 1939 to Ardersier; thereafter he taught at Drinishadder, was for 17 years at Stockinish and in 1962 came to Mallaig. In 1970 he was appointed to the Inverness High School and three years thereafter retired from teaching.

In 1944 he was united in marriage to Effie MacLeod in the Rodel Church near Strond, Harris on the very date which became the anniversary of his death. In this famed, historical building, the event of their marriage was remarkable as being only the second to take place within its ancient walls.

He was elected to the office of the eldership in the Inverness congregation, a real accession to the strength of the court, most diligent in attending to all the duties of his office and most willing to supply

neighbouring congregations when asked to conduct religious services among them.

The noticeable thing about Neil MacDonald which impressed those who knew him was that he was a man of prayer. His vibrant, resonant voice pleased the dull of hearing and also his other hearers when he was conducting public worship. He loved the weekly prayer meetings and when increasing debility made it an effort for him to get to church, he stayed at home when the family came to the English prayer meeting to conserve his strength for the prayer meeting in Gaelic on Wednesday evenings. When at last confined to bed he continued constant in prayer. His last public service was among the Tomatin people in October, 1978 when he spoke from the words "And unto this people thou shalt say, Thus saith the Lord; Behold I set before you the way of life and the way of death" — Jer. 21 v. 8, and in his remarks the words of Moses frequently recurred: "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore, choose life that both thou and thy seed may live" — Deut. 30 v. 19 and was urgent in his appeals to the young.

As his illness progressed he had the conviction that the days left him were few and he spoke more frequently of his hopes. During these days, Is. 43 and John 8 were consoling and helpful to him. Waking from sleep one night he spoke to his wife of the happiness that awaited him in the heavenly world. The last weekend he spent on earth he had his family around him and spoke solemnly to them to attend church regularly and give their hearts to Christ. He wished to be buried in Tomnahurich cemetery where he rests till the morning of the resurrection. He was reconciled to the Lord's will during the last weeks of his illness and has received, we believe, his wish to join the host of the redeemed who are around the Throne, praising the Lamb and contemplating his adorable face in peace. "Help Lord; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men" — Ps 12 v. 1.

We pray that the Lord of their godly husband and father would be the God of his sorrowing widow and family.

A.F.M.

John Gunn, Inverness

It is with sincere regret that we have to record the passing of this godly man from our midst to his eternal rest. It is not their social qualities or their natural disposition, however amiable, that endear the Lord's people to us but what can be discerned of the gracious work of the Spirit in them.

The removal of those who fear the Lord is not only a cause of sorrow on their own account, but a source of weakness to the Church on earth. The Saviour complained in the prophetic words of the Psalmist: "I am a worm and no man; a reproach of man and despised of the people" — Ps. 22, v. 6. His people can expect no better treatment from the unbelieving world. However they who loved the Saviour and His Cause when living in the world, because of their godly walk and conversation when in lowliness of heart they sought to avoid giving offence to Jew or Gentile, will be missed by the Lord's people. It will afford some pleasure and interest to recall their humble, affectionate, inoffensive walk and conversation while they were in the world. "The memory of the just is blessed, but the name of the wicked shall rot" — Prov. 10, v. 7.

John Gunn was born at Skerry in the parish of Tongue on the north coast of Scotland at the beginning of this century. He served for a short time in the navy and at the age of 20 years joined the Glasgow Police Force where he spent most of his active life. He retired in 1951 but remained in Glasgow where he was employed by the firm of Alexanders in the work of collecting unpaid debts. When the family moved to Inverness he was employed by a local firm of solicitors. His daughter Mrs Zena MacAskill moved into Inverness with her husband in 1961 and on the loss of his beloved wife, John lived permanently with them and remained under his daughter's loving care till his end came early this year. The last three years of his life was a time of sickness, he suffered greatly and pain became so intense that the doctor ordered surgery. John steadfastly refused to consent to an operation, but pain increased with the progress of the trouble till an operation could no longer be delayed. His recovery was painful and protracted and in March this year he passed away in Raigmore Hospital. He showed great patience during these trying months when his strength gradually ebbed away and hope of recovery was given up.

While in Glasgow John Gunn attended the ministry of the eminent pastor of St. Jude's, Rev. N. Cameron and it may be confidently said that the first religious impressions were formed which led him to think seriously of his soul's state in view of eternity. When he went to request baptism for his child who is now the daughter with whom he came to live in Inverness, he waited upon Mr Cameron in the manse. The minister being out, he was shown into the study where, to occupy his time till Mr Cameron's return, he took up a book to read and became so engrossed in it that he did not observe the minister enter the room. Noticing the title of the book, Mr Cameron loaned the book to him to read. It was not,



however, till the ministry of Mr Cameron's successor, Rev. R. MacKenzie, that John ventured again to go to the manse, but this time it was for admission to the Lord's table. Under the conviction of his sin, it seems that the passage of God's word which brought him relief spoke of the love of Christ to his soul: "In this was manifested the love of God toward us because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world that we might live through him" — 1 John 4, v. 9. Thereafter, in a broken voice indicating that he was profoundly moved, whether in public prayer or when conducting public worship, he spoke much of the love of Christ.

Elected to the eldership in the Inverness congregation, he served on the Kirk Session till laid aside by illness, diligently and circumspectly. He took a kindly interest in the young and when supplying vacant congregations near Inverness he pled with them to hold fast by the doctrines and practice of the church of their fathers. When he went farther afield, his loving and fervent services were greatly enjoyed. He was of a reflective turn of mind and when his daughter and her husband were absent during the day he improved his time by reading and meditation upon the Word of God and matured his thoughts on the great doctrines of the faith. Undoubtedly this practice of prayerful meditation, so greatly neglected today, prepared him for the time of pain and suffering and sustained his mind during the trials of his last days. He passed away in March of this year, we believe, to his eternal rest. To his daughters who mourn their great loss of a loving father, we extend our sincere sympathy and pray that they may receive the strong consolations of the Spirit. "And I will pray the Father and he will give you another comforter that he may abide with you for ever" — John 14, v. 16. *A.F.M.*

Letter from Zimbabwe

Mbumba 11.8.81

Dear Friends,

Two months have passed since we moved up here, the nurses first, followed two weeks later by ourselves. This brought an end to the rather wearisome twice-weekly clinics we were running from Ingwenya and Bulawayo. Settling in is proving a rather lengthy process. Exchange control regulations make the purchase of electrical equipment difficult and we have been unable to establish any link e.g. radio-telephone with the "outside". Since the necessary equipment is not forthcoming we are looking into the possibility of buying our own.

The girls trained by Miss Cox at Ingwenya are also very much at the stage of settling in. They are now having to put the theory they learned into practice and the transition is not easy. However, considering they had no knowledge of either at the beginning of the year they are doing very well.

Shortly after coming here David Ndlovo and I toured the North of the mission district — especially the Samokantana and Gampagalala areas. The trip was informative but rather depressing. At Mbumba itself and to the South the picture is more encouraging. A preaching plan has been drawn up for Mbumba and the four-preaching stations outside so that they are all supplied regularly. There are two services at Mbumba and one in the out-stations. As well as the Thursday Prayer Meeting here there are weekly meetings for the school-children at Mbumba and Lutsha.

The dispersal which occurred during the war resulted in several of our members and adherents teaching in the Binswa area among the Tonga people. This week a small group from the Mbumba Kirk Session, headed by David Ndlovo are travelling to the area to assess the possibility of missionary work among them. By all reports they are a very poor and backward people. Needless to say they took several parcels of Dutch clothes with them to afford these poor people relief.

Though we do not feel isolated or threatened and have plenty to keep us healthily occupied, security — or the lack of — in the Nkai area continues to cause alarm on occasions. One store not far from us has been closed because of repeated robberies. Rev. Dube, Zenka, was shot at in front of his home by three armed robbers who were trying to intimidate him into giving up school funds. They fled without getting anything when someone else entered the home. Reports of buses being robbed are not uncommon. The police are taking stronger measures this month D.V. and are hopeful of getting the situation under control.

On a cheerier note we are looking forward to next week's (20th August) induction and ordination of Mr Mazwabo to work among the Shonas. He is to be based at Shabani (D.V.) which is a small mining town between Bulawayo and Fort Victoria to the south of the country. The whole of our work here is very much on a missionary footing but, with no support from medical or educational institutions Mr Mazwabo will be in very much the same situation as Mr Radasi at the beginning of the century.

Miss P. Van der Ridder arrived just as the hospital was about to open and Miss J. Coote a few weeks after. They are now both immersed in the work here. We look forward to the arrival of Mr N. Murray in the near

future D.V. They are, or will be, welcome for themselves, for the skills and experience they bring and the impetus we trust they will give to the Lord's work here. Where work is "in the Lord" it will not be "in vain".

Yours very sincerely,
James Tallach.

Notes and Comments

The Law Concerning Blasphemy

Mr H.J.W. Legerton F.C.A., former Secretary of the L.D.O.S. has issued the following call for action in connection with the Law Commission's programme of law revision. It may be that this affects England only at present but what is done in England in this way is likely eventually to affect Scotland as well.

"The Law Commission is engaged in a programme of revising and restating substantive criminal offences in modern statutory form with a view to eventual codification. Among the subjects being dealt with is that of "offences against Religion and Public Worship", on which subject the Commission has issued an extensive Working Paper, a summary of which has been made available free of charge to any who care to apply. This is done in view of the Commission's desire to seek the views of the public on this question. The Commission intends to complete a final report with recommendations and a draft Bill which will be laid before Parliament. Views may be submitted not later than 30th November, 1981, and it is important that Christian people should take advantage of this invitation without delay. Letters should be sent to Mr C.W. Dymont, Law Commission, Conquest House, 37-38 John Street, London WC1N 2BQ.

The following statement which has been submitted by the writer to the Commission will, it is hoped, be of help in framing representations:

'The following comments are submitted in relation to Working Paper No.79 of the Law Commission, particularly with regard to the offence of blasphemy.

1) Blasphemy is offensive to Almighty God and brings down His righteous judgement upon offender, whether nations or individuals. The gravity of this fact needs to be emphasised and pondered well.

2) Blasphemy is offensive to all God-fearing persons and even to many who are not members of religious bodies. Such offence is not merely a matter of distaste; it causes hurt and distress of the deepest felt nature to

the great many to whom God and all that is sacred are most vital and precious.

3) The effect of blasphemous utterances on radio, television and other media, such as the Press, upon children is most harmful. For those of tender years to hear or read such matter can damage their outlook upon life and deprive them of all respect for the higher qualities which sanctify and sweeten human existence.

4) Protection of the community from such outrage as is presented by blasphemy is called for and this can be done by law to a large degree. Hence it is maintained that legislation on the matter is necessary.

5) Legislation of this character, it is agreed, needs clarification and should not be in the form of common law, as at present, but in the shape of statute law.

6) In formulating statute law on Blasphemy, it must be emphasised that, despite social changes, this country is basically — if even only formally — Christian, and that therefore the Law should specifically protect the Name and Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. At the same time it is recognised that some will plead that other faiths, now having in this country large numbers of adherents will be entitled to similar protection from hurtful expressions toward those matters sacred to them. Regard must be always had to freedom for reasonable yet respectful criticism and disagreement amongst the various religions.

7) The legal definition of blasphemy should be clear. It is suggested that it should particularly embrace irreverent and insulting reference to Almighty God, to our Lord Jesus Christ, and to God the Holy Spirit. The definition does not require any reference to the formularies of any particular denomination.

8) The question of “intent” is admittedly a difficult one, but we feel it need not enter into the matter of blasphemy. If words or expressions are blasphemous, they are so whether or not the person/s uttering them intended them to be such.

9) The need to preserve “freedom of expression” is recognised but it is submitted that this freedom — in common with other “freedoms” — must be limited in such manner as to preserve the public good and general well-being, which well-being is seriously imperilled by liberty to blaspheme — such liberty is “licence”.

10) It is acknowledged that there is a need for a new crime to penalise disturbances in places set apart for prayer and worship — as suggested by the Commission, but in addition to and not as a substitute for penalty against blasphemy.

Authority and order are of God: "By Me kings reign" (Proverbs 8:15); "For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God" (Romans 13:1). Blasphemy is therefore subversive of Authoritative Government, and, for this additional reason, to be discouraged by law.' "

The Moonies and Britain

It has been reported in the Press that the Moonies are to transfer 300 of their missionaries from Britain to West Germany after a three year crusade in this country in which they claim to have recruited more than 2000 lay members. The removal of these missionaries from our country is certainly good news for Britain but can hardly be so for West Germany. The proliferation of sects in recent times is indicative of the low state of religion in the land. If the present generation were as well acquainted with the teaching of the Word of God as a former generation were, they would not be so easily imposed upon by the different sects that go about seeking to win adherents.

Church Notes

Day of Humiliation and Prayer

The Synod resolved that "Wednesday, 25th November 1981, be held as a day of humiliation and prayer throughout the Church to confess our sins which contribute to the relative absence of the power of the Holy Ghost in our Assemblies, to blush and pray as did Ezra on account of the accelerating pace of our national spiritual and moral backslidings and cry to the Lord for a revelation of His glorious grace and mercy in the midst of deserved wrath, through the infinite merits of His dear Son."

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Australia and New Zealand: At Grafton on Friday 2nd October at 10 a.m.

Northern: At Dingwall on 27th October at 2.30 p.m.

Outer Isles: At Stornoway on 3rd November at 2 p.m.

Committee Meetings (D.V.)

The following Committees will meet at Inverness Church:

Tuesday 6th October

10.00 am-11.00 am Church Magazines

11.00 am-12 noon Religion and Morals; Sabbath Observance;
Welfare of Youth

12.00 noon-1.00 pm Publications

2.00 pm-4.00 pm Finance

4.00 pm-5.00 pm Training of Ministry

7.00 pm-9.00 pm Jewish and Foreign Missions
Wednesday 7th October

10.00 am-12.00 noon Church Interests

2.30 pm-4.00 pm Dominions and Overseas

Induction and Ordination of Rev. H.I. MacKinnon M.A.

On August 25th 1981, at 7 pm a large congregation from many parts of the church gathered to witness the induction and ordination of Rev. H.I. MacKinnon, Probationer, to the charge of Strath in the Isle of Skye. The church was filled to capacity, among whom were Revs. A. Murray, S.F. Tallach, J.W. Ross, J. Ross, and A. Morrison. Their presence and contribution to the service not only added much to the interest and enjoyment of the occasion, but underlined the special bonds and benefits of the Presbyterian structure of the church.

The relevant part of the Minute calling this meeting was read by the Clerk. The Edict was returned duly served. The Officer of Court made the usual proclamation at the door of the church. Thereafter, the Moderator, Rev. D. Nicolson went to the pulpit and preached a solemn and faithful sermon from 2nd Corinthians chapter 5, verses 18 to 20. Public worship being ended, the Clerk gave a brief narrative of the proceedings in the Call to Rev. H.I. MacKinnon. The Moderator then addressed to him the questions to be put to ministers at their induction and ordination to a pastoral charge, and he having returned satisfactory answers to the same, and having signed the Formula in the presence of the congregation, the Moderator did in the name of the Presbytery and with solemn prayer, and laying on of their hands, ordain and induct the said Mr MacKinnon as minister to the pastoral charge of the Strath congregation, and the brethren gave him the right hand of fellowship. Thereafter, the newly inducted minister was suitably addressed by the Clerk, and the congregation fittingly exhorted by the Moderator. The praise which was truly hearty and harmonious was led by Dr Cameron Tallach, at present on furlough from medical missionary work in Hong Kong.

We were greatly heartened by the breadth and depth of interest engendered by the induction of this young minister. It is our fervent prayer that the ministry now begun will be richly owned of God in the conversion of sinners, and the edification of His people. The Free Presbyterian witness is, we believe God given, and God originated. It is this firm conviction that makes us pray all the more earnestly for the preservation and dissemination of that Testimony at home and abroad in an age of moral and spiritual declension.

Fraser Macdonald, Clerk to the Skye Presbytery.

Acknowledgment of Donations

The General Treasurer, Mr W.D. Fraser, 20 Daleview Avenue, Glasgow G12 0HE acknowledges the following donations with sincere thanks:

Aged & Infirm Ministers' etc Fund: A Forgie, Redding £25.

Trinitarian Bible Society: North Tolsta Congregation, £52.94.

Home Mission Fund: Correction to insertion in July Magazine. Donation of £1,000 acknowledged as for Strathy Home Mission Fund, should read as donation of £1,000 to Strathy Congregation, for use as needed in that Congregation.

The Treasurers of the following Congregations acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:

Flashadder: Mrs MacD., £30 for door coll.; Mrs S., £10 for Comm. Expenses; Envelope in plate £10 for For. Miss. Fund.

Fort William: Friend of the Cause, Caol, £2 for Sustentation Fund, per Rev. J.A. MacD.; Miss E.O. Gunn, Edin., £5 for most needy fund (envelope in plate).

Glasgow: F.M., £10 per Rev. D. McL. for Congr. Fund; Miss N.H. per Rev. D. McL. £1; Anon £10; Mrs Walters, £100 per R.A.C.; Miss N.H. £5 per Rev. D. McL.; Anon £2; R. MacC. £25, all for Sust. Fund; Anon £20; Anon £5, both for Underground Evangelism; A MacPh. £5 for Bus Expenses per A. McK.; Anon £30 per Rev. D. McL.; Anon £1; Anon £2; Anon £5; Anon £5, all for Bus Fund.

Laide: Friend in coll. plate £10; Friend, Fort William £20; Friend, Poolewe per D.M.R. £10; Friend at Communion £10, all for Laide Manse Fund; In coll. plate £10 (£5 for Manse Fd & £5 for Cong. Funds); In coll. plate, in memory of loved ones £10 for Ministers Car Fund; Friend £50 for Church door colls.; Friend, Strathburn £14 (£8 for Sust. Fund, £3 for Home Missions & £3 for Foreign Missions); Friend, Strathburn £2 for Church door coll. per Rev. D.A.R.

North Harris: Friend, Tarbert £100; Friend, Portree £5; Friend, Portree £5; Rev. A.M.K., Tarbert £100; Friend, Stockinish £200; Friend, Cleuer £100; Friend, Cleuer £100; Friend, Harris House £5; Friend, Collam £50; Friend, Collam £50; Friend, Kyles Scalpay £100; Friend, Meavaig £100; Friend, Tarbert £100; Friend, Tarbert (ex Glasgow) £50; Friend, Tarbert £100; Friend, Diraclete £20; Friend, Kyles Scalpay £100; Friend, Kyles Scalpay £50; Friend, Kyles Scalpay £20; Friend, Leacklee £30; Friend, Leacklee £60; Friend, Sheilbost £30; Friend, Leacklee £50; Coll. Plate (Stockinish) £5; Friend, Leacklee £50; Friend, Collam £50.

North Uist: Envelope in plate £10 for Comm. Expenses; Envelope in plate £10 for Church Repair; Anon £30 for Congr. Purposes; Friend, Sollas £10 for Car Fund; Friend, Stornoway £5 for Car Expenses; Mr E. MacD., Glasgow £100 for Congr. Purposes, last four per Rev. A.M.; Mrs Hopkins (London) in memory of Mrs C. Macleod (Grimsay) £100; Miss MacD (Glasgow) £10 for Sust. Fund; Miss MacD. (Glasgow) £20 for Sust. Fund.

Shieldaig: Envelope in plate £10; Anon £10 for Comm. Expenses; Anon £3; Jannie and Leny Mol, Holland £25 per D. MacCuish, last 2 for Church and Manse Repairs.

Stirling: Friend, Dunblane £20 for Stirling Sabbath School Books per Rev. D.J. MacD.

Stornoway: Mr A. Nicolson, £2 for Organisation Fund, £5 for Home Mission Fund, £1.60 for Church Door Collection and £25 for Sustentation Fund, all per Mr Neil Murray; Anon, £10 per Treasurer; Friends, N. Tolsta, £20 for Sustentation Fund per Rev. J. MacLeod; Anon, £5 per Treasurer; Miss C. Matheson, £10 for Sustentation Fund per Mr N. Murray.

Uig: Anon £5; Anon £10; A Tolsta Friend £5, all in plate for Comm. Expenses; Friend, Portree £5 for Car Fund per Rev. D.A. MacLennan; Mrs M.A. MacLean and Family, Breanish, in loving memory of my dear husband £20 for Property Fund per Rev. D.A. MacLennan.

Waternish: Anon, in loving memory of loved ones £10 for Church Funds.