

THE
Free Presbyterian Magazine
and Monthly Record

Vol. 87

FEBRUARY 1982

No. 2

Christ, Head over His Church

As the Mediator of the Everlasting Covenant Christ occupies the offices of Prophet, Priest and King to His Church. These are not offices which He is to lay aside. Even now He is the great Prophet of the Church in revealing through His Word and Spirit the will of God for our salvation. While it is true that He has completed the sacrificial work of His High Priestly office, when as the great High Priest He offered up one sacrifice for sin for ever, yet He is even now engaged in that other part of His High Priestly function, His intercession within the veil, without which no blessing could ever reach any sinner or any one of His people. While it is true that in His death He obtained as King of Zion complete victory over all His enemies, yet He is even now sitting as King over Zion in ruling and defending her and in subduing and conquering all His and her enemies.

Christ did not take these offices to Himself. They were given to Him by the Father. With regard to His High Priestly Office we read, "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek". Psalm 70:4. It is no less so with regard to His Kingly office. We read in the second Psalm: "Yet have I set my King upon My holy hill of Zion". Were He not worthy of it, the Father would never have conferred this office on Him. But He is infinitely worthy of it as eternity will reveal.

He is reigning now in the midst of His Church and He is ruling in its midst. Men would dethrone Him and rob Him of His glory. Many would cast Him out of His own Church, and treat Him as an outsider. But He will have none of it. Kings and rulers are warned against the attempt to dethrone Him so that they may rule themselves. They are called to submit themselves to Him. The One who is King over His Church is also King of Nations. "Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of

the earth", the Scripture exhorts them. They are called to "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry".

As Christ is despised as King over Zion, so is that Zion despised over which He wields His sceptre. Men think little of Christ's Cause in the world but this is because they do not know the King of Zion. He is altogether glorious and powerful. His people will willingly concede His Headship over them and over His Church. They will say, "My Lord, and my God". Can that Zion then be of so little consequence that possesses such a glorious King? Surely not. The Lord's Cause is dear to Him, however despised by men. Well may He value it, who paid so dearly for it. He had to ransom His people, not only from the grave of death but from the grave of a lost eternity. Is it any wonder then that they are engraven on the psalms of His Hands and that their walls are continually before Him? He can never forget them or deliver them to the will of their enemies.

When men try to usurp the place of Him who is Head over His Church, the people of God will reject them and own no other but Christ alone as their King. A Saul will not do for them, no, nor a David either, but only that One who is both David's Son and David's Lord. Grace will ever resent men giving to any other the place due to Christ alone, however high and mighty these usurpers may be, and whatever place they may occupy in Church or in State. None but Christ as Head over His Church, the living soul says. They are jealous for His honour and glory and desire that Christ may ever have the pre-eminence as Head over His Church. For His part, what honour He is to confer upon them. They are to sit with Him judging the twelve tribes of Israel — this honour have all His saints. But over and above all this, He is to confer upon them that unspeakable blessing of living and reigning with Him for evermore.

Who are they that are thus to reign with Him for ever? Just those whom He took from the dust and from the dunghill to set them with princes, even the princes of His people.

"They shall be brought with gladness great,
and mirth on every side,
Into the palace of the King,
and there they shall abide".

Psalm 45:15

*Though Christ's coat was once divided, He will never suffer His Crown
to be divided.*

Thos Brooks

Sermon

by Rev. Donald MacLean, Glasgow

“Thy hands have made me and fashioned me: give me understanding that I may learn thy commandments. They that fear thee will be glad when they see me; because I hoped in thy Word”. Psalm 119, v. 73.

The Psalmist here acknowledges that God is his Creator. That is one of the things we must all come to acknowledge. He is the Creator of the ends of the earth who fainteth not, neither is weary. God is our Creator and our Lawgiver, and will be our ultimate Judge. The Psalmist is acknowledging that God created him, and, because God created him, he as a creature is dependent upon Him, “for in Him we live and move and have our being”. He is the one who upholds us, as the scripture declares, “by the word of His power”.

We do not acknowledge this as we are by nature. Though we may acknowledge it with our lips, we do not acknowledge it in our hearts. We are altogether dependent upon God, and until we come to the knowledge that we are altogether dependent upon Him, that in Him we live and move and have our being, we do not truly believe that God is our Creator.

We believe that the Psalmist is doing more than merely referring to the Creatorship of God, because he goes on to speak of the desire he had, “Give me understanding that I may learn thy commandments”. This embraces the fact that David knew and laid to heart that he did not have this understanding as he was by nature. While man did have an understanding of this kind as he came forth from the hand of God in a state of innocency, yet on account of sin he has become brutish in his understanding. It was necessary, therefore, that God would form and fashion him according to the new creation. Until the new creation took place in the spiritual experience of the Psalmist, and takes place in your experience and mine, he would not, and we will not, have this understanding. We will not have a desire to get understanding that we may learn God’s commandments.

The only way in which we will realise this, and lay it to heart, is by the Holy Spirit beginning the good work in our hearts, and performing it until the day of Jesus Christ. As surely as we, coming forth from the hand of God, are formed by the word of His power, so it is true of the new creation, the forming and fashioning of which the Lord speaks concerning others, “This people have I formed for Myself, and they shall show forth my praise”. They were formed by the creative power of God through the

Holy Ghost in the faculties of their souls. Until then they were sinners before God, without understanding, brutish men who knew not the mind of God, the ways of God, or the commandments of God. They were defying their Creator, their Lawgiver. They were at heart enmity with the heart of God, and determined that their will was the will which was to reign and to be carried out.

What the Psalmist mentions here "Thy hands have made me and fashioned me", in connection with the new creation, brings in the fact that David felt his need of this, and was acknowledging the hand of God in the work that He performed in his soul. As the Scriptures tell us in connection with the first creation there was a movement of the Spirit of God — "the Spirit moved upon the face of the deep". There was the word of power that said, "Let there be light, and there was light". In the forming and fashioning of the new creation of the soul, these two things must still take place. In your soul and mine is a great deep, which we cannot fully comprehend or understand. It is a great deep with respect to the desperate wickedness and deceitfulness of our hearts. There is no power but the Spirit of God, which can bring order that will be to the glory of God in the experience of our souls. The power of men, the earnestness of men, the exhortations of men, and the advices, commandments and requirements which they may set before us, are ineffectual in themselves to effect the forming and fashioning of that new creation in the soul which is to praise God world without end.

There must be this movement of the Spirit of God upon the faculties of the soul, and bound up with that movement of the Spirit there must be the word of power. "And God said, let there be light and there was light." This is what we have brought before us here, "Thy hands have fashioned me". The hand of God, the power of the Holy Spirit moving upon the faculties of the soul of a sinner, is bound up with the word of power. It is bound up with God saying to this soul who is in darkness and the shadow of death as he is by nature, "Let there be light and there was light". That is what the soul experiences.

The sinner is not conscious of the Spirit moving upon the faculties of his soul. What he is conscious of is the word of *power* we have just mentioned. God saying, "Let there be light and there was light". He is conscious of the Word of God coming to him in a way that it never came before. Whether it be by particular passages of the Word of God, whether it be by a sermon, whether it be at family worship, wherever or whenever or however it may be, this is what the sinner feels and experiences, as the Spirit moves upon the face of his soul — the Word of Power becomes

effectual. He is conscious of the Word of God as a Word of Power, giving him light and understanding, to understand what the Scripture declares — “that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God”. It gives him to understand, in the measure that God is pleased to reveal it to him, that God is his Creator, that he is dependent upon God, that God is his Lawgiver, and that God is angry with the wicked every day.

Now this is bound up with the Lord forming and fashioning the new creation. “God said, Let there be light and there was light”. There is no new creation apart from this light — the light of God’s word, and apart from this spiritual illumination, when the Spirit of God moves upon the face of the soul, giving the sinner light from the Word of God, so that he sees sins where he never saw them before. Things that he was doing with an easy conscience he cannot do now, because he sees them as sins condemned in the Word of God, worthy of eternal death. The multitude of thoughts in his heart thus fight, as the light of God’s Word, dealing with him, and meeting with him in his spiritual experience, makes known to him his state and condition before God, as one who has sinned against heaven and in God’s sight.

Whatever God’s people may have doubts about, there is one thing they have absolutely no doubt whatsoever about, that is — that they have sinned against God. The light of God’s Word makes this evident and clear to them — that their sins are more than can be numbered. They have crimson and scarlet sins, which, like the sins of Judah are written with the point of a diamond and engraven in the rock for ever, for in their own strength they have no power to remove them. They may have doubts as to whether they have been truly convinced of sin, and as to whether the work that went on within them was the work of the Spirit of God or not. They may have many a doubt about that, and many a fear and concern in connection with it. But one thing they have no doubt whatsoever about is — “We with our fathers sinned have, and of iniquity too long we have the workers been, we have done wickedly”. The soul that has no doubt about that, is a soul that has been convinced of sin, and has experienced what we have here, God saying with regard to that soul, “Let there be light and there was light”. All the darkness of the soul could not stand against it, all the enmity of hell could not stand against it, and all the persecution of the world could not stand against it. This light brought the sinner to see and to understand that he had sinned against heaven and in God’s sight, and he was prepared to acknowledge it and to confess it before the throne of God.

As I said already, one of the great truths as far as the Creatorship of

God is concerned, is that all his creatures are dependent upon Him. One of the fruits of this light in the soul is to create in it what is the very element of the new creation — a dependence upon God. He says here, "They that fear Thee will be glad when they see me, because I have hoped in thy Word". Where this light is, its effect is to bring the soul to complete dependence upon God. In order to do so, it brings him to understand his sins, and that he is closed out from God's favour by reason of these sins. If God dealt with him as he had sinned, "O Lord, who could stand?" said the psalmist. He understands that he is dependent upon the very God against whom he has sinned, for being spared in the room of mercy.

This involves also, that the Word of God, giving light in the spiritual experience of the sinner, convinces him that he has no faith of his own. Not only is he dependent upon God for sparing him, but also for his believing the everlasting Gospel which sets before him the very Saviour he needs. A Saviour who can save from sin, a Saviour who has paid the ransom price for sin, a Saviour of whom it is true that "the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin", a Saviour who glorified the Father on the earth by finishing the work He gave Him to do, a Saviour of whom we read "the Lord our God is a sun and shield, and He will grace and glory give" — this Saviour is set before him in the Word of God in all His fullness. The Word of God tells him this is the light to lighten the Gentiles, and the salvation of God to the ends of the earth, "whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life".

He now comes to understand, under the light of the teaching of God the Holy Spirit, that he cannot believe, that faith is the gift of God, and that his dependence upon God must extend to this — to depend on Him for the very faith by which he can believe in Christ. It is the hand of God from beginning to end, and the sinner, under the light of God's Word, by the power of the Holy Spirit, comes to realize this.

Surely there is no time when the sinner feels himself so lost as he does when he realizes that he is lost on account of his sins. "This is my son", said the father, with regard to the prodigal son, "that was lost". Although Christ and all His fullness is set before him in the everlasting Gospel — the Gospel call encouraging him to come, and to taste and see that God is good, and Christ addressing him thus — "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest", he realises that he does not know what faith is, or what it means to believe in Christ. He does not know how this can be accomplished in a sinner finding himself thus in the miry clay of his own corruptions and inability. How impossible it is for him to believe in the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! If he could do that in

his own strength he would cease to be dependent upon God.

That is where the Arminianism of the present day is just the Covenant of Works — the finished work of Christ plus my ability to believe. Instead of the soul being dependent upon God, God is dependent upon man to believe, before he can be saved. If that is the light which you and I have then the light that is in us is darkness.

The sinner must therefore become dependent in this way —

“I waited for the Lord my God
And patiently did bear;
At length to me He did incline
My voice and cry to hear.”

The Word of God was requiring him to believe, and he felt the sinfulness of rejecting the glorious Saviour whom God had provided, yet at the same time, through this light he realised that he was just as dependent upon the Lord to work faith in his heart and mind as he was dependent upon Him for the breath of his nostrils. Now he is disposed to look outside of himself. Some spend many a day seeking faith within their own hearts and mind. But the sinner must be brought to this — to seek Christ, to seek Christ in the Word of God, to seek Christ at the throne of grace, to seek Christ in the house of God. This is now his desire in coming — “Sir, we would see Jesus”, asking the Lord to reveal Himself to him in another way than He does unto the world.

This is the light of which Paul speaks in these words, “God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ”. Not merely shined out of darkness, but shined in our hearts, giving, by a secret, powerful working, the grace of faith, so that the sinner beholds Christ in the word of God. As the Redeemer says with regard to the Father — “This is the will of Him that sent Me, that whosoever seeth the Son and believeth in Him”, whosoever has such a sight of Christ as to bring him to depend upon Him for time and for eternity — “shall have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day”. You see, we may be hearing about Christ and seeing Him in many ways in the preaching of the everlasting Gospel, but where this new creation is, where this saving work is, where the Holy Spirit is moving upon the depths of the soul by the Word of His Power and in the light of His Truth, He gives the sinner to see Christ in such a way that he believes in Him, that he trusts in Him.

Here we have one of the greatest evidences of faith, this soul

dependence on Christ. He is seen in such a way that the soul, although feeling laden with iniquity more than he can describe, sees such a divine and glorious fullness in Him, such a suitability, and such infinite merit in His blood of atonement, that he believes in, and trusts in the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The definition of faith nowadays is "a leap in the dark". Well, if your faith is a leap in the dark, you will leap into the blackness of darkness for ever. That is where modern religionists are going. Where there is faith there is understanding, understanding that I am a sinner, a helpless sinner unable to deliver myself, but also an understanding of the fullness that is in Christ to save to the very uttermost, and that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish. There the sinner is content, assenting to that as the way of salvation, but also there is a trusting, an embracing of the Redeemer as his glorious Saviour, for time and for eternity, a soul dependence upon the infinite merits of His precious blood, upon His love, and upon His faithfulness to His promise.

When the sinner does come to this, as the Westminster Shorter Catechism says, "resting upon Christ alone for salvation", it is very important for us to remember that at that particular time Christ is the object of the soul's faith, not faith itself, which of course could not be. This is very important if you look at it, for the sake of illustration, from the point of view of the body which God has formed and fashioned. If we are weary, tired, hungry and thirsty, when we come to a table spread before us and partake of food and drink, we feel the refreshing, strengthening and reviving due to our partaking. We say with regard to the food, "this food is reviving and strengthening me; I am relishing it, and it is sweet to my taste". That is what we say. We do not say, "it is a good thing that I have a mouth to partake of this food, and a good thing that I have teeth to masticate it". Neither do we say, when we are feeding upon Christ by faith, "It is a good thing to have faith". No, but we say, "Christ is good, Christ is glorious, He is all my salvation and all my desire". At the time of feeding upon Christ He is the object of faith. He is before the eye of the soul, and it is of Him the soul is saying, "His mouth is most sweet, yea He is altogether lovely, and I am trusting Him", because that is what faith is, an exercise of soul.

We are very apt to think of faith, love, hope and patience — these graces of the Spirit — as if they were different compartments within our souls, but they are not. They are exercises of the same soul. The soul that is exercising the grace of faith is, from an understanding view of the Redeemer in the Word of God, trusting Him for ever — "for in the Lord

Jehovah is the Rock of ages", with a dependence which means just this — that I am done with my own righteousness, and with everything that belongs to myself. I am done with promising God this, that and the next thing. My soul goes out in dependence, for time and eternity, upon the One who came in God's great name to save, whose blood was shed for the sins of many, and whom I now see in the Word of God as I never saw Him before. I am feeling the cords of His love going round the faculties of my soul and drawing me sweetly and powerfully into union with Himself. Where this is, you have the new creation — "Thou has formed and fashioned me, O Lord".

The Redeemer uses certain language in connection with His abiding in His people, and they abiding in Him. They abide in Him by virtue of the faith wrought in the new creation, and He abides in them by virtue of His Holy Spirit. What does He say with regard to the new creation in the soul? "Without Me," He says, "you can do nothing". Now there is that soul dependence which is the very life, the very frame and element of the new creation, which has been fashioned by the hand of God in the depths of the soul. In the souls first closing in with Christ there is dependence and also hope. Faith looks to this — "Whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life". Hope looks to the expectation of enjoying the fulfillment of that promise.

Now faith and hope are not the same thing, and we may bring ourselves into darkness and difficulty with regard to this matter if we do not understand it as we should. Faith looks to the promise. One of the best illustrations of this is the case of Abraham, and God's promise with regard to Isaac. Abraham believed God, and exercised faith in the promise, and as far as his faith was concerned it was satisfied with the promise of God, and the faithfulness that was in the promise. But as far as Abraham's hope was concerned — his hope was waiting for Isaac. Abraham's hope could never be satisfied until Isaac was born. Ishmael could not satisfy the hope of Abraham, but the coming of Isaac did. The soul that closes in with Christ in the everlasting Gospel for the forgiveness of sin is satisfied with the promise, and hopes that that promise will be fulfilled with regard to the pardon and everlasting life which the soul is to enjoy world without end.

The next thing we see is that, as the soul, closing in with Christ in the everlasting Gospel, is wholly dependent upon the Lord in that exercise of faith, so God's people continue in that frame all their days in the world. They do not become so strong that they can do without God. They do not become so well-exercised in the graces of the Spirit that they can dispense

with the help of God. They do not become so proficient in the knowledge of God's Word that they can dispense with God — far from it. We therefore find the psalmist saying here, "Give me understanding that I may learn thy commandments". Though his understanding was enlightened by the light of God's truth to embrace Christ in the everlasting Gospel, the child of God is still conscious of this — "I am rude and ignorant, and in Thy sight a beast". He is still conscious of darkness, ignorance and blindness, as David himself was after years of following the Lamb, and of tasting that the Lord was gracious, when he says — "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law". Here he is saying "Thou mad'st and fashioned me, O Lord", not only as my Creator, but as the author of the new creation in the faculties of my soul. "Now give me understanding that I may learn Thy commandments, that I may walk in the way of thy Truth".

God's people are going on in this world learning His mind, and that is part of their spiritual history. Whatever situations they are brought into, whether prosperous or full of adversity, they are brought into these situations in order to learn the mind of God with regard to them there. They need to learn His commandments, and what he would have them to do, whether in the den of lions or in the courts of God's own house. "Give me understanding", is a thirst that God's people have, a thirst after the light that they received in the days of their effectual calling. Whatever darkness they may feel now, there is left a thirst in the soul after more light. "O send thy light forth, and thy truth, let them be guides to me".

They need this light in many ways, for instance, with regard to the commandment that confronts them in connection with the Lord's supper, "This do in remembrance of Me". Christ is saying this to His people, to those whom He has redeemed with His own precious blood, and to whom He has revealed Himself by His Spirit. Yet what difficulties they have in obeying this command when they are brought face to face with it. They need the prayer brought before us here — "Give me understanding that I may learn thy commandments". Although they have the grace of faith to discern the Lord's body, although they have the desire to obey this command of Christ, yet how their darkness of mind, the temptations of the Devil and the evil work of unbelief cloud the understanding of God's people with regard to keeping in remembrance the death of Christ. Although the Saviour says "Do this in remembrance of Me" by a direct command, a command that has the same weight, and more weight, from the point of view of the Redeemer's love, than the other commandments, yet how dark this may be to them, that it is their place to be at the Lord's

table. It is their place to commemorate the death of Christ, but when they think of the darkness they feel within, the darkness that embraces them, and how they are tempest-tossed each one is ready to conclude — “Whoever is fit for the Lord’s table I am not. Although I have a hope that the Lord formed and fashioned me, and a hope that I praised Him for the Saviour He provided, and the salvation I found in Him, yet I feel too dark and ignorant to engage in commemorating the death of the Divine Redeemer, to obey this command — ‘Do this in remembrance of Me’.”

The Devil and unbelief say to you — “Never was one of God’s people in such a dark and ignorant frame of mind as you are in: why should you mingle with them? You will only bring death and darkness upon their souls by sitting beside them at the Lord’s table”. But David said this, and he was a man after God’s own heart — “Give me understanding”. Although the Lord had formed and fashioned him in the new creation, he still felt the need of this — “Give me understanding”. Even if you have been to the Lord’s table more times than you can remember, you still need this prayer, that the Lord would shine the light of His Word into your heart, and give you a refreshing understanding of what this means — “This do in remembrance of Me”.

David is saying also “I hoped in Thy Word”. “Who is there among you that feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voice of His servant?” — mark that — *obeyeth* the voice of His servant, “that walketh in darkness and hath no light. Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay himself upon his God”. That is what David is saying here — “I hoped in thy Word”. It is not in turning away from God’s command to remember the Lord’s death, that light, comfort and consolation are to be found at all, but by hoping in God’s Word — hoping that His light will break in upon your soul as you set your face upon this command.

We read here “They that fear Thee will be glad when they see me”. This is the very opposite of what the Devil and unbelief were telling you, that God’s people would have no joy in seeing such a dark, ignorant sinner as you are, at the Lord’s table. It is the very opposite — “They that fear Thee will be glad when they see me, because I hoped in Thy Word”, because I am dependent, altogether dependent, whether it be in professing Christ ten or twenty years or ten or twenty months. The fact is that God’s people are all still dependent, whether in the pulpit or in the pew — “My hope is in His Word”.

Is not this the very thing that David had when he was looking for light?

What does he say in Psalm 130, in connection with this light which he was looking for to break into his heart and mind —

“I wait for God, my soul doth wait”, what else? —

“My hope is in His word,
More than they that for morning watch,

My soul waits for the Lord.

I say, more than they that do watch

The morning light to see,

Let Israel hope in the Lord

For with Him mercies be.

And plenteous redemption

Is ever found with Him,

And from all his iniquities

He Israel shall redeem.”

It is a promising frame of soul to be in when approaching the Lord's supper, to be saying “I poor and needy am”, and still there is the hope, “yet of me the Lord a care doth take”. It is good to be praying to get a better understanding of what it means to keep in remembrance the death of Christ than we ever had before, with such a prayer — “Give me understanding, and I will keep thy commandments”. May we get a deeper and fuller understanding of the gracious and glorious privilege Christ is giving His people when He says — “This do in remembrance of Me”.

Letter

by Rev. Neil Cameron

4 Shaftesbury Terrace,
Glasgow.

26th February 1917.

My dear Mrs MacGillvray (Oban),

A correspondent sent me today ten shillings from you for Foreign Missions, for which I desire to thank you. He told me that your son is at the front in France. No doubt this will cause you anxiety. You should look to the power and faithfulness of God as regards your boy. He took the three young men out of the fiery furnace, though heated seven times more than usually, without an hair of their head being singed. He is the same now, and not even a sparrow falls to the ground without His providence. A man is of much more value in His eyes than a sparrow. Cast your many burdens upon the Lord Jesus; He is able to bear both your burden and yourself. Not one can fall there but as He wills. Let us place our hope and confidence in Him at all times. “None perish that Him trust.”

It is only when we take our eye off the Lord Jesus and begin to look at the wind and the waves that we begin to sink. Alas, alas, that we should listen to that child of the Murderer — Unbelief! Had we faith in God as we should, we could sing in the fires in the Isles of the sea; for we have a faithful, merciful and pitiful God to look to and trust in. Look to Him therefore. Black clouds and wintry weather are just now on the face of our skies if we only take our senses as our guide, but if we look up to God's throne and see our Great High Priest advocating the cause of His poor ones tossed with tempest and not comforted in this world, we have solid cause of rejoicing should it be with trembling.

There is nothing in this world but troubles, and we need not expect to find rest in it; because it is defiled with sin. So are we defiled from head to foot by the loathsome disease of sin. Therefore let us make up our mind, that one trouble must follow another while we are here, and let that cause us to seek a better country, that is, an heavenly; where neither sorrow nor sighing shall ever enter. Sin is our greatest enemy. Alas, that we fear it so little!

I hope you enjoy good health of body, and that there are signs of life in your soul. You will ask, What are these signs? (1) "Unto you therefore which believe, He is precious." (2) "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." (3) Do you love the Lord's people? "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." (4) Would you have all men and yourself obey God's commandments? "O that my ways were directed to keep Thy statutes." These are four marks. Have you got one of them? I am certain you must confess that you have all of them. What is that but grace in your heart?

I trust Capt. MacGillvray and your daughter are well, also your son. Remember me to your son.

With Kindest Regards to you all.

I am,
Yours very sympathetically,
Neil Cameron.

Disappointment — His Appointment

"He performeth the thing that is appointed for me" (Job 23:14).

"Thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass" (Job 14:5).

"Disappointment — His Appointment",
Change one letter then I see

That the thwarting of my purpose
Is God's better choice for me.
His appointment must be blessing
Tho' it may come in disguise,
For the end from the beginning
Open to His wisdom lies.

"Disappointment — His Appointment",
Whose? The Lord's, Who loves me best,
Understands and knows me fully,
Who my faith and love would test.
For, like loving earthly parent,
He rejoices when He knows
That His child accepts unquestioned
All that from His wisdom flows.

"Disappointment — His Appointment",
"No good thing will He withhold",
From denials oft we gather
Treasures of His love untold.
Well He knows each broken purpose
Leads to fuller, deeper trust,
And the end of all His dealings
Proves our God is wise and just.

"Disappointment — His Appointment",
Lord, I take it then as such,
Like the clay in hands of potter,
Yielding wholly to Thy touch.
All my life' plan is Thy moulding
Not one single choice is mine,
Let me answer unrepining,
Father, "Not my will, but Thine".

"Disappointment — His Appointment",
Change the letter, then, dear friend,
Take in cheerful acquiescence,
All Thy Father's love may send.
Soon will faith be lost in vision,
Then, in glory thou shalt see
"His Appointment", and that only
Was the right way home for thee.

L. S. Soole.

Obituaries

The Late Alex. Ewen Alexander, Elder, Glasgow.

The subject of this notice was born in the year 1913 and spent his early years in Fochabers in Morayshire. In 1932, he came to the City of Glasgow where he was employed in one of the Warehouses there. He was called up to the Pioneer Corps in the Army during the Second World War, but was later discharged due to his eyesight. He never forgot his period in the Armed Services and did his utmost, while at home to provide comforts and help for the young men and women from St. Jude's who were serving their country during that terrible time. He was latterly with the South of Scotland Electricity Board until he retired.

Alex. Alexander belonged originally to the Church of Scotland. Being religiously inclined, he took a great interest in its activities. In the providence of God, he came to lodge with two pious ladies, the Misses Morton. Their father had been an elder with the late Rev. J. R. Anderson who had separated from the Free Church in 1852 because of the tendency to Arminianism creeping into the preaching of the ministers of that body. The piety of the sisters had an influence on the young lodger and he began to attend the services in the St. Jude's congregation, in which they were both communicants. Thus the purposes of eternal love were being fulfilled. He now heard doctrine and took part in a form of worship of which he had been ignorant before. The Word of God was blessed to his soul; his sins became a solemn reality to him; and he could find no rest until he found it under the shade of the Lord Jesus. He could now say, "As the apple tree among the trees of the wood so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight and his fruit was sweet to my taste" (Song. 2:3). Like many of the Lord's people the spiritual change was gradual but there could be no doubt about its reality. A verse made specially precious to him was, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles: they shall run and not be weary: and they shall walk and not faint" (Is. 40:41).

In April, 1936, he came before the Kirk Session seeking to sit at the Lord's Table for the first time. When he was accepted, he had a special time of spiritual joy. He never forgot the refreshing of soul he felt at this time when he was enabled to undertake this duty placed upon him by his blessed Lord. Another green spot was a prayer-meeting held by a group of young men from the St. Jude's congregation in the home of the Misses Morton. Of the original number of these young men, there are only three

now left in the Valley of Baca. These are Rev. A. McPherson, London; Captain James Henderson, Dumbarton; and the present writer. In March, 1946, Alex. was ordained a deacon and in March, 1949, an elder, in the St. Jude's congregation. He took a great spiritual and practical interest in the affairs of the congregation and sought its welfare, prayerfully and earnestly.

Soon after his marriage, Mr Alexander moved to the town of Dumbarton. After the conclusion of the War, he was instrumental in having a new Church built there for the benefit of the congregation, who had been previously meeting in a small Hall. He took the Sabbath services and week-day prayer-meetings for many years and laboured diligently seeking the spiritual and eternal good of souls. Prior to the War, communion services had been held in Dumbarton but these had ceased. In the 1960s, however, the Church was extended and communion services were re-commenced. It was a matter of great joy to our friend that the Lord's death was once more commemorated in the congregation. He saw the congregation raised to the status of a sanctioned charge and a minister set over it for the first time. It has often been remarked that it was a good thing that death removed him from being an eye-witness to the circumstances which led to the loosing of the pastoral tie between that minister and the congregation, which Mr Alexander so loved and where he had so laboured to build up.

On his retiral from business, Mr Alexander returned to Glasgow and became beadle in St. Jude's. Here he evidenced the same concern and diligence which had always been a feature of his Christian course. It was not to be for long, however. In the closing days of 1978, there was a heavy snow fall. When engaged in clearing away this snow he suffered a heart attack. Although no immediate danger was expected, he suffered another attack and, on 3rd January, 1979, passed away from this present scene to be with the Lord, Who loved him and Who had redeemed him at so great a cost. The loss to his family, congregation and Church was felt to be very great but our loss undoubtedly was his everlasting gain.

As a spiritually-minded Christian with clear and well-formed views of Divine Truth, Alex. was a profitable companion with whom one could enjoy sweet fellowship. He could express himself very well in addressing the people or in speaking to the Question. He was edifying to listen to. He carried out his duties as an office-bearer as one who felt he was taking to do with the high things of Zion. He was a spiritually-convinced Free Presbyterian. Having been in the Church of Scotland, he knew only too well the soul-destroying effects of false christianity and regarded his

deliverence therefore as a signal instance of divine mercy. He had no place for those who are for ever thinking that the grass is greener on the other side of the fence and who, while full of praise for others, are critical of their own Church. He knew very well that while such think they have an excess of christian charity, they are in reality the victims of spiritual blindness and religious ignorance. It was a privilege for a true minister of the gospel to have such a man as an elder. Instead of weakening one's hands, one felt strengthened. "Help, Lord; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men" (Ps. 12:1).

To his widow and son, we extend our sincere sympathy and pray that the Lord will uphold and keep them.

D.M., Glasgow.

The Late Mrs Neville, Glasgow.

Mrs Neville, whose maiden name was Smith, was born in the parish of Uig, Isle of Lewis, on 5th January, 1900. This parish was greatly favoured in the early 19th century through the ministry of Rev. Alex. MacLeod. A notable revival of religion took place and the spiritual darkness which had reigned for so long was dispelled to a remarkable degree. This revival was marked by an unusual degree of purity and a notable group of Christians was raised up to show forth the praises of Him Who had called them out of darkness into His marvellous light.

Mrs Neville had the great benefit of being brought up in a godly home, her father, Malcolm Smith, being a pious elder. She left home in her teens to work in Nelson, Lancashire, but returned to Glasgow in 1921 and went to work as a nurse in Gartloch Hospital. Here she met her husband who was a male nurse in that hospital. They were married in 1928 and set up home in Baillieston and afterwards in Carntyne. Mr Neville died in 1974.

Mrs Neville was brought to the knowledge of the gospel when she was about 30 years of age. She came to realise her state as a sinner and her need of a Saviour. The words, "And him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out," seem to have been made very precious to her. She told of one occasion of being very cast down. She heard a sermon on the words, "O send out Thy light and Thy truth . . ." (Ps. 43:3,4). She felt so uplifted that she could say, "He is my chiefest joy." "I felt," she said, "I could have called on all in the house to say that He is my chiefest joy." "But," she added, "these enlightenments did not come often." She often complained of the coldness of her love to Christ and of the plague of her

own heart. "How do I know at times that I really love Him. Surely, if I did, I should not have such wicked thoughts."

Her husband belonged to the Christian Brethren and she felt it her duty to go with him, although he never objected to her attending St. Jude's when the opportunity arose. She was able to get a lift with one of our elders, especially to the Gaelic services, the distance from her home being too great to walk. On the death of her husband, she began to attend St. Jude's regularly and in due time became a communicant. She continued to attend and to appreciate the gospel, until she was laid aside in her last illness. Her end was peace and she passed away to be with Christ on 1st July, 1978. Her two daughters were standing one day by her bedside in the hospital. One of them said to her, 'Mum, you do not want to leave us, do you?' To this, she replied, "No, I do not want to leave my girls, but if the Lord calls, I will go." She was made ready to go by divine grace.

Mrs Neville was a woman of considerable natural intelligence. As a Christian, she took delight in teaching her children and her grandchildren the way of salvation. One could not but be impressed at the obvious affection and regard they all had for her and this, no doubt, arose from the sense that she sought their highest good. "Favour is deceitful and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised" (Prov. 31:30).

We extend our sincere sympathy to her family. May the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort be their help.

D.M., Glasgow.

The Protest of 1843

Did the Protest of 1843 separate the Disruption Fathers from the Church of Scotland, or did it not? Within recent years a theory, plausibly presented, has been advanced, that a Protest is not a legal instrument which effects separation, and that "neither the Free Church Fathers nor their successors held the view that the famous Protest of May 18th, 1843, effected their separation from the Church of Scotland". The following extracts from the Ten Years' Conflict, by Robert Buchanan, D.D., one of the Disruption Fathers, prove the contrary:—

'Thursday, the 18th of May, 1843, dawned on the ancient metropolis of Scotland — and as the morning wore on, the crowded state of the leading streets, and the look of excitement and expectation which appeared on almost every countenance, must have betrayed, even to the most ignorant and careless observer, the approach of some great event. The Marquis of

Bute was again the Queen's commissioner to the assembly; and had, as usual, taken up his temporary residence in Holyrood". Vol. II p 433.

It was about half-past two o'clock when the tramp of the military cavalcade and the sounds of martial music, announced the approach of the Queen's commissioner to St. Andrew's Church, where the assembly had been appointed to meet. Dr Walsh had arrived and taken his place in the moderator's chair a few minutes before. As the commissioner entered the Church, the assembly and the audience rose to receive him with the deference due to the representative of the crown . . . The central area of the Church, allotted to the members of assembly, was densely filled, while on the front cross-bench might be seen representatives from various other Churches, who had come, many of them from distant continental countries, to witness the transactions of this memorable day. The rest of the building, from the floor to the roof, presented one living mass, which left no available spot unoccupied within the walls . . . The first movement was towards the Throne of God, the moderator leading the devotions of the meeting in a solemn and earnest prayer. As soon as the members had resumed their seats, Dr Welsh again rose, and, amid breathless silence, spoke as follows:— "Fathers and Bretheren, According to the usual form procedure, this is the time for making up the roll; but in consequence of certain proceedings affecting our rights and privileges — proceedings which have been sanctioned by Her Majesty's Government and by the legislature of the country — and more especially in respect that there has been an infringement on the liberties of our constitution, so that we could not now constitute this Court without a violation of the terms of the union between Church and State in this land, as now authoritatively declared, I must protest against our proceeding further. The reasons that have led me to come to this conclusion are fully set forth in the document which I hold in my hand, and which, with permission of the house I shall now proceed to read". This document embodied the solemn protest of the Church of Scotland against the wrongs of the civil power, and was signed by 203 members of the house (p.438).

When the last of these solemn sentences (of the Protest) had left the moderator's lips, he laid the Protest upon the table of the house, and turning round towards the commissioner, who rose in evident and deep emotion, Dr Welsh bowed respectfully to the representative of the Queen, and in so doing, bade the Church of Scotland's farewell to the State. That brief but solemn significant action done, he lifted his hat from the table and went forth from the degraded establishment. As he moved with calm dignity from the chair, Dr Chalmers, Dr Gordon, Dr Patrick

MacFarlane, Dr Thomas Brown, Dr Macdonald, the fathers of the Church, men who were its strength and glory one after another, rose and followed him. The immense audience looked on, thrilled with feelings which it is impossible to describe — but not a voice, not a whisper was heard. . . . There was no hurry, no rush, no confusion. Rank after rank the protesters withdrew, with the order and steadiness of the successive companies of a military host. One entire side of the assembly, and the whole of the cross-benchers, were left untenanted. The life had departed from the empty space as if they had been looking into an open grave” (p.441, 442).

In the manner described, the procession moved on towards Canon-mills, a suburb lying at the northern extremity of the city. Here an immense hall, capable of accommodating at least 3,000 persons, had been procured, and hastily fitted up, for the reception of the dis-established assembly. In this hall which was crowded to its utmost capacity Dr Welsh, who had meanwhile taken the chair, rose and lifted up his hands as the signal for prayer. No one who was present on that memorable occasion can forget, while he lives, the thrilling pathos and overpowering solemnity of that prayer (p.443, 444).

The prayer ended and the immense audience having resumed their seats, Dr Welsh after a short pause again rose and nominated Dr Chalmers as Moderator of the Free Assembly.

A heavy thundercloud had for some time darkened the heavens, and as the eye ranged at that particular moment over the dense mass of human beings who covered the immense area of the low-roofed hall, individual forms had almost ceased to be distinguishable through the sombre shade. The Psalm which Dr Chalmers had chosen was the xliii. He began at the touching and beautiful line: “O send Thy light forth and Thy truth”; and as the words sounded through the hall, the sun, escaping from behind his cloudy covering, and darting through the windows which pierced the roof, his brilliant beams turned on the instant the proceeding darkness into day (p.445).

The devotions being concluded, Dr Chalmers as moderator, after recapitulating, succinctly and clearly, the grounds of the disruption, as these were embodied in the Protest went on to address the house. When the Moderator concluded his address, the Rev. Mr Duncan, of Ruthwell, moved that the Rev. Dr Clason of Edinburgh and the Rev. Thomas Pitcairn of Cockpen be appointed clerks of the assembly.

Dr Candlish then rose and said that “he had to propose that the Protest should lie open for signature by other members, and that their signatures

should be held ipso facto as admitting them members of this assembly". The motion was adopted with the most cordial unanimity (p.448).

The sittings of the Free Church Assembly which commenced on Thursday the 18th, were concluded on Tuesday, the 30th of May. It was on Tuesday, the 23rd of May, that the Deed of Demission, prepared according to the strictest forms of law were laid on the table of the house and signed (p.463).

Please note the following points:—

(1) It was on Thursday 18th of May, the Protest was read and tabled by Dr Welsh in the Church of Scotland Assembly, after which he and all who followed him adjourned to form a separate Assembly in the Canonmills hall. The Free Church of Scotland Assembly was there duly constituted, a Moderator, Dr Chalmers, elected, and clerks of Assembly duly appointed. It was not until Tuesday 23rd of May that the Deed of Demission was drawn up and signed. Were they not separate until Tuesday the 23rd? Why proceed with the normal assembly proceedings from Thursday until Tuesday if they did not consider themselves separated de facto, de jure and de forma in virtue of their Protest?

(2) Dr Candlish's motion on the opening day of the Assembly, which was unanimously adopted, that those who signed the Protest were thereby ipso facto (in fact and in reality) admitted as members of the Free Church Assembly. If subscription to the Protest ipso facto admitted those who signed as members of the Free Church Assembly, it must have separated them ipso facto from the Church of Scotland.

(3) Dr Begg, one of the Disruption Fathers, in his book *The Free Church Principles*, page 136, writes: "That for the reason stated in the Protest and in the Claim of Right, those who signed the said Protest **ABDICATED** and **RENOUNCED** their status and privileges as ministers and elders of the Establishment" (Synod Statement p.8).

(4) Dr Welsh, while speaking at the first Free Church Assembly, said: "We separated — we did it with great regret — from those with whom we have long been connected". Note that Dr Welsh does not say, "We separate now; and we do it with great regret". No, he used the past tense as describing that which was already an accomplished fact at the time of protesting (Synod Statement p.8).

(5) On page 455 of *The Ten Years' Conflict*, we read: "It was not till Wednesday, the 24th of May, the Assembly of the Establishment took up the Protest which embodied the Deed of the Disruption". Note the terms, "which embodied the Deed of the Disruption".

Dr Cook later on the same day read a motion which contains the

following terms: "The General Assembly having mutually considered the Protest . . . did and hereby do find, that the ministers who attached their names to the said Protest, have by their own act ceased to be ministers of the Church of Scotland — that their Churches have become vacant — and that the subscribing elders are no longer elders in any of the parishes or sessions in connection with the Establishment". This motion, with the above findings included, was adopted by the Assembly, thus expressing in no uncertain terms the view of all the members of the Church of Scotland Assembly, that the Protest of the Disruption Fathers in being subscribed to, did effectually cut them off from being any longer ministers or office-bearers of the Church of Scotland and that their separation was an accomplished fact thereby. Subscription to the Protest when tabled, and not future steps by way of organisation into a new Assembly, meant their being declared separate (Synod Statement, p.9).

It is evident on the one hand from Dr Candlish's motion which "was adopted with the most cordial unanimity" and the above views of Dr Welsh and Dr Begg, that the Disruption Fathers did unanimously believe that their Protest separated them from the Establishment, *de facto*, *de jure* and *de forma*; and on the other hand that the members of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland regarded all who signed the Protest as having separated *de facto*, *de jure* and *de forma*. And yet we are told to believe "that neither the Free Church Fathers nor their successors held the view that the famous Protest of May 18th, 1843, effected their separation from the Church of Scotland, *de facto*, *de forma* and *de jure*". It has been truly said, "Every absurdity has a champion to defend it".

W.M.

Presbyterianism

Some people seem to imagine that they have named Presbyterianism correctly, and given it its proper setting in human history, when they call it "the Scotch Church". It is not by any means a product peculiar to Scotland. It has found a congenial soil there, but it has taken root and flourished in other lands. It has proved itself on the field of history to be far less national than any other form of Church order in Protestantism. Indeed, when a living Church has been at liberty, or has claimed and exercised the liberty, to determine its own polity, it has almost invariably worked out a Presbyterian system. In almost every one of the reformed Churches on the Continent of Europe either the Presbyterian form or one

nearly akin to it was adopted. It is not necessary to adduce proof of this, for the fact itself is unquestionable.

The Church of the Huguenots in France, and the National Church of Holland, may be taken as specimens. They were both, no doubt, very much influenced by Geneva; but it was not because Calvin had stamped Presbyterianism with his great and justly-revered name that they accepted it. They went direct to the Word of God. They acknowledged no human lordship over their spiritual life. Christ was their Lord, and every article of their creed and all the essential elements of their Church polity were fashioned in accordance with His revealed will. They were in no sense ignorant of primitive usage. They knew the writings of the Fathers and the traditions of the early Church. Their range of literature may have been narrower than ours; but they had all the patristic literature that bore on the great themes with which men's minds were then exercised, and every jot and tittle of it almost was as familiar to the leaders of the Reformation as the school books of their boyhood. While thankful for any glimmer of light it yielded, they put it all aside as a final and determining influence in their beliefs and practices, and appealed to Holy Scripture as the supreme rule of faith and judge of controversies. It surely counts for much that these men, animated by the Spirit of God, and going in patient prayerful study to the Word of God, found in its pages the grand outlines of Presbyterianism.

The same thing may be truly said of the Church in England about the time of the Westminster Assembly, in 1643-49. It is very desirable that the place and purpose of that famous Assembly in religious history should be understood. It was the outgrowth of a purely English movement. It was composed entirely of Englishmen, one hundred and fifty-one in all — namely, ten Lords and twenty Commoners as lay assessors, and one hundred and twenty-one Divines. True there were seven* Scottish Commissioners, but they were there simply to advise; they had no vote. The Parliament that called these men together was certainly not deficient in intelligence nor lacking in patriotism. And it had a very definite purpose in view in calling the Assembly together. That purpose is very explicitly stated in the "Ordinance of the Lords and Commons in Parliament for the calling of an Assembly of learned and godly divines and others, to be consulted with by the Parliament for the settling of the government and liturgy of the Church of England." Parliament had agreed to abolish the prelatic system of Church government. That system

*Eight, but Robert Douglas never sat.

seemed, in its readiness to become the tool of the King, a continual menace to national liberty, and it was doomed to be swept away. And now the Parliament wanted to have something to put in its place. The jungle, let us say, had been cleared. The tangled thickets and matted luxuriance of heavily-scented vegetation, where poisonous fruits grew and wild beasts had their lairs, had been got rid of. Was the ground to remain fallow and lie open to every shifting opinion, and become a nursery of sects and a lurking place for crawling things; or was it to be cultivated and sown with the seed of the Divine Word, so that it might become like a Paradise restored, where God and man would walk together, and the fruits of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost abound? Surely the last was above all things desirable.

And so, after Parliament had determined to get rid of the system of Prelacy that had grown so offensive and dangerous, it further resolved — “That such a government shall be settled in the Church as may be most agreeable to God’s Holy Word, and most apt to procure and preserve the peace of the Church at home, and nearer agreement with the Church of Scotland and other Reformed Churches abroad.” Most of the Puritan divines who occupied such a determining place in the Assembly had received Episcopal ordination, and had carried on their ministry for a time in the Episcopal Church of England, but they had become Presbyterians. The appeal with these men, and with all parties in the Assembly, was to the Word of God; and after careful and patient deliberations — protracted through the almost incredible period of five years and a half — they gave to the world, as the result of their labours, the documents known as “The Westminster Standards”, which are Presbyterian in their polity, and include (as is well known) the Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms of our Church.

It would be hard to over-estimate the debt which modern (as distinguished from mediæval) civilisation owes to Churches of the Presbyterian type. This is more clearly seen, and more forcibly acknowledged, by historians now than it was wont to be. Froude’s book, “English Seamen in the Sixteenth Century”, shows, with the clearness of a sunbeam, that men of the Calvinistic type virtually made modern England. They may not have formulated their strong and rugged convictions into the Presbyterian or any other system. They were hewing at realities — at the essentials of freedom — rather than chiselling at outward forms. Their hearts burned with a fierce enthusiasm against Rome, because of the infamous deeds of the Inquisition. They were eager to strike at every sign of Rome, because it was to them a portent of cruel

tyranny. It was well that there were such men to ally themselves with the winds and waves, and beat back the Spanish Armada from the shores of England; else Roman Absolutism might still have been sitting like a hideous nightmare astride all human energy, and choking the breath of freedom from every human institution. It seems very clear that these "poor Protestant adventurers who fought through that perilous week in the English Channel, and saved their country and their country's liberty" were the precursors of the Puritans who helped to frame the Westminster Standards. Their love of liberty, and readiness to dare all things that they might have clear space for doing God's will, ran through all the subsequent stages of British history, both in the Old World and in the New.

Further, who can say how much modern civilisation in its industrial progress owes to the Presbyterian Huguenots. They fought valiantly in their own land against a tyranny as pitiless and unsparing as that of the unspeakable Turk. The horrors of Armenia are recent, and seem unparalleled in the history of religious persecution. They are not one whit worse than the inhuman atrocities that were committed every day in France under those pliant instruments of the Romish hierarchy, Charles IX and Louis XIV. Little wonder that so many of the Huguenots got weary of the interminable struggle, and at terrible risk sought asylum in other lands. Thither they carried the practice of arts unknown to their protectors. Almost every handicraft received an impetus from their intelligence and skill. They quickened the pulse of industrial life in many parts of England and Scotland. In the north of Ireland they laid the foundation of that linen trade, and imparted some of its sturdy elements to that character, which have helped to make Ulster prosperous and strong. In the new world their influence can still be traced.

The Netherland Presbyterians were equally brave and enterprising. Men who were ready, during the horrors of a prolonged siege, after everything else was consumed, to eat their left arm that they might, as they put it, have their right arm to defend their women, their liberty, and their religion, were surely cast in heroic mould. Many of them, too, were scattered by persecution, and the impoverishment of their own land turned to the enrichment of others.

(To be continued)

*Visability and universality are Popish marks of a true church, and
Protestant marks of a true Christian* *George Swinnock*

Book Reviews

Historical Collections of Accounts of Revival by John Gillies. Banner of Truth Trust. 582pp. Price £10.95.

This massive volume is the reprint of a book first published in 1754 and revised and enlarged in 1845. The present title is not altogether accurate as only part of the contents of the volume can be properly termed *Accounts of Revival*. Even its original title, "Historical Collections relating to remarkable periods of the success of the Gospel", does not fully accord with the contents which include times of trial and difficulty as well as times of success of the Gospel. It is really a compendium of extracts of historical accounts of the Church especially from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, though the first few chapters cover some of the earlier centuries. The accounts given in this book, are practically all taken from other writers. In this way a great deal of interesting material has been gathered together in one volume. A considerable amount is biographical, accounts being given of the leading figures in the history of the Church on the Continent, in our own land and in America. We must not judge the worth of these persons by the amount of space their history occupies in these pages as some of great note are fairly briefly recorded and others of lesser note more fully. The book abounds in interesting anecdotes. It does not have to be read through systematically. It can be taken up and read almost anywhere as it is sectioned off and each section is a unit in itself. By the use of its Index it may be used even as a biographical dictionary, so long as the limitations hinted at already are kept in mind.

We are glad to recommend this volume as a useful addition to anyone's library who has £10.95 to spare.

D.B.M.

Christian Worthies Vol II by Francis Coxon. 326pp. Price £7.50 plus postage. Available from Zoar Publications.

The articles in this volume first appeared in the Gospel Magazine about 25 years ago. The first volume of *Christian Worthies* was favourably reviewed in the Magazine last year and we are glad to recommend this second volume of noted *Christian Worthies* of the 16th to 18th centuries. This volume includes sketches of such noted Reformers as Calvin, Farel,

Beza and Peter Martyr, as well as a host of others who were eminent witnesses for Christ in their own day, fifty seven altogether. We need to be reminded of the lives of those who spent themselves in the service of Christ so that we may be followers of those who through faith and patience are now inheriting the promises.

D.B.M.

New Testament Commentary. Romans 1-8 by William Hendriksen. Banner of Truth Trust, price £5.25.

This commentary is prefaced by an informative, refreshing, and elucidating Introduction, from which the discerning reader should derive profit. The topics discussed in the Introduction to the Epistle seem to furnish ground for a degree of legitimate speculation, but, of conclusions based on speculation or strong presumption in their favour, we must beware. The author is to be commended for his remarkable measure of simplicity and clarity in the explication of such a difficult Epistle. His exposition of Chapter 7 where so many commentators have floundered, is clear and convincing. It follows and reinforces the orthodox school of thought on this controversial part of Holy Scripture. Conspicuous among the merits of the writer is that exegetical accuracy which generally leads to doctrinal purity. The footnotes though brief, are manifestly the product of skill, knowledge, and efficiency. Another pleasing feature which enhances the value of the book, is the list of practical lessons that follow the critical and exegetical explanation of each portion. The writer's comments on the Spirit's intercession carry an air of uncertainty that leaves us unconvinced. Further, the increasingly popular view of this rejuvenated earth as the final abode of the saints is supported by the author. In our opinion, such a view is untenable as it poses serious questions and problems in the light of the whole analogy of the faith. If the creation is literal, why not the harps and the crowns of gold? Above all, however, the commentary is devotional as well as critical so that when and where we disagree with Dr Hendriksen, such is his honesty, his humility and his weight of scholarship that our reaction though strong — would be respectful rather than violent.

F.M.

Gospel duties are to be performed with a Gospel temper.

Stephen Charnock

Notes and Comments

Sabbath Trading in the Highlands

As is well known to our readers the practice of selling newspapers on the Sabbath and of running trains on that day has become commonplace in some parts of the Highlands. More recently Sabbath trading in drink has been added to the list of trades in which it is now common to trample God's holy Day under foot. In the last year or two the increased trade over the so-called "Christmas" period and over New Year has emboldened a number of shops in the Highlands to cater on the last Sabbaths of the year for this trade. In December 1980 the well-known store of Woolworths opened their premises on the Sabbath in Inverness and last December other shops in Inverness followed their example. In Dingwall Woolworths opened their premises on the Sabbath day for the first time.

This trend of Sabbath breaking is one which bodes ill for the Highlands of Scotland, where once the Sabbath was respected. The law of God is to stand, however much men may trample it under their feet, as they will find out ultimately to their everlasting shame, if not brought to repent of their sin. May the Lord so work in our midst by His Word and Spirit that our land may be called Sabbath-loving Scotland once again.

A Grave Warning

The Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, Mr Michael Foote MP, has sent a letter to Mr Charles Oxley MP in which Mr Foote expresses his support for the removal of anything religious from all State and Civil Ceremonies; the abolition of all privileges granted to religious organisations; taking Church schools and colleges into State control; the abolition of the criminal offence of blasphemy; the repeal of the 1961 Education Act's provision of religious instruction and morning assembly worship in schools. Other items include the sexual rights of teenagers and free contraceptives; and abortion on request through the National Health Service.

The above appeared in the Christian Herald in November. The Herald commented: "Mr Oxley speaks for all committed Christians when he says that all who value our way of life will want to prevent the change into the kind of society these measures will produce".

A New Party in Britain

The rise of the Social Democratic Party in Britain might at first glance be thought a good thing for the country in that it has arisen in opposition to the far left swing of the Labour Party towards Communism. However, when the composition of the new party is looked at more closely it would appear that Roman Catholics form a not insignificant section of it. With Mrs Shirley Williams MP as one of its leading figures it may well become the instrument by which the Roman Catholic Church will try to win even greater political power in the country than it wields at present. If this proves to be so, then the days of persecution for the Church of Christ in our land may not be so far away as we are ready to think.

It has been the aim of the Roman Catholic Church for many a year to subdue Protestant Britain. She has been working subtly and relentlessly towards this end. How far she has succeeded in her plans may be gauged from her extraordinary influence over the Media, her success in destroying the Sabbath, which was a prime aim in her plan, and her infiltration of the Protestant Churches so that the religious leaders of the land are waiting to welcome the Pope if his projected visit materialises. A party in Parliament dedicated to the same end must not be ruled out. Its temporary alliance with the Liberals, led by abortionist Mr David Steele, can be abandoned when the time is ripe, and the Romanist party gain full power for itself.

What answer is there to the subtle workings and intrigues of Rome? None, but exposure of her workings, more fervent preaching of the Gospel so that sinners eyes may be opened, and unceasing prayer for her downfall.

Letter re Pope's visit

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
London SW1A 2AH
5 January 1982

Dear Mr MacLeod,

Your petition has been referred by HM The Queen to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs who, by Her Majesty's Command, has given it careful consideration but regrets that he feels unable to advise The Queen to act as you suggest.

You will appreciate that the Pope is not only the Head of the Roman Catholic Church: he is also recognised by Her Majesty's Government as a Head of State. In these circumstances, it is normal that, while in Britain,

the Pope should be offered hospitality commensurate with his position. In common with other visiting Heads of State it would be appropriate for the Queen to receive him at Buckingham Palace during his stay. Such a gesture would in no way alter the nature of the Pope's visit which remains, as you know, a pastoral visit to the Roman Catholic community. Nor could it in any way be construed as suggesting recognition by The Queen of the spiritual claims of the Papacy.

Yours sincerely,
F N Richards
Private Secretary

Britain and the Vatican

The Government has announced that Britain's diplomatic relations with the Vatican are being raised to ambassadorial level. This is the first time this century that full diplomatic relations have been accorded to the Vatican. This step, together with the proposed visit of the Pope, are events of the most serious nature and are the fruition of plans and scheming that has gone on over a long period of time. The end in view is undoubtedly the total submission of Protestant Britain to Papal Rome.

Over a long period the minds of the people of Britain have been conditioned to an acceptance of the Roman Catholic Church as a Christian Church and of the Pope as the outstanding Church leader. The real nature of the Papal system as an anti-Christian body and of the Pope as anti-Christ has been lost sight of by the vast majority of professed Christians in our land today. Consequently Britain is facing her darkest hour without realising that the enemy is at the gate. Only a divine intervention can avert the loss of our spiritual freedom and heritage. May the hour of Great Britain's spiritual peril find the people of God on their knees pleading for her deliverance.

Church Notes

Meetings of Presbytery (D.V.)

Skye: At Portree on 9th February at 11 a.m.

Outer Isles: At Stornoway on 16th February at 2 p.m.

Scripture and Catechism Exercises an Appeal

The Welfare of Youth Committee agreed that an appeal should be made through the magazine to all who bear special responsibility for the spiritual welfare of our Church's young people. This appeal, therefore, is to ministers, missionaries and parents to do all in their power to urge the children and youth in their care to take part in the Scripture and Catechism Exercises which begin again this month. We feel that a few words from the pulpit at the beginning of February could have considerable effect on those young people who either have never done the exercises or stopped doing them, and would encourage all who already take part. There is special cause for concern regarding those of 15 years and over, very few of whom are now doing the Senior Exercises. Parents, of course, have the main responsibility, and we urge upon them that part of their duty to train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, is to impress upon them that it is right as well as to their advantage that they should do the Exercises.

A. McPherson, Convener

Bookroom List

The list of books issued with the Magazine at the end of the year was intended only as a supplement to the catalogue issued earlier and therefore does not contain all the books which are available from the Bookroom in Glasgow.

Acknowledgment of Donations

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

Sustentation Fund: R. MacKay, Isle of Harris, £50.

Home Mission Fund: Geo. Nicol, Easterhouse, £1; R. MacKay, Isle of Harris, £50.

Foreign Mission Fund: Anon., £1,000; A Friend, £20, per J. Dunbar; C. Morrison, North Tolsta, per Rev. J. MacD., £5; Dutch Reformed Church, Bleskengraaf, Holland, per Rev. A. MacD., £106.

Home of Rest Fund: Alex. Murray, Aberfeldy, £10; Anon., Resident, £5 for petrol.

Trinitarian Bible Society: Lochinver, Stoer and Drumbeg Congregations, £170; Raasay Congregation, £119.77.

The Publications Treasurer, Mr R.W.M. MacKenzie, C.A., Hilton of Cadboll, Fearn, acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:

Publications Fund: K. MacPh., £5.

Free Distribution Fund: London Congr., £6.43.

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

Dundee: Miss C. MacK., £3, for Congr. Purposes, per Rev. D.J. McD.; A Friend, £3 in Coll. Plate.

Fort William: J.&C., Inverness, £10 (Amount omitted last month).

Glasgow: Legacy of late Miss M. McIntosh, £300 for Congr. Fund; Mrs F.M., £10 for Congr. Fund, per R.A.C.; A.M., £5 for Comm. Exp., per Rev D.M.; Anon., £5 for Hearing Aids; Anon., £30 for Bus Fund; P.H., £1 for Bus Expenses (Edin. Comm.); Anon., £3; E.M.M., £3; Passenger, £10; Anon., £5; Anon., £5, all for Bus Expenses.

Halkirk: Mrs Beach, Inverness, £15 for Comm. Exp., "in memory of my loved Christian parents".

Kinlochbervie: L.&M. MacKay, Vancouver, £890, in memory of a loving sister for General Purposes Fund, F.P. Church, Kinlochbervie.

Gairloch: Mrs E.I., £25, for Sust. Fund and £15 for New Meeting House (Strath), per Rev. A.E.W. MacDonald; Anon., £50, £10, £100, all for New Meeting House (Strath).

North Harris: A Friend, Stockinish, £5 for Comm. Exp., per Mrs R. MacCuish; A Friend, Meavag South, £2 for Car Fund; A Friend, Bayhead, Meavag South, £5; Mr R.M., Collam, £100, both for Church and Manse Repair Fund; A Friend, Harris House, £2 for Church Door Coll.

North Tolsta: Anon., Skye, £30 for Car Expenses, per Rev. J. MacD.

Oban: A Friend, £100, per J.M.; A Friend, £10, per Rev. A.M.; Mrs T., £10, per Rev. A.M., all for Congr. Fund.

Raasay: Raasay Friends of the Cause, £15 for Sust. Fund and £5 for Property Fund; Raasay Friend, £6 for Sust. Fund; Raasay Friend, £4 for Property Fund; Dingwall Postmark, Isa. 44:8, £3 for Church Door Coll.

South Harris: Neil MacL., Perth, £50 for Northton Mission House Renovations, per A. MacCuish.

Staffin: Happy memories of by-gone days, £20 for Home Miss. Fund; Anon., Portree, £5 for Congr. Fund, both per M.M.; Envelope in Plate, £100 for Congr. Purposes; Adherent, £92 for Vestibule Floor Covering (Church), per M.M.I.