

THE
Free Presbyterian Magazine
and Monthly Record

Vol. 95

NOVEMBER 1990

No. 11

The Knowledge of God

It is very generally acknowledged that there is a God. There are very few out and out atheists who deny that there is a God. However, there are millions of practical atheists in the world, men and women who live as though there were no God. It is evident in such cases that God is not in all their thoughts. Man by nature is truly ignorant of the God who has given him a being in this world. This is one of the solemn consequences of the fall of man — man lost the knowledge of the living and true God.

Yet the Word of God makes plain that to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent is eternal life. It is impossible therefore for anyone to possess eternal life apart from the knowledge of the living and true God. If we are to have eternal life we must know God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent.

The fall brought man into a low condition in that man, once possessed with the knowledge of God, knows Him no longer. The most educated of men are no better than the most backward so far as this knowledge is concerned. The natural mind is blinded and cannot apprehend what is spiritual. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." It is certain, then, that no man can know God until his sin-darkened mind is enlightened by the Spirit of God.

What our souls need is the saving knowledge of God which can only come through saving enlightenment in the knowledge of the truth. If we are to know God in a saving and a living way, it cannot be apart from saving belief of the truth. The revelation that God has given of Himself to poor sinners is in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. It is in and through Christ alone that God is to be known as a reconciled God. Outside of Christ He is a consuming fire.

If we are then to come to the knowledge of God, it is through coming to the knowledge of the One whom He has sent, the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is made known in the gospel of God's grace as the alone Saviour of sinners. It is through that gospel being applied to our hearts by the Spirit of God that we are brought to receive and rest upon Jesus Christ alone for eternity. Through faith in His Name, He becomes precious to us — "Unto you, therefore, which believe He is precious." Christ is revealed to the soul as the One who alone can meet his need for time and eternity. It is as a poor needy sinner that the soul lays hold of Jesus Christ in the gospel. It is on a divine Saviour that the soul lays hold, seeing in Him the One who is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His Person.

One of the disciples said to the Saviour: "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." The Saviour answered: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father. . . . Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in Me." What a revelation God is giving of Himself in Jesus Christ. He is making Himself known in the riches of His grace, mercy and love. He is revealing Himself as a sin-forgiving God in His Beloved Son. That a God of infinite glory should condescend to pardon and blot out sin, iniquity and transgression is something altogether wonderful and ought to fill our souls with joy and rejoicing. What amazing grace that must be to pluck a sinner from the burning and bring that soul to be an heir of eternal life.

Eternity will consist of the unveiling of the glory of God as that is to be seen in the great work of Calvary. Of that glory there is no end. How blessed shall the eternity be of all who will be entering in more and more to the knowledge of the glory of God as revealed in the great work of redemption where "mercy and truth are met together" and "righteousness and peace have kissed each other"!

For ourselves the great question must be whether or not we will be of that blessed company. The answer to this question must lie in the question whether or not we have come to the knowledge of God here in time through the revelation that is given to us in Christ Jesus. Can we say in truth that we know Him, whom to know is eternal life? If so, then we may be assured that we shall inherit glory and shall be eternally enjoying the beautiful vision of God in glory for, as the Saviour has said, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

Sermon

(For Preparation to the Communion)

by Rev. David Dickson

"Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." 2 Timothy 2: 19.

With you of this congregation, I have ado for the present; as for others, let them take a share, as God's word is dealt. It is love to your souls, and a longing to see God's work thriving amongst you, after so long labour, that makes me sharp upon you this evening, and to speak hard things against you. And now, I am sent forth to you with as hard and as comfortable a message as any, — a hard message to you who will not amend, but a sweet message to you who are begun to amend, or have a solid purpose to amend. As for you who will not amend, but will live on in your profanity, drunkenness, worldliness, malice, deceit, ambition, lechery, or in any known sin, I have a message to you this day, to tell you, that ye look like vessels of dishonour fitted for destruction, reprobate, whom God in his justice has rejected, and all the ministers in the earth shall not be able to convert, — yea, albeit Christ himself should preach, a reprobate villain would not be converted, — such as those to whom Christ spake in the days of his flesh, and told them, that they were not of his sheep; for if they had been his sheep, he says, they would have heard his voice: but they, like stinking gaits¹, went away their own way, that they might perish as filthy beasts. So say I to you. If ye will not turn in to God, he shall turn you from him, when he separates the sheep from the gaits; ye shall be ranked on his left hand, and he shall say to you, "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity, I know you not." For ye have said, as those who said, "Make the Holy One of Israel to cease from us, for we will have none of his ways:" so says this hypocritical generation, "that draw near me with their lips when their hearts are far away."

The apostle knowing that such persons are rejected, and that there are others, who for the time, having made defection (such as Hymeneus and Philetus), were a great stumbling-block to the people of God; therefore, in this text, he sets himself to guard those who were not fallen, by laying before them the doctrine of election and reprobation, and the use that should be made thereof. Therefore, I wish that ye would take heed to that which shall be spoken, if possibly the wicked may yet forsake his way, that he may return unto the Lord.

1. Goats

1. He tells us, that Hymeneus and Philetus, counterfeit hypocrites, had brought in damnable doctrine, saying that the resurrection is past, and so had overthrown the faith of some; whom, when the people perceived them to have made defection, might conclude and say, We see the faith of some is overthrown; why may it not fall forth so with us also? Yon men were teachers of others, yet are they fallen from Christ, and have drawn others after them: why may not all fall away as they? The apostle answers, Be not troubled for that; let those that are fallen from Christ go, for none of his will leave him; if they will go, let them go, for Christ may well spare them, they were never his. But never one of the elect shall go from him, for the foundation of the Lord standeth sure, having this seal, "The Lord knows who are his; and Let every one that names the name of Christ, depart from iniquity." God's elect will be kept fast, go away who will; and they will so adhere to Christ, as they will depart from iniquity.

Yet will they object and say, Those who are fallen from Christ, were once in the kirk as well as we; they came to the word and sacraments, they were teachers of others; and now, they are fallen into Satan's net, — what if we fall also? He answers, A fair matter that they were in the kirk, and came to preachings and communions, and now are gone to sorrow: know ye not, that as in a great man's house there are some vessels to honour made of gold and silver, for honourable uses, and some vessels of wood and earth, to carry out the refuse and jugs² of the house; so in the house of God, or bosom of the kirk, as there are vessels of honourable elect souls, so are there filthy vessels, that are filled with the devil's refuse, and their own reprobate persons full of rottenness and uncleanness. Let such filthy buckets and their dirt go away together out of God's house, and let nobody bemoan them. Why should any body be troubled to see such filthy vessels flung to the door?

Yet they may object and say, How shall we be made sure that we shall not follow their course? He answers, "If a man purge himself from those, he shall be a vessel of honour," (verse 21); as if he said, Ye are now in the high-gate; hold you in it; purge yourselves from such errors and uncleanness; keep you well from their fashions, and here I make a promise to you, in the name of the Lord, that ye shall be vessels of honour kept for your Lord's use, and prepared for every good work: let the filthy be filthy still, and hypocrites, like Judas, go to their place, but ye who are holy, be holy still.

Hereof we gather first, in general, that the doctrine of election and

reprobation, is a doctrine which may be safely taught and propounded unto people, without fear of any inconveniences that men would pretend, albeit men use to say, it is a doctrine hard, and should not be meddled with; because (say they) it makes some men despair, and others become careless what they do. I answer, Let God make an answer for his own doctrine, who has commanded us to teach it, and has pointed it out in so many places of scripture. If some abuse this doctrine to licentiousness, and others desperately run away from God, let them answer for it; to themselves be it said. Yet God has propounded this doctrine in such indefinite terms, that no particular person can conclude from anything that God has said, that he is a reprobate; but he has told plainly, that of those who come to him, he will put no man away, he will shoot out none that will stay in his house. Therefore, the apostle says boldly, the election obtained it, and the rest were blinded; and that the god of this world has blinded the eyes of many, who will not receive the gospel. Or would Christ have propounded this doctrine, if it had been dangerous? Therefore, we oppose to such carnal men, secure sleepers in sin, this doctrine of Christ and his apostles, clearly set down in scripture. Let none take offence at this doctrine, for Christ's sheep will hear his voice, and if any will startle away, let them go.

2. The apostle brings out this doctrine of election and reprobation, when filthy errors are risen in the kirk, that he may stint the defection of those who are not fallen, and make such a bar betwixt them who are fallen, and those who are standing; which lets us see, that this doctrine of election and reprobation, is a profitable and useful doctrine, and brings special vantage to the godly. It is a fence to keep them from defection, a guard to hold them from stumbling when they see others fall, a bar to hold them from running after a godless world; for, take away this doctrine, men would be atheists. If men saw, that the doctrine of Christ's gospel makes no reformation in the life of professors, they might think and say, that Christianity is no religion, seeing the professors of it are of such lewd lives. But this doctrine tells, that God's elect will be loath to make the gospel be evil spoken of by their lewd conversation; albeit the bulk of deboshed titular Christians do so, the elect will leave their courses, let the reprobate abuse religion as they will. And what are the elect the worse, that there be reprobates in the kirk? — as he were an evil-skilled husband-man, who should take a whole bing of stuff³ to be chaff, because there is much chaff in it; for the owner of it might say, albeit he counted it but chaff, he will not sell it good cheap; for let his bing go through wind, and the

chaff shed from the corn, then the corn shall kythe. So in Christ's kirk, albeit there appear to be many more hypocrites than true Christians, yet when the fan comes to winnow, the chaff shall blow away, and Christ shall gather the good stuff in the girnel⁴, and burn the chaff in unquenchable fire. Be not troubled then, albeit many knaves haunt the kirk and communions, and the next day turn them to the devil's service; for such fashions keep up their own damnation, and the means that help others to heaven, help them to hell. Let none scaur⁵ because they see some fall away, but rather be confirmed by their fall: for as a goldsmith, out of ten pounds of drossy metal, can purge out that which is good, and cast the rest away, so God, for one or two pickles of good stuff, will purge it, and cast away the bad.

3. This doctrine is full of comfort, strength, and encouragement to those who are walking in a good way, and aiming to seek God as they should: for if they be purging themselves from the filthiness of the flesh and spirit, to them it is an evidence that God has chosen them, albeit thousands should be reprobates beside them; for if their ear be nailed to the post of the Lord's door, and they be contented to be his servants for ever, when they hear the doctrine of election and reprobation, and find themselves in the elect's way, it is to them a sweet leaning-stock, to rest and comfort them.

4. When we consider the apostle's drift, who condemns those for reprobates who are fallen away, and uses the doctrine of election and reprobation as a means to hold the rest from falling, we see, that this doctrine is a strong attractive, to draw back those who are fallen in error or vice, that they lie not in it; for this doctrine forces such men to turn to God, or else, to take on the name of reprobates, and to blot out their own name out of the book of life. It is a doctrine meet for this age, wherein God is mocked and blasphemed by the lewd lives of those who are called Christians, to tell them, that they must either turn in to God, or take home with them those black tidings, that they are vessels of dishonour, fitted for destruction.

This doctrine is very needful to put men to their preemtours;⁶ and yet it condemns not a man to hell presently, who is lying in sin; but it tells him, that there are some elect, who will come home, and some reprobate, who will not come home. Therefore, if a man be elect, albeit for the time he be a deboshed villain, this doctrine will serve him for the third and last summons; for when he hears that he must either quit his sinful courses,

4. Granary

5. Take fright

6. Decisions

or have no portion with God, presently he must resolve, I will renounce my old lovers, my uncleanness, drunkenness, worldliness, and turn in to God, and seek a covering to hide my vileness, and a garment to make me beautiful in the eyes of God. This effect will this doctrine work in the elect.

5. This doctrine is only terrible to those who are walking in an evil way, and will not quit it; who, like swine, delight in filthiness, and will not come out of it; as the adulterer or drunkard, who will come to the communion, and back again to his adultery, and again to the communion, and back again to his adultery. For such a person, it were better for him never to have known the way of righteousness, than after having known, to turn away from the holy commandment. Dearly shall he buy his coming to the communion: better to him to have eaten a fiery coal, than to have eaten the consecrated elements. If any, for that is said, will go on desperately in the way of Cain, renounce God and Christ, have preferred their pleasures to him, or with Esau, selling their birthright for pottage, who can hinder them to go to destruction? But let us tell them their doom ere they go. Because they will not quit their sins, the curse of God go with them, for they have chosen to mock God, and dare him to his face, living like filthy dogs; therefore, like dogs, let them be debarred out of New Jerusalem. So, then, this doctrine serves out those who will not come to Christ, and will not quit the devil's service; and it is a doctrine to keep all who have a sore heart for sin; for when others go on in their filthiness, as vessels of dishonour, sealing their own damnation in their bosom, they are preserved, as vessels of honour for their master's use. This in general: now we come to particulars in the text.

"Nevertheless" — that is, for all the falling away of some, and drawing away of other some, yet the foundation of the Lord stands sure; the Lord knows who are his. We see, that albeit there be some in the kirk who depart from the faith and grounds of religion, and by their fall draw others after them, yet the elect shall be preserved, albeit not from falling, yet from falling away; albeit a thousand filthy bodies in a congregation, who call themselves Christians, and live like Pagans, who should run away, yet not one shall run away, but shall be severed from them. Let them go; God shall tine⁷ nothing when they are gone; there shall not be a penny or jewel less in his treasury, a sheep fewer in his fold, nor a pickle of stuff less in his garner.

When some see men of lewd lives in the kirk, taking liberty to fall out into the common gross evils of the land, they think they may do as they,

7. Lose

and then say, God forbid that all such men go to hell — will any man say, that all proud folk, all greedy folk, all malicious folk will be damned! We answer, whatever they be that live in known sin, albeit they were never so many, shall be damned; for Tophet is large and wide; there is fire and brimstone enough, God has wrath enough; and if there be not room enough in hell, let them be laid on heaps above other, or bound together like bunches of thorns, to burn all together.

2. "The foundation of the Lord stands." — Ye will say, How do the elect stand, when others fall? I answer, The ground of that standing is the foundation of the word, which lets us see, that it is nothing in the elect's self that makes them stand when others fall, but the sure laid foundation of God's work in them makes them stand. God's free love and grace, his solid purpose and decree, brought them to Christ, keeps them in Christ, and lets them not fall into deadly errors: it is God that holds their hearts in the hatred of sin, when others hunt after it. It is not their own strength that makes them stand; but their strength is of the Lord, who has builded them on his unalterable grace and love, and has fore-ordained them to be partakers of his kingdom.

If any run not away with the wicked, let them thank God, and not their own strength; for it is the strong arm of God's decree that holds them, and the mighty pull of his hand that pulls them from among the wicked. Thank God that thy heart scunners⁸ at the conversation of the wicked, and that Satan's chain is loosed from thy neck — that they are strong in sin, the devil and they going on together, when God's strength has made thee to stand.

3. The apostle propounds here the doctrine of election, to fortify them who are not departed from the faith. We see, that those who stand when others fall, and depart not when others make defection, may take that standing for an evidence of their election, and lean to it, as a strong ground of their strengthening, to keep them from staggering when others fall: for if they stand when others fall, it is a token God has begun, even here, to separate the sheep from the goats, the metal from the dross, and the chaff from the corn; and if he has done so now, much more hereafter. It is, because God has tane pleasure in thee, to make thee confirmed to His Son Christ. Take it then for a token of election, and lean upon it as a rock. Let it be an encouragement for farther welldoing, yea, a confirmation of thee in the way, and a thing to make thee bless God that thou standest when others fall. Even now, the Lord's fan is in his hand by the preaching of the word, severing the good from the bad; and the preaching

is like the wap⁹ of a fan, to tell the one that they are chaff, and the other that they are corn, but with this difference — albeit the preaching call the one chaff, and the other corn, yet that which is chaff now, may become corn, by earnest prayer and dealing with God to make a change: but not hereafter. Here is a vantage by the fanning of the word: that which is on the worst side, may be brought to the best. But hereafter, that is, after this life, that which is set apart to the worst side, shall not come to the best; they who are ranked to the left hand, shall not come to the right. Therefore I wish, that those who now, by the preaching of the word, find themselves to be chaff, would pray to God, to fill their chaff with some good stuff; for he can put his Spirit in them, to make of chaff, corn; for if he was able to cause the rod which was in Aaron's hand, bud, flourish, and bring forth ripe almonds in one night, why can he not make of chaff, corn? Therefore call upon him that he may change thee.

4. "Having this seal." — He takes a comparison from things kept under lock and key; or things stamped with a seal, which men would have closed and confirmed. It lets us see, that all the elect are under God's great seal and sure custody, reserved for himself; and their election is a secret thing kept up with God from the world, and from the elect themselves, till he be pleased to reveal it. Seldom are the elect revealed to the world, albeit in due time he will reveal it to themselves, so as he will make them cry, "Abba, Father," and make his Spirit bear witness to their spirits, that they are the children of God: he seals them to the day of redemption.

If election be a thing sealed and secret, let none unreverently break up the Lord's seal: but if ye would know it, know it the way that God has ordained, and wait for his revealing of it. This I speak, to reprove those who will not serve God, till he reveal to them whether they are elect or not. I tell them it is a wrong question at the first: for first, they must set them to do God's bidding, and then, speir if they be elected; but use not preposterous haste to break up God's seal and coffers, till he like. It is not for the profane to win in upon God's counsel: the secret of the Lord is revealed to them who fear him; it is the pure in heart that see God. If then thou would know God's love and purpose about thee, purge thine heart; for the love of sin must be out, ere the love of God be shewn. If thou scrape not out of thy heart the love of sin, thou shalt never read thy name written in the book of life truly.

Christ's Priesthood and the Church's Worship

Extract from Discourse by Rev. Hugh Martin, D.D., Edinburgh.

The priesthood of Christ and the worship of the Church are so connected, that they stand or fall together; and the scene or locality of the one must be the scene or locality of the other. All our worship of God hangs on the mediation of Jesus in the execution of his sacerdotal office; and he who is unacquainted with the great leading truths concerning Christ's priesthood cannot intelligently nor acceptably worship God. No worship is acceptable to the Father, no ascriptions of praise and glory, and no supplications and prayers can come into His presence, save through the hands of the one Mediator between God and men. And this does not merely imply that, on the one hand, God has regard to the sacrifice of Jesus, and that, on the other, the worshipper directs his faith to it also. There is more implied in it than that. For the sacrifice of Christ cannot be regarded as something that has passed out of His hands, so as that benefits may be solicited and bestowed on the ground of it, the continual personal and living intervention of Christ Himself being unnecessary. No: not only does the Father dispense the blessings of the covenant on the ground of the satisfaction rendered to divine justice on the cross of Calvary; but when He does dispense those blessings, it is only through the perpetual ministry, the gracious personal intervention, and the very hands of the living High Priest Himself. And not only does the acceptable worshipper proffer his faith, and love, and service, through the merit of the great propitiation, but his right to do so with acceptance he recognises as dependant on his making use of the ministry and service of the High Priest, as He personally and officially presents them at the throne. When we are invited to come boldly to the throne of grace, our privilege is rested on twofold ground: *first*, that we have "a new and living way into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, and by the rent veil," which is to say, His flesh; and *secondly*, that "we have a great High Priest" — the risen Saviour Himself, as the leader of our worship — "over the house of God." And assuredly no one will rise to the purity of a true heart, and to the privilege of the full assurance of an unshaken confidence, whose faith does not embrace the completeness of this double warrant for drawing near to God.

All our worship is dependent on the priesthood of Christ. Our worship, in fact, is nothing else than our communion with Christ in His

priesthood. Our whole worship hinges on that priesthood: takes its colour and character, its spiritual life and substance, from it; gathers round it, and revolves about it. Inevitably the scene of His priesthood is the scene of our worship.

It is written in the opening statement of the chapter succeeding that from which our text is taken: "Then verily the first covenant had ordinances of divine service, and a *worldly* sanctuary." And the contrast which the Apostle is carrying out between the old covenant and the new, suggests by antithesis the sure and implied counterpart and correlative truth, that the second covenant has ordinances of divine service, but a *heavenly* sanctuary as the scene of them. And this truth is either expressly asserted or implicitly involved in repeated statements throughout this epistle. When in the *fourth* chapter we are called on to hold fast our profession, on the ground that we have a great High Priest who has passed into the heavens — Jesus, the Son of God — it is surely the throne of God in heaven to which we are for the same reason invited to "come boldly, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." When in the *sixth* chapter we have a glorious description of the strong consolation which God is willing that the heirs of promise should enjoy in the city of refuge into which they have fled, it is a heavenly refuge-city — heaven itself — into which their hope is sent to carry them, or into which their souls, in the power of hope, are spiritually carried out; which hope "enters *into that within the veil*, whither the fore-runner is for us entered." When in the *tenth* chapter we are invited into the holiest of all now pertaining, to gospel worship — analogous to the holy of holies under the law — it is manifestly heaven itself into which we are, by this heavenly calling, summoned to enter by faith: "Having therefore boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near." When in the *thirteenth* chapter the writer asserts that "we have an altar of which they have no right to eat that serve the tabernacle," it is assuredly no earthly altar that he has in view, but one with which a heavenly and exclusively spiritual worship is connected, and in the virtues of which we are to offer no ceremonial, material, or sensuous sacrifice, or any worship of earthly pomp, but the pure and simple "sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of the lips." And more decisive perhaps, than any of these, is the grand description of our Church-state and privilege under the gospel, which he expressly contrasts with that under the law; and in which he makes heaven so palpably the only scene and seat of worship, the readers are continu-

ally tempted to fancy that it is the estate of glory he is depicting, though it is manifestly our present condition under the gospel which he has in view:— “Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; but ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the *heavenly* Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.”

Yes; as the holy place in the innermost recesses of Israel's temple was the recognised scene of Israel's worship under Aaron's priesthood, heaven is the scene of our worship under Christ. We enter there, indeed, in this life, only by faith. But faith's entrance is real. Faith's entrance is not fanciful, but true. We enter by no effort of imagination, but by an effort and exercise of *faith*; and faith has a warrant of the word, and the call of the Father, and the quickening of the Spirit, and the ministry and priesthood of the Son to proceed upon, when it enters there. And when our case is called, and our petition to be considered — if reverently we may speak of these great mysteries in terms borrowed from the procedure of men and courts on earth — and if the question is put: Who appears on behalf of these petitioners, and in support of this petition; the answer is: “Christ hath entered into heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of God for us.”

In the grateful remembrance of this great truth — that God's heaven of glory is the real sanctuary and scene of our unpretending gospel worship — with what perfect satisfaction, with a mind how calm and equal, may we be contented to resign all the grandeur and pomp of a ritualistic worship, and cleave to the simplicity of our Presbyterian order! We are but *preferring heaven to earth* when doing so. And though our forms may be accounted bald, and tame, and unimpressive, it can only be in the judgment of those that are comparatively carnal, and who, in default of spiritual ability to appreciate the heavenliness of New Testament worship, would lay *earth* and *sense* under contribution, where *heaven* and *faith* should rule. The truly spiritual worshipper, sensitive to the difficulty of maintaining his spiritual-mindedness, will be jealous of everything fitted to appeal to sense. To such, the grave sweet melody of Zion's psalmody will be a congenial vehicle for spiritual feeling; while the artistic sounds of instrumental music thrilling the ear, awakening bodily sense to energies

conflicting with those of the spirit, precisely where most of all the spirit should be free from all such conflict, will be felt intuitively as a great impurity, and a fundamental violation of the great principles of gospel worship.

It is remarkably confirmatory of these remarks to remind you that, in point of fact, the tolerating or desiring of such innovations and impurities in the worship of God, always goes hand in hand with false or defective views of the priesthood of Christ. A ritualistic worship is found to be historically connected with notions of an *earthly* priesthood. When the ministers of the gospel are accounted priests, as in Popish or Puseyite worship, the earthly house of prayer — and not heaven — comes to be regarded as the scene and sanctuary of worship; its observances, in default of heavenly and unseen beauty, are decorated with materials of earthly splendour; and inasmuch as it is a principle of reason that the worship of God should be glorious, and priesthood and glory stand intimately related, the priesthood being on earth, the glory sought is an earthly pomp and glory too. The doctrine of Christ's exclusive and celestial priesthood puts ritualistic worship to flight. And the believing worshipper, seeking in spirit to enter heaven, rejoices to resign every beggarly element of the world, which can only chain down his spirit, too prone to cleave unto the dust, and hinder his entrance within the vail.

I need scarcely remark, in this connection, that it is manifestly the deep appreciation of doctrine — a large, and sound, and rich theology, once highly valued in Scotland, when every peasant could confound the prelates — that will alone protect and conserve among us the worship and government of the Church of God according to His will. Doctrine, in all things, takes the lead in the Church; doctrine, held fast in the grasp of a living faith, a deep spiritual intelligence, and a loving, cordial appreciation. And where doctrine becomes corrupt, or shallow, or inefficient, neither the worship nor the government of the Church can long be safe from the follies of human wisdom, and the corruptions and impurities of human inventions. Nor is there any doctrine more distinguishing and glorious in Christianity than the many-sided and exalted doctrine of the priesthood of Christ. You will always find those deplorably ignorant of it, who desiderate or would welcome innovations and ceremonies in our worship.

I verily think that they have very much cause to question the truth of their assurance, who know not what it is to have their assurance assaulted strongly by Satan. — *Brooks*.

"A Garden Inclosed"

Canticles 4: 12

by Rev. J. C. Ryle, D.D.

The Lord Jesus Christ has a garden. It is the company of all who are true believers in Him. They are His garden. Viewed in one light, believers are Jesus Christ's *spouse*. They are all joined to Him by an everlasting covenant that cannot be broken; wedded to Him by the marriage of faith; taken by Him to be His for ever, with all their debts and liabilities, with all their faults and imperfections. Their old name is gone, they have no name but that of their Bridegroom. God the Father regards them as one with His dear Son. Satan can lay no charge against them. They are the Lamb's wife: "My Beloved is mine, and I am His." (Canti. 2: 16).

Viewed in another light, believers are Christ's *sister*. They are like to Him in many things. They have His Spirit; they love what He loves and hate what He hates; they count all His members brethren; through Him they have the Spirit of adoption, and can say of God, "He is my Father." Faint indeed is their resemblance to their elder Brother! And still they are like.

Viewed in a third light, believers are Christ's *garden*. Let us see how and in what way.

1. Jesus calls His people *a garden*, because they are altogether different from the men of the world. The world is a wilderness: it brings forth little but thorns and thistles; it is fruitful in nought but sin. The children of this world are an untilled wilderness in God's sight. With all their arts and sciences, intellect and skill, eloquence and statesmanship, poetry and refinement, — with all this they are a wilderness, barren of repentance, faith, holiness, and obedience to God. The Lord looks down from heaven, and where He sees no grace, there the Lord can see nothing but a "wilderness" state of things. The Lord Jesus Christ's believing people are the green spot of the earth; the oasis amidst barren deserts: they are His garden.

He calls His people *a garden*, because they are sweet and beautiful to His mind. He looks on the world, and it grieves Him to the heart; He looks on the little flock of His believing people, and is well pleased. He sees in them the fruit of His travail, and is satisfied. He rejoices in spirit when He sees the kingdom revealed to babes, though the wise and prudent receive it not. As in the day of Noah's sacrifice, He smells a sweet odour and is refreshed. It is very wonderful, very mysterious! Believers

are vile in their own eyes, and feel themselves miserable sinners; yet Jesus says, "Thou art all fair," — "sweet is thy voice," — "thy countenance is comely," — beautiful as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, — "fair as the moon, and clear as the sun" (Canticles 1: 15; 4: 7; 2: 14; 6: 10, etc). Oh the depths! It sounds incomprehensible and almost incredible; but it is true.

He calls His people *a garden*, because *He delights to walk among them*. He sees the children of this world, but He mingles not with them. His eyes are on all their ways, but He does not come down to talk with them, as He did to Abraham, like a man with his friend. On the other hand, He loves to walk among His candlesticks, and see whether the light burns brightly. He loves to be present in the assemblies of His saints, and to come in and sup with them, and they with Him. He loves to come with His Father and make His abode with His disciples; and wheresoever two or three are gathered in His name, there is He. He loves to come into His garden and eat His pleasant fruits; to go down to the beds of spices and gather lilies; to see whether the vine flourishes, and the tender grape appears, and the pomegranates bud forth (Cant. 7: 12). In short, He holds peculiar communion with His people, and deals familiarly with them, as He does not with the world.

He calls His people *a garden*, because *they are useful, and bear fruit and flowers*. Where is the real use of the children of this world? Of what value are they, while they continue unconverted? They are unprofitable tenants, and worthless cumberers of the ground. They bring no glory to the Lord that bought them; they fulfil not their part in creation; they stand alone in the world of created beings, not doing the work for which their Maker meant them. The heavens declare the glory of God; the trees, the corn, the grass, the flowers, the streams, the birds speak forth His praise. But the man of the world does nothing to show that he cares for God, or serves God, or loves God, or feels grateful for Christ's redeeming death.

The Lord's people are not so. They bring Him some revenue of glory. They bear some little fruit, and are not altogether barren and unprofitable servants. Compared to the world they are a garden.

II. The Lord's garden has a distinctive peculiarity about it. It is *a garden inclosed*.

There is an inclosure round believers; or else they never would be saved. This is the secret of their safety. It is not their faithfulness, their strength, or their love, — it is the wall around them which prevents their being lost. They are a "garden inclosed".

They are inclosed by *God the Father's everlasting election*. Long before they were born, — long before the foundations of the world, — God knew

them, chose them, and appointed them to obtain salvation by Jesus Christ. The children of this world do not like to hear this doctrine proclaimed. It humbles man, and leaves him no room to boast. But whether it is abused or not, the doctrine of election is true. It is the cornerstone of the believer's foundation, that he was chosen in Christ before the world began. Who can rightly estimate the strength of this inclosure?

They are inclosed by the *special love of God the Son*. The Lord Jesus is the Saviour of all men, but He is specially the Saviour of them that believe. He has power over all flesh, but He gives eternal life to them that are specially given to Him, in a way that He does to none others. . . . He invites all, but He quickens whom He will, and brings them to glory. He prays for them; he prays not for the world. He intercedes for them, that they may be kept from evil, that they may be sanctified by the truth, that their faith fail not. Who can fully describe the blessedness of this inclosure?

They are inclosed by *the effectual working of God the Holy Ghost*. The Spirit of Christ calls them out from the world, and separates them as effectually as if a wall were built between them and it. He puts in them new hearts, new minds, new tastes, new desires, new sorrows, new joys, new wishes, new pleasures, new longings. He gives them new eyes, new ears, new affections, new opinions. He makes them new creatures; they are born again, and with a new birth they begin a new existence. Mighty indeed is the transforming power of the Holy Spirit! The believer and the world are completely put asunder, and everlastingly separated. You may place a believer and an unbeliever together, *marry* them, join them under one roof, but you cannot unite them any more into one piece. The one is part of the "garden inclosed", and the other is not. Effectual calling is a barrier that cannot be broken.

Who can tell the comfort of this threefold wall of inclosure! Believers are inclosed by election, inclosed by washing and intercession, inclosed by calling and regeneration. Great is the consolation of these threefold bands of love around us, — the love of God the Father, the love of God the Son, the love of God the Holy Ghost! A threefold cord is not easily broken.

Does any reader suppose for a moment that all this was not needed? I believe that nothing short of this threefold inclosure could save the Lord's garden from utter ruin. Without election, intercession, and regeneration, there is not one soul who would get to heaven. The wild boar out of the wood would break in and devour; the roaring lion would come in and trample

all under his feet. The devil would soon lay the Lord's garden level with the ground.

Blessed be God for this, that we are a garden inclosed! Blessed be God, our final safety hangs not on anything of our own, — not on our graces and feelings, — not on our degree of sanctification, — not on our perseverance in well doing — not on our love, — and not on our growth in grace, — not on our prayers and Bible readings, — not even on our faith. It hangs on nothing else but the work of Father, Son and Holy Ghost. If this threefold work inclose us, who shall overthrow our hope? If God be for us, who can be against us?

Adam had a heart free from sin. Adam was strong in innocence and undefiled by contact with bad examples and corrupt neighbours. Adam was on a higher ground, a thousand times higher than we now occupy; and yet Adam fell before temptation. There was no inclusion round him, no wall to keep Satan out, no barrier round the first flower of the Lord's garden — and see how Adam fell.

Let believers open their sleepy eyes and try to understand the value of their privileges. This is the most blessed part of the Lord's garden. It is a "garden inclosed". I believe if there was no election, there would be no salvation. I never saw a man who would be saved if it depended in any wise on himself. Let us all thank the Lord Jesus, every day, and thank Him from our hearts, that His people are a chosen and guarded people, and that His garden is nothing less than a "garden inclosed".

The Present Time

As our present time is ominous, and dangers are ahead,
When plots by wily Papists in secrecy are made;
Then what should be done that such we may avert,
And preserve our present liberties in Church and State?

The Scriptures are challenged as they never were before;
Yea, men cast aside the Bible, and the Sabbath Day ignore.
Church meetings are like theatres, with amusements and fun;
The fear of God is gone, but a reckoning day shall come.

False teachers fill our pulpits in every corner of the land,
Who preach a spurious gospel with its structure on the sand.
It never came from God, and will never save a soul;
Thus preachers and people will find Hell to be their goal.

But Hell is not feared, and there is not such a place
Within the new theology, you will not find a trace.
Smooth things the people love, and in judgement they are given,
And such as those things follow shall ne'er enter Heaven.

Alas! the time is come when God's people should consider,
As the floods of Infidelity and Popery together
Are swelling in among us, like to cover all the land,
Then, Rome will show her teeth, and may gain the upper hand.

When Israel of old departed from the Lord,
And were punished for their sin, they sought to be restored.
God's wrath was then assuaged, and His judgments removed;
A time of joy and gladness and holiness ensued.

Why not proclaim a fast, as was done in former days,
That our sins we may confess, and turn from evil ways?
Yea, the Scriptures do command us to fast and to pray,
Which now would well become us, in this, an evil day.

The Solemn League and Covenant of Scotland's Reformation
Was visibly acknowledged by the God of Salvation.
When afterwards renewed, then Livingstone declared
He never saw such motions as the Spirit then conferred.

On the King upon the throne, and on all his subjects too,
Those Covenants still are binding, but, alas! there be but few
Who think of them renewing, and why is it so?
O just because fidelity to Bible truth is low.

Our day indeed is dark, Church and nation are asleep,
When our foes are wide awake, who would kill us with a sweep;
But a wakening day will come, when God's judgments will appear,
And the stake and the gibbet with dread tortures shall be near.

May England and Scotland awake yet in time,
And the people of the Lord right nobly combine,
To stand in the gap, and the mighty foes confront;
With the sword of the Lord their enemies they shall daunt.

A. M. M.

A Useful Illiterate Man

All who were in the eldership in the parish of Lairg, Sutherland, at the Disruption 1843 became office-bearers in the Free Church. The oldest man in the Session was Donald Munro, Balnadelson, a native of Ardvar, Assynt.

Donald experienced the power of saving-grace at the early age of 16 years. He began his married life in Glencoul, and after remaining there for a few years, he removed to Corrykinloch at the head of Loch Shin, where he was in the employment of Captain Donald Matheson of Shinness. Here his neighbours were few, but he counted it his privilege, that nearly all the house-holders who lived then in that sparsely-peopled district were sincere Christians.

Though Corry was far from any church, Donald was diligent in his attendance on the means of grace. Lairg was over 20 miles away, and three bridgeless rivers intervened, but he was very frequently among the worshippers there. After Mr John Kennedy came to Assynt, he was a regular attendant at the church of Inchnadamph. Occasionally Mr Kennedy officiated at Torbreck, not far from Lochinver, which was fully 12 miles further away, but the additional distance did not prevent Donald from attending the service there, especially when the days were long. He had an excellent constitution, and the preaching refreshed his spirit. After spending nearly 20 years in Corrykinloch he removed to Balnadelson near Lairg.

He was a man who possessed sound judgment, and a great measure of sanctified common sense. Angus Grey, his fellow-elder in Lairg Free Church used to say that there was another member who was his equal for piety, but for matters requiring judicious treatment, Donald was worth more than others. His meditations and prayerful spirit gave a singular freshness to his religious exercises. "He remembered the Lord upon his bed in the night watches."

As a Friday speaker he was original and never tedious. Once in Creich at a Fellowship meeting, he described the experiences of the Lord's people in a few pregnant sentences and sat down. Mr Kennedy, Killearnan who presided turned to him and said "I wish Donald you would rise again and give us more of the good things you have been telling us."

He was much missed when he passed to his rest 14th April 1852 aged 90 years.

From: RECORDS OF GRACE IN SUTHERLAND

Revivals of Religion in the Island of Arran

During the year 1804, &c., but especially in 1812, 1813.*

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the state of religion in this island was exceedingly low. "Darkness covered the land, and gross darkness the people." But, through the tender mercy of God, the day-spring from on high visited it. Divine light arose on them that sat in darkness, and the cause of Christ has gained much ground in this part of His vineyard since the year 1804. In that year, and the year following, many were awakened at the north end of the island, especially about the farms of Sannox and their neighbourhood. And although this awakening — as to its power and progress — was not of long continuance, yet a considerable number of the subjects of it testified, by their after lives and conversation, that they had undergone a gracious change. This day of small things was the commencement of the revival which followed. From this time a change for the better might be observed in the religious sentiments and conduct of many among the people. Many seemed now to be awakened from the slumber of spiritual death, being disposed to attend to the things which belong to their everlasting peace. Their eyes were now opened to see the evil of their former wicked ways, their perishing condition as sinners, and their need of Christ as a Saviour. They now began also to distinguish between truth and error; to relish evangelical doctrine; to attend with diligence on the means of grace; and, in general, to set up the worship of God, morning and evening, in their families. Religious meetings were also set up in many places, and in the course of a few years a kind of reformation was thus visible throughout many parts of the island. This was the case more especially, though not exclusively, in the parish of Kilmorie, which was at this time favoured with the ministry of the late pious and laborious Mr McBride. It may be remarked, respecting his usual style of preaching, that he was by no means what might be called an alarming preacher, but rather the opposite. His sermons were frequently close and searching, but he dwelt more on the consolations of the Gospel than on the terrors of the law; and the excitement seemed to be, in general, greater under the sermons in which the riches of divine grace and the consolations of the Gospel were exhibited, than under such as were more awful, and apparently better fitted to awaken. Mr McBride's manner of

* Reprinted from one of the interesting Tracts on Revivals published in Glasgow before the Disruption — *Scottish Christian Herald*.

preaching was very much distinguished for seriousness, fervour, and great zeal for the salvation of sinners; and this often led him to make very close appeals to the conscience. But the revival itself was not of a sudden. It was gradual, and spread from one place to another. Neither was it in all cases saving as to its effects. Many under it assumed a form of godliness, who were altogether destitute of its power. In other cases, however, there was something more deep and precious — even the quickening, saving, and soul-transforming influence of the Holy Spirit. During its progress a considerable number were accordingly brought under deep convictions of their guilt and unworthiness as sinners, of their liability to eternal misery, and of their utter helplessness as concerned themselves. Now they began in earnest to say, “What shall we do to be saved?” — and to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, for an interest in him. And the God of all grace, who thus visited them with the awakening influences of His Spirit, was pleased also to enlighten their minds as to the way of salvation, and thus to lead them by faith for peace and rest to the only Saviour of sinners. And being thus quickened, enlightened, and comforted, by the teaching of the same Spirit, they were also united together in the bonds of love and Christian fellowship while they travelled together Zionward.

The subjects of these spiritual influences were, however, only as a little flock when compared with the multitude who remained yet stout-hearted and far from righteousness. And these, becoming impatient under the restraints which the late Reformation had laid upon them with regard to unholy practices, began to break out anew with greater violence, so that in 1810 and 1811 many were bolder in sin and more abandoned to wickedness than they had been at any former period. The enemy of souls now came in as a flood, and threatened to carry all before him. It is right, however, to observe that this was in no respect true of professors, or of such as there was reason to believe had been the subjects of divine grace. These were, for the most part, remarkably consistent in their walk and conversation. The breaking-out of sin here referred to was among the bulk of the people who made no particular profession of religion, and especially among the young who had been brought under temporary restraint.

These circumstances, however, affected the tender-hearted, and stirred up the pious zeal of Mr McBride, and led him to be even more earnest in his warnings and remonstrances, from the pulpit and otherwise, against abounding iniquity. The little flock of tender-hearted Christians scattered throughout his parish were, at the same time, moved with a sense of the prevalence of sin and the desolations of Zion. They felt an increased con-

cern for the conversion and salvation of sinners, and a deeper interest in the prosperity and enlargement of the kingdom of Christ. They began to be more frequent and earnest in their supplications at a throne of grace for a time of revival — of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. Several little parties of them, by mutual consent, set apart some days for private fasting and prayer, sending up their united supplications to the Hearer of prayer for the downpouring of the Spirit in His awakening and converting influences on sinners around them. They kept several such days for nearly a twelvemonth before the commencement of what is generally called the "Revival of Religion in Arran." In these devotional exercises some of them enjoyed uncommon nearness to God, and great freedom at a throne of grace when pouring out their hearts in earnest supplication for the manifestation of divine power and glory in the sanctuary, especially in the congregation with which they were themselves connected. Their minds were much stirred up to press after these things in secret, and at their fellowship meetings, and also when attending public ordinances. They seemed to be animated by the spirit of Him who said, "For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth."

While this little flock of Christ, and their pastor at their head, were thus engaged, and about the beginning of March, 1812, the Lord began to work in an unusual way among them — in a way of which they had not, till this time, any expectation, and which, accordingly, caused some surprise. It was at this time that the outcrying commenced, which was afterwards so common for a considerable time. It began at first in some private meetings, but afterwards extended to the public assembly under Mr McBride's ministry. What made the thing the more remarkable was that it made its first appearance among the people of God. Yea, the most tender, humble, and spiritual-minded among them were the first affected in this manner, and it continued for a short time among them only. But the influence which appeared first moving on them in this unusual way was soon extended to others, and the next subjects of it were those who had been before seriously disposed, or who had been at one time or other under serious impressions. But soon after it was extended to the gay and thoughtless, the immoral, and the openly wicked. Persons of almost every description and age — from nine years or under, to that of sixty upwards — were affected, but the number of old people was small compared with that of the young. The crying at first, and while confined to the people of God, was attended with very little bodily agitation; but after others

were affected, it was generally attended with these — such as panting, trembling, and other convulsive appearances.

The writer of these pages did not reside in Arran till about six months after the commencement of this revival, but he inquired particularly concerning the beginning of it from such as were best able to inform him, and he is satisfied in his own mind that the Spirit of the Lord was at work in preparing for it; that His mighty power was revealed in the commencement of it; and that He had a gracious and merciful design in ordering the circumstances of it. Although this revival did in some measure degenerate latterly through the weakness and folly of men, yet the beginning of it was truly the doing of the Lord, and marvellous in our eyes. Some, who were among the first affected, told the writer that they had not the most remote idea of crying out before they were constrained to do so. So much was this the case, that they said they could not have refrained even if they had been threatened with instant death. They added that their outcryings and bodily agitations arose entirely from the state of their minds when powerfully impressed and affected with a sense of divine truth. But it is proper to observe that the writer is here speaking only of such as were lively-exercised Christians previous to this revival. On examining others who knew nothing of Christian experience before the beginning of this work, he found that the first impressions of many of them were accompanied with deep convictions of sin, with a painful sense of their helplessness and misery as sinner, and also with earnest desires after an interest in Christ, which it is to be hoped many of them attained. But it must be acknowledged that the accounts given by all were not alike satisfactory. Many were deeply affected externally who could give little account of the matter. Their affections were moved, but convictions of sin did not take any deep hold on their hearts and consciences, and so their awakenings soon passed away; at least, it was so with some. But if there be joy in heaven over even one sinner that repenteth, we have reason to think that there must have been much joy in that world of light and love over many that were brought to true repentance in this place during the progress of that work.

About the beginning of 1812 the awakening became general, and continued to make progress about three months. After this it seemed to be at a stand till the beginning of the following December, when it again revived, and continued to spread considerably for about three months more, during which period it extended over a great part of the parish of Kilmorie, which is nearly thirty miles long, and it extended also to some parts of the parish of Kilbride. The writer cannot pretend to give the exact number

of the subjects of this awakening, but the number, from first to last, was very considerable. It must have amounted to two or three hundred persons — old and young taken together. He may state them at two hundred and fifty, which is rather below than above the real number. But he does not mean to insinuate that the whole of these proved true believers. This will appear from the statements already made.

For some months after the commencement of the awakening the subjects of it manifested an uncommon thirst after the means of grace. Both old and young flocked in multitudes to hear the word of God. His house, and the place employed for private meetings, were frequently so crowded that the people, as it were, trod one on another. To travel ten or fifteen miles to hear sermon was considered as a very small matter; and after sermon was over it was no uncommon thing for many of them to meet together in private houses or in barns, and to spend several hours in religious exercises. Some of them spent even whole nights in this way. They also longed for the return of the Sabbath. They rejoiced when it was said unto them, "Let us go into the house of the Lord." They eagerly sought after renewed opportunities of receiving spiritual instruction. Their desire was so great as not to be easily satisfied. In our religious assemblies at this time some might be seen filled with divine love, others with fear; some rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, and others trembling lest they should come short of it; some crying out in accents of praise, and others indicating by their cries their dread of everlasting wrath. At this time our meetings were frequent and well attended; and almost every sermon seemed to be effective in awakening, quickening, or refreshing. Satan and his agents, indeed, made strong efforts to counteract the designs and operations of the Spirit of God, by throwing all manner of stumbling-blocks in the way of His people; but notwithstanding all the opposition of earth and hell, the word of the Lord grew and multiplied. Some who were lively Christians before, enjoyed at this time much of the refreshing influences of the Spirit, and were often filled in an extraordinary measure with peace and joy in believing. As illustrative of this, I may mention that in the spring of 1813 I was catechising one day at a particular farm in the district of _____, and when speaking of the character of Christ as the Redeemer of God's elect, and attempting to describe the preciousness of His blood and the riches of His grace, an excellent Christian, who is now in the world of spirits, cried out in an elevated tone of voice, "O, the infinite virtue of the blood of Christ — the preciousness of His blood! What am I — what am I — that He should ever spend one thought concerning me? O, my nothingness, my nothingness, my nothingness!" And soon after she

exclaimed, "I shall soon be with Thee — I shall soon be with Thee; be for ever with the Lord!" I have seen others also, on various occasions, affected much in the same way. And these ecstasies of spiritual joy among the people of God were generally accompanied with great humility and tenderness of spirit. Instead of being puffed up, they were, on the contrary, bowed down to the very dust under a sense of their privileges. When the glory of the King of Zion was manifested to their souls in the light of the Spirit, they were ready to exclaim, with Job, "Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." I have heard others, under awakening of conscience, cry out, "O, what shall we do — what shall we do? Wash us from sin. Let us not deceive ourselves, for we cannot deceive Thee." It was pleasing thus to see many of them really afraid of self-deception, and earnest in their inquiries after the only sure foundation — the only hope set before them in the Gospel.

In the spring of 1813 this awakening, however, began to decline, and ceased very soon after. But those who were truly Christians continued to enjoy, both in secret duties and at public ordinances, renewed and manifest tokens of the divine presence and favour. This was especially the case on sacramental occasions, at which they were favoured with the assistance of some of the most pious ministers of the day. Most of these having now departed this life, I am enabled to name the greater part of them without making any reference to the living. The late Rev. Messrs. Bayne of Greenock and Robertson of Kingussie, formerly of the chapel of Rothesay, assisted here constantly for many years. The late Rev. Dr. Love of Anderston assisted here occasionally, about the time of the revival; and the late Rev. Mr McKenzie of Gorbals, formerly of the Gaelic Chapel, Duke Street, Glasgow, assisted also occasionally, but chiefly before the commencement of this work. These, along with the late Mr McBride himself, were considered — and I believe justly — among the most pious ministers of their day; but they have ceased from their labours and their works do follow them. The more regular or occasional labours of these men were often blessed as seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. It is doubtless true that, as the awakening declined, some of those who appeared at one time much affected and much engaged in religious pursuits, began to grow cold and remiss in spritual duties, to fall into diverse temptations, and to slide back into conformity with the world. like the stony-ground hearers, the religious impressions of many were slight and transitory — their convictions were not of a spiritual or abiding nature, and having no root in their hearts, they soon withered away, without bringing forward any fruit to perfection. But although many did thus turn —

as the dog to his vomit — and soon got rid of their religious impressions, a considerable number of the subjects of this work continue, to the present day, bringing forth fruit meet for repentance, and manifesting their faith by their works. It is due, however, to acknowledge that, even in respect of the best of us, the zeal, fervour, and liveliness manifest during the time of our revival have suffered some decay, and that, instead of these, coldness, deadness, and formality in religion are now too prevalent among us. We have, therefore, much need to be earnest in our supplications for another season of refreshing from the presence of the Lord — to pray, with the devout Psalmist, “Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger towards us to cease. Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee? Show us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation.”

Maxims from William Gurnall

As God can make a straight line with a crooked stick, so can He be righteous when He uses wicked instruments.

God has a design in suffering Satan to trounce some of His saints by temptation, to train them up in a fitness to succour their fellow-brethren in the like condition.

What did Satan get by all his pains upon Job, but to let that holy man know how much God loved him?

Unbelief fears Satan as a lion — faith treads on him as a worm.

Wolves may snarl at one another, yet are soon quiet, but the wolf and lamb, can never be made friends.

He that is not ashamed, has not the spirit of a man.

David says the mouth of the wicked is an open sepulchre, and in this grave many a saint's name has been buried.

It is more honour to take one soul alive out of the devil's clutches, than to leave many slain upon the field.

Obituaries

The late Mr Kenneth MacLeod, Elder, Stornoway

Kenneth MacLeod departed this life on the eighth day of November, 1989, at the advanced age of ninety-three years. His birthplace was Balallan in the parish of Lochs and it was there that he spent his childhood and adolescence. Like many of his contemporaries, he, while still in his teens,

was found fighting for his king and country in the trenches of the Western Front. In his old age he could still vividly recall some of the perilous situations in which he found himself in the course of that awful conflict. In the marvellous providence of God he came out of it unscathed apart from suffering from the effects of having inhaled mustard gas. He was then unchanged spiritually, and when in after years his eyes were opened to see his lost state, the Lord's sparing mercy towards him over that period of his life was all the more marvellous in his sight.

When, and in what circumstances, that change took place we are unable to say. It is very likely that it was while he was still fairly young. After the war he learnt his trade as a tailor and worked for some time in Tarbert, Harris. It was while there that he first came into real contact with the Free Presbyterian Church and heard the Gospel from the lips of ministers who long predeceased him and who were wont to visit Harris at communion seasons. After that he worked in Stornoway and it was there that he began to worship regularly with us. In September 1952, on the occasion that the Rev James Tallach sat for the first time as the Moderator of the Stornoway Kirk Session, Kenneth was received by Disjunction Certificate and his name was added to the roll. In May, 1963, he was elected to the eldership and faithfully performed the duties of that office for as long as health and strength permitted.

Kenneth was an exercised Christian with a very lively mind. His knowledge of the Truth was extensive and having a thorough grasp of the foundation doctrines of the Faith he was very acceptable as a speaker at fellowship meetings and when called upon to take services in the house of God. He was a Free Presbyterian by conviction and his attachment to the Church's principles and witness remained firm and loyal right to the end. Old age did not impair his mental abilities and he kept abreast of all that was happening in our church courts. When the May 1989 secession occurred he expressed the view that it was the Lord and that the Church would be the purer for its occurrence.

His latter end was peace. Twice married, he is survived by his second wife. To her, and other relatives, we anew tender our sympathy. "Help, Lord; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men."

J. McL.

The late Mr Donald MacLean, Elder, Breasclete.

It would seem that Donald MacLean was within the household of faith for many years before he made a public profession, and from what we know to be true of him in later years as he ran his Christian course, we

may be sure that it was not without much heart-searching that he did so when the time came. That was in September, 1948, when, we believe, no ordinary constraint must have been laid upon him. Of his circumstances and soul-exercise when he passed from death to life we have no record. We know that just before the outbreak of the Second World War a number of young men and women in Breasclete seem to have come under the influence of the Truth and that among them were Donald MacLean and Finlay Smith, who was for many years an elder in our congregation there.

Although elected to the office of the eldership on a number of occasions he repeatedly declined acceptance. In August, 1973, however, and after much thought, he agreed to accept the office of a Deacon. Later on, in 1985, after the death of Finlay Smith, he was ordained as an Elder. The duties of both offices he performed in an altogether satisfactory and exemplary manner. He did his utmost to preserve the witness of the Free Presbyterian Church in Breasclete and latterly he, in ordinary circumstances, single-handedly conducted the morning Sabbath services and also the weekly prayer-meetings. His removal was all the more felt on that account.

Quiet and unassuming by nature, grace moulded Donald MacLean into a Christian in whom the grace of humility shone. His mind was steeped in the Truth and his conversation was always seasoned with salt. In his company it was very evident that it was in the things pertaining to Christ's kingdom that he took pleasure. It might be said that there were found in him the traits of character which John Bunyan attributed to "Mr Fearing" in his "Pilgrim's Progress". "His fear was about his acceptance at last. . . . He desired much to be alone; yet he always loved good talk, and often would get behind the screen to hear it. He also loved much to see ancient things, and to be pondering them in his mind." When it came to crossing "the river where there is no bridge" Donald was taken across very swiftly. He died in his sleep sometime in the early hours of the Monday of the June, 1988, communion in Uig. He had sat at the Lord's table the previous day and was in a very happy frame of soul when bidding us farewell at the door of the Church after the services of the day had come to an end. We little thought that the time of his departure to join the company of the spirits of just men made perfect was then so near at hand.

The MacLean home is where the ministers assisting at the Breasclete communion have been hospitably entertained for many years now. His surviving, like-minded sister now lives there alone. May she be comforted and sustained by the Brother that shall never die.

J. McL.

Notes and Comments

Rise in Recorded Crime

The total recorded crime figures in England and Wales for the second quarter of 1990 were 17 per cent up on the same period last year. In nearly all categories of crime there was considerable increase. While it is true that the increased reporting of crime may affect these figures, yet it is a sad reflection on the nation that such high crime figures are recorded. Also, while there appears to be some relation between crime such as thefts or burglaries and the economic situation, the real cause of this situation must lie in the abandonment of any Christian belief by a large section of the country. Children are being brought up without proper biblical and moral teaching. This bears its own fruit in lives given over to evils of one sort or another, including that of crime.

Rise in Abortion

Figures for England and Wales show that in the first three months of 1990 over two thousand more abortions were performed than in the same period last year. This was a 5.9 per cent increase on 1989. The total number of abortions in England and Wales for the first three months of this year was no less than 44,925. We understand that figures for countries when under atheistic communism are very high, but it is sad to think that in a country where Christianity and Christian values once prevailed that such a wholesale slaughter of unborn children is carried out. The Lord's message is clear: "Shall I not visit for these things? . . . and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?"

Child Abuse

According to statistics recently released, there are more than 40,000 children on child abuse registers. These figures are another evidence of the low moral state to which we have fallen as a nation. Even natural affection, which once would safeguard the young from abuse, appears to have diminished. As a consequence the young, as well as the unborn, are exposed to abuse, by those who have ceased to have any regard for Christian moral values. Only a return to the Bible and to the preaching of the Gospel will deliver the nation from its plight. May the Lord pour out of His Spirit upon our land to this end.

Opinion Polls on Sabbath Trading

The Lord's Day Observance Society warn about the abuse of opinion polls by those who wish to establish a majority in favour of Sabbath trading. They point out that the B&Q store chain admitted influencing

an opinion poll by sending out a memorandum asking all their stores to make ten separate telephone calls to register a vote in favour of Sabbath trading. The Society therefore will question all other polls conducted by the Shopping Hours Reform Council.

They state: "During past decades this country has been undermining the Laws of Almighty God. Moral standards have declined at an alarming rate and Sabbath observance is no exception. To lose the Sabbath as a day of rest and worship is to our inestimable loss."

They further comment: "A nation that is rich in goods but poor towards God is on the road to spiritual bankruptcy. We must not permit our Christian heritages to be taken from us. It is not what the people say that should determine the law but what God's Word says: "The Society through its General Secretary pledges itself to continue to resist all attempts to undermine God's Day."

Church Notes

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Southern: At Glasgow on 20th November at 6 p.m.

Canadian: At Inverness on 4th December at 9.30 a.m.

Western: At Laide on 11th December at 6 p.m.

Zimbabwe: At Bulawayo on 13th March, 1991 at 2 p.m.

Student Received by Southern Presbytery

On the 19th June, the Southern Presbytery accepted as a student training for the ministry of the Church, Mr Roderick MacLeod, a member of the Glasgow congregation. We trust that our people will remember him in their prayers, and be entreating the Lord also to send forth other labourers into his harvest.

Alex. McPherson

Clerk of Southern Presbytery

Letter from Kiev

The following letter is from the Baptist Church in Kiev which Rev. D. Ross visited in April of this year. Mr Ross thought it would be of much interest to the people of our Church and others outwith our Church who so readily contributed to the cost of sending these Bibles to Russia.

Kiev

15.09.90

Dear friends in Christ Jesus living in Scotland. The elders of the newly

set up Christian Church in Kiev, are sincerely thankful for the delivery of 1000 black covered Bibles, through brother Donald Ross's efforts. The Bibles have already been distributed free of charge in Kiev and in the Boyarka Church, which is in the suburb of Kiev. The elders wish you all new spiritual successes in God's vineyard.

Pastor Chaika B.
Deacon Grichenko A.
Deacon Roschtan V.

Deputy to Chesley, Ontario

Rev. George Hutton, who is presently acting as Church Deputy to Chesley in Canada is expected to return home on 6th November. We trust that he will be brought home in safety again to his Congregation and family and that his labours in Canada will be blessed.

Urgent Appeal for Foreign Mission Staff

At Ingwenya, at John Tallach Secondary School, there is an urgent need for teachers having Mathematics or Science at degree level. Persons not having teacher training will be acceptable.

At Sengera in Kisii Province in Kenya there is urgent need for a doctor or nurse to supervise the setting up and running of the Hospital Clinic which has recently been built.

Again we would urge suitably qualified persons to give prayerful consideration to the above appeal. Anyone willing to respond to these needs should contact the Clerk to the Foreign Missions Committee, Rev. Dr. J. R. Tallach, Free Presbyterian Manse, Raasay, Kyle, IV40 8PB.

Theological Conference

The Theological Conference will be held in Inverness on 4th and 5th December (D.V.). The following papers will be read

Tuesday: 2.30 p.m. Evangelisation — Rev. D. A. Ross
7 p.m. The Millenium — Rev. K. D. MacLeod

Wednesday: 10 a.m. Adoption — Rev. D. MacLean
2.30 p.m. The Second Reformation — Rev. D. J. MacDonald

(Public): 7 p.m. The Excellency of the Authorised Version —
Rev. J. MacLeod

Conference Chairman — Rev. D. B. Macleod.

Male members, office-bearers and ministers are eligible to attend.

Note — A Forgotten Great Scotsman

With regard to the article in the August issue of the Magazine with the above title, it has been pointed out by a reader that the accuracy of the details of Rev. Alex. Comrie's shipwreck have been questioned by J. M. Banfield in his biographical introduction to Alexander Comrie's ABC of Faith, recently republished by Zoar Publications, to which readers may refer.

Editor

Acknowledgment of Donations

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

Beaully: Anon., (by post) 3 occasions £10 each for Sust. Fnd.

Breasclete: Envelope in plate £100 for Comm. Exps.

Daviot-Stratherrick-Tomatin: £2000 legacy from Estate of Dr. A. Fraser for Sust. Fd.

Dingwall: Mrs G. £30 per I.M.M.

Dumbarton: J.C., Glasgow £20; G.M., Glasgow postmark £10 per T. MacRae; Miss J. McD. £20 per Mrs McA.; Mrs J. McL., £10 by post; Mrs McC. £3, all for Congr. Fd.; Anon., £20 for Sust. Fd.; Anon £20 for T.B.S., both in plate.

Edinburgh: Anon., Friends of the Cause, Stornoway £10, where most needed; T.M., Strond, Harris £5; T.M., Leverburgh, Harris £5 both for Congr. Fd.; Anon., Raasay Friend £10 for Sust. Fd.; Anon., Glasgow postmark £10; C.M. £10, both for Congr. Fd.; T.M.C. £20 for Bibles for Russia (envelope in plate).

Gairloch: Mrs S. Wick £50; Friend, Kyle £5 both for Congr. Purposes, both per Rev. A. MacDonald.

Inverness: From the Estate of the late Miss Catherine MacGillivray, Inverness per Innes & Mackay, Solicitors £3081.60 for Congr. Funds; Famine/Blind £20 per envelope in plate.

Laide: Dutch Friend for Church Funds £1000; Kinlochbervie Friend £10 for Bibles for Russia; Friends, Wick £30 for Sust. Fd.; Friend, Wick £50 for Congr. Fds; Shildaig Deacon's Court for use of Laide Car £50; Gairloch Friend for Ch. Door Coll. £20; all per Rev. D. A. R.; Anon., in plate £10 for Ch. Door Coll.; Anon., £50 for Bibles for Eastern Europe per Rev. D.A.R.; Applecross Deacon's Court for use of Laide Car per Rev. D.A.R. £50.

Lochbroom: A Friend £30 for Sust. Fd., per Mr. K. McL.; A Friend £20 for Congregation Tape Fund per Mrs N. R.; Mrs J. S. £50 for Congr. Fd.; Dutch Friend £6 for Congr. Fd.; both per Rev. N.M.R.

North Harris: Friend, Stockinish £5 for Ch. Door Coll per R.M.C.; K. M., Harris House £3 (twice) for Ch. Door Coll by envelope in plate; Friend, Seilibost £5 per R.M.C.; M.M. & S.M.L., Cluer £20 per J.M.L.; M.M. Tarbert £10 envelope in plate; M.A. Tarbert £10 envelope in plate; D.M.L., Grosebay £20 per J.M.L.; Anon., Stockinish £5; Friend, Stockinish £5, last seven for Comm. Exps; Friend, Stockinish £5, where most needed; Anon., £10 for Comm. Exps, last four per Rev. J. MacL.; Tarbert £5 for Comm. Exps, by envelope in plate; Tarbert £5 for Welfare of Youth, envelope in plate; Friend, Leacklee £40 donation, envelope in plate.

Portree: Two Friends £30 where most needed per F.M.; Anon., £10 where most needed per K.M.; Friend £10 for Church. Bus.; Friend £10 for Sust Fd. both per F.M.; Anon., £5 for Church Bus, envelope in plate.

Shildaig: Anon., Inverness £10 for Congr. Fd.; N.M., Inverness £10; Anon., £10; Anon., £30; Envelope in plate £30; last 3 for Comm. Exps.

Stornoway: Anon., £10; C.N., Stornoway £10; Anon., £5 (in Church Plate); Friend of the Cause, Breasclete £10, both for Comm. Exps (in Church Plate); M.D.A. McL. £10 for Church Funds per Rev. J. MacLeod.