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A Day of Humiliation and Prayer

At the dedication of the temple in Solomon's time, the Lord gave an encouraging promise to Solomon in connection with the people humbling themselves before God. "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." How suitable is this promise to us as a nation and people at this present time when, as a nation and as individuals, we have so grievously departed from our God.

Because of threatened calamities in the prophet Joel's time we find him delivering a message to the elders and people in the land. "Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the Lord your God, and cry unto the Lord, Alas for the day! for the day of the Lord is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come." He called for a solemn assembly and for the priests, the ministers of the altar to weep between the porch and the altar.

Daniel spoke in a similar vein when, conscious of the solemn straits into which the nation had been brought for their sins, he cried to the Lord for them, humbling himself before God. "I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth and ashes: and I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession." In that confession he acknowledged the righteousness of God in His dealings with them, yet he sought mercies of the God of heaven.

We know that God has no delight in the sacrifice of fools. Feigned worship and service is hateful in His sight. Joel understood this when he spoke in the Word of the Lord to the people. "Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God." As it is better not to vow, than to

vow and not pay, so must men lay to heart the danger of appearing to worship the Lord with their lips while their heart is far from Him.

When we are called year by year, on a day set apart for this specific purpose to humble ourselves before the Lord, it is a work we must engage in with all our heart, if we are to derive any spiritual benefit from it. We are not to regard it as merely a yearly recurring event that must be attended to, but as a solemn and weighty duty for which we need rich supplies of grace if we are not to misuse the occasion. Some may say, 'Why have a day of humiliation and prayer seeing that there are so many difficulties in the way? Let us not be discouraged by such talk but let us be encouraged to engage in a duty from which multitudes have derived great benefit. To come before God to confess our sins, individually and nationally, and to humble ourselves before God, is not a vain work. Joel encouraged the people to humble themselves before God on the grounds that "he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil."

Isaiah could say, "O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me." As it is with the individual, so it is with the nation. "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." He is faithful that promised and He will send an answer in peace. "His compassions fail not. They are new every morning." Only let a backsliding people humble themselves in the dust before the Lord their God and confess their sins to Him and they will find Him to be as good as His Word. Has He said it, and shall He not do it? "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him." In this assurance then, let us engage in the duties of a day of humiliation and prayer, looking to the Lord that He will show mercy towards us.

O God of hosts, we thee beseech,
return now unto thine;
Look down from heav'n in love, behold,
and visit this thy vine.

This vineyard, which thine own right hand
hath planted us among;
And that same branch, which for thyself
thou hast made to be strong.

Ps. 80: 14, 15

Sermon

(For Preparation to the Communion)

by Rev. David Dickson

(Continued from Page 341)

“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.

5. “The Lord knoweth who are his.” — Here is the seal of the ministry of election; and it lets us see, that God has chosen a number to himself out of the world, to be his peculiar people, to whom he will shew mercy, reveal and communicate himself, and take for his inheritance. These He knows for his; others he knows not, for they are of their father the devil, and his will they do. As for His own, he will purge them, and make them zealous of well-doing, when others run to the devil. That he says God knows them, it is not only that he is at a point with himself about them, or knows their number and name, what they are, what they were, and what they will be; but also, he knows them, while he sets his eye of pity, care, love upon them, and his good hand to preserve them; he knows when they were born, when they will die; he knows them, while he calls them to his kingdom both of grace and glory; he knows them, when it was agreed betwixt him and his Son about the price of their redemption, when he gave them to Christ, and Christ took in hand to satisfy for them; he knows them who he called according to his purpose, when he gave them saving faith, and his Holy Spirit to dwell in them; he knows them from his first purpose about them, to the last perfecting of them in glory; he knows them, by loving them, approving them, keeping them that they fall not, and when they fall, to raise them up again. All is concluded with him, from his first foresight and falling in love with them; and he still keeps them, and preserves them, for he is stronger than all, and none shall be able to reave them out of his hand.

“And let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” — Thou wilt say, I wot well God knows all his own; but what wot I, if he knows me for one of them? Here is a mark to know, — Let him that names the name of the Lord, depart from iniquity. That he puts this for one part of the seal, it lets us see, that the matter of election is not so secret, that God has given no revelation of it. Some evidences may be of it, both to a man’s self and others. A man’s election may be evidenced to the kirk, but more powerfully to a man’s self; and possibly the Lord will not reveal to others such a man’s election, but he will tell a man

himself, and so fill him with the sense and assurance of his favour, that from the spirit of adoption he will cry, "Abba, Father!" with a good heart; and God again will acknowledge him for his child: which makes sweet embracement betwixt the soul and God; and the soul heartily blesses God, and magnifies him, when it perceives what he has done for it.

Question. What then is the mark of the seal of election? *Answer.* So far as it may be seen of men, it has two parts — calling upon, or naming of Jesus, which also includes depending upon him, and believing in him, or adhering to him — and departing from iniquity. Then we see, that the seal of the elect has two sides; the one is read of God, the other toward us, is read of us. The side toward God is, that he knows who are his: he knows whom he has loved, and fore-ordained for heaven; and the side of the seal which is toward us is, "Let every one that names the name of Jesus, depart from iniquity." And as in a common or ordinarily current coin of money, if ye let a man see the one side of it, he can readily tell what is on the other side of it, so, in this seal, he who knows the one side, will also know the other; for God has no adulterate or false coin as uses to be among men, but if any can find that they adhere to Jesus and depart from iniquity on the one side, they may be sure to find that God has elected them on the other side. Whosoever thou art that believest Christ, and adherest to him, and art daily more and more shedding¹ from sin, mayest conclude thou art an elect.

If adherence to Jesus and departing from iniquity do evidence election both to the world and a man's own soul, then the soul that wants these two, can have no comfort: they who have not fled to Christ, and have not put the back of their hand to sin, want the comfort of election. I dare not say, they are not elected, for God can change a filthy sinner into a washen saint. But I dare to say, while a soul is separate from Christ, and adheres to sin, that soul can have no comfort in election, nor yet say that it is elected. If thou then would be out of the black band and rank of reprobates, haste in to Christ, and from sin, as thou would be free of hell and damnation. Haste thee from the service of thy old lusts and lovers, and come in to Christ, if thou would eschew that dreary sentence, "Depart from me, ye accursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!" Haste, I say, in time, for thou hast too long dwelt in the tents of Kedar: get thee speedily from the tents of these wicked men; turn, and seek the living God.

"Let depart." — He says not, *has* departed, but *let* them depart, by way of command. This presupposes, that elect souls are not yet departed

¹ Parting

from the way of sin and death. It lets us see, that all who lie in sin be reprobates for the most part: yet it is possible that some elect souls may be sticking in sin, and living an evil life, who will turn quickly; and therefore it is not a mark of reprobation to be in the estate of sin, for one may come out of that estate. An elect may be lying as deep in the devil's service as a reprobate; but incontinent he will haste from that estate.

"Let depart" shews, that there are none departed from iniquity, but they must depart farther, and never return again to it, if they would have the comfort of election. So, then, the elect soul may not do as it likes. By this, Satan deceives many, making them trow they are elect, and so cannot fall away, and so may do what they like; and makes them trow they are elected, because after the committing of grievous sins, they have gotten a wound of conscience, and have thrust out some tears for sin, being forced, by the gnawing of their conscience, to take with their faults. On finding this, they trow they are elected; and being elected, must remain so, and so may take on a new lease of sin. But I say, many a Pagan has repented thus far; for the Pagans had fears or terrors of conscience that did chase them from their sins, which fears being ceased, they ran back to sin. Even so, thou who sayest thou hast repented all thy villanies, and yet returnest again, and hardenest thyself more, wilt thou call that repentance? No, for albeit God took instruments that he had tane thee in the fang,² yet I speir, where is thy new life? Therefore resolve upon a new life: depart from iniquity, or count not thyself an elect; for Christ leaves his blood to no sow to wash in, to go back to the puddle; but having your garments clean, be loath to defile them.

Mark the order here: 1. Name, — the LORD. 2. Then, — DEPART. By naming of Jesus, is meant coming to him, and believing in him; professing him, worshipping, and taking him for your master. And depart from sin. We see then, we must first be joined to Christ, come to him, believe in him, and possess him, before we can depart from iniquity; for how shall we either get strength or feet to flee from sin, till we come to Christ? Who shall loose our chains and fetters, or who shall cleanse us, and make us new? Must not fleeing and departing from sin, be from faith in Christ? Whatsoever is not from this fountain, is unclean. Let the vile who would be clean, go to Christ, and say, Draw me, we will run after thee; sever me from sin.

Verse 20. "But in a great house, there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour." — Ye will say, Is not that great dishonour to God, to have

² Fact, deed

hypocrites and chaff always in his house? He answers, No, no more than it is dishonour to a great man, to have vessels of dishonour in his house, to carry out refuse and rubbish. In this comparison, that as a man has power to appoint, the vessels of his house, some for honourable uses, some for sordid uses, so God in his house; and man takes also great authority over the creatures given to him, as God doth over men in the matter of election and reprobation. This being well weighed, would stop all men's mouths from quarrelling God for electing some, and reprobating others. Man will say, Whereto Christian souls, to cast them into hell? I answer, Man, takes not God as great authority over the creatures, as the potter takes one piece of clay, and makes a vessel of it, and casts away another piece of clay? And man saves the life of some of his beasts, and kills others: shall not God have as great liberty over his creatures, as man has over them? What the Lord doth in the matter of election and reprobation, he doth it justly; for he says to man, Leave thy sins, and come to me, and thou shalt get heaven. Man answers, I will not leave sin. Then says the Lord, Thou shalt go to hell. Is not this justice? From these words, no particular person can gather a mark of reprobation, or conclude that he is a reprobate; but contrarily, there is here a mark of election. Why then should any quarrel God, while he shews a possibility of election, and no mark of reprobation? Doth he not lay before all, life and death, and bids choose? And why then should any carp if thou canst not come to Him, and choice bade him draw thee, and he shall do it?

We see it is no dishonour to God nor his kirk, to have wicked hypocrites in the bosom of it; as it is no dishonour to a great man, to have vessels of dishonour in his house. We see, that God makes use of these hypocrites to purge the rest of his household, as vessels of dishonour to keep clean a great man's house: when they go out, the filth goes out with them. Hypocrites and filthy persons serve to make the rest honester and cleaner; for the sight of their filthiness makes God's children labour to purge themselves, and by their falls they are made wise, to stand the better. As to the wicked's abomination, it is their own, and the dishonour is their own; and when they go out of God's house, the filth goes out, so that God has no dishonour by them. Albeit God has letten them in to his kirk, yet they hurt not his kirk; but their falls make his children wise, for they say, I am of the same stuff by nature; Lord cleanse me. When they feel the stench of the wicked, they flee up to a higher house, and by all means seek to cleanse themselves. So God can make use of the wicked, albeit not for their own, yet for others' vantage.

Question. How shall I know whether I be a vessel of honour or

dishonour? *Answer.* Look what stuff is in thee. Wherein delightest thou? If it be in the devil's vessels, worldliness, filthiness; if thy mind, will, affections, be upon the filthy puddle of the devil's abominations, thou art a vessel of dishonour. See what employment thou givest to the vessel of thy mind, heart, memory, and by that try thyself.

OBJECTION. — Are there any so clean and holy, that their mind and hearts have no filthiness in them; *Answer.* I grant, the holiest have their own filth and dirtiness: but they are not vessels to keep still that dirtiness; their vessels are ordained to keep holiness, the graces and gifts of God's Spirit; and if dirtiness be gathered, they are daily washing again. Is thy ear then a conduit to bring in knowledge to thy mind; thy eye, tongue, heart, all to keep and vent holiness? Then thou art a vessel of honour: albeit thou contract filthiness, yet the Master of the household, Christ Jesus, has a care that thou be daily washen, and thy organ is sanctified for a holy use. But thou to whom holy discourses are a burden and weariness to hear, and in a conference of good things will be tickled with delight in songs and sales, thou lookest like a vessel of dishonour. Thou art like those of whom the prophet speaks; thy "throat is an open sepulchre;" the stench of thy oaths, blasphemy, lewd language, defiles all that are about thee, so that the godly soul is vexed with thee, as Lot was in Sodom; thy deeds, plots, courses, desires, tell thou art a vessel of dishonour.

Question. But how shall I be made sure that I am one of that number? *Answer.* In the next verse (verse 21), the apostle gives thee a counsel what to do. Purge thyself from these, and thou shalt be a vessel of honour. So then, he that would be a vessel of honour, must purge himself. This is not, than any *can* purge himself, or that a tree of itself can bring out good fruit. But he shews here, what is required of us; and to shew the order of God's working, which is, to work in us, and by us, using us as instruments, albeit he be the chief doer of the work. The right use of this doctrine, is not to dispute what strength a man has to purge himself, but to set himself to the practice of it; not to the discouraged finding his own weakness, but to set to a reformation; and whatever estate he find himself in, set to, and purge himself: for if such be, he looks like a vessel of honour, for all holy vessels are making for some honourable use, and purging from dishonourable. Art thou then purging thyself from thy old deeds? crying with David, "Purge me with hyssop, cleanse me from my sins?" breaking thy heart for grieving the Holy One of Israel? thou carriest the mark of a vessel of honour.

"Sanctified for the Master's use." — The hypocrite or the foul vessel

has this mark; whatever he doeth, it is all for his own ends, not to God, if he be not swearing, lying, drinking, &c. But if they be not for God's use, they are for dishonest uses: following of their lawful calling, working, ploughing, making merchandise, are all dishonest uses with them, for they do these to make themselves rich and honourable. They are not done as service to God, therefore they are unclean; and to the unclean, all things are unclean: their eating, drinking, working, not being for God's use, are turned into sin. But the vessel of honour goes to the plough, and makes merchandise, for God's use; for albeit he might deceive in bargains, and so get gain, he will not, because he is for his Lord's use. He goes to the kirk, not to see and be seen, but to meet God in the assembly; he comes to the communion, to get the seal of God's love.

Let a man be what he may for the time bygone and present, yet if you fly to Jesus, seeking to be purged, come to Jesus, and be ranked the morn at the table, with the vessels of honour. Repent thy bygone misbehaviour; cast out jugs³ by confession; or rather, hold to the well of Christ's blood; to that clean water, and washing of his Spirit. Pray Christ to purge with his Spirit and with fire. If so thou wilt do, thou shalt be a sanctified vessel for the Lord's use. Either obey this doctrine, or carry with you the appearance of reprobation, and a forerunner of hell. Either live a clean life, or I debar you from the Lord's table. Fly both from evil company, vessels of dishonour, and eschew works of dishonesty; else quit you and God. Depart from foul company, and foul ways, as ye would not depart from God. To that God, Son, and Holy Spirit, be all praise and honour, for now and ever, Amen.

"The Garden Inclosed"

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

(Continued from page 349)

III. The Lord's garden is not empty: it is always *full of flowers*. It has had many in time past, it has many at the time present. Believers are the flowers that fill the Lord's garden.

I will mention two things about the flowers in the garden of the Lord Jesus. In some things they are all exactly like one another. In some things they are as various and diverse as the flowers in the gardens of this world.

(a) *In some things they are all alike.*

(1) They have all been *transplanted*. Not one of the Lord's flowers grew

³ Foul or stale water

naturally in His garden. They were all born "children of wrath, even as others." No man is born with grace in His heart. Every believer among the Lord's people was at one time at enmity with Him, and in a state of condemnation. It was the grace of God that first called him out of the world. It was the Spirit of Christ who made him what he is, and planted him in the garden of the Lord. In this the Lord's people are all alike: they are all transplanted flowers.

(2) The Lord's flowers are all *alike in their root*. In outward things they may differ, but underneath they are all the same. They are all rooted and grounded on Jesus Christ. Believers may worship in different places, and belong to different Churches, but their foundation is the same, — the cross and the blood.

(3) The Lord's flowers are all *at their beginning weak*. They do not come to full maturity at once. They are at first like new-born babes, tender and delicate, and needing to be fed with milk, and not with strong meat. They are soon checked and thrown back. All begin in this way.

(4) The Lord's flowers *all need the light of the sun*. Flowers cannot live without light. Believers cannot live comfortably unless they see much of the face of Jesus Christ. To be ever looking on Him, feeding on Him, communing with Him, — this is the hidden spring of the life of God in man's soul.

(5) The Lord's flowers *all need the dews of the Spirit*. Flowers wither without moisture. Believers need daily, hourly to be renewed by the Holy Ghost in the spirit of their minds. We cannot live on old grace, if we would be fresh, living, real Christians. We must be daily more filled with the Spirit. Every chamber in the inward temple must be filled.

(6) The Lord's flowers are *all in danger of weeds*. Flower-beds need constant weeding. Believers need daily to search and see that they do not let besetting sins grow on undisturbed. These are the things that choke the actings of grace and chill the influences of the Spirit. All are in peril of this; all should beware.

(7) The Lord's flowers *all require pruning and digging*. Flowers left alone soon dwindle and grow small. No careful gardener leaves his roses alone all the year round. Just so believers need stirring, shaking, mortifying, or else they become sleepy, and incline like Lot to settle down by Sodom. And if they are slow about the work of pruning, God will often take it in hand for them.

(8) The Lord's flowers *all grow*. None but hypocrites and wolves in sheep's clothing, and painted Christians, stand still. True believers are never long the same. It is their desire to go on from grace to grace, strength

to strength, knowledge to knowledge, faith to faith, holiness to holiness. Visit a border of the Lord's garden after two or three years' absence, and you will see this. If you see it not, you may well suppose there is a worm at the root. Life grows; but death stands still and decays.

(b) But while the Lord's flowers are all alike in some things, they are *various and diverse in others*, even as the flowers in our own gardens. Let us consider this point a little.

Believers have many things in common, — one Lord, one faith, one baptism of the Spirit, one hope, one foundation, one reverence for the Word, one delight in prayer, one newness of heart. And yet there are some things in which there are not one. Their *general* experience is the same, and their title to heaven the same: and there are varieties in their *specific* experience. There are shades of diversity in their views and feelings. They are not so altogether and completely one that they can quite understand each other in all things, at all times, and in all points. Very important is it to bear this in mind. Believers are one in genus but not one in species, — one in great principles, not one in all particulars, — one in reception of the whole truth, not one in the proportion they give to the parts of truth, — one in the root, but not one in the flower, — one in the part that only the Lord Jesus sees, not one in the part that is seen of the world.

You cannot understand your brother or sister in some things. You could not do as they do, speak as they speak, act as they act, laugh as they laugh, admire what they admire. Oh, be not hasty to condemn them! Make them not offenders for a word. Set them not down in a low place because they and you have little sympathy, few harmonizing and responding strings in your hearts, — because you soon come to a stand-still in communing with them, and discover that they and you have only a limited extent of ground in common. Write it down in the tablets of your heart, that there are many schools, orders, classes, diversities of Christians. You may all be in the Lord's garden, and be united on grand doctrines; and yet for all that the Lord's garden is made up of various sorts of flowers. All His flowers are useful; none must be despised. And yet His garden contains widely different sorts.

(1) Some that grow in the Lord's garden are like the flowers which are *brilliant and showy in colour, but not sweet*. You see them afar off, and they attract the world's eye, and their tints are beautiful, but you can say no more.

These are frequently the public Christians, — the popular preachers, — the speakers on platforms, — the lions of listening companies, — the people talked of, and pointed at, and run after. Such persons are the tulips,

and sunflowers, and peonies, and dahlias of the Lord's garden, — wonderful, gaudy, bright and glorious in their way, but not sweet.

(2) Some are like those flowers which *make no show at all, and yet are the sweetest*.

These are the Christians whom the world never hears of; they rather shrink from public observation. They hold on the even tenor of their way, and pass silently on towards home; but they sweeten all around them.

These are they that are rare and hard to find; but the better they are known the more they are loved. Ask their true character in their own homes, and in their families, — ask husbands, wives, children, servants, their character, and you will soon discover that not a tenth part of their beauty and excellence is known by the world. The nearer you go, the more perfume will these dwellers in the Lord's garden give out. These are the Lord's violets, — valued by only few, but to those who know them, oh, how sweet!

(3) Some in the Lord's garden are like those flowers which *cannot live in cold weather*.

These are the Christians who have but a little strength, who faint in the day of adversity, who only flourish when everything around them is smooth and warm. A cold wind of trial, an unexpected frost of affliction, nips them and cuts them down. But the Lord Jesus is very merciful; He will not suffer them to be tempted above what they can endure. He plants them in sheltered and sunny places of His garden. He protects them and hedges them round by strong plants, to break the cold. Let no man despise them. They are the Lord's flowers, beautiful in their place and in their way.

(4) Some in the Lord's garden are like those hardy flowers *which flower even in winter*.

These are those rough Christians who never seem to feel any trials; whom nothing either of opposition or affliction appears to move. Doubtless there is not that softness and sweetness about them that we admire in others. We miss that lovable delicacy which in some people is such an unexplainable charm. They chill us sometimes by their rudeness and want of sympathy, when compared to many we know. And yet let no man despise them. They are the crocuses in the garden of the Lord, beautiful in their place and way, and valuable in their own season.

(5) Some in the Lord's garden are *never so sweet as after rain*.

These are the Christians who show most grace under trial and affliction. In the day of sunshine and prosperity they become careless; they need the shower of some sorrow to come down on them to make their

full excellency appear. There is more beauty of holiness about their tears than about their smiles: they are more like Jesus when they weep than when they laugh. These are the roses of the Lord's garden: lovely and sweet and beautiful at all times, but never so much so as after rain.

(6) Some in the Lord's garden are *never so sweet as at night*.

These are the believers who need constant trial to keep them close to the throne of grace. They cannot bear the sunshine of prosperity; they become careless in prayer, sleepy about the Word, listless about heaven, too fond of nestling with some Benjamin in the corner of this world. Such persons the Lord Jesus often keeps under a cloud, to preserve them in a right frame. He sends wave after wave, trouble after trouble, to make them sit like Mary at His feet, and be near the cross. It is the very darkness they are obliged to walk in which makes them so sweet.

(7) Some in the Lord's garden are *never so sweet as when crushed*.

These are the Christians whose reality comes out most under some tremendous and uncommon judgment. The winds and storms of heavy affliction roll over them, and then, to the astonishment of the world, the spices flow out. I once saw a young woman who had lain on a bed six years in a garret, with a spine complaint, helpless, motionless, cut off from everything that could make this world enjoyable. But she belonged to the garden of Jesus: she was not alone, for He was with her. You would have thought she would have been gloomy; she was all brightness. You would have expected her to be sorrowful; she was ever rejoicing. You would suppose she was weak and needed comfort; she was strong and able to comfort others. You would fancy she must have felt dark; she seemed to me all light. You would imagine her countenance was grave; it was full of *calm* smiles, and the gushings forth of inward peace. You would have pardoned her almost if she had murmured; she breathed of nothing but perfect happiness and content. The crushed flowers in the Lord's garden are sometimes exceeding sweet!

(8) Some of the flowers in the Lord's garden are *never fully valued till they are dead*.

These are those humble believers who, like Dorcas, are full of good works and active love towards others. These are those unostentatious ones who dislike profession and publicity, and love to go about like their Lord and Master doing good to souls, — visiting the fatherless and the widows, pouring in balm on wounds which this heartless world neither knows nor cares for, ministering to the friendless, helping the destitute, preaching the Gospel, not to silk and velvet, but to the poor.

These are not noticed by this generation; but the Lord Jesus knows them,

and His Father also. When they are dead and gone, their work and labour of love all comes out. It is written with a diamond on the hearts of those they have assisted: it cannot be hid. They speak, being dead, though they were silent when living. We know their worth when gone, if we did not when we had them with us. The tears of those who have been fed in soul or body by their hand, tell forth to the wondering world that some have gone home whose place cannot easily be supplied, and that a gap is made which will be hard to fill up. These shall never have that wretched epitaph, "Departed without being desired." These are the lavender in the Lord's garden, never so much appreciated and admired as when cut off and dead.

And now let me wind up with a few words of practical application.

There is one thing about the Lord's garden which I see nothing like in this world.

The flowers of this world all die, and wither and lose their sweetness, and decay, and come to nothing at last. The fairest flowers are not really everlasting. The oldest and strongest of nature's children comes to an end.

It is not so with the Lord's flowers. The children of grace can never die. They may sleep for a season; they may be taken away when they have served their generation, and done their work. The Lord is continually coming down to His garden and "gathering lilies," laying flowers in His bosom one after the other; but the Lord's flowers shall all rise again.

When the Lord comes again the second time He shall bring His people with Him. His flowers shall live once more, more bright, more sweet, more lovely, more beautiful, more glorious, more pure, more shining, more fair. They shall have a glorious body like their Lord's, and shall flourish for ever in the courts of our God.

(1) Reader, are you in the Lord's garden, or are you in the wilderness of this world?

You must be in one or the other. You must take your choice. Which have you chosen, and which do you choose now? The Lord Jesus would fain transplant you. He strives with you by His Spirit. He would fain add you to the number of His beloved ones. He knocks at the door of your heart by word and by providence. He whispers to your conscience, "Awake, arise, repent, be converted, and come away!"

Oh, turn not away from Him that speaketh! Resist not the Holy Ghost. Choose not your place in the wilderness, but in the garden. Awake, arise, and turn away from the world.

(2) Reader: the wilderness or the garden! Which will you have?

If the wilderness, — you will have your own way, run wild, grow to waste, bring forth fruit and flowers to yourself, become a barren, un-

profitable, useless plant, live unloved and unlovable to yourself, and at last be gathered in the bundle with the tares, and burned!

If the garden, — you will not have your own way. But you will have what is far better, — you will have God and Christ for your own. You will be cultivated, watered, tended, moved, pruned, trained by the Lord Jesus Himself; and at last your name shall be found in the bundle of life.

Then choose the garden inclosed, and live!

Letter

Turvey,
January 1808

My dear Aunt,

Affection for one so long known and loved must indeed be asleep, if I did not hasten to express tenderest concern on your account. My office and station calls me daily in one place or another, to pour the balm of consolation into the wounded breast. I cannot indeed comfort you in person; but if I may be allowed to speak in my Lord and Saviour's name, I may do so by letter. Indeed, my dearest aunt, I shall be happy in any endeavour I can exert, to prove to you how affectionately I am interested in what regards your welfare, both spiritual and temporal. I am daily exercised amongst the sick and the weak, the maimed, the suffering and the departing, and am constantly reminded of the uncertainty of life. What a glorious light has the Word of God thrown on the otherwise dark and gloomy uncertainty which would have overhung the prospect of Eternity! How full, how free a provision has our gracious God revealed, for the salvation of sinners, who lay hold on His promises by faith! May you and I be enabled, under every trial and pang of soul or body, to flee to the strong One for help, remembering that "in all our afflictions He was afflicted!"

May the recollection of every past instance of God's kindness, lead you to trust in Him, and to repose on His redeeming grace and love! May your prayer be constantly heard and answered, when at the throne of grace you plead what a Saviour has done and suffered for you, and supplicate for a heart thankfully resigned to God, let what will be His pleasure concerning you. I feel persuaded, you will ascribe what I have said, to a sincere affection, and a desire to contribute my mite of consolation, under the trial which Providence has brought upon you. May you meet it with the true spirit of Christian fortitude! Sanctified afflictions are the Lord's peculiar mercies to those whom He loves. May your's prove one of this

kind. Seasons of sickness and debility, are peculiarly calculated to this end. They are often expressly sent, that as in the day of health and prosperity we are too prone to forget the Author and Giver of all our blessings, these messengers of mercy may be the means in His Almighty hands, of collecting our wandering thoughts and affections and of fixing them abidingly on Him. Receive these reflections from one who loves you, who wishes never to forget that he is a minister of Christ.

Always — your affectionate nephew,
Lekh Richmond.

A Fervent Prayer for the Lord's Cause

by Rev. J. A. Macdonald

"O deliver not the soul of thy turtledove unto the multitude of the wicked: forget not the congregation of thy poor for ever. Psalm 74: 19.

When David penned the words in verses 4 and 5 of Psalm 74, "Thine enemies roar in the midst of thy congregations; they set up their ensigns for signs. A man was famous according as he lifted up his axe upon thick trees", it was obvious that he had experienced the forces of darkness warring against his own soul and against the cause of Christ at large. This caused David to betake himself to a throne of grace to wrestle with the Lord: "O deliver not the soul of thy turtledove unto the multitude of the wicked." In the face of all this the psalmist said of himself: "I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts." Ps 119: 63.

Oh what a comfort it is to the godly that God will not leave the soul of his turtledove until the work of sanctification is complete. It will then be whiter than the snow, and ready for heaven. Oh, the efficacy of the blood! God will take care of both the soul and body of his own chosen ones until they arrive in heaven. The body as well as the soul is precious in God's sight. May your faith be strengthened to say with David, "The Lord is my rock, in him will I trust". Oh, I wish I could tell you the full extent of Christ's love for your soul's salvation. It is eternal and unchangeable beyond our comprehension. Listen to one of the invitations: "Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse." Song of Sol. 4: 8. These invitations are like streams flowing to you from His heart. If you and I get to glory then we shall see him and love him, and sing His praises throughout eternity.

To be present at the death bed of one of the Lord's people is a great privilege. Their precious souls shall welcome their bodies on the resurrec-

tion morning. David believed this. "Because my soul in grave to dwell shall not be left by thee." Thomas Watson puts the matter in a very sweet way. "God will not leave his people in the grave. Our friends bring us to the grave and leave us there, but Christ will not." Oh how they will rejoice at hearing the words, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." How beautiful the Lord's people will appear on the resurrection morning when the silver trumpet shall sound: "Arise my love, my fair one, and come away"! Then they shall enter into glory, into the rest that remaineth to the people of God.

As God listens to David's prayer, "O deliver not the soul of thy turtledove", I hear as if God were answering him thus: "I will never, never leave thee nor forsake thee", neither in the night, nor in the day, because I have loved thee with an everlasting love from before the foundation of the world. "The mountains shall depart, and hills be removed; but my loving kindness shall not depart from thee." It is most sweet to ponder over what Jesus said: "My sheep hear my voice."

The dove is a beautiful bird, seldom if ever is she seen in the company of birds of prey owing to her meek and quiet nature. She dwells solitarily in the woods. This also is true of the Lord's people. This reminds us of what is written in the Song of Solomon: "O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs." Song 2: 14.

Satan will not stop assailing some of God's people who in a dark day are to be useful in upholding His cause. This reminds us of a sore temptation that took possession of Rev. D. Beaton, one who served His Master in a remarkable way to the end of his sojourn here. This temptation took possession of his soul shortly after he was licensed to preach the gospel — that he would be of very little use to the Free Presbyterian Church because he was not fluent in the Gaelic language. In his trouble he wrote to the eminent Rev. Neil Cameron. Mr Cameron took some time to reply to his letter but when he did so he said something that took Mr Beaton right out of Satan's temptation. "I took your trouble to the throne of grace various times since I received your letter and, if I am not mistaken, you shall find more work to do in the Free Presbyterian Church than what you would ever realise possible." This is indeed the case, as all who knew the man of God can testify.

The apostle Peter, whom Satan often assailed, served the Lord well in his day. Jesus asked him: "Lovest thou me?" He had a ready reply indicating his high esteem and love for the Lord Jesus: "Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." For this very reason Satan desired

to sift him as wheat, but his Redeemer watched over him, making intercession for him "that his faith fail not." Oh, what a loving Saviour we have in the person of Jesus Christ.

It is as if David was saying to the Lord, "Is another snare on the way? O stretch Thy hand from Thy bosom as on former occasions and deliver the soul of thy turtledove from multitude of the wicked." It is written for our comfort: "Gad, a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last." Gen. 49: 19. Scripture again promises: "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper." There is nothing under the canopy of heaven so precious to God as His own Cause. Recently our beloved church passed through great trials but the plans of those who sought to sweep the Free Presbyterian Church off the face of the earth were frustrated by the God of the whole earth.

He it is who is taking stock of the thoughts and intents of all hearts. It is grieving to see Free Presbyterian property occupied by those who made such a display of enmity at the time of their departure. They have no more right to these buildings, or to the name of being Free Presbyterian, than to effect a take-over of Westminster Abbey. The Lord reigneth. We have reason to praise his blessed name.

When God created man he blessed him with an immortal soul and that soul should seek to glorify him for ever and ever and serve God continually, saying: "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." Ps 73: 25. Like the noble woman who in love to her Saviour broke the alabaster box of precious ointment and poured it on Christ's head. This was done for his burial. She loved Him who saved her soul from perishing. You who have the prayer: "Leave not the soul of thy turtledove unto the multitude of the wicked, forget not the congregation of thy poor for ever", will be in heaven with her.

God is angry with the wicked every day. If he turn not he will whet his sword. Ps. 7: 12. He was angry with Cain for offering a cheap sacrifice. Abel was taught of the Holy Spirit and brought a lamb without blemish. The Lord hearkened to the groaning of the children of Israel in Egypt day by day. We will not weary the Lord by our groaning but we will weary him by our sins. How pleased God was with David as he listened to him bemoaning himself thus: "Let not the errors of my youth nor sins remembered be." The older we get the more we fear falling into the hands of wicked men. Our constant prayer must be: "As the apple of thine eye me keep." Let this be our perpetual desire and prayer. How sweetly He invites them to follow Him in the face of all opposition. "Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse." Song 4: 8. May the Holy Spirit cause us to

rejoice that the Lord Jesus Christ has all power in heaven and on earth. This gladdened the heart of Asaph when he said:

Thou, with thy counsel, while I live,
Wilt me conduct and guide;
And to thy glory afterward
receive me to abide.

Book Reviews

JONAH, A Study in Compassion by O. Palmer Robertson. Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh. 64 pages, £1.50.

The author is presently pastor of Wallace Memorial Church, Hyattsville, Washington, U.S.A. He previously held chairs in Old Testament in three American Theological Seminaries, one of which it should be noted, was Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, U.S.A. The booklet claims to be a study in compassion based on the parallel between the work of Christ on earth and the life of Jonah.

In the reviewer's opinion that book is totally lacking in reverence to God the Father and to God the Son. For example, on page 42, we read in reference to Jonah 3: 1, "God says, let's go at it again." Again on page 61, "Remember that instead of a dead gourd, your Lord had the discomfort of a dead tree."

One wonders what this one time Professor of Old Testament thinks was happening on the Cross of Calvary.

Another example is to be found on page 24, "Rather than creating trouble for others, Christ bore the judgment of God for sinners." Further there are numerous pieces of American slang which are best left unquoted.

There is nothing in this booklet which will be of instruction or give spiritual pleasure to true believers — rather the contrary will be the case in view of the language used. There is a stark contrast between this work and that of Dr. Hugh Martin on the same subject where the parallel is treated with the reverence and scholarship required. We commend Dr. Martin's book on Jonah to the readers of our Magazine. Your reviewer was saddened by reading this book both in view of the comments above, and also by the strong Arminian flavour in many of its pages. One wonders how a former Professor of Old Testament could write in this way, but perhaps such is the American scene in theology.

One was further disappointed by the fact that The Banner of Truth Trust, once noted for its publication of sound Puritan works, should think it appropriate to market such a book in the U.K.

R.K.M.

THE AUTHENTIC GOSPEL by Jeffrey E. Wilson. Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh. Price 75p.

The author of this twenty page booklet is stated on the cover to be in a leadership role in Grace Christian Fellowship, Saint Charles, Missouri, U.S.A. He states in the preface of the booklet was born out of a deep conviction that modern-day Christianity, as it is in evidence in most places, is far removed from biblical roots. With this statement we would agree. The popular message calls people to receive Jesus as Saviour, and then a second appeal is made later to submit to Jesus as Lord. A division is made between Christ as a Prince and Christ as a Saviour. This is basically the old antinomian heresy. However in the reviewer's opinion the author's own theology is highly suspect by Biblical and Westminster Confession standards. He repeatedly refers to making decisions to commit oneself to Christ, and on one occasion turning ourselves over to Christ's control. In writing of Christ's meeting with the rich ruler the author writes — "Rather than try to encourage him to make a false decision — Jesus let him leave and did nothing to persuade him."

The booklet is sadly deficient in its presentation of the moral law and the Ten Commandments. Indeed they are not mentioned at all as such, and there is no discussion with respect to their obligation on the believer in his daily life. There is no reference to purity of worship or observance of the Lord's Day. The booklet makes no real contribution to the subject addressed.

R.K.M.

Notes and Comments

MacBrayne's Sabbath Sailings

Opposition to the Cal/Mac Sabbath service to Tarbert proposal continues. Every effort is being made to bring the Company to a better mind. An elderly woman in Stornoway who worked in the 1920s for Mr David MacBrayne, owner of the MacBrayne Company, has written to the Press stating that if Mr David MacBrayne were alive today she felt sure there would be no talk of a Sabbath ferry service. Even Life and Work, the magazine of the Church of Scotland, has added its weight to the campaign asking: "Why are Cal/Mac so anxious to offer 'Sunday' sailings to the people of the Western Isles, most of whom certainly do not want them?" Cal/Mac is advised by Life and Work to drop the Harris plan and learn to respect local feelings. The attitude of companies engaged in public transport has often been that of opposition to the sanctity of the

Sabbath. The battle against trains running on the Sabbath was fought and lost in the first half of last century, and this form of Sabbath desecration has continued ever since. It is to be hoped that the present battle will be fought and won and be the prelude to other victories over the Sabbath desecrators in the future. A European Community proposal, referred to in a later Note and Comment, may help to expedite this.

Moral Crisis in Church of Scotland

Prof. Thomas Torrence of the Church of Scotland has spoken out strongly about attitudes to Christian moral standards which have appeared in his own Church. He states that there has been an abject failure by the Church to uphold Christian moral standards, so contributing to the breakdown of family structures and allowing a sliding conformity of the Church to the world. Professor Torrence's view is that the Church of Scotland needs to be re-evangelised. Professor Torrence has in this way highlighted one cause of the moral deterioration of the nation. The doctrines, however, which will bring about a change in the land are not these which are now preached in the Church of Scotland but those abandoned by her many generations ago. A return to Biblically based preaching of law and Gospel would be a token for good and may it not be long delayed. It is such preaching that the Lord will bless.

Crime in Scotland

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton, Scottish Home Affairs Minister, stated recently that a very high proportion of crime was committed by young people. Half the crimes recorded were committed by young men under 21. Also one third of all those convicted of criminal offences were aged under 17. This is an appalling indictment of the rising generation.

How clear it is from these figures that engagement in crime begins at a very early age and the seeds of these criminal activities must be sown even earlier. The nation is reaping to an alarming degree what it has sown by its abandonment of Christian teaching so that every man and even every child, is a law unto himself. Measures to try to combat this state of affairs will no doubt be taken, but there is no permanent solution apart from a revival of true religion and a return to Christian moral teaching as a consequence.

Late Abortions

The House of Lords approved the Commons Amendment cutting the time limit for abortions from 28 to 24 weeks in the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill but allowed late abortion when a baby is found to

be severely handicapped. The latter provision was strongly opposed by the Anglican Bishops present along with other pro-life peers but they failed to get a majority. This means that we now have a law allowing abortion up to the time of birth not, as formerly, in cases of danger to the life of the mother, but for handicap and for serious injury to the physical or mental health of the mother — a term that can be used to justify social abortions.

European Community Sabbath Proposal

It is not often that we associate the Common Market with anything helpful to the cause of Christ. Indeed, Common Market law has been invoked repeatedly by some major stores in an effort, not always successful, to prevent them being convicted of illegal trading on Sabbaths in England and Wales.

Such has been the slide in national standards of Sabbath observance in this country that the work of the Church's Sabbath Observance Committee has over the years largely been taken up by efforts merely to restrain the increase in Sabbath desecration. However, the Committee has recently had something more positive to respond to. The German government had brought before the European Community a proposal which, if implemented, could very significantly reduce the amount of Sabbath work being done in this country. This is a proposal for the Sabbath to be designated as a weekly rest day, and it would close down all business except continuous activity such as blast furnaces and newspapers. It appears that nine out of the twelve EC countries already shut down most industrial and commercial activity on Sabbaths. The exceptions are Denmark, Portugal and sadly, Britain. But even should all these countries oppose the proposal — a decision was to be made on November 26 — they would not have sufficient voting power to prevent it becoming law.

However many exceptions there may in practice be to the prohibition on Sabbath activity, it would create a situation very much better than that which exists at present. This proposal will not create a Sabbath-keeping Britain, any more than it will create a Sabbath-keeping Europe; a spiritual revival is needed for that. It will only leave more people free to pursue their private Sabbath-breaking for the whole day. Yet anything that will reduce Sabbath-breaking by commercial enterprises must be warmly welcomed, not least because it will reduce the difficulties for those employees who have a conscience about keeping the Sabbath. It is a sad fact that over the years it has become more and more difficult to obtain employment where one is not expected to work on Sabbaths.

The Sabbath Observance Committee has sent a letter to the Home Secretary to encourage the Government to support the proposal. The text of the letter is reproduced below:

I refer to the recent German proposal that there be a weekly rest day throughout the European Community. I understand that you and your Department are responsible for the UK Government's response.

I am writing to tell you of our enthusiasm for the proposal. Our concern for Sabbath observance is based principally on the fact that God has commanded, "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy," and that therefore nothing should be done on that day except what is genuinely necessary or a work of mercy. We believe too that to rest from ordinary work on one day in seven fulfills a basic human need. We appreciate that the Government has a concern for the freedom of the individual, but in this connection we would point out that fundamentally we have no more right to break the Sabbath than to kill a fellow human being; both are prohibited in the Ten Commandments.

We would be very sad if our country were to be among the few countries who would oppose this excellent proposal, especially with our rich Christian heritage, which in the past has led to a willingness to listen on a national level to what God has told us in the Bible. Neither God's law nor man's needs have changed, and we would accordingly ask you to give your wholehearted support to what is a wonderful opportunity to shift our society in a more Biblical direction. It is, of course, all the easier to do so when it will not put us at a disadvantage against any of our European competitors.

K.D.M.

Mission News

Dr Janette Hak has returned to Zimbabwe after her furlough in Holland. All are delighted she has returned, but she intends to remain in Bulawayo for a period of language study. It is extremely difficult to sit down to regular language study at Mbuma, where there are continual interruptions and even emergency calls.

Miss Jessie Coote is on duty once more at Mbuma, which is a tremendous help. It is good news to hear that there are two new Dutch nurses accepted for Mbuma. Miss Verlouw who was studying in England for a time, and Miss Zekveld, who is not quite a stranger as she paid a visit to the Mission last year. Miss Zekveld's home is now in Canada as her parents have gone there to live.

Miss van Saane goes home to Holland D.V. in December to care for her Mother. Mr and Mrs Neil Murray hope to arrive in Scotland at the end of November.

Miss Marion Graham is due leave at the end of the year. It would be a great help if some Christian teacher would go out to help in the Secondary School, even for a couple of years. The work is most interesting, and the interchange of ideas and experiences among the members of staff throughout the Mission generally, stimulating and unforgettable.

I am sure that Miss MacLennan received a very warm welcome from staff and pupils. Mr David Mdlovu has had a period of ill-health, and was in hospital for a time. His illness was diagnosed as diabetes. He has a great burden of work, general upkeep of buildings, maintenance of the water supply, of the electricity supply, where that is appropriate, for motor transport, and in addition, he has services on Sabbath and occasional week-day services. When it is remembered that there are long distances to travel and sometimes difficult weather conditions, not to speak of caring for a wife and family, Mr Ndlovu needs the prayers of our people.

Mr Neil Murray and a driver whose name has escaped me, have paid another visit to Binga, bringing clothes and food and tracts. The Tonga people have their own language and so an interpreter is required. At their first stop there were fifty at the service. They stayed at a rest-camp and set off next morning at 8.30 a.m., for the next group of people, seventy kms into the mountains, where there is dire poverty despite Government assistance. Five hundred people gathered for the Service. It may be remembered that when the great Kariba Dam was built on the Zambezi River some of the displaced people moved to this exceptionally poor area. As has been said, the Government is assisting but it is the church that must give spiritual help.

As the Rev. P. Nzamo has written in this year's Report, "The door is open for the Free Presbyterian Church to testify among the Tonga people, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us remember the Tonga people at a throne of Grace."

J.N.

Church Notes

Synod Motion for Day of Prayer

That Wednesday or Thursday, 12 or 13 December 1990 be held as a day of humiliation and prayer throughout the church at home and abroad to crave the spirit of penitence for an outpouring on the Church of the Blessed Holy Spirit, as the only remedy for the decadence of the age.

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

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

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

Outer Isles: At Stornoway on 5th February 1991 at 12 noon.

Skye: At Portree on 12th February 1991 at 11 a.m.

Northern: At Dingwall on 12th February 1991 at 2 p.m.

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

Theological Conference

The Theological Conference will be held (D.V.) in the Inverness Church on Tuesday and Wednesday 4th and 5th December. The Conference opens at 2.30 p.m. on the Tuesday. The only paper given in public will be on Wednesday at 7 p.m. when Rev. J. MacLeod will give a paper on "The excellency of the Authorised Version." For other papers — see November issue of the Magazine.

Ordination and Induction at Daviot

On Thursday 18th October 1990 the Northern Presbytery met for the ordination of the Rev. John Goldby to the holy ministry and his induction to the pastoral charge of the Daviot, Stratherrick and Tomatin Congregation. The other ministers of the Church who were present were associated with the Presbytery. After the Edict had been returned as served, and proclamation made three times at the Church door, the Moderator of Presbytery, Rev. A. F. MacKay, went to the pulpit and preached an appropriate sermon from Hebrews 3: 1. After public worship was ended, the Clerk of Presbytery gave a narrative of proceedings in the Call to Rev. J. Goldby. Thereafter the usual questions were put to Mr Goldby and the Formula was signed by him. Rev. John Goldby then kneeled and the Moderator by solemn prayer, and the laying on of the hands of the ministers of the Presbytery set him apart to the office of the holy ministry. Afterwards he did, in the name of the Presbytery, and by the authority of the Great Head of the Church, induct Rev. John Goldby to the charge of the Daviot, Stratherrick and Tomatin Joint Congregation, in token of which he gave to him the right hand of fellowship. In this he was followed by the other members of the Presbytery. The Clerk then addressed the newly ordained and inducted minister, while Rev. D. Boyd addressed the congregation. Rev. D. MacLean, Glasgow, also addressed the assembled congregation and wished Mr Goldby well. Good wishes from other ministers of the Church were also intimated. The service was concluded with the singing of a Psalm and the benediction.

A large gathering attended the service filling the Church and afterwards were provided with refreshments by the ladies of the congregation, for which Rev. A. F. MacKay later thanked them.

It is gratifying to know that the Daviot, Stratherrick and Tomatin Congregation was vacant less than a year since Rev. D. Boyd was translated to Inverness. Our desire is that the new ministry begun in that part of the Lord's vineyard may be abundantly blessed of the Lord to the good of never-dying souls.

D. B. Macleod,
Clerk of Presbytery.

List of Communions

The list of Communions on the inside front page of the Magazine has been corrected for 1991. The Editor would be grateful if the ministers of the Church could let him know any further corrections that are necessary.

Editor's Visit to Africa

The Editor has been asked by the Foreign Missions Committee to go as Church Deputy to Kenya, Malawi and Zimbabwe from 6th December until 24th January (D.V.). Leave of absence for this visit has been granted by the Northern Presbytery. Rev. A. Ndebele is expected to visit Kenya and Malawi at the same time. The Editor requests the prayers of the people of the Church in connection with these visits that the Lord's guidance and blessing and safe-keeping may be granted.

Editorial Material for F.P. Magazine

During the months of December and January material for the F.P. Magazine should be sent to Rev. John MacLeod, F.P. Manse, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis, who will be acting as Editor during the Editor's absence.

Dumbarton Communions:

The Kirk Session has decided that the dates of the Dumbarton Communion for 1991 be changed to the first Sabbath of April and the first Sabbath of September (D.V.).

J. A. Henderson, Session Clerk.

Notice from Church Centenary Committee

In view of the fact that all the chapters of the *Church Centenary Volume* and all the sections of the *History of F.P. Congregations* must be completed by December, 1991, the Church Centenary Committee urges all

those to whom has been delegated the responsibility for these, to proceed with the work expeditiously, with the Committee's deadline in mind.

The Committee trusts that congregations will continue to contribute to the Commemoration Fund, set up for financing the production of the *Centenary Volume* and associated publications.

The Committee again appeals to anyone who may have original letters or photographs pertaining to the history of our Church to send them to the Church Librarian, Dr Duncan MacSween, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow. All items sent will be carefully preserved and, in due course, returned to their owners. Such items will be of use to the Committee in its preparation of the *Church Centenary Volume*.

Financial Year End — 31 December 1990

Will Congregational Treasurers please note that all funds in respect of 1990 should be in the General Treasurer's hands by Tuesday, 8th January 1991. Funds received after that date will be included in 1991.

Increase in Price of Magazines

Owing to a reduction in subscriptions and increased cost of printing, the Magazine Committee has found it necessary to increase the price of the F.P. Magazine to 70p a copy and the Y.P. Magazine to 40p a copy. The Gaelic Supplement will continue to be issued free.

Binding of Magazines

Anyone wishing to bind volumes of the F.P. or Y.P. Magazine should send complete sets of the Magazine to Mr Neil MacLean, F.P. Church Bookroom, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow G3 6LE. The cost per volume is £5.

Free Presbyterian Publications

Easily the most important of the titles published by the Church's Publications Committee is *The Westminster Confession of Faith*. This is the subordinate standard of our Church, to which all office-bearers must give their unqualified assent. It is also the subordinate standard of most other presbyterian churches in the English-speaking world, though in most cases there is some kind of escape clause allowing those who subscribe to the *Confession* to do so, although there may be considerable parts of it which they do not accept. This is usually achieved by a Declaratory Act of the type that led in 1893 to the formation of the Free Presbyterian Church as a separate body.

It is very encouraging that in just over two years after the last reprint of 3,000 copies a further printing became necessary. This has been arranged, and 4,500 copies have now been delivered to the Church Bookroom. It now costs £9.50. This latest reprint is identical to the last, except for a very attractive cover design showing the Houses of Parliament in full colour. The book contains, not only *The Confession of Faith* itself, but also *The Larger Catechism* and *The Shorter Catechism*, each with their Scripture proofs. This means that the reader has available a concise body of Scripture doctrine arranged systematically in three different forms, and each doctrine tied by the Scripture proofs to its basis in the Bible. It is obviously a book that should be in every Free Presbyterian home.

Also included are *The Sum of Saving Knowledge*, *The National Covenant*, *The Solemn League and Covenant*, together with the other documents of the Westminster Assembly, *The Directory for the Public Worship of God* and *The Form of Church Government*.

We would remind readers of the proposed re-issue of the six volumes of *The Works of Ralph Erskine* which contain his prose writings. Further details are available from the F.P. Bookroom (133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LE), where all F.P. publications may be obtained.

It is also hoped that a further edition of Thomas M'Crie's *Life of John Knox* will be available next year. This book has already been twice reprinted by the Church, but this edition will be newly typeset and will have a more attractive cover design. Two completely new titles are also proposed. One is the fine book by Alexander Stewart of Cromarty, *The Tree of Promise*. It deals with the sacrifices and some of the other types of the Old Testament, and it is probably the best treatment of the subject for the general reader. The other book is a collection of some of the articles on topics in Scottish church history, such as the Marrow Controversy, written by the one-time editor of this magazine, the Rev. Donald Beaton. These articles will be drawn both from the Free Presbyterian Magazine and other sources. Mr Beaton was widely acknowledged as an able and informed writer, and it seems very desirable that at least some of his work should be brought before a wider public.

Three children's books are being prepared for issue under the auspices of the Welfare of Youth Committee. One, though not the first, is a revised edition of *Gospel Gleanings for Young People*, and another is to be for younger children.

More details of the unpublished titles will follow in due course, D.V.

K.D.M.

Acknowledgment of Donations

The General Treasurer acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:-

Eastern Europe: Friends, Kirkhill £20 for Bibles for E. Europe; Friends, Eketahuna £100 for Psalm Books for Russia, both per Rev. D.A.R.

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

Dingwall: Friend, N. Tolsta £5 (where most needed); Friend, N. Tolsta £5; Mrs MacI., N. Tolsta £5, all per Rev. D.B.M.

Dumbarton: Inverness Friends £20 for Congr. Fd. per M.H.

Edinburgh: T. £200 (envelope in plate) for the most needy Funds of the Church.

Glasgow: Anon., £100 for Minister's Car/Telephone; Anon., £100 where most needed, both for Congr. Fd.; J.C. £30; Matth. 6: 3 £10; M.G. £10; Anon., £10; Anon., £10; Anon., £10; Anon., £5; Anon., £5 all for Car Fund; Anon., £5; Anon., £5; Anon., £5 all for Sust. Fund; Anon., £300 for Jewish and Foreign Mission Fund.

Greenock: Friend, Harris £10; M.G., Glasgow £10; I.C., Glasgow £20 for Congr. Purposes; I.C. £10 for Comm. Exps., all per Rev. L. MacLeod; Anon., £40 for Russian Bibles.

Inverness: Anon., £80 to be used where needed most, per envelope in plate; Mrs N. M. £10, where most needed, per Rev. D.M.B.

Kames: Friend, Kyle of Bute £50 for General Purposes.

Larne: K. & A. MacL., Glendale £20; Envelope in plate £20 for Mbuma Mission Hospital; Envelope in plate £20 (£10 for For. Miss. & £10 for Congr. Fds); Envelope in plate £20 (£10 for Sust. Fd. & £10 for Home Miss.)

Lochbroom: Mrs McL. £21; Mrs M. £10, both for Congr. Tape Fd., both per Rev. N.M.R.

London: From the Estate of the late Miss Margaret MacKenzie, London per Child and Child, Solicitors, £100, for Church and Manse Fund.

North Harris: Friend, Stockinish £3; Friend, Stockinish £2; Friend, Stockinish £10, all for Door Collection; Friend, Stockinish £10, where most needed, all per R.M.C.; Friend, Stornoway £6 for door coll. per J. McL.

North Tolsta: In memory of a beloved husband £10 (in plate); In memory of my mother £20 (in plate); In memory of a beloved husband £10 (in plate); In memory of my mother £20 (in plate); In memory of a dear brother £20 (in plate); T.&C. £10, all for Congr. Fds.; Mr and Mrs B. £50; Anon., £5; J. & A.M.D. £20, all for Sabbath School outing; Anon., £3 for B.T.S. (in plate); In memory of our beloved parents £20 for heating; Anon., £20 for Church Windows per D. MacKenzie; Anon., Tolsta £20 for For. Miss. Fd.; Friend of the Cause, Breasclate £10 for Comm. Exps. (in plate).

North Uist: Friend, N. Harris £25 for Sust. Fd.; J.&K., Tarbert £20; Friend, N. Harris £20; Friend, Harris £10; Friend, Harris £5, both where most needed; Anon., £5; Friend, N. Harris £5; Friend, N. Harris £5, both for Petrol.

Portree: Two Friends £40 for Sust. Fd., per F.M.; Anon., £10 for Tapes per A.M.N.; Friends £10 for Church Door Coll. per S.Y.M.

Raasay: From the Estate of the late Miss Margaret MacKenzie "in memory of my sister Sheila" £100 for Sust. Fd. and £100 for Home of Rest, Inverness, per Rev. J. R. Tallach; C.F. £15 where most needed; Friend of the Cause, Inverarish £20 for Manse Central Heating per M.D. MacKay; M.D. £10 for Congr. Fd. per Rev. J. R. Tallach.

South Harris: Friend, Leverburgh Home £100; Friend, Leachlee £20, Friend, Glasgow £20; Friend, Northton £20 for comm. Exps. per Rev. K. MacLeod.

Stornoway: M.&C. £50, where most needed; Friend, Stockinish £5 for petrol; J.&K. £10 for Congr. Purposes; Friend, Stockinish £25 for Sust. Fd.; Friend, Stockinish £30; Friend, Stockinish £10, both for Petrol; Friend, Stockinish £10; Friend, Stornoway £20, both for Sust. Fd., all per Rev. J. MacLeod.

Tain: Glasgow Friend £10 for Sust. Fd.

Notice of Correction — Sydney Congregation: During 1989 Sydney Congregation gave a donation of £223.05 to the Jewish and Foreign Mission Fund, this was not shown in the table of donations that appeared in the April magazine.