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Meeting of Synod

Once again in the month of May the Synod, the Supreme Court of our Church will meet. This yearly event, when the ministers and representative elders of the congregations meet together in Synod is an important one in the life of the Church. Because of this, it should be the earnest prayer of all in our midst who have the Cause of Christ at heart that wisdom and direction would be given in all things and that all that is done may be to the Lord's glory.

We have reason to acknowledge the Lord's goodness to us as a Church in still maintaining a witness for the truth in our midst. This witness was raised in troublous times when the Word of God was being attacked by men who had ceased to value it as they ought, and were intent on weakening the Church's witness to the inspiration, infallibility and inerrancy of God's Word. A leavening of carnal sentiment and belief had come in threatening to subvert the doctrinal standards of the Church. Yet this was not allowed to happen without a witness being raised against it.

In the mercy and kindness of God there were those raised up to stem the flood and to oppose the innovations that were being gradually brought into the life of the Church. It pleased the Lord to raise up humble and godly men — Rev Donald MacFarlane and Rev Donald MacDonald and a host of other godly men to stand in the breach in the day of trouble. By this means, weak though it was in the eyes of men, a testimony was raised on the side of truth in Scotland which has been continued in Scotland and other lands down to the present time.

For the possession of our present privileges we are to take no glory to ourselves. It has not been our doing but the doing of the Lord and ought to be wondrous in our eyes. To Him must be the praise and the glory and honour and not to any man. This was the mind of the Fathers of our

Church and ought to be our mind too.

In recent times the Church has been called to pass through great trials and difficulties. Men, some of whom had over a long period of time supported the witness of the Church turned aside from the path of duty and forsook their erstwhile brethren to forge a new path for themselves. Undeterred by the loss of so many at one time, and the division of congregations already weak through the apostasy of the day, our Church has continued in its numerically weakened state, the same teachings for which it has contended throughout its history. As in the beginning of its history it was dependent on the Lord for its establishment and preservation, so in our day also it is to the Lord alone we must look to uphold and maintain this selfsame witness as we draw near the centenary of our witness as a Church.

It was the view of some of the godly in the past that the witness of the Free Presbyterian Church would be maintained until better days would come. This is our hope for our Church — that the Lord will preserve it faithful in a day of abounding evil and backsliding until the time will come when He will pour out of His Spirit upon the nations of the world, including the nation of the Jews held so long in the thralldom of unbelief.

Let us not falter and fail in the midst of widespread declension. Let us hold fast to that which we have that no man take our crown. Let us mourn over our many sins and backslidings and turn to the Lord in repentance and so experience renewed tokens of the Lord's favour and love to us as a denomination. What could be more suitable to us as an exhortation at this time than the words of the Apostle in writing to the Corinthians: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

Deed of Separation

By Ministers and Elders from the Church calling herself the Free Church of Scotland.

We, the undersigned Ministers and Elders of the Free Church of Scotland, considering that the Constitution of said Church as settled in 1843 is contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith, as approved by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1647, the First and Second Books of Discipline, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, the Claim, Declaration, and Protest of 1842, the Protest of 1843, the Act of Separa-

tion and Deed of Demission executed in the last-mentioned year, the Formula appointed to be subscribed by Probationers before receiving license, and by all office-bearers at the time of their admission, together with the Questions appointed to be put to the same parties, at Ordination and Admission, and the Acts of Assembly of the Church of Scotland prior to 1843; and, further considering that the Establishment Principle — that is the national recognition and encouragement of religion and the Church of Christ by the State as such — is part of the Constitution of the Free Church of Scotland as settled in 1843, and since repeatedly affirmed in Acts and Proceedings of her General Assemblies, and that the maintenance of said Principle is binding and obligatory on all Ministers and Office-bearers of said Church; and now seeing (1st) That the present subsisting Church now calling herself the Free Church of Scotland, through majorities of her Commissioners in General Assembly met, has, in violation of one of the fundamental principles embodied in the Constitution of the Free Church of Scotland, of late years repeatedly passed resolutions having for their object the separation of Church and State, and the abandonment of the distinctive testimony of the Free Church of Scotland in favour of a national recognition of religion, and that without any declaration in favour of any Scheme for the Reconstruction of a National Church on the basis claimed by the Church of Scotland in 1842; (2nd) That the present subsisting Church, calling herself the Free Church of Scotland, by sanctioning the use of uninspired hymns, has departed from the original Standards of the Free Church of Scotland; and by the authorisation of instrumental music in the public worship of God has altered the ancient and universal practice of the Church of Scotland, and violated the purity of worship as understood by the Free Church of Scotland in 1846; (3rd) That the said present subsisting Church, calling herself the Free Church of Scotland, through judgments of her General Assemblies, now not only tolerates but supports office-bearers who do not hold the “whole doctrine” of the Confession of Faith — especially the doctrines of the Divine Authorship and entire perfection of all the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, which “whole doctrine”, by their ordination vows, said Office-bearers owned and declared to be the true doctrine which they would constantly adhere to; (4th) That by passing the Declaratory Act (1892) the said present subsisting Church calling herself the Free Church of Scotland, through her General Assemblies, has, in so far as said Church is concerned, destroyed the integrity of the Confession of Faith as understood and accepted by the Disruption Fathers and their predecessors, and instead of the Westminster Confession of Faith as the recognised stan-

dard of orthodoxy in the Church, in all its heads and articles, has substituted what is called "the Substance of the Reformed Faith therein set forth," the Church, through the majorities of the Members of her Courts, being by said Declaratory Act made the sole judge of the particular points that are to be included under this category of doctrines — a provision which overthrows the fixed Doctrinal Constitution of the Free Church of Scotland, and lays its creed at the feet of an irresponsible majority to determine the same as it will; and (5th) That the majority of the Ministers and Elders who for the present rule and guide the said present subsisting Church calling herself the Free Church of Scotland have, in the instances above set forth, abandoned one of the most vital principles of the Free Church of Scotland; have practically embraced Voluntarism; and have passed acts and resolutions under which the Standards of the Free Church of Scotland can be and are violated; whereby they have ceased to represent the Church of Scotland as settled in 1843. In consequence whereof we resolved to separate from the said present subsisting Church calling herself the Free Church of Scotland; therefore, and in order the more formally and to effectually carry out said resolution, we, the ministers and elders, hereto subscribing for ourselves and all who may now or hereafter adhere to us — under the solemn declaration that we and they now adhere as we and they have heretofore done to the Constitution and Standards of the Free Church of Scotland as settled in 1843, and set forth in the several documents above named, and to the whole principles therein embodied — and in humble dependence on the grace of God, the help of our Lord and Saviour, and the presence and blessing of the Holy Spirit, have separated, as we do hereby separate, from the present subsisting Church, calling herself the Free Church of Scotland; declaring, however, as we hereby specially provide and declare that we for ourselves, and all who may now or hereafter adhere to us, in no degree abandon or impair the rights belonging to us as Ministers of Christ's Gospel and Pastors and Elders of particular Congregations, to perform freely and fully the functions of our offices towards our respective Congregations or such portions thereof as may adhere to us; that signature or adherence to this Deed of Separation shall in no way prejudice our right to maintain the Doctrines and Principles of the Free Church of Scotland as set forth in her authorised standards and authoritative documents as recognised and understood in 1843, and to take all steps that may be necessary to vindicate said Doctrines and Principles; that we are and shall be free to exercise government and discipline in our several judicatories separate from the said Church, according to God's Word and the constitution and stan-

dards of the Free Church of Scotland as understood in 1843; that henceforth we are not and shall not be subject in any respect to the ecclesiastical judicatories of the said present subsisting Church calling herself the Free Church of Scotland; that the rights and benefits accruing to the Ministers subscribing or who may hereafter adhere hereto in connection with the Free Church of Scotland Ministers and Missionaries Widows and Orphans Fund are hereby reserved; that this Deed of Separation shall noway be held as a renunciation on the part of such of said Ministers as are Ministers of Churches or occupants of Manses built by private contribution, of any rights which may be found to belong to such Ministers or to their Congregations or to the Office-bearers of such Congregations, or to existing and future Trustees on behalf of such Congregations or their Kirk-Sessions in regard to the same, by virtue of the intentions and destination of the contributors to the erection of said Churches or Manses, and to the acquisition of any lands thereto attached or otherwise, according to law; and that there is hereby specially reserved to us, the subscribers hereto, and to all who may now or hereafter adhere to us, power and authority to take all steps that may be necessary to vindicate our or their status, and all advantages, rights, and privileges, both sacred and civil, of whatever nature and description soever, which may righteously be found to belong to us and to those who, by adhering to her constitution and standards as settled in 1843, claim to represent the Free Church of Scotland, and we consent to the registration hereof for preservation.

In testimony whereof, these presents, written on stamped paper by Aeneas Fraser, Clerk to Innes & Mackay, Solicitors, Inverness, are subscribed by Mr Donald Macfarlane, Minister at Raasay; Mr Donald M'Donald, Minister at Shieldaig, and Alex Macfarlane, Teacher of the Public School at Raasay, Elder, all at Portree on the fourteenth day of August, 1893, before these witnesses — John Robertson Mackay, Preacher of the Gospel at Gairloch, and Allan Mackenzie, Student of Divinity, residing in Inverness.

Signed Donald Macfarlane, Minister
Donald M'Donald, Minister
Alex M'Farlane, Elder

Signed John R. Mackay, *Witness*
Allan Mackenzie, *Witness*

Sermon

By Rev. D. Beaton

"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints." — Jude, 3.

In these words Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, announces to his readers his design in writing this epistle. He informs them that it had been his intention to write to them about the common salvation, but owing to the presence of certain men who had crept in unawares, who were turning the grace of God into lasciviousness and denying the only Lord God and the Lord Jesus Christ, he found it necessary to specially exhort them to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. And in addressing the believers, who are described as sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called, he recalls certain well-known facts that bring out the great necessity of not only beginning well but also of ending well. Israel were delivered out of Egypt, but they were afterwards destroyed because they believed not. The fallen angels began well, but they kept not their first estate, and as a consequence they are now reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day. Proceeding on these lines, Jude, in language of special solemnity, warns his readers to be on their guard against the devices of the enemies of God's truth. Their attitude, however, is not to be merely defensive; they are called upon to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints.

In considering these words let us notice —

I. The exhortation.

II. The manner in which they are to contend.

III. The matter for which they are to contend.

I. *The exhortation.*

They are called upon, in the interests of the common salvation, to *contend* earnestly for its preservation. God's people are not to be indifferent to the pricelessness of the treasure that has been committed to them. For while, in one sense, it may be said that the maintenance of God's truth in the world is quite independent of men, yet it reveals a spirit of exceptional callousness in any professed follower of Jesus Christ, to stand idly by and see the precious treasure, graciously bestowed upon him and others, stolen away, and never an effort on his part made to retain it or defend it from such thieves. Not so was the spirit of the Psalmist, who felt the force of God's commandment, and whose desire was that children yet un-

born should be partakers of like blessings which he had received. Not so was the spirit of the Apostle Paul, who, in giving advice to Timothy, says "O, Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust." An effort — an *earnest* effort — is to be made by every follower of Jesus Christ to maintain and defend the faith that was once delivered to the saints. All natural aversion to controversy is to be laid aside, and while mere pugnacity — having its origin in a corrupt nature — is to be carefully guarded against, there is set before every believer the soldier's task and the soldier's reward. Some natures may, from their natural bent, shrink from the ordeal, and endeavour to ease their conscience by reminding it that Christ Himself has said that those who use the sword shall perish by the sword. It is to be remembered, however, that apart altogether from the misapplication of Christ's words in such a connection, it should not be forgotten that He said on another occasion that those who had not a sword were to sell all and buy one. The sword, in its own time and in its own place, is absolutely necessary in this conflict. And it is unkind and cruel to attribute to true soldiers of Jesus Christ, who are standing in the front line of battle, a spirit of mere natural pugnacity, when their zeal and earnestness may be traceable to the fact that their ears are more sensitive to the commands of the Captain of their salvation and their vision keener than that of their fellow-believers. At the same time too much stress cannot be laid on the fact that our weapons in this conflict are not carnal. No amount of carnal zeal and carnal activity will make up for the essential qualification of success in this conflict. The whole training must begin with God, and the whole equipment must be His, if there is to be any victory.

(I) *The whole training must begin with God.* — This battle is not ours but God's, and He has not called anyone to contend for His truth without giving the necessary preparation. The Psalmist fully recognised that it was God who taught his hands to war and his fingers to fight (Psalm 144: 1). And it was because of this and the further fact that He had given him the shield of salvation and held him up by His right hand, that He had made him great. Much may be done, and is done, in connection with Christ's cause in the world, with a zeal and earnestness that seem to point to genuine interest in that cause, that does not bear the test even of time itself. The enthusiasm having an earthly origin has an earthly end, and the burning flame, kindled by an ardent zeal, leaves no trace of its existence, except it may be some ashes, to remind one of how vehemently the fire burned. Such cases are by no means uncommon, and one has only to take a survey of the field covered by one's own limited experience to take home with a new meaning — "Let him that standeth take heed

lest he fall." But for the army of the living God every one is a chosen man, as in Gideon's army, and he enters into the conflict with some sense of the true inwardness of the struggle; and, trained by God Himself, he shall come through it all more than a conquerer.

(2) *The whole equipment comes from God.* — The conflict that confronts the Christian is not one over which he can afford to affect indifference. There are abundant evidences to remind him that the enemy is powerful, persistent, and vigilant. That his modes of attack are subtle, is again and again brought home to the believer. The Church of Christ is a strong citadel, against which the gates of hell can never prevail. "It is an anvil," said Beza, "which has broken many a hammer." But the attacks of the enemy have been determined and varied. His policy to begin with was to crush the infant Church by the pagan power of Rome, but failing in this — though he so wrought in the hearts of men to invent forms of death for the early Christians that the mere reading of their sufferings makes the blood run cold — he resorted to his great master-policy of using the professing Church of Christ in the world for the accomplishment of his wicked designs. His success in this direction is seen to perfection in the Church of Rome, and in a more or less degree in the flood of worldliness with which he is filling so many of the Protestant churches in modern times. Confronted with such a subtle enemy and the consciousness of the great army that is arrayed against them, the believer may well say with Jehoshaphat: "O, our god, wilt not thou judge them? For we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee." And God's answer is given plainly in His Word: — "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." We are not at liberty to refuse the armour or to make choice of any particular part of it. Each piece is necessary, being specially mentioned by the Holy Spirit, and for the conflict we are to take the *whole* armour of God.

(a) *The loins are to be girt about with truth.* — The girding of the loins is a common figure of speech in Scripture, indicative of preparation for action. The long, loose garment, so likely to prove an impediment, is gathered together by the girdle. In the believer's case the girdle is truth. The soldier of Christ must have this part of the armour. However able and zealous he may be — however powerful his attack on the enemy's position may appear — it is strength spent in vain if he be not equipped with truth. With this, standing alone, he is stronger than the man who is without it, though receiving the applause of thousands. Luther, at the

Diet of Worms, apparently so utterly alone and helpless when he uttered his heroic words, "I can do nothing more, so help me, God," is a striking illustration of one whose loins were girt with truth. No amount of zeal or activity can atone for the lack of the truth. If we have it not, all our contending is but vexation of spirit. It is more than the world can know for a believer to be able to say with Ralph Erskine, "I had a good God, a good cause, and a good conscience." It is something to be able to say *that* in reviewing a life spent in contending for the faith once delivered to the saints.

(b) *Breastplate of righteousness* — The breastplate was armour protecting the heart, and in order that the heart may not be influenced in the wrong direction, the believer is to be equipped with the breastplate of *righteousness*. Righteousness may be here used in the general sense of integrity, honesty, uprightness, or in the sense of Christ's imputed righteousness. In both senses it is necessary that the soldier should have such a breastplate. A double-hearted man is a poor soldier at best, and in Christ's army it is treachery to the great Captain of salvation to be serving under His banner and holding converse with the enemy. Loyalty to Christ demands that in this conflict we should be single-minded, honest, and upright. The world's cunning and diplomacy is not allowable here. But if the believer needs such armour, he is no less in need of the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. The Scriptures present us with one striking illustration of Satan's policy in weakening the hands of one who was doing a work for God. Joshua, the high priest, clothed in filthy garments, had very little outward evidence of being suitably equipped for such holy work as God had called him to, and Satan is not slow to make use of his opportunity to discourage him. Joshua's vindication is found not in his own spotless character, but in the choice of Him who said, "Is not this a brand plucked from the burning?" In modern warfare heavy guns are used not only for destructive purposes but for demoralising the opposing army. The shattered nerves of an army into whose ranks these guns have been pouring their shells, render the soldiers ill-prepared to meet the attack when it is made. Such tactics were well-known to Satan of old, and his method is to keep the soldiers engaged in this holy war looking to themselves, and asking them, "Do you think God would have ever employed such an unholy man as you in His warfare?" It was with such a question he came to John Knox when he was engaged in the great and noble work of the Reformation in Scotland; but when the Reformer lay dying Satan changed his tactics by saying, "If ever a man got into heaven for his good works, you're the man: look at the great work you have done

in Scotland.” In such times as these happy is the man that can turn away from himself, with all the evidences of his sinfulness, and by faith realise that God seeth no iniquity in His Jacob nor perverseness in His Israel. Christ’s righteousness, imputed and received by faith — how strengthening it is in the day of battle!

(c) *Feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.* — The figure is that of a soldier preparing himself for the battle by binding under his feet the military sandals. The feet are to be shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace. Without this peace of God in the heart the conflict is a heartless effort, if effort there be. One destitute of this peace has been compared to an unshod soldier, the painfulness and difficulty of whose movements occupying his attention and taking his mind off the conflict, which should have his undivided attention. This Gospel of peace is a preparation for the believer as he goes into the battle. In this Gospel there is revealed the peace of God which passeth all understanding, and the Apostle Paul, realising its supreme value, told the Philippians that it would keep their hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

(d) *The shield of faith.* — *Above all*, taking the shield of faith wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. The parts of the armour already mentioned covered only parts of the body, but the shield is meant to cover it all. Its express function, as particularised by the Apostle, is the quenching of the fiery darts of the wicked. The figure employed is full of meaning; in the days of old it was customary to dip the arrows in some inflammable material, and, setting them on fire, shoot them into the ranks of the opposing force. One can imagine what confusion such a mode of warfare would introduce into the ranks. After all, it is a very apt illustration of the effect produced by the fiery darts of Satan and his numberless emissaries. To throw the ranks into confusion, especially at a critical moment, is his great design, and how often has he been successful! To obviate such a state of things, faith has been given as a shield, and the work of faith is to direct the thoughts and affections of the believer to the things which are unseen and eternal. In the time of confusion, and in the midst of every evil work, it can take, and has taken, the believer above the circumstances that surround him. *Above all*, take this shield, says the Apostle, for without faith the conflict for the cause of truth cannot be carried on.

(e) *The helmet of salvation.* — The helmet protects that part of the body upon which a blow would be likely to prove mortal, so, it has been well said, does the possession of salvation — the recognition of the fulness

of Christ's redemption — afford a sure protection against the blows aimed with deadly intent by our spiritual foe. And may there not be here a clear indication that our main protection in this part lies not in any special wisdom of our own, but in the wisdom of God revealed in His salvation?

(f) *The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.* — This is the only weapon mentioned in the equipment. It is to be used for attacking and defending. We are not at liberty to use any sword we please in this conflict for truth. The sword of the Spirit — the Word of God — is alone to be used. And since we are limited to this weapon, the thought naturally arises — what are its characteristics? It is sharper than any two-edged sword; it is living and powerful; it is a discerner of the thoughts and the intents of the heart. Before it the proudest enemies have yielded. It has read the thoughts of millions of hearts, and taught them to look to that God against whom they were fighting. The believer has also the assurance that it is a perfect weapon. Christ pointed to no flaw in it; nay, on the contrary, He used it in His own great conflict with Satan. Should our faith be shaken in the trustworthiness of this weapon, we go into this conflict without confidence. And if the professing churches in this country are to carry on the conflict to a successful issue against the world, the flesh, and the devil, and the superstitions of Rome, there must be a whole-hearted return to the Bible as the sword of the Spirit. Equipped thus with the whole armour of God, praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints, the believer is to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints. Notwithstanding his full equipment, he is never to lose sight of his entire dependence on God, hence the need of praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit. So prepared and so equipped, he is called upon to fight the good fight of faith, to contend earnestly for the cause of Jesus Christ in the world. Such, in the merest outline, is the nature of the equipment God has prepared for His people. No attempt is made to enter with anything like fulness into a description of the armour, but the main thing for the Lord's professing people is to lay to heart that, when they are called to contend earnestly for the faith, they are called to put on the whole armour of God, so that they may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand.

II. *The manner in which they are to contend.*

Contend *earnestly* is the exhortation. Now, it is evident that all who will carry out this injunction must be *living*. However necessary the graveyard may be, it is not the place to which any sane man will go who is in search of men to work for him. However pressing and necessary the

work may be, no one ever thinks of going to the thousands lying in their graves in the hope of having it accomplished. And in the things of heaven, the living alone will contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints. We are left in no manner of doubt that it is such who are addressed in this epistle — those who are sanctified by God the Father and preserved in Jesus Christ. They are a people in whom the good work has been begun by God Himself. The sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, so indispensable to progress in the Christian life, is being carried on in their hearts, and He who hath begun it hath given the assurance that it will be carried on until the day of Jesus Christ. There is the possibility that the word “sanctify” here is used in its less familiar sense of setting apart to the service of God. The people to whom Jude writes are set apart to serve God in the world, and they are further described as preserved in Christ Jesus. Such, and such alone, will contend earnestly for the faith. The manner in which believers are called to contend excludes two classes at least — (1) those who are asleep; (2) those who are dead.

(1) *Those who are asleep.* — The state of those who are asleep may not be so hopeless, from a human standpoint, as those who are dead, but for all practical purposes, as far as the conflict is concerned, there is very little difference. An army, however powerful it may be — however well equipped — if attacked when all are asleep, is in an extremely critical position. Looking abroad over the religious world of today, one cannot but feel the deepest concern at the tremendous apathy revealing itself on all hands, as far as the things of Christ are concerned. The lack of interest and enthusiasm among the professed followers of Jesus Christ, in contending for the faith, is one of the most fateful signs of the times. This is seen also in the half-hearted Protestantism of this so-called Protestant nation. Our leading statesmen may inform us that the Protestantism of this nation is too strong to fear the inroads of Rome, but they speak as men under delusion. The professing Church and the nation must be awakened out of this sleep if they are actually to see the enemy confronting them. There is no use speaking in low tones to men who are asleep, telling them of their danger. It is necessary to arouse them out of that sleep, and with their eyes open they will then see the danger for themselves. Our present condition in Church and State requires something mightier than man's power to work a remedy, and unless the Lord sends His Spirit from on high, our case will be lamentable indeed.

(2) *Those who are dead* in the very nature of things cannot contend earnestly for the faith. They have no living interest in this conflict; of old, men were employed for payment to fight for other nations. They were

not fighting for home and hearth, and had only a mercenary interest in the struggle. But in Christ's army there are no mercenaries — they are living men and women in whose hearts the Eternal Spirit is working. They have, as it were, a personal interest in the issues of the conflict. And realising that it is carried on in God's name and for God's glory, it has a significance of transcendent interest for them.

III. — *The matter for which they are to contend.*

It is to be carefully observed that the great matter for which they are to contend is the *faith once delivered unto the saints*. Its importance is emphasised by the fact that it was delivered to the saints. This faith, which, broadly speaking, may be understood as the common salvation to which Jude refers in the same verse, was not the outcome of man's devising; it came from heaven. And coming as a gift, it is to be highly prized. It is for no man's honour that the conflict is to be carried on. There can be little doubt that in religious controversy there is always the lurking danger that the honour of some individual or individuals should bulk much more largely than the vital interests of Christ's truth. Such a state of matters is deeply to be deplored, and it is indicative of a very unhealthy state of religion. The mere ambition to make a name is another hateful form manifesting itself in religious controversy. It is not to make a name for themselves that the true followers of Jesus Christ carry on the warfare in His name. The faith once delivered to the saints is the vital matter to them. It is something worth losing their reputation for; it is something worth losing their life for. And in our own land we are not wanting in instances of men, women, and even children, who held not their lives dear to them for the testimony of Jesus Christ. Then, again, it is not for the doctrines or opinions of men we are called upon to contend. These men may be highly esteemed and occupy high positions among their fellows, and their words may carry great weight, but in this great conflict it is the faith once delivered to the saints that must have first place. Recently in this country we had a striking illustration of so-called Protestants pleading earnestly for the servants of the Pope. If one may say so, they seemed to read the exhortation as if it ran:— “Contend earnestly for the Church of Rome”. If there was half the enthusiasm manifested by our Members of Parliament on the side of Protestantism as there was on the side of Roman Catholicism, its votaries would not dare to trouble the House of Commons with Roman Catholic Disabilities Bills. It ought to fill us with the deepest concern and grief that the legislators of our country were so far left to themselves as to blot out from the statute book of this realm the Royal Declaration, repudiating the doctrines of transubstantiation,

the sacrifice of the Mass, and the invocation of the Virgin, and declaring them to be superstitious and idolatrous. These doctrines are blasphemous and dishonouring to God and His Christ, and it was something that the most exalted person in this nation, at a supremely solemn hour of his life, should make this national confession that he regarded these doctrines as superstitious and idolatrous. That testimony shall no more be heard uttered by our Kings, unless God, in His providence, ordain a way whereby the repudiation of these doctrines be restored to the Royal Declaration. The teaching of the Church of Rome runs directly in the very teeth of the faith once delivered to the saints.

That faith is clearly set forth in the Scriptures. It tells of man's ruin, utter and hopeless as far as the help of his fellow-men are concerned. In it there is made known the glad tidings that Christ Jesus came into the world to seek and to save that which was lost. It asks no impossible thing from man. He is not to ascend to heaven nor to descend to the deep, for the Word is nigh, even the truth declared in the gospel. And the Lord has made known in His word that His Spirit shall instruct the sinner. All things have been provided. For the salvation of Jesus Christ is not a mighty, but after all, only a partial remedy. It is a remedy that never fails when applied. It was the realisation that this was God's remedy, fully capable of meeting the most desperate cases, that filled the hearts of the preachers of the cross with courage to declare it to Jew and Gentile. For He who made the provision knew the depths to which human beings were capable of sinking, He knew the varied needs of perishing sinners and made provision adequate to meet all their necessities. To darken this glorious gospel by human additions is a disastrous undertaking, fraught with danger to the souls of multitudes of men and women. The more one realises the wonders of the gospel of the grace of God the more will one desire at all costs that this glorious message be handed on to coming generations. It is the one hope for the salvation of sinners. Hence the imperative need of contending earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints.

"Let us Hold Fast Our Profession"

by Rev. J. C. Ryle

(Continued from Page 106)

II. Let us in the second place consider, *Why Paul says, "Let us hold fast our profession."* The answer to this question is threefold, and demands the serious attention of all who hope that they are really sincere in their Christian profession.

(a) For one thing, OUR HEARTS are always weak and foolish, even after conversion. We may have passed from death to life, and be renewed in the spirit of our minds. We may see the value of our souls, as we once did not. We may have become new creatures; old things may have passed away, and all things may have become new. But believers must never forget that until they die they carry about with them a weak, foolish, and treacherous heart. The roots of all manner of evil are still within us, although cut down to the ground by the grace of the Holy Ghost. Whether we like to acknowledge it or not, there are within us, at our very best, latent dislike of trouble, secret desire to please man and keep in with the world, carelessness about our private Bible-reading and our prayers, envy and jealousy of others, laziness about doing good, selfishness and desire to have our own way, forgetfulness of the wishes of others, and want of watchfulness over our own besetting sins. All these things are often lying hid within us, and below the surface of our hearts. The holiest saint may find to his cost some day that they are all there alive, and ready to show themselves. No wonder that our Lord said to the three apostles in the garden, "Watch ye, and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak" (Mark 19: 38). I have no doubt that St Paul had the heart in view, when he wrote those words, "Hold fast". "Let us, therefore, hold fast our profession."

(b) For another thing, *the world* is a source of immense danger to the Christian soul. From the day that we are converted, we are living in a most unhealthy atmosphere for religion. We live and move and have our being in the midst of a vast multitude of people who are utterly without vital Christianity. In every rank of life we meet with hundreds who, however moral and respectable, seem to care for nothing but such things as these, — What shall I eat? What shall I drink? What can I get? What can I spend? How shall I spend my time? What profit can I make? What amusement can I have? What pleasant company can I enjoy? — As for God, and Christ, and the Holy Ghost, and the Bible, and prayer, and repentance, and faith, and holy living, and doing good in the world, and death, and resurrection, and judgment, and heaven and hell, they are subjects which never appear to come across them except in sickness, or at a funeral. Now to live constantly in the midst of such people, as a Christian must do, is sure to be a great trial to him, and requires constant watchfulness to prevent his getting harm. We are incessantly tempted to give way about little things, and to make compromises and concessions. We naturally dislike giving offence to others, and having frictions and collisions with relatives, friends, and neighbours. We do not like to be laugh-

ed at and ridiculed by the majority, and to feel that we are always in a minority in every company into which we go. I fear that too many are laughed out of heaven and laughed into hell. It is a true saying of Solomon, "The fear of man bringeth a snare" (Prov. 29: 25). I once knew a brave sergeant of a cavalry regiment, who, after living to the age of fifty without any religion, became for the last few years of his life a decided Christian. He told me that when he first began to think about his soul and to pray, some months passed away before he dare tell his wife that he said his prayers; and that he used to creep upstairs without his boots at evening, that his wife might not hear him, and find out what he was doing!

The plain truth is that "the whole world lieth in wickedness" (1 John 5: 19), and it is vain to ignore the danger that the world causes to the believer's soul. The spirit of the world and the tone of the world, and the tastes of the world, and the air of the world, and the breath of the world are continually about him every day that he lives, drawing him down and pulling him back. If he does not keep his faith in lively exercise, he is sure to catch infection, and take damage, like the travellers through the Campagna at Rome, who take the fever without being aware of it at the time. The most perilous and unsanitary gas is that which our bodily senses do not detect. We have reason to pray continually for an increase of that faith of which St John says, that it gives us the victory over the world (1 John 5: 4). Happy, indeed, is that Christian who can be in the world and yet not of the world, — who can do his duty in it, and yet not be conformed to it, — who can pass through it unmoved by its smiles or its frowns, its flattery or its enmity, its open opposition or its playful ridicule, its sweets or its bitters, its gold or its sword! When I think what the world is, and see what harm it has done, and is doing to souls, I do not wonder that St Paul says "Hold fast." "Let us hold fast our profession."

(c) For one thing more, *the devil* is a constant enemy to the Christian's soul. That great, sleepless, and unwearied foe is always labouring to do us harm. It is his constant object to wound, hurt, vex, injure, or weaken, if he cannot kill and destroy. He is an unseen enemy who is always near us, "about our path, and about our bed," and spying out all our ways, prepared to suit his temptations to the special weak points of every man. He knows us far better than we know ourselves. He has been studying one book for 6000 years, — the book of fallen human nature, — and he is a spirit of almost boundless subtlety and cunning, and of boundless malice. The best of saints has little idea how many vile suggestions in his heart come from the devil, and what a restless adversary stands at his right

hand.

This is he who tempted Eve at the beginning, and persuaded her that she might disobey God, eat the forbidden fruit and not die. — This is he who tempted David to number the people, and to cause the death of 70,000 of his subjects by pestilence in three days. — This is he who tried to tempt our Lord in the wilderness immediately after His baptism, and even quoted Scripture to gain his end. — This is he who opposed our Lord all throughout His three years' ministry, sometimes by possessing the bodies of unhappy men and women in a most mysterious manner, and at last by putting it into the heart of one of His apostles to betray Him. — This is he who constantly opposed the apostles after our Lord's ascension, and tried to stop the progress of the Gospel. — This is he of whom St Paul testifies that even "Satan is transformed into an angel of light," and that false teachers are his agents. (2 Cor 11: 14).

Does any reader of this paper foolishly suppose that the devil is asleep, or dead, or less mischievous now than in old time? Nothing of the kind! He is still "walking about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." He is still "going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it" (1 Peter 5: 8; Job 1: 7). It is he who goes among heathen nations and persuades them to shed oceans of blood in the worship of idols, or murderous wars. — It is he who goes to and fro amongst fallen Churches, persuading them to throw aside the Bible, and satisfy people with formal worship or grovelling superstitions. — It is he who walks up and down in Protestant countries, and stirs up party spirit, and bitter political strife, setting class against class, and subjects against rulers, in order to distract men's minds from better things. — It is he who is continually going to the ears of intellectual and highly educated men, persuading them that the old Bible is not true, and advising them to be content with Atheism, Theism, Agnosticism, Secularism, and a general contempt for the world to come. — It is he, above all, who persuades foolish people that there is no such person as a devil, and no future judgment after death, and no hell. In all this fearful list of things I firmly believe that the devil lies at the bottom, and is the true root, reason, and cause. Can we suppose for a moment that he will let true Christians go quietly to heaven, and not tempt them by the way? Away with the silly thought! We have need to pray against the devil, as well as against the world and the flesh. In the great trinity of enemies which the believer should daily remember, the devil perhaps is the greatest because he is the least seen. Nothing delights him so much (if, indeed, he can be delighted at all) as to injure a true Christian and make him bring discredit on his religion.

When I think of the devil, I do not wonder that St Paul said "Hold fast." "Let us hold fast our profession."

Now I suspect that some reader of this paper may be secretly thinking that I am an alarmist, and that there is no need of such watchfulness, carefulness, and "holding fast." I ask such a person to turn with me to the Bible for a few moments, and to consider seriously what that blessed Book teaches.

I ask him to remember that Judas Iscariot and Demas both began well, and made a good profession. One was a chosen apostle of our Lord Jesus Christ, a constant companion of our blessed Saviour for three years. He walked with Him, talked with Him, heard His teaching, saw His miracles, and up to the very night before our Lord was crucified was never thought a worse man than Peter, James and John. Yet this unhappy man at last let go his profession, betrayed his Master, came to a miserable end, and went to his own place. — The other man whom I named, Demas, was a chosen companion of the Apostle St Paul, and professed to be of like mind with that eminent man of God. There can be little doubt that for some years he journeyed with him, helped him, and took part in his evangelistic labours. But how did it all end? He gave up his profession, and the last Epistle St Paul wrote contains this melancholy record: "Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world" (2 Tim. 4: 10). We never hear of him again. To every one who thinks I have dwelt too much on the Christian's dangers, I say this day, Remember Demas, remember Judas Iscariot, tighten your grasp, "hold fast your profession," and beware. We may appear to men to be very good Christians for a season, and yet prove at last to be stony-ground hearers, and destitute of a wedding garment.

But this is not all. I ask every believer to remember that if he does not "hold fast," he may pierce himself through with many sorrows, and bring great discredit on his character. We should never forget David's awful fall in the matter of the wife of Uriah, and Peter's thrice-repeated denial of his Master, and Cranmer's temporary cowardice, of which he so bitterly repented at last. Are we greater and stronger than they? "Let us not be high-minded, but fear." There is a godly fear which is of great use to the soul. It was the great Apostle of the Gentiles who wrote these words: "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest" after "I have preached to others I myself should be a castaway" (1 Cor. 9: 27).

Does any Christian reader of these pages desire *much happiness* in his religion, and much joy and peace in believing? Let him take an old minister's advice this day, and "hold fast his profession". Let him resolve

to be very thorough, very decided, very watchful, very careful about the state of his soul. The more boldly he shows his colours, and the more uncompromising and firm he is, the lighter will he find his heart, the more sensibly will he feel the sun shining on his face. None are so happy in God's service as decided Christians. When John Rogers, the first martyr in Queen Mary's time, was being led to Smithfield to be burned, the French Ambassador reported that he looked as bright and cheerful as if he were going to his wedding.

Does any Christian reader of these pages desire *much usefulness to others* in his religion? Let me assure him that none do so much good in the long run of life, and leave such a mark on their generation as those who “hold fast their profession” most tightly, and are most decided servants of Christ. Few men, perhaps, did more for the cause of the Protestant Reformation, and shook the power of Rome more completely in this country, than the two noble bishops who were burned back to back at one stake in Oxford, and would not let go their faith to save their lives. I need not say that I refer to Ridley and Latimer. The careless, thoughtless, irreligious world takes notice of such men, and is obliged to allow that there is something real and solid in their religion. The more light shines in our lives, the more good shall we do in the world. It is not for nothing that our Lord says, in the Sermon on the Mount, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 5: 16).

Let us gather up all these things in our memories and never forget them. Let it be a settled principle in our minds that it is of immeasurable importance to our happiness and usefulness to “hold fast our profession,” and to be always on our guard. Let us dismiss from our minds the crude modern idea that a believer has only got to sit still, and “yield himself” to God. Let us rather maintain the language of Scripture, and strive to “mortify the deeds of our body,” to “crucify our flesh,” to “cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit,” to wrestle, to fight, and live the soldier's life. (Rom. 3: 13; Gal. 5: 24; 2 Cor. 6: 1; Eph. 6: 12; 1 Tim. 6: 12; 2 Tim. 2: 3). One might think that the account of the armour of God in the Epistle to the Ephesians ought to settle the question of our duty. But the plain truth is, men will persist in confounding two things that differ, — that is, justification and sanctification. In justification, the word to be addressed to man is, Believe, only believe. In sanctification, the word must be, Watch, pray and fight. What God has divided, let us not mingle and confuse. I can find no words to express my own deep sense of the immense importance of “holding fast our profession.”

Letter

by Samuel Rutherford

To the Lady Kilconquhar

Mistress, — Grace, mercy, and peace be to you. — I am glad to hear that ye have your face homewards towards your Father's house, now when so many are for a home nearer hand. But your Lord calleth you to another life and glory than is to be found hereaway; and, therefore, I would counsel you to make sure the charters and rights which ye have to salvation. You came to this life about a necessary and weighty business, to tryste with Christ anent your precious soul, and the eternal salvation of it. This is the most necessary business ye have in this life; and your other adoes beside this are but toys, and feathers, and dreams, and fancies. This is in the greatest haste, and should be done first. Means are used in the Gospel to draw on a meeting betwixt Christ and you. If ye neglect your part in it, it is as if ye would tear the contract before Christ's eyes, and give up the match, that there may be no more communing about that business. I know that other lovers beside Christ are in suit of you, and your soul hath many wooers; but I pray you to make a chaste virgin of your soul, and let it love but one. Most worthy is Christ alone of all your soul's love, howbeit your love were higher than the heaven, and deeper than the lowest of this earth, and broader than this world. Many, alas! too many, make a common strumpet of their soul for every lover that cometh to the house. Marriage with Christ would put your love and your heart by the gate, out of the way, and out of the eye of all other unlawful suitors; and then you have a ready answer for all others, "I am already promised away to Christ; the match is concluded, my soul hath a husband already, and it cannot have two husbands." Oh, if the world did but know what a smell the ointments of Christ cast, and how ravishing His beauty (even the beauty of the fairest of the sons of men) is, and how sweet and powerful His voice is, the voice of that one Well-beloved! Certainly, where Christ cometh, He runneth away with the soul's love, so that it cannot be commanded. I would far rather look but through the hole of Christ's door, to see but the one half of His fairest and most comely face (for He looketh like heaven!), suppose I should never win in to see His excellency and glory to the full, than enjoy the flower, the bloom, and the chiefest excellency of the glory and riches of ten worlds. Lord, send me, for my part, but the meanest share of Christ that can be given to any of the indwellers of the New Jerusalem. But I know my Lord is no niggard: He can, and it becometh Him well to give more than my narrow soul can receive. If there

were ten thousand thousand millions of worlds, and as many heavens full of men and angels, Christ would not be pinched to supply all our wants, and to fill us all. Christ is a well of life; but who knoweth how deep it is to the bottom? This soul of ours hath love, and cannot but love some fair one. And oh, what a fair One, what an only One, what an excellent, lovely, ravishing One, is Jesus! Put the beauty of ten thousand thousand worlds of paradises, like the garden of Eden in one; put all trees, all flowers, all smells, all colours, all tastes, all joys, all sweetness, all loveliness, in one: oh, what a fair and excellent thing would that be! And yet it would be less to that fair and dearest Well-beloved, Christ, than one drop of rain to the whole seas, rivers, lakes, and fountains of ten thousand earths. Oh, but Christ is heaven's wonder, and earth's wonder! What marvel that His bride saith (Cant. v. 16), "He is altogether lovely!" Oh that black souls will not come and fetch all their love to this fair One! Oh, if I could invite and persuade thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand of Adam's sons, to flock about my Lord Jesus, and to come and take their fill of love! Oh, pity for evermore, that there should be such a one as Christ Jesus, so boundless, so bottomless, and so incomparable in infinite excellency and sweetness, and so few to take Him! Oh, oh, ye poor, dry, and dead souls, why will ye not come hither with your toom vessels, and your empty souls, to this huge, and fair, and deep, and sweet well of life, and fill all your toom vessels? Oh that Christ should be so large in sweetness and worth, and we so narrow, so pinched, so ebb, and so void of all happiness. And yet men will not take him! They lose their love miserably, who will not bestow it upon this lovely One. Alas! these five thousand years, Adam's fools, his waster (Prov. 18: 9) heirs, have been wasting and lavishing out their love and their affections upon black lovers, and black harlots, upon bits of dead creatures, and broken idols, upon this and that feckless creature; and have not brought their love and their heart to Jesus. Oh, pity, that Fairness hath so few lovers! Oh, wo, wo to the fools of this world, who run by Christ to other lovers! Oh, misery, misery, misery, that comeliness can scarce get three or four hearts in a town or country! Oh that there is so much spoken, and so much written, and so much thought of creature vanity; and so little spoken, so little written, and so little thought of my great, and incomprehensible, and never enough wondered at Lord Jesus! Why should I not curse this forlorn and wretched world, that suffereth my Lord Jesus to lie His lone? O damned souls! O miskenning world! O blind, O beggarly and poor souls! O bewitched fools! what aileth you at Christ, that you run so from Him? I dare not challenge providence, that there are so few buyers, and so little

sale for such an excellent one as Christ. (O the depth, and, O the height of my Lord's ways, that pass finding out!) But oh, if men would once be wise, and not fall so in love with their own hell as to pass by Christ, and misken Him! But let us come near, and fill ourselves with Christ, and let His friends drink, and be drunken, and satisfy our hollow and deep desires with Jesus. Oh, come all and drink at this living well; come, drink and live for evermore; come, drink and welcome! "Welcome," saith our fairest Bridegroom. No man getteth Christ with ill will; no man cometh and is not welcome. No man cometh and rueth his voyage; all men speak well of Christ who have been at Him: men and angels who know Him will say more than I dow do, and think more of Him than they can say. Oh, if I were misted and bewildered in my Lord's love! Oh, if I were fettered and chained to it! Oh, sweet pain, to be pained for a sight of Him! Oh, living death, oh, good death, oh, lovely death, to die for love of Jesus! Oh that I should have a sore heart, and a pained soul, for the want of this and that idol! Wo, wo to the mistakings of my miscarrying heart, that gapeth and crieth for creatures, and is not pained, and cut, and tortured, and in sorrow, for the want of a soul's-fill of the love of Christ! Oh that Thou wouldst come near, my Beloved! O my fairest One why standeth Thou afar! Come hither, that I may be satiated with Thy excellent love. Oh for a union! oh for a fellowship with Jesus! Oh that I could buy with a price that lovely One, even suppose that hell's torments for a while were the price! I cannot believe but Christ will rue upon His pained lovers, and come and ease sick hearts, who sigh and swoon for want of Christ. Who dow bide Christ's love to be nice? What heaven can be there liker to hell, than to lust, and green, and dwine, and fall a swoon for Christ's love, and to want it? Is not this hell and heaven woven through-other? Is not this pain and joy, sweetness and sadness, to be in one web, the one the weft, the other the warp? Therefore, I would that Christ would let us meet and join together, the soul and Christ in each other's arms. Oh what meeting is like this, to see blackness and beauty, contemptibleness and glory, highness and baseness, even a soul and Christ, kiss each other! Nay, but when all is done, I may be wearied in speaking and writing; but, oh, how far am I from the right expression of Christ or His love? I can neither speak nor write feeling, nor tasting, nor smelling: come feel, and smell, and taste Christ and His love, and ye shall call it more than can be spoken. To write how sweet the honeycomb is, is not so lovely as to eat and suck the honeycomb. One night's rest in a bed of love with Christ will say more than heart can think, or tongue can utter. Neither need we fear crosses, nor sigh nor be sad for anything that is on this side of heaven,

if we have Christ. Our crosses will never draw blood of the joy of the Holy Ghost, and peace of conscience. Our joy is laid up in such a high place, as temptations cannot climb up to take it down. This world may bost Christ, but they dare not strike; or, if they strike, they break their arm in fetching a stroke upon a rock. Oh that we could put our treasures in Christ's hand, and give him our gold to keep, and our crown. Strive, Mistress, to thring through the thorns of this life, to be at Christ. Tine not sight of Him in this cloudy and dark day. Sleep with Him in your heart in the night. Learn not at the world to serve Christ, but speer at Himself the way; the world is a false copy, and a lying guide to follow.

Remember my love to your husband. I wish all to him that I have written here. The sweet presence, the long-lasting good-will of our God, the warmly and lovely comforts of our Lord Jesus, be with you. Help me His prisoner in your prayers; for I remember you.

Yours in his sweet Lord Jesus,

Aberdeen, August 8, 1637.

S. R.

Murdo Cameron, Kishorn

Murdo Cameron, Kishorn, was well known in the West Highlands as a man of eminent standing among the Lord's people. He was very retired in his natural disposition. This accounts for the obscurity in which his memory has been shrouded hitherto in the public place given to other worthy men of God in the "Free Presbyterian Magazine". This year some fragments concerning him came to our hand, so we decided to put them on record in order that nothing should be lost to posterity through our negligence.

The writer met Murdo Cameron in his own house in Kishorn, in December of 1890. After a few general remarks in the house, he came to convoy the writer a part of the way. The subject, galling to the hearts of all the lovers of God's truth in the Free Church of Scotland at that time, was her flagrant departure from holding the infallibility and inerrancy of the whole Bible, and the boldness with which men in office in the Church tore the Confession of her faith in pieces, despite their own vows to God and men that they would assert, maintain, and defend it, and that they would follow no divisive course from it. It became evident to the writer that Murdo was exceedingly pained at heart on account of the scandalous conduct of these men, and the great dishonour done to the Lord by a Church which tolerated such infidelity and daring irreverence

to God's truth within her pale.

In the year 1893, Murdo Cameron was among the first to join the party who separated from the Free Church of the Declaratory Act in order to continue the existence of the Free Church of 1843 in her strict adherence to the Bible and the Westminster Confession of Faith. He was present at the first Communion services held by the Free Presbyterian Church at Inverness. A godly woman, Mrs Mackenzie, Douglas Row, in that town, asked him — "What is your opinion concerning this stand that has been made in vindication of God's truth?" He answered that he believed the witness raised in vindication of God's truth would not die out in Scotland till the glory of the latter days would come. When Mrs Mackenzie told the above to the writer, she quoted a text of truth which he mentioned as the ground he had for what he said; but the writer regrets that he cannot remember the passage. He told her also that great trials would meet this small Church, and that these trials would begin in Inverness. This part of what he said has so far become a fact. The other part of it, if men will be faithful to God's truth, will also be accomplished. The which may the Lord grant.

The following covenants, written and signed by him, were sent us:—
"Kishorn, June 4, 1869, I am here this day, O Lord, to go about a great work, which I am not capable of. Therefore, I desire Thy assistance. That which I have to do is to enter into an engagement with Thee, and I desire, Lord, that Thou wouldest consent to the bargain. Say not to me, What hast thou to do to take my covenant into thy mouth; but though Thou shouldest say the same to me, Thou art righteous. Yet I will plead upon Thine own Word: "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give your rest." O Lord, I am this day to subscribe with my hand that I am the Lord's, as I promised in Gairloch on the Communion Sabbath, June 4, 1869, in the wood of Shildaig there, where I did beseech the Lord not to approach me in anger at His table that day. I gave up myself to be wholly at His disposal soul and body and all my cares for time and eternity; but all is to be done in the strength of Thine own grace. I deny all strength of mine own to do anything that is good; daily experience has taught me the truthfulness of this." When the Rev Duncan Matheson was fencing the Lord's Table, he said — "Come and fulfil your vow, you vowed this morning in Gairloch, to the Lord at His table." This does not mean that I did not know the Lord to be gracious before this time, and in witness hereof I do subscribe with my hand the 27th day of June 1869 — Murdo Cameron.

"Another year, going to Gairloch, I left Alikin early in the mornin

on the Communion Thursday, and held worship in the hills, and entered anew into covenant with the Lord to be His by the assistance of His grace, and prayed that He would consent to this covenant engagement. The Rev Mr Matheson began the Communion Services that day by reading Isaiah, 44th chapter, and preached from the first five verses, and spoke specially on making a covenant with the Lord. He said — “And you who did this today in the hills coming here, I call you to the Lord’s Table on the coming Sabbath, and keep it in possession till the day of your death.”

At another time, at the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper at Dingwall, I promised that, if the Lord would reveal Himself to my soul at that sacrament there, I would be His by the assistance of His own grace, whatever He would call me to suffer for His name and cause. The Lord did reveal Himself to me there, to the praise of His grace be it recorded. To this I subscribe with my hand, the 21st day of April 1877. — Murdo Cameron, Kishorn.”

The following statement found among the papers sent me was made by Murdo Cameron’s daughter:— “1st April 1882 — I do this day give myself up to the Lord with all my heart, by the help of his grace, soul and body for time and eternity. I take Christ to be my portion for ever to be for Him and Him alone. If I live, may I live to the Lord, and if I die, may I die in the Lord — (Signed) Barbara Cameron.”

May the Lord grant that these secret engagements between the Lord and living souls, longing souls, breathing after His fellowship, and an assurance of their interest in Him which are now brought to light, be blessed to others struggling on their way to Mount Zion above.

Murdo Cameron departed this life in June 1897. So far as the writer could ascertain, he was over 80 years when he passed away to his everlasting rest. “I said thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living.” — N.C.

Book Reviews

PSALM 119: VOL. 1 by Thomas Manton — hardback. Publishers: Banner of Truth Trust. Cost of set — £25.

Thomas Manton (1620-77) was one of the most outstanding of Puritan preachers of his day. Psalm 119 was the subject preached on to his congregation in sermons three times a week. This volume covers 67 sermons, from verse 1-60 of Psalm 119. He opens up the sweetness of divine truths as experienced in the soul exercises of David, the sweet Psalmist. In some

measure, all true believers find their own experience in Psalm 119. Thomas Manton knew Psalm 119 experimentally, and felt its sanctifying effect. It was his desire that his sermons would enlighten the understanding, win the affections, and lead to practical holiness. A contemporary of Manton said he had never heard him preach a 'mediocre sermon'. Careful reading of this work, with the blessing of the Holy Spirit, will prove a valuable exercise.

A. McK.

THE JOURNALS OF A. N. BROWN paperback 76 pages. Publishers: The Elms Trust, Tauranga, N.Z. Cost: N.Z. dollars 7.50.

A COMMUNION SERMON by A. N. Brown — N.Z. dollars 1.

Rev. Alfred Nesbit Brown was a missionary under the auspices of the Church Missionary Society (C. of E.) at Paihia, N.Z., from 1829; Matamata from 1835, and finally Tauranga from 1838 till his death in 1884. His journals were preserved in his family. This commemorative, unedited edition covering the years 1840-1842, were hitherto unpublished, as is the case with the communion sermon. It could be said of Rev. A. N. Brown: 'a workman that needeth not to be ashamed', II Tim 2: 15. He laboured 'in season, out of season' amidst opposition from Roman Catholic priests, setting up their missions. His well-informed instruction of the natives showed his high estimation for admission to the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper. His labours were favoured of the Lord.

In his communion sermon he laments the inroads of Romanism in the C. of E. at that time, exposing the errors. He gives the Scriptural meaning of the Lord's supper. His journal is of historical interest. Rev. A. N. Brown witnessed the sad effects of murderous feuds between chiefs, which threatened to hinder his missionary labours. Satan's plans were not allowed to stop the spread of the gospel.

These publications are a witness against the ecumenism of our day.

A. McK.

D. MARTYN LLOYD-JONES Vol. II by Ian H. Murray, Banner of Truth Trust, 809pp, £15.95.

This second volume of the biography of Dr. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, who had so influential a ministry in London from 1939-68, is sub-titled, *The Fight of Faith*, and records the different aspects of his work from the beginning of the Second World War, when he was inducted into Westminster Chapel, down to his lamented death in 1981. This volume, like the first, is up to the high standard we have come to expect from the

pen of Rev. Iain Murray. It contains a thorough documentation, not only of the Doctor's own life but also of the movements which were afoot in the Churches and religious organisations in England during that period. In some of these Dr. Lloyd-Jones played a conspicuous part. He was very alive to the drift away from the Word of God in the main Churches in the land, and the drift of the people away from those Churches, and recognised the connection between the two. From the outset of his ministry in London he spurned all gimmicks and sought to proclaim a full orb'd Gospel to those who attended his ministry. By all accounts it proved to be an influential and fruitful ministry which he exercised through the blessing of God. It would appear that he had many souls for his hire. He attempted to unite together, not necessarily in one denomination, those who adhered to the fundamentals of the faith but was disappointed in this. It particularly saddened him to see evangelicals in the Church of England, not only remaining in that heterogeneous body, but even attempting to come to some accommodation with those who had abandoned the essentials of the faith. He lived at a time when the ecumenical movement was at its height and making headway in most of the Churches. Against that movement he fought with all his might. His adherence to the Independent form of Church government is well known with all the limitations implied in that form of Church government. One aspect of this is the difficulty in obtaining the continuity of a sound gospel ministry as happened in Dr Lloyd-Jones' case, his ministry being succeeded by a ministry different from his own. Dr. Lloyd-Jones' view on Romans 7 has also been commented on as out of line with the usual orthodox view.

Since his death there has been much controversy over Dr. Lloyd-Jones' attitude to Pentecostalism and especially the second blessing. Mr Murray goes in very fully to these matters and shows what Dr. Lloyd-Jones' position actually was, so that anyone interested in it may by reading the book find it out for themselves. Yet Dr. Lloyd-Jones was among those who longed for and pleaded for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Churches of the land.

In a day of abounding iniquity and of gross backsliding in the nation, Dr. Lloyd-Jones endeavoured to proclaim the fundamentals of the faith of the Gospel to his fellow-sinners and warned of the dangers confronting a people who were turning away from the only gospel that could save their souls. While not without his faults, he was a humble and gracious servant of the Master whom he served.

D.B.M.

DISCOURSES AND SAYINGS OF OUR LORD Volume 2, by John

Brown, Banner of Truth Trust.

This volume by the minister of Broughton Place, Edinburgh from 1829 to 1858 was first republished by the Banner of Truth Trust in 1976. Now bound, even more attractively than previously, and less heavy to handle, it still contains the same solid exposition of the Word of God. It is the middle volume of a trilogy on the subject-title. What emerges from a further perusal of it, is, the abiding value and profit to be derived from expository preaching. It is, to some extent both devotional and experiential, but the emphasis throughout lies in the accurate and painstaking exposition of the Word. It is evident, that the author was acutely aware of the difficulties and dangers to which the best of expositors are exposed. The contents are weighty, edifying, helpful and thought-provoking, and are most obviously the product of much prayer and study. There is evidence too of the pastoral love and experience by which these discourses are coloured and enriched. The author has girded himself for this labour of love, with supreme reverence for the Word of God, in the best orthodox tradition. Traces of the disciplines required for the production of such a worthy contribution to our Christian literature are not difficult to find. When Brown disagrees with the mainstream interpretation of any passage, he does so with characteristic modesty and conviction, furnishing the reader with valid reasons for the adoption of his own point of view. He is rightly convinced that Scripture is best interpreted by Scripture. As far as we can judge, this book is in no way tainted by Higher Critical theories, which were soon to vitiate so many works of this kind. The literary style, while fitting the loftiness of the themes explained and expounded, will not overtax the powers of the average reader. The sometimes distracting appendage of excessive foot-notes (frequently in a foreign tongue) is kept well under control. The price for the three volume set is £25. Surely excellent value for money.

F.M.

Notes and Comments

Sabbath Trading

While the Bill introduced by John Marshall, Conservative M.P. for Hendon South under the 10-minute rule in an attempt to lift Sabbath Trading restrictions has failed by being rejected decisively by M.P.'s, yet the Home Office is engaged in discussions with various groups, including Church representatives to try to get general agreement on the reform of the Sab-

bath laws. It is said that the Prime Minister favours reform of the Sabbath trading laws. The Home Office minister, Mrs Angela Rumbold, has emphasised that no proposal to change the law will be made until general agreement has been reached. The aim is no doubt to relax the laws as they presently stand, but the proper course is to make them more strict and make them applicable to Scotland as well as to England and Wales.

Discussions in Northern Ireland

Mr Peter Brooke, the Secretary for Northern Ireland, has succeeded in getting the various parties in Northern Ireland to agree to sit round the Conference Table. It is difficult to see what real progress can be made in such talks when the British Government continues to insist on the Dublin Government having a role to play in arriving at any settlement. It is strange to insist on this when the Eire Government's long antipathy to Britain and anything British, and its claim to Northern Ireland, makes it an enemy of Protestant Northern Ireland and not a friend. The violence which has been continued so long by the I.R.A., and which has stirred up a similar response from certain sections in Northern Ireland, is still continuing unabated. We are convinced that the murderous campaign of the I.R.A. could not be sustained without the support of the Roman Catholic community and of the Roman Catholic Church. The whole campaign against Northern Ireland has been nurtured by the Roman Catholic educational system which produces young people filled with an inveterate hatred to Protestantism and to Protestant institutions. What is needed in Ireland, North and South, is the outpouring of the Spirit of God in a true revival of genuine religion. Under such an influence Romanism would wither and die and true Christianity would take its place in which North and South could live in harmony as one nation. Until that time comes we are not hopeful of seeing any great change in the Irish situation. Nevertheless we would wish Mr Peter Brooke well in his attempt to defuse the situation there, so long as it will not mean sacrificing the principles for which the Protestant people of Northern Ireland have stood for so long and suffered so much in defending them.

Christian Education

The Education Secretary, Mr Kenneth Clarke, has insisted, in a letter circulated to education authorities, that schools should devote more attention to Christianity in religious education. The letter warns that a syllabus must devote a "reasonable amount of attention to teaching based on Christian traditions," according to a Press report. It rules out the

kind of syllabus which does not mention God, the Bible or Jesus Christ. So far, so good, but we fear that the kind of Christianity taught will be of a very watered down kind. The low state of religion in the land is one cause of the lamentable situation regarding the teaching of Christianity in schools. The other cause is the influx of people into the land and into our schools from other countries whose religion is opposed to Christianity, such as Muslims, Hindus etc. The Government is being pressed to concede state funding for Islamic schools. What trouble a backsliding land has brought upon itself!

Commonwealth Service at Westminster Abbey

The Queen and the Prince of Wales attended the annual observance of faith on Commonwealth Day. At the 'service' a rabbi, a Muslim, a Hindu, a Buddhist and a Sikh read from their respective scriptures. The Queen's attendance at this 'service' was contrary to her Protestant vows. This hotch-potch of false religion is dishonouring to the claims of Christ, who is the alone Saviour of sinners. The attendance of the Queen and Prince of Wales at it is to be deplored. Christianity is not one of many religions which men are free to adopt at their pleasure. Christianity is the one true religion.

Further Moral Decline

The use of AID or artificial insemination for married couples has been opposed by our Church on moral grounds. This practice has been taken a step further in recent times in being made available to single women who are virgins. To what lengths the sin-darkened minds of men will go in moral depravity and then seek to justify such conduct on social or other grounds. What a sad reflection on a nation once Christian that it is now doing its best to cast aside all the Scriptural requirements for the bringing of children into the world. How more and more we are becoming conformed to the attitudes and practices of Sodom and Gomorrah. The voice of the God of heaven is clear enough in all this — "Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?"

Mission News

Miss Marion Graham's furlough is drawing to a close and she expects to leave for Zimbabwe early in May. Miss Katie Macaulay will then be making preparations for coming home. Mr and Mrs Neil Murray are still with us and he is kept busy with services in Edinburgh and, at times, in

Shieldaig and Applecross.

Our people in Zimbabwe are still mourning the death of the Rev. B. B. Dube. Just twelve years ago the Rev. A. B. Ndebele travelled from Ingwenya to Zenka, a distance of eighty miles, despite the very real hazards of terrorist activity, to organise the Call to their new minister, the Rev. B. B. Dube. There was great rejoicing throughout the Mission. The three old elders, Elisha Mkandhla, Philemon Ndebele and Magaya Ncube, now gone to their rest, were especially happy. Elisha Mkandhla who was well over ninety years of age, passed away on his journey home after the Induction at Ingwenya, where he was noticeably in a very happy frame of mind.

Now on the 17th of March of this year the Rev. A. B. Ndebele went on his sad errand to declare the Charge vacant. To our eyes the work at the Mission has been greatly weakened by the loss of two ministers and three worthy elders in recent years. But as the Rev. A. B. Ndebele writes, "The Lord knows it all. Our whole lives and the life of the Church are under His control. He slumbers not nor sleeps. He can fulfil his purposes with one preacher as well as with ten."

The Rev. P. Mzamo has been made Interim Moderator for Zenka, thus adding to his burden of work.

At Mbuma Dr. Hak writes that she and the Sisters are continuing the Bible Classes for little primary children at Mbuma. "We have now begun classes at three other places — Singangombe, Gampagalala, and Simbo. There are many children attending at each place which is very encouraging. Once the classes are established we can move to other places, such as Lukampa, Bubu and Magazi. We now have one AIDS patient after another. We would like to do something more for them, such as having a special Care Unit to make their lives a little more comfortable, and to prepare them for death. It is very sad." J.N.

Church Notes

Meeting of Synod

The Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland will meet, the Lord willing in the Free Presbyterian Church, Inverness on Tuesday, May 21, 1991 when the Retiring Moderator, Rev. D. J. MacDonald M.A., Uig, Lewis, will conduct public worship.

Meetings of Presbyteries (D.V.)

Canadian: At Inverness on 19th May at 4 p.m.

Zimbabwe: At Bulawayo on 11th June at 2 p.m.

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

Skye: At Portree on 18th June at 11 a.m.

Northern: At Dingwall on 25th June at 2 p.m.

Australia and New Zealand: At Gisborne on 25th October at 2.30 p.m.

Scourie Communion

The Kirk Session decided that there would be no Communion in Scourie on the second Sabbath of May this year.

Acknowledgment of Donations

The General Treasurer acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:—
Eastern Europe: Edinburgh £20; Daviot-Stratherrick-Tomatin £140; J.R., London £100; R.R. & M.B., Aberdeen £15.

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

Barnoldswick: Anon., £20 (St. Jude's collection plate); Friend, Liverpool £50; Anon., £10 for Barnoldswick Manse Fund.

Dingwall: Mrs M., Strathpeffer £25; Mr & Mrs D. MacL., Strathpeffer £5; Friend £10, all per Rev. D. B. M. and all for Church Funds.

Gairloch: Anon., two donations £100 each, Inverness postmark, per Rev. A. MacDonald.

Greenock: Friend, Lochcarron £10; Friend, Glasgow £10, both per Rev. L. M.; J. C., Glasgow, £20 for Congr. Funds, per J. McD.

Inverness: Anon., £25 for Ingwenya Blind Children's Fund; Anon., £20 for upkeep of Church Minibuses, both per envelopes in plate; Ballifeary Home of Rest Coll. Box for T.B.S. £14.14.

Kinlochbervie: K. A. MacD., Vancouver \$140; K. A. MacD., Vancouver £100, both per R. Ross; Anon., £30 (in plate).

Laide: Friend, Glasgow £70; Glasgow P.M., per Rev. N.M.R. for work in Eastern Bloc; Anon., Skye £50; Anon., Stornoway postmark £100; Anon., Stornoway postmark £30, all for Bibles for Russia; Friends, Wick £10; J. M. £10, both for Church Door Coll; Anon., Skye £50 as needed for Romania; Friend, Aultbea postmark £20 for Church Funds; R. & J. M. M. £20 for Romania or Eastern Europe; Friend, Aultbea postmark £20 for Church Funds, all per Rev. D. A. R.; J. M. £10 for Sust. Fund per C. Ross.

Lochbroom: Legacy from late Mrs Isobel MacDonald, Strathkaniard, £605.

North Harris: Friend, Stockinish £10; Friend, Stockinish £10, both per Rev. K. D. MacL., both for door coll.; Anon., Tarbert £10 for Hearing Aid (envelope in plate); K.M., Harris House £6; Friend, Stockinish £10, £10, £2, £5, all for Door Coll.

Portree: Wellwisher £100 "where most needed"; Anon., Braes £20 for Church Bus.; Anon., £10 for Door Coll.; Anon., £4; Anon., £5 both for Church Bus.; Anon., £100, a small token for Communion Expenses; Anon., £10 for Door Coll.; all by envelope in plate; Tolsta Friend £20 for Congr. Purposes per F.M.

Sheildaig: Mrs M. MacP. £100 for Sust. Fund.

South Harris: Friend of the Cause, Kintilavig, £200 per D. MacKenzie; Anon., South Harris £10; Anon., £5; Friend of the Cause, Stockinish £20, last three per Rev. K. MacL., Friend of the Cause, Leachlee £20 (in plate), all for Congr. Fund.

Stornoway: Anon., £150 for Bibles for Eastern Europe; Anon., £30 for African Mission; Anon., £10, where most needed, all in church plate; Miss K. A. MacLeod, The Cottage, Callanish £10 for Sust. Fund; Friend £10 for door coll, all per Rev. J. MacLeod.