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Thou hast given a Banner

The Psalmist speaks of a banner which the Lord has given to His people. It is a banner that is to be displayed because of the truth. It is to be held aloft by the Church of God and the Lord's people are to rally round it. It is the gospel banner setting forth the glory of the Divine Redeemer and it is founded upon the Word of God.

It is to those who fear Him that the Lord has given this banner, a people who in the mercy of God have been delivered from the bondage of sin and Satan and have become living followers of the Saviour. The Lord will have such a people in the world as long as sun and moon endures. At times they may be so few and be in such a low condition that it appears as though the banner of the Lord has fallen and that His enemies are triumphing. But the triumphing of the wicked is short and the Lord raises again that fallen standard. This has happened again and again throughout the history of the Church of God. Noah raised the banner on the side of truth after the flood when he re-established the worship of God in offering sacrifice to God. So did the judges whom God raised up to bring the children of Israel back to God. So did Elijah when on Mount Carmel he faced the prophets of Baal. So did Hezekiah and Josiah and other reforming kings of Judah. At the Reformation in the 16th Century the Reformers raised aloft once more that banner so that men might be delivered from the thralldom of Romanism. These things were the doing of the Lord and to Him is all the glory due.

Seeing that we have entered a year in which the centenary of our Church is due to be commemorated, we are reminded of the Lord's goodness to us as a people. The Lord has preserved among us the witness on the side of truth which was raised in 1893 when Rev Donald MacFarlane protested against the Declaratory Act and left the Disruption Free Church. It was

to maintain inviolate the constitution of that once noble Free Church that Mr MacFarlane took the action that he did. His aim was that generations following should receive a full-orbed testimony to the truth of God's Word. When the banner was ready to fall through the declension of the Disruption Free Church, Mr MacFarlane took hold of it and raised it aloft for his own and succeeding generations to see. He followed in the line of Knox, Melville, Henderson, Gillespie, Rutherford, Welsh, Blackader and other Covenanting Worthies, and the Disruption Fathers. It is a line of notable worthies whom the Lord raised up at different times to hold aloft His banner.

To us as a people is bequeathed a priceless inheritance. This ought to humble us in the dust before the Lord. It ought to make us realise also what a responsibility lies upon us to maintain that banner given to us, and to hand it on to the generations following as we have received it. If we weaken our hold of it in any way, or if we deviate from it to the right hand or the left, we will have failed in our duty and have rendered a disservice to the rising generation. A mere intellectual attachment to the testimony for truth embodied in our constitution will avail nothing unless we are bound by spiritual ties to the One whose testimony we bear. In view of this, what need there is in the hundredth year of our history as a Church to look anew to the Lord who wrought such great things for us in the past and who is able to do great things for us in the days that are to come.

New Year's Day Lecture

Delivered in St Jude's, Glasgow, by Rev Neil Cameron.

"Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion" (Micah 4: 11).

- I. Let us consider a few things concerning Zion, in the first place;
- II. Let us consider those who were gathered against her; and
- III. Let us consider their intention.

1. A few things concerning Zion, and (1) When God set up His visible Church (afterwards called Zion) in the wilderness of Sinai, every thing concerning her mode of worship, her office-bearers and their respective duties and her government and discipline, were all declared to Moses by the mouth of the Lord. As regards the Tabernacle, with all its furniture, the Lord gave the plan and specification of it, to the minutest detail, to Moses in Mount Sinai. Moses caused all things within and without the tabernacle to be made exactly as God ordered him to do. After all things were finished by the workmen, Moses examined every thing so as to make

sure that nothing was done except what God ordered, and that nothing had been left undone of the things which God commanded to be done. He found that everything had been made in strict accordance with the pattern showed him in the Mount: "And Moses did look upon all the work, and behold, they had done it as the Lord commanded, even so they had done; and Moses blessed them." The commands and instructions the Lord gave Moses concerning the setting up of his Church among the children of Israel are fully recorded in the Book of Exodus, beginning at Chapter 25 and ending at Chapter 39. The Lord gave Moses a very good character as a servant, for He said concerning Him — "My servant Moses . . . who is faithful in all mine house."

When, even, a man purposes to build a house, the first thing he will do is to get a plan of the house, which will be in accordance with the idea he has in his mind, and then he will submit the plan with specifications of how it is to be finished to the person who engages to do the work. Should he find when the house is finished that the workman threw the plan away and that he did act in everything according to his own ideas, would he accept of the house so built? or would he give the workman the like character as God gave Moses? I don't think any man would; far less will God accept houses built in His name — like the temple built on Mount Gerizim and the idolatrous and evil worship set up therein.

(2) In the New Testament we have the intimation made which God promised repeatedly in the Old Testament. All the typical forms of worship set up under the ceremonial law at Sinai have been superseded by "the good things that were to come," and have passed away never to return again. But this does not mean that Zion, or the Church of God, is left without a pattern now as to how it should be built, not among the Jews only, but in the world at large. The plan is so clearly and definitely recorded in the New Testament that should any intelligent man take it in his hand, he could point out every thing in the Churches which is not consistent with it.

The statement made by our Lord Christ to the woman of Samaria — "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem, worship the Father But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth" — lies at the foundation of the change which was then being effected by the removal of the things that could be shaken so that the things which could not be shaken might remain, and come clearly into view. These things were the form of the spiritual worship of the New Testament, divested of the scaffolding of the typical rites under the Ceremonial Law, and also the truth that lay hid, except to the eye of faith, under these

types. All these were being fulfilled by the Lord Christ, who was the substance of them all, and their true meaning was shortly to be unveiled by the one offering of Christ on Calvary's cross.

First, the temple was removed in which the only altar was on which the priest was to offer sacrifices for the sins of the people. For it is written — "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood. He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." By the once offering up of Christ of Himself through the Eternal Spirit, the typical temple, the sacrificing priesthood, and all sacrifices for sin were abolished, being then fulfilled and of no further use. Secondly, the Gospel was now to be preached, in which Christ and Him crucified was to be set forth clearly as God's only remedy for perishing, guilty men among all nations. The doctrines of the Gospel are evidently revealed in the Word of God. The office-bearers of the New Testament Church are definitely stated. These are elders and deacons. Beside these two offices, there are none mentioned. Elders are designated bishops; but nothing can be clearer than that the two names — elder and bishop — are applied to the same person. The duties of this office are, on the part of the teaching elder (minister) to preach the Gospel, and to rule, along with ruling elders, over the Church in spiritual matters. The duties of the deacons are connected with the pecuniary affairs of the Church, such as the distribution of the people's contributions to the poor, and the provision made for supporting the ministry, etc. These two officers were represented in the Old Testament Church by the priests and Levites, but with this difference, that whereas God chose the priests and Levites, elders and deacons are to be elected by the voice, or votes, of the members of the New Testament Church. The Papist and Episcopal Churches have no Scriptural warrant for their hierarchy.

The mode of worship in the New Testament is clearly set forth. The Word of God is to be read and preached in the language of the people — not in an unknown tongue. All its doctrines are to be asserted, maintained, and defended, viz, the doctrine of the infallibility and absolute inerrancy of the whole Bible — the doctrine of man's fall and of all his posterity with and in him — the doctrine of eternal punishment as the wages of sin — the doctrine of man's total inability to earn the favour of God and eternal life by any efforts he may put forth to obey the law of God — the doctrine of the obedience and death of the Son of God,

Jesus Christ, as the only Mediator and Saviour of guilty and lost men, and of His ability to save to the uttermost them that come to God by Him — the doctrine of the work of the Holy Spirit in the effectual calling of men by the Gospel to repentance, faith, love etc — the doctrine of the perseverance of God's elect in faith and holiness unto the end. This is an imperfect summary of the doctrines to be held and publicly declared by the Church now under the New Testament. Public and private prayer is much enjoined. In the family, prayers are to be put up daily. In public worship prayer is to be made for all men, but especially for the Lord's people and cause in the world. Praise, which is greatly commended, is to be the fruit of the lips, and not to be offered under the New Testament by musical instruments of any description whatsoever.

Strict discipline is commanded. Pertinacious heretics — that is, such as hold or teach views contrary to God's Word on any point of the Church's avowed creed, and who persist in the same — are to be separated from the Church. Again, such as live immorally and bring the cause of Christ under slander and contempt in the sight of His enemies, are likewise to be separated.

The godly and upright men who formulated the creed and practice of the Church of Scotland at the Reformation founded every statement of her constitution upon the pattern they saw in the New Testament. So careful were they as to this, that each member of the Westminster Assembly of Divines had to give his oath that he would not do or say anything contrary to God's Word. The result was that, so far as it was possible for fallible men, the Church of the Reformation in Scotland was built entirely in strict accordance with the Church set up by the apostles. It was solidly laid upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being its chief corner-stone. Thus was Sion set up in Scotland as sure as it ever was either at Sinai or at Jerusalem. The result of this great care on the part of these upright men is set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the other subordinate standards relative thereto.

II. Let us consider those who were gathered against her. And (1) Those who opposed Zion, or the true Church of God, under the Old Testament dispensation.

When the children of Israel came to take possession of the land of Canaan, they were commanded to destroy the Amorites etc, who inhabited it. They did not fulfil this command, as we have it written — "And the angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swore unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you,

and ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars; but ye have not obeyed my voice: Why have ye done this? Wherefore, I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you. And it came to pass . . . that the people lifted up their voice and wept" (Judges 2: 1-4). They had good cause for weeping, as their after history reveals.

In the days of Isaiah the Church is described by him as a besieged city. This siege is set forth in the 83rd Psalm — "They said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance. For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against thee: the tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites; Moab and the Hagarenes; Gebal and Ammon, and Amalek; the Philistines with the inhabitants of Tyre; Assur also is joined with them; they have holpen the children of Lot." Surely this is an extraordinary confederacy against the Church, which justifies fully the description of a besieged city. They were all idolaters, and they considered that Jehovah, the God of Israel, was not better than their own idols, and that His worship was not at all so good as the worship of their gods. But the animosity shown against the Church of God has a power behind it in every age — even the power of the god of this world (Satan), but He that is in the Church is stronger than he that is in the world.

(2) Those who oppose Sion in New Testament times, are legion. First, the nations that imbibed the pernicious idolatry of the Church of Rome. Religiously, they are to the true Christian Church what the surrounding idolatrous nations were to the Old Testament Church. Besides, these nations — such as France, Italy, Spain, Ireland etc, there are hosts of others. Germany, with her Rationalism; Russia with her nefarious Communism, thirsting for the blood of their neighbours, and the extirpation of all true religion; Ritualists in England and Scotland, bent upon bringing the Churches of the Reformation in Britain back to the slavery and idolatry of Rome. Along with all these are to be considered the carnal professors of religion within the Churches, who have a form of godliness while denying its power. The world with its lusts — the lusts of the flesh and of the eyes, and the pride of life. Surely the true Church of the living God is like a besieged city in the midst of them all. But seeing that time demands brevity, let us proceed to consider, in the last place —

III. Their intention, and (1) Their real aim and intention was, "Let her be defiled." This was their intention in Old Testament times. Her creed, mode of worship, and her discipline were far too holy and narrow and

strict for the surrounding nations, so they used all their influence and powers to make up a confederacy by which the worship of idols and the worship of Jehovah, Israel's God, should be blended together. By the unfaithfulness and unsteadfastness of leading men in Church and State, encouraged by false prophets, they did defile her to their own ruin and misery. The culmination of this process was reached that day, on the plain of Dura in Babylon, on which the three young, noble, Christian men refused unflinchingly to bow their knees to Nebuchadnezzar's golden image, and faced the fiery furnace in performances of their duty to God and His Church. Two things followed the persecution of Jehovah's faithful witnesses that day — (1) The decree of Nebuchadnezzar — "That every people, nation and language which speak anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill; because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort." So we find the Jews, after their return from the captivity, refusing to co-operate with the people of Canaan in the rebuilding of the temple, because of the idolatry they had mixed with their worship of Jehovah. This hatred to and fear of idolatry continued among the Jews till the time of our Lord's appearance on earth; and has done so ever since. But other dangerous efforts were made by Satan. And (2) men arose within the Jewish Church who defiled her. The Sadducees taught that there were no spirits — neither angels, nor the souls of men — and that there would be no resurrection. The Old Testament was disbelieved by them wherever anything in it was contrary to their rationalistic tenets. Annas, Caiaphas, and all the priests in the days of our Lord's humiliation were of this heretical class. Our Lord charged them with being ignorant of the Scriptures and of the power of God; and therefore of erring greatly.

The Pharisees were another party in the Church then. Our Lord denounced them as hypocrites. He exposed their pride, self-seeking, their pernicious abrogating of the law of God by their traditions, their zeal in their efforts to bring the people to hold their damnable views and practices, and their turning the temple — the house of prayer to all people — into a house of merchandise, or into a den of thieves. Thus, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel was defiled, more by men holding the highest offices within her pale than by her enemies from without.

Their real intention was, "Let our eye look upon Zion," or as these words may be translated — Let us see our desire upon Zion. Their desire was to change her mode of worship, and her faith to conformity with the creed of the natural man. Regeneration, or a being born again, was so far out of sight that when our Lord taught Nicodemus the absolute

necessity of it in order to see or enter into the Kingdom of God, he was amazed. This man was one of the Pharisees, and a teacher of the people. By the doctrines of these men, who desired to make great progress in bringing into the Church the new light which they held, they landed her in darkness. Christ said of it — “If the light that is in you be darkness, how great is that darkness!” These men saw their desire upon Zion to her utter ruin, and the everlasting ruin of millions of the poor Jews.

(2) In the second place, let us apply this part of our text to the New Testament Church, or Sion. How the Church was defiled in the sub-apostolic age, and how that defilement matured in the Antichrist or Papacy is a matter of common history. All her doctrines, form of worship, form of government, and her foundation — Christ — was transferred to the Pope. The name of Christ and Christianity was retained in order to deceive the nations, but the whole form of doctrine and worship became heathenish idolatry. Almost all this defilement was brought about from within the Church. Pride and self-seeking on the part of unconverted men wrought all the mischief. Whole heathen nations were received into the Church, and their idolatry along with them; only the names of heathen idols were changed by giving them Christian names. Thus the Church was defiled, and Satan and wicked men saw their desire upon Sion. This awful apostacy became so prevalent and had got so entrenched in the whole of Christendom, that such as would not accept of this great harlot as the true Church of Christ were persecuted to the most cruel deaths that Satan and Antichrist could invent. This terrible state of affairs continued for about one thousand years, till the Reformation of the sixteenth century. These thousand years are known in history as “The Dark Ages” and dark they were truly!

At the Reformation men began to look into the Word of God, and they saw that the Pope was Antichrist, and that his claims to be the Vicar of Christ were absolutely false. So the true Church became visible out of the mist of darkness which concealed her during the Dark Ages. But as time and space will not allow us to enter more fully into her future, with the exception of Scotland, we will confine our search into the way men endeavoured to defile her in our beloved land.

When John Knox was greatly honoured by God in removing all the idolatry, superstition, and hierarchy of the Papacy out of the Protestant Church of Scotland, and set up that Church upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Italy, France, Spain, Ireland, and a strong party in Scotland and England did all in their power to defile her, with the intention of seeing their desire upon Sion; but all their efforts failed. No intrigue or diabolical conspiracy that could be invented in secret was left

untried. But the Lord was building Sion, and consequently no weapon formed against her prospered. But the faithful servants of Christ had to pass through great sufferings before the Protestant Church of Scotland was established as the Church of Scotland.

At the time of the Second Reformation, when the Church of Scotland, at the General Assembly in Glasgow in 1638, did cast off the incubus of prelacy which had been surreptitiously introduced into her ministry and mode of worship, she appeared again in her glory. The Westminster Assembly of Divines followed four years after that. The results of their labours during five years were our Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms, the Form of Church Government, and the Form of Worship which formed the Subordinate Standards of the Church of Scotland. All these were passed by the Parliament of Scotland as the recognised standards of the Church, and declared to be in perfect agreement with the Word of God. Carnal and unconverted men in high positions felt that the discipline and doctrine of the Church were far too strict and pure for their licentious mode of life, and they put their heads together with the intention of defiling her by making her lax in doctrine and worship. Another bold effort was made to change her ministry and form of worship, but she for a short space of time held her integrity. Under that profligate man, King Charles II, her ministry acted traitorously, so that the few who said, "She shall not be defiled and your eyes shall not see your desire upon Sion should it cost us our all and even our lives," took to the caves and dens in the mountains of Scotland, and were persecuted, hanged, slain with the sword; they were in cold, hunger, nakedness, and poverty during twenty-eight years. At last the Lord appeared for them, and He hurled off the British Throne the family of the Stuarts, and brought into infamy the sycophants who, for court favour, betrayed God's Church and their countrymen. There is hardly any of their posterity in Scotland today. We are exceedingly indebted to these godly and faithful and true men and women who suffered the most horrible deaths to save the Church from being defiled; for had they not done so we would not have enjoyed our spiritual and temporal liberty; but, on the contrary, we would be under the temporal and spiritual degradation of the papacy. Let no slanderer of those noble men and women cause you to blush or to be ashamed of them.

Let us now consider the efforts put forth in the Free Church of Scotland to defile her, so that her enemies might see their desire on her. The Free Church in 1843 held exactly the position taken by the Church of Scotland at the Second Reformation. Men in office, within her pale, introduced

uninspired hymns into her worship, thereby ousting the Psalms of David from the place given them by God's Word and by the Confession of Faith. The argument made use of by these men was that by allowing these few hymns they would be a barrier against instrumental music. The late Dr Kennedy, of Dingwall, warned the Assembly against such subtle pretences, and told them that, within twelve years, the men who asked the Assembly to allow hymns to be used in the public worship of the Church that day would come there to plead for the introduction of instrumental music. This was actually fulfilled. The Assembly of the Free Church thus defiled the Church, and allowed men to see their desire upon her pure and Scriptural mode of worship.

The next step on the down grade in the Free Church was that in the name of superior learning, doubts were cast upon the infallibility and absolute inerrancy of the Scriptures of the Old Testament. During the controversy over this most vital doctrine, it became manifest that there were an alarming number of the ministers and elders in the Assembly quite prepared to grant the conclusion against the Bible brought forward by one of her professors, Professor Robertson Smith. The Professor was allowed to resign his place after several years of debate; but his views, which he got in that asylum of our woes, Germany, had taken deep root in the Church. This was the first nail struck into the coffin of the Free Church. It has caused that the Bible is a discredited Book in the minds of both the ministry and people of our poor country. Surely this was a case of "Let her be defiled and let our eye see our desire upon Zion." The Lord's true people mourned and wept in secret before the Lord on account of this infidelity and daring blasphemy, and their determination was that they would have to separate from such ungodly men. These men began to move for union with a Church which did not hold either the doctrines or principles of the Free Church. This movement was stopped at that time, but the purpose to have it consummated was not given up. Immediately a crusade was set on foot to have the Church of Scotland disestablished. This also was given up for the time being. (But the Established Church of Scotland has now disestablished herself, for she has now the reins thrown on her own neck, so that she has freedom, if it can be called freedom, to change her relation to the Westminster Confession of Faith, without Parliament having any right to interfere.) The Free Church began then to question several statements in the Confession of Faith. This was done on the pretence that there were young men, for whom the Church should make allowances, who could not subscribe the Confession if things were left as they were. The writer remembers well the debates in the Edin-

burgh Presbytery of the Free Church over this matter, and the exceedingly painful experience through which he was passing on account of these indications of the rapid downfall of that Church. These debates ended in the formulating and passing of the Declaratory Act of 1892. By this Act, so cunningly phrased, room was made in that Church for holding all the innovations that were up till then contended for. When this Act appeared it became immediately manifest that if the purity of the original Free Church was to be upheld, it would have to be done outside the jurisdiction of that backsliding Church.

Along with the above changes in her creed and constitution, the Free Church introduced social gatherings into her congregations, at which her ministers became the buffoons of the vain and carnal members and adherents of their congregations and neighbours. Speeches were made to cause as much laughter as possible; vain songs and even masques were indulged in, to the scandal of serious piety and the heart-grief of the truly godly. Sales of work and bazaars were also held, at which raffling for some time was the order in vogue for such. Even playing cards and dancing were made use of. So that the world had now if ever seen its desire in the defilement of Sion.

But when the General Assembly of 1893 refused by an overwhelming majority to listen to the protest and appeal of some of her ministers and elders to take steps to repeal the Declaratory Act of 1892, the Rev Donald Macfarlane, their minister at Raasay, tabled a protest and a declaration, by which he made known that he and such as might follow him would set up the Free Church of 1843 on her original position, and separate from the jurisdiction of the Declaratory Act Church, and from all innovations she had introduced contrary to the Word of God and the Subordinate Standards of the Church of the Reformation in Scotland. This was in truth as much as to say, "She shall not be defiled, and your eyes shall not see your desire upon Zion."

Thus the Free Church was resuscitated without adding anything to her constitution; but all the defilements these men brought into her were left with themselves in the new Church which they had formed. Rev D Macfarlane and those who helped him to reform the Free Church were denounced then as schismatics, and the people were warned not to follow nor to go near them, because they were breaking up what they called the Free Church but what was in fact another Church having a new creed and constitution set forth in her Declaratory Act. None was so vehement in denouncing them as the party who were hitherto of the same mind with them, viz, that nothing but separation could save the Free Church. These

men remained till 1900 in that Church without showing much concern about her defilement, but quite concerned about restraining the people from joining the party who could not allow the Church to be any longer a den of thieves.

In the year 1900, a union was constituted between the Declaratory Act Church and the United Presbyterian Church. A remainder of the Constitutional ministers refused to enter into that union, and raised an action in the civil courts, claiming the whole property and funds of the Free Church. They lost the case in the Court of Session in Edinburgh, but gained it in the House of Lords. It was quite manifest to every unbiassed person that the Declaratory Act Church, with her entirely new creed and constitution, had no right to property built or money subscribed for the original Free Church. It was hoped then that they who refused to enter into this union would see to it that all innovations in doctrines and practices would be immediately purged out, and that they would take up exactly the original position of the Free Church as she was constituted in 1843. Had they done this there would be no difference betwixt them and those who separated in 1893; but they did nothing of the kind. A movement for union with this party was begun in the Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church within a fortnight after the above union took place. It may be desirable to explain that the designation, Free Presbyterian Church, was taken by the party that separated in 1893 for distinction's sake. The Synod came to the conclusion that they were pleased that these men did not enter into the recent union; but that it was premature to take any steps in uniting with them till it would be seen how they would deal with the innovations under which they had remained during seven years since 1893. It very soon became evident that they had no intention of removing the anti-Christian practices which had destroyed the purity and peace of the once noble Free Church of Scotland.

But the party who moved in the Free Presbyterian Synod in 1900 that steps should be taken for uniting with the present Free Church, continued to agitate for it till 1905. It became evident that this was a repetition of the desire, "Let her be defiled, and let our eye see its desire upon Zion." When the Synod of our Church refused to acquiesce in this desire, these men went over to the Free Church. Social gatherings, bazaars, sales of work, and even Higher Criticism were all swallowed by them; for not a word has been heard since from any of them against these defiling views and practices.

We then thought that all the renegades had gone away, and that we should have no more trouble with men of this stamp; but our thoughts

were mere dreams. For in the year 1916, a Committee was appointed by the Commission of the Assembly of the Free Church "to confer with any committee which may be appointed by the Free Presbyterian Church on all matters that may at present be regarded as obstacles to co-operation or union between these Churches." The Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church sent a statement of outstanding obstacles that would have to be removed by the Free Church before the Synod could take any steps in the desired direction — (1) "The Free Church has never explicitly condemned the views advocated by Dr W M Alexander, one of her professors, in a book named 'Demoniac Possession', views destructive of the inspiration and inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures, nor has she called upon Dr Alexander to state publicly in distinct and unequivocal terms that he repudiates the book and sincerely regrets the anti-Scriptural opinions expressed therein, and by her unfaithfulness in this respect has called in question her own loyalty to the doctrine of the Scriptures as the infallible Word of God." (2) "The Free Church, in an Act of 1905, rescinding the Declaratory Act of 1892, inserted a clause in the preamble of the said rescinding Act, namely, 'as she has always adhered', which bears the construction that the Free Church in her corporate capacity had always adhered to the Confession of Faith and other subordinate standards as adopted by the Free Church in 1846, and which clause may be reasonably construed as a censure of the position of the Free Presbyterian Church relative to the Declaratory Act of 1892, the said Act being the overt ground of its taking up a separate position in 1893. . . . The present Free Church, by the clause referred to, has raised a standing barrier between her and the Free Presbyterian Church." (3) "The Free Church, since 1900, has thrown open the door of admission to her ministry very indiscriminately to men out of a great variety of Churches, and this latitudinarianism has also raised a barrier between her and the Free Presbyterian Church."

(4) "The Free Church has been lax in her general discipline and practice, and differs from the Free Presbyterian Church in such matters as church bazaars and sales of work, church soirees and social meetings, prayers at the grave, and to mention a particular case of discipline, the failure on the part of her Assembly to remove a Popish symbol from one of her church buildings.

"The Synod, in adopting this statement, declares that it does so with a sincere desire for the glory of Christ, the Head of the Church, the integrity of His Word, both in profession and practice, a clear testimony for the truth as embodied in the Confession of Faith and other subordinate standards, and the general welfare of Christ's cause in Scotland

and throughout the world.”

To this statement of facts, the Free Church returned a very evasive reply. No steps were taken to effectually remove any of the matters referred to then, and nothing has been done since to show the least intention on the part of the Free Church to rectify these defections.

Notwithstanding three of our ministers did all that they could to bring the Free Presbyterian Church over to the Free Church, and when they saw that they could not succeed in this purpose, they went over to her without getting any of the things complained of removed. But the Synod and all the people of the Free Presbyterian Church said again:— “She shall not be defiled, and your eye shall not see your desire upon Zion.” Let it be noted to the praise of the people of our Church (not to flatter them) that, with the exception of a few, very few, they adhered firmly to the position taken up in 1893.

There are and have been a few who make great pretensions as to piety, but who make manifest by their conduct that the Free Presbyterian Church is too strict in her discipline, and also some who show that they think it no defilement for the Free Church to have had and to tenaciously retain these infidel and carnal men and practices. But we pray that the Lord will, of His superabounding grace and strength, hold up the goings of the Free Presbyterian Church to the end, and that godly and faithful ministers, and other office-bearers, will, in the future as in the past, contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints in her pulpits and Church courts.

Letters

by Rev Hugh Martin, D.D.

Montrose, 3 July, 1880

My Dear Friend — How are you? “Faint,” perhaps, “yet pursuing,” the Lord doing you good. I mean doing you good to your obvious perception thereof, for He cannot do you other than good, world without end.

I wish to tell you that you may help me to praise the Lord for it, that during the past few weeks He has been graciously pleased to be revisiting and reviving my poor and needy soul. Humbly let me say it, yet to the honour of His grace, He has been leading me to the green pastures and beside the still waters, and restoring me in the paths of righteousness for His own name’s sake. Therefore, “extol the Lord with me, let us exalt His name together.”

In considering what were the *means* which the Lord was pleased to

employ, and through which He drew near, I may say it was in connection with that too much neglected and despised invitation of His Word. "Turn you at my reproof, behold I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you." O! do we realise the exhaustless supply there set before us, and to which we are bidden welcome? Do we realise the wondrous privilege of being warranted yea encouraged "to turn?" Do we realise the greatness of the blessing promised by Him who cannot lie, "I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you?" It is in substance the same blessing as was held out to the woman of Samaria. "If thou hadst asked of Him He would have given thee living water." Are we, therefore, dry and parched as we may be, but on the warrant of God's own invitation "turning" and "asking" these blessings which He has been pleased to declare He is willing to bestow? In speaking thus, it is with myself I am reasoning, though it may not be inapplicable to you too.

I have also been thinking lately of that glorious foundation of all our blessings — the death of Christ. How ashamed we should be of our low and superficial views of that blessed mystery into which even angels desire to look! Christ in and by His death defeated and destroyed death — the death that was the penalty of His people's sins. He was even in death a powerful triumphant conqueror, a slain Lamb yet a living Priest. His death, although it was the separation of His soul from His body, was the separation of neither from His Godhead or from Himself, for His personality is in His Godhead. He was the Living One while vanquishing the death due to His people in and by His own death. He also went to the grave; not His dead body merely, "Come see the place where the Lord lay." He likewise rose from the dead; not merely "was raised", but reuniting His paradisaically-blessed soul and His lifeless body, He arose. "The Lord *is risen* indeed." And all this He did as His people's surety, and this triumph they will share with Him, He the first fruits and afterwards they that are His. Pity poor Unitarians and praise God for a *Divine* Saviour! I have expanded these thoughts in an article I have written for next issue of the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, and shall send you a copy when it is out.

I have also an article in this month's issue on "Justification by Faith". It may not be relished by those who hold erroneous views of the atonement, but if any seekers after scriptural views of it are benefitted or helped, I don't care should a thousand whipper-snappers call me "an old wife". I have an impression that my writing days are nearly over, that the time is not very far off when Christ shall be, not to my fitful faith, but to my

endless enjoyment, the "Pearl of great price." Indeed, with my broken health, it will be but a fight to the end, but in the hope that the end will end the fighting, all is well. Write soon.

Yours affectionately, Hugh Martin

Montrose, 20th July, 1880

My Dear Friend — I have been "learning my questions" according to your authoritative directions, but to be fair to me, was it not on the supposition of continued broken health that I spoke as I did? I am also ill of a disease without something of which I could hardly keep up any sense of self-respect, viz, a grumbling and grudging over my uselessness in the Church, and in the world. That sense of uselessness along with my broken health affords little reason why I should wish to live away. But the Lord's will be done. If He is pleased to give me health wherewith to serve Him and His Church a little longer, I am willing; although as regards our own Church, alas! the more abundantly I love her the less I am loved!

Did it strike you that I have been too rash and ready of late, to say things that indicate an assurance of my own personal salvation? It may have been so, but you know I have been, as a rule, so sorely kept down, that if the Lord has been pleased to give a faith's glimpse of what He has provided for His children, surely a little bit of joyous scamper towards the confines of that everlasting inheritance may be allowed? especially when all is seen to be the provision of Grace, when Christ himself is seen as the gift of that Grace, ready, fit, yea, waiting to be received by the poor sinner that has nothing, not the least coin wherewith to purchase the least blessing. We may think we ought to give, if not a price, at least some return for blessing received, but I have come to feel myself so strengthless, so helpless, so empty and dependent, that even if I had something to give (which I have not), I have not strength to give it. *Giving* therefore, can no longer be my investment, it must be *taking*. And in the measure in which the freeness, the fulness and the all-sufficiency that is in Christ is apprehended by faith, in that measure will I become content to take at God's hand what He is pleased to give, and to say "Even so, Lord, be it unto me as Thou wilt."

But I am writing too much about myself. It is, however, almost my settled persuasion — although I am not saying anything about it to any one — (what good would that do?) — that I shall not long be able to hold intercourse with you. For one thing, I see truths with which I have been familiar from my childhood in a new light, the light of eternity. When reading this morning the first chapter of Genesis, where it is written "the

evening and the morning were the first day, the evening and the morning were the second day," &c, &c; it occurred to me that men do not reckon time as God reckons it. He says, "The evening and the morning are a day," we say "from the morning till the evening is a day." But soon we shall reckon as God reckons. We shall begin our reckoning in the "evening" of this mortal life, looking back on all its darkening clouds and deepening shadows, on all its precarious paths, and sorrowful stumblings, and we shall end our reckoning in the "morning" of the bright rising of the "Sun of Righteousness," whose glorious beams shall usher in the full noon-day light of glory. Of that glorious noon-day we may reverently say that it shall be "infinite, eternal and unchangeable."

Yours, dear friend, until its dawning, Hugh Martin.

The Free Offer of the Gospel

by Rev. John Colquhoun

(Continued from Vol. 97, page 343)

Man's Responsibility. — Those Calvinists who give the free offer of the gospel, yield to none in their belief of man's total inability, in his fallen state, to close in with Christ, but they hold that his inability, being moral, does not affect his responsibility. The object of preaching the gospel to the unconverted is, first, to get at their understanding, and through the understanding, to get at their consciences. It is the conscience, as Dr Hetherington puts it, that "tells even that proud faculty, the will, what *duty* requires, what *moral obligation* enjoins, and what *responsibility* demands. . . . Hence we conclude, that a darkened and depraved conscience, and a corrupt and rebellious will, form the great maladies of man's moral nature." *Apologetics of the Christian Faith*, Chap. v. sect. 2. When a sinner hears Christ offered to him in the preaching of the gospel, and willingly closes his understanding against the gospel, his conscience is not informed, and it, in turn, is not in a position to inform the will, thus the sinner's rejection of Christ is his own sinful act, and God shall hold him responsible for it. This cannot be put in better language than that of Dr Love. "Man, both in his primitive and in his present state, is transacting about the eternal possession of a state either of sin or of holiness. Adam in the primitive state chose death. And now when Christ is offered, whosoever receives Him not, chooses death over him. His acting, as having eternity depending on it, is exceedingly weighty. Unbelief, by rejecting Christ, endeavours (as much as it can) to thwart the Divine purposes, and

to prevent the fulfilment of the gracious promises of God. God says: 'Thy people shall be willing.' Unbelief says, 'No'." *Memorials of Dr Love, Vol. ii. p.216.*

To ignore the doctrine of man's responsibility, in the way that Hyper-Calvinists do, is quite as bad as Arminianism. The Arminian maintains that man has a certain amount of ability to believe in Christ, and to accept Him as He is freely offered in the gospel, but he will not concede that he is responsible except so far as he is able to accept Christ. The Hyper-Calvinist, rightly, maintains that man is utterly unable to accept Christ, but ignores the solemn fact that God has a right to command man to accept Christ, as He has a right to command him to obey His precepts. It is man's sin that he is unable to do any good thing, but it would be wrong on man's part to conclude that God has changed so much, because of man's inability, that He has ceased to require of man to repent and believe. God holds man responsible for his impenitence and unbelief, as all the unregenerate shall find out to their cost at last, for "this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." John 3: 19.

A Gospel for Sinners. — Hyper-Calvinists, by their view that Christ should never be offered but to the elect, would seem to hold that, not only must the preacher see tokens of being elected on those to whom Christ should be offered, but also that the hearers would see marks of being among the elect on themselves, before they would receive Him. None will admit, readier than our friends, that it is not as a creature bearing marks of being elected that a sinner closes in with Christ, but as a sinner. When the Holy Spirit convinces a man of his condition in the sight of God, he sees that he is lost, ruined, and undone, far off from God, a slave to Satan and his own lusts, utterly unworthy of God's mercy, a child of wrath, and altogether unfit and unable to receive Christ. In that condition he will not be able to see in himself anything of that sincerity and willingness to receive Christ which would make him hope that he is among the elect. No, he sees the very opposite, but, when in that condition Christ is offered to him as a Saviour suitable for such as he is, he is so far removed from despair as to say, "Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him." Not only is he thus far removed from despair, but in that condition, through the saving work of the Holy Spirit, he is enabled to embrace Christ as He is freely offered in the gospel. It is only in the very act of receiving Christ that he, for the first time, bears such marks of being among the elect as sincerity, willingness, and humility. The difference between those who give the free offer of the gospel and

those who do not, can only be settled by the word of God. It ought and must be our only guide.

This is clearly stated by the Westminster Divines when they state in the Shorter Catechism that "The word of God which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him." **Question 2.** They, however, deny that there is in the word of God a common call extended to all to whom the gospel comes. Is this view in accordance with the Scriptures or the fruit of human reasoning? If the free offer of the gospel is found in the word of God then it must be wrong to withhold it on the ground of human reasoning. It is certainly true that none but the elect shall believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore that none but them shall be saved, but the question arises with respect to the hearers of the gospel as they are in a state of nature. Who can point out the elect in order to offer Christ to them; Is a preacher of the gospel warranted in the word of God to say to his congregation, "I cannot offer Christ to you seeing that I do not know who is elected and who is not?" Such language would be contrary to the Scriptures and to the commission given by Christ to His disciples, "Go ye unto all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," and to the practice of the Apostles as brought before us in various parts of the word of God.

Human reasoning on the part of the Hyper-Calvinists, says, Man is dead spiritually, it is impossible for him to believe, therefore it is contrary to the Scriptures to offer Christ and salvation to him. The Apostle Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, says, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent?" Rom. 10: 13-15. From this we see that the reasoning of the Holy Spirit is, that in order to be saved men must call on the name of the Lord, but in order to call upon Him, they must believe, and in order to believe they must hear, and in order that they should hear, the gospel must be preached to them. The preaching of the gospel is good news for sinners. It is suited to their needs for it proclaims salvation to the lost, and who among the hearers of the gospel can deny that he is lost as he is by nature. Those who treat as heresy the free offer of the gospel maintain that a universal call can only be consistent with an unlimited atonement. In meeting this argument we cannot do better than quote the words of Principal Cunningham. "It is very evident that our conduct, in preaching the gospel, and in addressing our fellow-men with

a view to their salvation, should not be regulated by any inferences of our own about the nature, extent, and sufficiency of the provision actually made for saving them, but solely by the directions and instructions which God has given us, by precept or example, to guide us in the matter, — unless indeed, we venture to act upon the principle of refusing to obey God's commands, until we fully understand all the grounds and reasons of them. God has commanded the gospel to be preached to every creature; He has required us to proclaim to our fellow-men, of whatever character, and in all varieties of circumstances, the glad tidings of great joy, — to hold out to them, in His name, pardon and acceptance through the blood of atonement, — to invite them to come to Christ, and to receive Him, — and to accompany all this with the assurance that "whosoever cometh to Him, He will in no wise cast out." God's revealed will is the only rule, and ought to be held to be the sufficient warrant for all that we do in this matter, — in deciding what is our duty, — in making known to our fellow-men what are their privileges and obligations, — and in setting before them reasons and motives for improving the one and discharging the other. And though this revelation does not warrant us in telling them that Christ died for all and each of the human race, — a mode of preaching the gospel never adopted by our Lord and His apostles, — yet it does authorise and enable us to lay before men views and considerations, facts and arguments, *which, in right reason*, should warrant and persuade all to whom they are addressed, to lay hold of the hope set before them, — to turn into the stronghold as prisoners of hope." *Historical Theology, Vol. ii. p.345.*

Again, he says, "The position of our opponents is in substance this, — that it was not possible for God, because not consistent with integrity and uprightness, to address such offers and invitations to men indiscriminately, unless an atonement, which is indispensable to salvation, had been presented and accepted on behalf of all men, — of each individual of the human race. Now this position bears very manifestly the character of unwarranted presumption, and assumes our capacity of fully comprehending and estimating the eternal purposes of the divine mind, — the inmost grounds and reasons of the divine procedure. It cannot be proved — because there is not really any clear and certain medium of probation — that God, by offering to men indiscriminately, without distinction or exception, through Christ, pardon and acceptance, contradicts the doctrine which He has revealed to us in His own word, as to a limitation, not in the intrinsic sufficiency, but in the intended destination, of the atonement. And unless this can be clearly and conclusively proved, we are bound

to believe that they are consistent with each other, though we may not be able to perceive and develop this consistency, and of course to reject the argument of our opponents as untenable. When we carefully analyse all that is really implied in what God says and does, or authorises and requires us to say and do in this matter, we can find much that is fitted to show positively that God does not, in offering pardon and acceptance to men indiscriminately, act inconsistently or deceptively, though it is not true that the atonement was universal. And it is easy to prove that He does no injustice to anyone; since all who believe what He has revealed to them, and who do what He has given them sufficient motives or reasons for doing, will certainly obtain salvation. *Historical Theology, Vol. ii. p.346.*

From these quotations from a man, who was eminent above many for his knowledge of the doctrines of God's word and his ability to state these doctrines in their relationship to each other, and thus present a well-balanced statement of the truth of God's word, it is very evident that the sole ground or warrant for offering Christ and pardon to sinners is the authority and command of God in His word. We have no other warrant and no other is necessary. The Scriptures clearly show that the preacher of the gospel has a sufficient warrant in what is revealed in them to press upon all men the duties of faith, repentance, and obedience, though he knows full well that none have any ability to believe, repent, or obey. It is God's will and command that he should to so, and this is the rule of his duty. It is what God requires that he must look to and not to what man is unable to do. This duty must be performed with a view to impress upon men their inability to perform any of these things, and their duty to look to Him who, through His all-sufficient grace, enables them to say, with the Apostle, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Phil. 4: 13. He must impress upon his hearers that the gospel, in its fullness, is the means appointed by God to turn to sinners from the error of their ways and make them partakers of the benefits of the Covenant of Grace.

In the Scriptures we read that "Many are called, but few are chosen." Matt. 20: 16. Every one to whom the gospel comes is called to repent, believe, and obey, but only those who are elected are separated by that gospel from the rest who have that gospel and are not regenerated and saved. This is very clearly put by Dr Charles Hodge when he says, "This call is universal in the sense that it is addressed to all men indiscriminately to whom the gospel is sent. It is confined to no age, nation, or class of

men. It is made to the Jew and Gentile, to Barbarians and Scythians, bond and free; to the learned and to the ignorant; to the righteous and to the wicked; to the elect and to the non-elect. This follows from its nature. Being a proclamation of the terms on which God is willing to save sinners, and an exhibition of the duty of fallen men in relation to that plan, it of necessity binds all those who are in the condition which the plan contemplates. It is in this respect analogous to the moral law. That law is a revelation of the duties binding all men in virtue of their relation to God as their Creator and moral Governor. It promises the divine favour to the obedient, and threatens wrath to the disobedient. It therefore of necessity applies to all who sustain the relation of rational and moral creatures to God. So also the gospel being a revelation of the relation of fallen men to God as reconciling the world unto Himself, comes to all belonging to the class of fallen men. The Scriptures, therefore, in the most explicit terms teach that the external call of the gospel is addressed to all men. The command of Christ to His Church was to preach the gospel to every creature. Not to irrational creatures, and not to fallen angels; these two classes are excluded by the nature and design of the gospel. Further than this there is no limitation, so far as the present state of existence is concerned. We are commanded to make the offer of salvation through Jesus to every human being on the face of the earth. We have no right to exclude any man; and no man has the right to exclude himself. God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish but have everlasting life." *Systematic Theology, Vol. ii. p.642.*

We are not to take isolated texts which seem to point at particular conditions and say that these texts clearly show that it is the elect, and they only, who are exhorted to repent, believe, and obey, and say that it is to these alone that Christ is offered in the gospel. These texts are to be considered in the light of other texts in the word of God which clearly have a universal application, and which are of equal authority with the texts which our opponents are so fond of quoting as the ground of their views on the invitations of the gospel. The truth, as drawn from the Scriptures, is, that all sinners, of every character, are invited, whether or not they are sensible or insensible of their sins. If we take, for instance, the words, "Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man." Prov. 8: 4. This is addressed to all who are men, who are sinners, and who need salvation, although they may not be sensible of the fact that they are sinners. Those who reject and despise the invitations and offers of the gospel are as clearly invited and Christ is as truly offered to them

as those who come, but they are condemned for their unbelief. They had a warrant and a right to come to Christ for life, which they would not make use of, and for this Christ says to them, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."

It is true that men cannot come to Christ in their own strength, or, in any way, contribute to the attaining of that position, but yet it is their duty to use the means of God's appointment in order to attain that end. Our Subordinate Standards teach that, "As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto." *Confession of Faith, Chap. iii. sect. 6*. When Christ ascended up on high He received gifts for men, and among these gifts are the means by which His salvation is applied to sinners. As we have it in the Shorter Catechism, "The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in the holiness and comfort, through faith unto salvation." **Question 89**. Where the gospel and these other means are at hand for the elect and the non-elect, and both being equally dead in trespasses and sins, they have no power to make use of them, but both are responsible before God as to the use of these means.

Hyper-Calvinists charge those who give the free offer of the gospel with preaching "free will," but never seem to take the trouble to examine seriously the position of such, a position which is very different from that of those who uphold the position of those who are known as Hyper-Evangelists. The latter do often call themselves Calvinists and hold some, at least, of the doctrines that come under the system, but in their preaching they hold that the Atonement was made for all men, and it is on that ground that they invite men to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. At their so-called revival meetings such statements are made as the following:—"Your eternal salvation depends entirely on yourself," or this other one, "You can be saved this very minute if you want to." This language reveals clearly that those who use it do not believe in the absolute necessity of the Holy Spirit to regenerate sinners, for, according to their view everything can be done by man himself, and their use of all the invitations of the gospel is based on such views. Not only so, but it is contrary to the plain declaration of Scripture concerning those who receive Christ through believing in His name, that they "were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God." John 1: 13.

[**Note:** Since the publication of the first part of the above article the Editor has received letters from some Gospel Standard Strict Baptists who

are readers of The Free Presbyterian Magazine. We wish to assure our friends among the Strict Baptists that though we differ from them on the Free Offer and some other matters, we continue to esteem them highly in the Lord as those who fear the Lord and who prize those precious doctrines of God's Word which we hold in common. — Editor]

Book Review

A TREATISE OF EARTHLY-MINDEDNESS by Jeremiah Burroughs. Soli Deo Gloria, 1991. Available from Free Presbyterian Bookroom. 219pp. £7.95.

Jeremiah Burroughs (1599-1646) was held in high esteem by Thomas Goodwin, William Bridge and William Greenhill who published six volumes of his writings after his death. The sermons which make up this volume have been reprinted for the first time since their publication in 1649.

This work will be welcome by all pilgrims journeying to the celestial city. Its use to them is stated by Burroughs at the beginning of chapter 7: "The main thing we have tried to do thus far is to take the minds of men and women off the things of the earth. This will prepare us for the next point which is of infinite concern, our conversations in heaven. But because a man's conversation cannot be in heaven until his mind is taken off the earth, until the disease of earthly-mindedness is cured, we must now propound those things that may help take off men's minds from the earth." After the Puritan manner, eleven considerations follow, with a further five directions how to get our hearts free from earthly-mindedness. These first 76 pages are based on Philippians 3: 19 "who mind earthly things", in which he explains what is this activity of the wicked. In two searching chapters (two and five) he endeavours to expose earthly-mindedness lurking undiscovered in the heart.

The second treatise, *A Heavenly Conversation*, is based on the succeeding verse: "... for our conversation is in heaven. ..." (Phil. 3: 20). He explains it in the context of the example of the godly, and moves on to explain how they are citizens of heaven, and how they have their conversation in heaven. After explaining their trading with heaven (the trading metaphor is prominent throughout the book; he had "much of the comfort that earth could afford him" p.3), he gives seven marks of such persons and, finally, seven directions how to get a heavenly conversation.

More than once (p40, 86, 127-8) he draws attention to the importance of a heavenly conversation because it is a convincing conversation. "You will never be the man or woman who is likely to convince any by your

conversation; you are never likely to be a means to draw any of the love of the ways of godliness, because there is so much darkness and earthliness in your conversation.” “Let those who profess religion labour to walk so that their examples may be convincing to others.” “Truly, Christians should live as if they came from heaven every day, as if they had been in heaven conversing with God.” He was aware of the valuable use of a heavenly conversation to convince the wicked (p118), hypocrites (p120) and the godly whose “conversations are too low, too earthly” (p124).

The last treatise is a sermon on Genesis 5: 24: “And Enoch walked with God.” He raises the doctrine from the text: “It is the excellency of a Christian to walk with God.” He proceeds to show how the soul is brought to walk with God, and what walking with God is. A useful chapter sets forth twelve excellencies of walking with God. Ten marks of such walking are given and twelve rules of direction for walking with God. He concludes by dealing with objections about walking with God when He hides His face.

Useful lessons are given to heavenward-bound pilgrims. I would have preferred Burroughs to have dwelt more upon the place the Saviour occupies in drawing one away from earthly-mindedness to heavenly-mindedness. He mentions this, and it undergirds most of what he writes but, rather than assuming it and introducing the Saviour as the fifth section in the last chapter on Five Directions How to Get our Hearts Free from Earthly-Mindedness, it would give a better relish if the whole subject matter was handled in relation to the Saviour.

The difficulties of editing old works can be great. The editor, Don Kistler, has done quite well but there are still mistakes. The dust cover tells us that there are two treatises whereas there are three (Burroughs considers Phil. 3: 20 to be a separate treatise, p76) and the dust cover calls the second treatise “*A Heavenly Conversation, or Walking with God*” whereas these are different treatises based upon Phil. 3: 20 and Gen. 5: 24. This mistake is made by following the original title page which is misleading and incomplete. Treatises developed in the hands of puritan authors and it is no different with Burroughs. His original plan is on pages 2-3 where it is apparent he intends to handle Phil. 3: 19-20. The five points on verse 19 are on p3, but they are expanded into six points on his contents page. If these points had been followed, the present editor would have put the last paragraph of chapter 2 as the first paragraph of chapter 3 (pp16-17) and the last four sentences of chapter 4 are really the first four sentences of chapter 5 (pp45-46) and chapter 5 should be renamed along the lines of point 3 on page 3 (the present title is unintelligible).

The editor has americanised the spelling, and updated the old style "s"; however one of the old style slips through on p93; "And hath raised us up together, and made us fit (sic) together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus". A more objectionable change is You for Thee when applied to the Most High, p32, 132, 157, 160 *et passim*. However, thou, thy and thee are retained in biblical quotations, p158, sometimes capitalised, p160.

These points in no way hinder the usefulness of this volume, although they illustrate the difficulties of an editor. In trying to faithfully reproduce an author's work, he must decide whether to reproduce his mistakes or correct them, and sometimes whether or not to tidy up and reorganise material where, for a multitude of reasons, the author did not have the time or opportunity to do so. This volume is worthy of prayerful consideration.

D.M.B.

Notes and Comments

Election of New President of the U.S.A.

Governor Bill Clinton was elected in November as President of the U.S.A. in place of President George Bush. He is due to assume office this month. His election took place notwithstanding revelations as to his private life which had been brought to light early in the campaign. The President-elect's liberal outlook on moral issues gives cause for concern. He has already indicated, according to a Press report, that he will issue an executive order ending the ban which prohibits homosexuals from serving in the armed forces. His outlook on the abortion issue will be one favouring relaxation of the laws governing it. In view of the fact that the U.S.A. is the most powerful nation in the world, the President's outlook on these and other issues cannot but have its impact on other nations as well. What the outcome will be remains to be seen.

Government Lottery

The Government is in process of drawing up a scheme for the running of a national lottery to finance the arts and sport. The proposals were due to go to the House of Commons before the end of the year. The aim is to make it a national habit across the social spectrum with the emphasis on giving to charity. Much evil has been done in the name of charity and this proposal can only fuel the gambling habit in the country. The action of the Government in promoting this lottery is a further retrograde step in Britain's moral decline.

The Archbishop and Morality

For once we can commend the Archbishop of Canterbury when he spoke against immorality in high places. He warned that discarding absolute standards and allowing private opinion to decide what was good or evil had radically dangerous consequences at different levels. Recent scandals within the Royal Family and among Government ministers, no doubt, were the background to his warning. He also said: "We must be careful not to suggest that major public figures can behave as they like at home or in their office and that this has nothing to do with their work." The warning is timely and it is to be hoped that it will be heeded in high places.

Broadcasting Standards

The Broadcasting Standards Council which acts as a TV watchdog are pressing for programmes on sex and violence not to be shown until after 10 pm rather than 9 pm as at present. In view of the increase in rape and violence in the country it would be well if proper research were done as to how much of this stems from such TV programmes. TV producers wishing to extend the limits further and further hold up their hands in horror at the suggestion of any connection between the two. The Great Day of Judgment may show otherwise. A return to proper moral standards is called for and that all such programmes be banned.

The Church of England — Another Step Backward

By the narrowest of margins the Church of England has taken another step away from the Scriptures. After 17 years of discussion the Church's General Synod has voted to approve of women becoming priests, a term whose associations with sacrifice many are happy to accept while others use it purely as another form of the word presbyter. It is doubtless a measure of the sacramentalism of the present Church of England that opposition seems to have been stronger to the possibility of a woman administering the Lord's Supper than to a woman preaching the Word. In fact, well over a thousand women have already been ordained to the office of deacon, the basic difference between the two offices being no more than that the priest may dispense the sacrament of the Lord's Supper but the deacon may not. This, of course, is not the Scriptural distinction between the offices of deacon and presbyter, or elder.

The Church of England had already allowed women to become ministers, albeit incomplete ministers — as deacons. That this was permitted indicates the willingness, so manifest in many other directions, to disregard the plain teaching of the Bible, expressed in this connection with

crystal clarity in the words of Paul, "I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man" (1 Tim. 2: 12). We must remember that the Epistles of Paul are on the same inspired and authoritative footing as the other Scriptures (see 2 Pet. 3: 16).

Opposition was strongest from the Anglo-Catholic wing of the Church. John Gummer, for instance, who is Secretary of State for Agriculture, spoke against the change on Scriptural grounds, but held out the possibility of fresh revelation from heaven which would make the change possible. But in a school of thought which is prepared to accept the authority of tradition as well as Scripture this need not be surprising.

But where was the evangelical party? Yes, it had representatives present, who would surely claim to take Scripture seriously, and to take Scripture as the one source of religious authority. Sadly, evangelicals are strangely divided on the issue, and too many have devoted tremendous energy to an attempt to show that Scripture, suitably interpreted, does not oppose women in the ministry. They may have satisfied themselves, but they cannot have the approval of Him who gave the revelation which is Scripture.

K.D.M.

Mission News

We hear that there have been heavy showers in Zimbabwe in November and we trust, if it is the Lord's will that they will continue until April and ensure a good harvest not only in Zimbabwe but in other drought-stricken countries.

Last month it was noticed that the Zimbabwean government was not able to provide the money for the piping of water from the Nyamandlovu aquifer to Bulawayo, but we have heard since then that the Government has advanced 20 million dollars as a first instalment of 57 million dollars for this project, which is a great matter for thankfulness, as water has been severely rationed in Bulawayo for the past few months.

There were large attendances at Mbumba Communion at the end of October. There were thought to be about one thousand present at the morning service on Sabbath morning, less than half of whom could be accommodated in the church. However, with open windows and fair weather the preacher could be clearly heard. We trust there was a blessing on the Word preached. The ministers, the Rev P Mzamo and the Rev Z Mazvabo were said to have been in a happy frame of mind. The addresses given at the Lord's Table were based on — 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love. . .' and 'Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end

of the world.'

I quote from a circular letter written by Miss Anna Zekveld, who is one of the Sisters at Mbumba Hospital, and who had been in Bulawayo with her sister, who was visiting the Mission:—

Umguza is a little place a few miles from Bulawayo which I got to know while doing language study in Bulawayo. The church is actually on a farm, and close to it are many homes of people who are just squatters on the farm. Some work on the farm but most have no income. A lot of beer-drinking goes on in the homes. It is the children that really attract one to the place. There are so many of them running around, and they are so poor.

Church services were begun here some years ago by the Rev D A Ross while he was minister in Bulawayo, and they have continued since then on Sabbaths and Thursdays. Quite a number attend, mostly women and children. My sister and I attended the Prayer-meeting on Thursday afternoon. The speaker on that occasion was our Administrator, Mr Budhi Mziya, who is an elder in the Bulawayo church. He spoke from Exodus 16. Mr Mziya spoke on the manna. A comparison was made between the manna in the wilderness and the Lord Jesus Christ, the Heavenly Manna. As the manna was given to the Children of Israel in the wilderness to satisfy their hunger, so the Lord Jesus was sent into the world as the Bread of Heaven, the Bread of Life, by God the Father to satisfy the hunger of those who hunger and thirst after Him. As the Israelites did not see the manna until the dew had lifted so the mist that is on our understanding, the dew of ignorance, must be removed so that we might be given to behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world, and then to behold Christ in His beauty.

On this occasion we had brought food for the people. I had received money from Canada for that purpose. After the service Mr Mziya asked the people to sit as families. Then 20 kg bags of mealie-meal were handed out to each family and each family received a couple of scoops of beans. The children ran home to fetch utensils for the beans. They were very happy with the food. After everyone had received his portion we went over to the home of the old Mnyathi who has not been well and has not been able to attend the services. We all gathered round sitting on the ground or on low stools. Mnyathi himself was sitting outside and seemed a little better than the last time I had seen him. We sang a psalm together and had a word of prayer, before we all went our separate ways.

There is another old man there who is blind. His name is Mathe. Every time I have gone to Mguza he has been sitting patiently outside his hut,

listening for the vehicle to arrive, and then he gets up and makes his way with the aid of his cane, to the church building. He seems to listen very attentively, and a couple of women are also noticeably attentive. May the seed of the Gospel find entrance into well-prepared hearts and bring forth fruit unto righteousness amongst those poor people.

There was a prize-giving at the John Tallach School at the end of October. The Assistant Secretary for Education and his wife attended. Many parents and friends were also present. Among other matters the Assistant Secretary referred to the good results secured each year by the pupils of the John Tallach School. Tea was provided for all and lunch for the official party.

Mr Neil Murray is anxious that Binga should not be forgotten in the prayers of the Lord's people. There is a great need for the blessing of the Lord on the Word, for the people are in great need of instruction. Mealie-meal is being carried regularly to the needy people. The temperature has reached 40 degrees and is very trying at this time of year. 'The Lord of us hath mindful been and He will bless us still!' JN

Italian Mission

by Rev. D. A. Ross

Once again I visited Fornaci di Barga accompanied by Mr Lucio Strada. Much kindness was shown us by the Marchi ladies who kindly supplied most of our meals during our stay. As in the past, our sleeping quarters were in the only hotel in Fornaci di Barga where the tariff was modest although during the summer season it can be costly.

It was in this hotel that we obtained a small meeting room to hold our Sabbath services. The weekly service was held in the home of the Campani family, whose kindness extended to giving us their home for one of the Sabbath services also when there was a misunderstanding with the hotel proprietors as to the actual dates of services. It is intended, God willing, that we continue to hold all future Sabbath services in the hotel or some other suitable public place, for there is more likelihood of strangers coming to the services if they are held there rather than in a private home.

It is now a known fact that the APC schism has adversely affected the little congregation in Fornaci di Barga. Nevertheless there are the few there who adhere with all their heart to what our church stood for in May 1989, and who are worthy of our help. They wish especially that we as a Church would continue to hold services in Fornaci di Barga, if possible on a more frequent and regular basis. Their desire for the future is that the Reform-

ed Faith, so dear to them, would have a place in the hearts of many people in Foranci di Barga and indeed throughout Italy; a land so sadly blighted by the popery of many centuries. Our continuing of services in Foranci di Barga is not merely to retain the allegiance of this small group to our church, as was suggested by one APC Congregation news letter, but rather their allegiance to Christ and to the scriptural doctrine, worship and practice which pertains to His glory.

I was encouraged that there are now those in the congregation in Fornaci di Barga who make regular contributions of money towards the mission work there and who gave the Dominions and Overseas Fund £150, a sum which they have gathered since my last visit. Although it was not their practice in the past to contribute in this particular way to the work in Italy they intend to continue to do so. Also, as in the past, contributions specifically for the work in Italy continue to come from our people in the home church. Interest of this kind encourages us to look forward to a future for the Church in Fornaci di Barga. Not least there is the selfless contribution of Mr Lucio Strada to be acknowledged. In more ways than one he has helped the work, and on this occasion, as on a previous one he acted as interpreter. We are much indebted to him.

May the Lord be pleased to acknowledge and bless this small endeavour on the part of our church, to continue spreading His word. Let us take care not to despise the day of small things, as we are so liable to do when there are but a few gathering to worship God. It was but one woman that Christ went to meet and teach at the Well of Sychar, and she became an instrument for bringing others to hear Him. It was just two people the Saviour was pleased to be identified with and to communicate to on the way to Emmaus, these two being part of the then very small church, but a church which was on the threshold of receiving a superabundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit and unprecedented blessings.

“The whole earth let His glory fill.

Amen, so let it be.”

(Psalm 72: 197)

Church Notes

The New Year

When this issue of the Magazine reaches the hands of readers we will have entered another year. We wish all our readers the Lord's blessing during the year that has opened. It is our desire that 1993 may prove a year of spiritual blessing to our land through an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the nation. Our desire for our congregations abroad and on

the Mission Field is that the Lord would bless them abundantly and build up His Cause among them. The Psalmist's prayer was: "Let the whole earth be filled with His glory."

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Outer Isles: At Stornoway on 19th January at 1 p.m.

Australia and New Zealand: At Auckland on 26th January at 9.30 a.m.

Northern: At Dingwall on 2nd February at 2 p.m.

Southern: At Glasgow on 9th February at 6 p.m.

Zimbabwe: At Bulawayo on 8th March at 2 p.m.

Matron and Nursing Staff Appeal

A Matron and Nursing Staff are required for Senger Hospital, Kenya. The Foreign Mission Committee would be pleased to hear from suitably qualified staff for the above posts. It is our hope that the Hospital will open, the Lord willing, in March 1993.

(Rev.) James R. Tallach

Acknowledgment of Donations

The General Treasurer, Mr R. A. Campbell, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow G3 6LE wishes to acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:—

Eastern Europe: Providence Strict Baptist Chapel £50; Anon., Glasgow, £30.

Zimbabwe Famine Relief: Anon., Canada, \$100.

Foreign Mission: Providence Strict Baptist Chapel £100; Anon., £40; Friend, Ardheslaig, £100 for Binga.

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

Binga, Zimbabwe: Two Friends, Edinburgh, £100; Dr Mercer, Cirencester, England, £100; Two Friends, Gairloch, £100; Friends, Greenock, £35; Old Baptist Chapel, Chippenham, £377.70; Mrs T., Glasgow, £20.

Beaulieu: Inverness Postmark, £10, for Sust. Fund; Dutch Friends, £10 for Congr. Funds, per A. McD; Mr A. Fraser, Muirton, £15 for Foreign Mission, per I. McD.

Edinburgh: From the Estate of the late Mr Roderick MacRaild for Free Presbyterian Church, Gilmore Place, Edinburgh, £100; Friend, £50 for African Famine Relief; Two Friends, Inverness, £30 for Communion Expenses.

Uig (Lewis): Friend of the Cause, £10; Anon., £30; Anon., £20; Anon., £10; Anon., £10; Anon., £20; Friend of the Cause, Breasclete, £10; S. G., £20 per Rev. D. J. MacD., all for Communion Expenses, first seven by envelope in plate; G. M., Stornoway, £10 for Sust. Fund, per Rev. D. J. MacD.; Anon., £20 for Kenya and Malawi Mission, by envelope in plate.