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God is our Refuge and Strength

The Psalmist speaks of the earth being removed, the mountains being carried into the midst of the sea, the waters of the sea roaring and being troubled, and the mountains shaking with the swelling of the waters. All these are descriptive of the mighty forces which are opposed to and ever assault the Church of God. Not only is the Church of God collectively faced with such mighty forces, creating such awful upheavals, but each one of the people of God is exposed to the assaults of the forces of the kingdom of darkness. It is in the light of such upheavals and assaults that the Psalmist goes on to say: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear." His trust is in the Lord and the Lord will be his Deliverer, therefore he will not fear. So it must be with all the Lord's people and so it must be with the Church of God. Vain is the help of man, but in the Lord Jehovah, the Rock of Ages, is everlasting strength.

The forces of evil and darkness appear in many forms, yet whatever form these forces take the aim is the same, that is, opposition to Christ and His Cause in the world and the attempt to destroy that Cause. The world itself is a mighty force when it appears in all its powerful attractiveness to ensnare the souls of men, and to entangle them in the mesh of its own net. There is that in the world which is attractive to the carnal heart of man, and to the remnants of the old nature left in the people of God. How easy it is to give place to the things of this world and elevate them to a place they do not deserve! How easy it is for us to be drawn aside from those things which are of lasting value to those things which perish in the using! How easy it is to be affected by the maxims of this world and a place given to these which they do not deserve, while the truths of God's Word are neglected and passed over! How often has the world insinuated its way not only into the thoughts and practices of the people of God, but even into the Church itself! The world when it enters the

Church of God brings its own thoughts and ways with it. How many once-faithful Churches have been destroyed by it. The world, whether attacking the Church of God from outside, or by worming its way into it and attacking it from within, is a mighty foe and how dangerous it would be to regard it otherwise. Yet there is One who is mightier —

“But yet the Lord, that is on high,
is more of might by far
Than noise of many waters is,
or great sea-billows are.”

The false system of Antichrist, and all forms of false religion, and all false sects, are mighty foes against the Church of God. How many of the children of God has the Church of Rome slain in her opposition to Christ and His Cause! How many of the Lord's servants and followers has Mohammedanism slaughtered! How many have all forms of false religion persecuted and slain! The enmity of these evil systems to the people of God indicates the enmity they have to Christ Himself. What countless millions has Communism slain of the true children of God in the attempt to establish atheism in the earth! Blind to the glory of Christ and His Cause, these systems as mighty forces have pitted themselves against the true Church of God in the world. Do they succeed? Only for a little time, and then the Lord by His Almighty power overthrows those that are set against Him, for all His enemies shall be made His footstool.

In this dark day what powerful forces are arrayed against Christ and His Cause. In such a time the Church of God must look to the One who is her refuge and strength and who is a very present help in trouble. He will be with His Church still, for He dwells with her and in her. Therefore let us not be dismayed.

“God in the midst of her doth dwell;
nothing shall her remove:
The Lord to her an helper will,
and that right early prove.”

Let us hold fast in these times of blasphemy and rebuke, looking to the Lord for deliverance from all the forces that are at work threatening to overthrow Protestantism in our land and the Protestant constitution on which our civil and religious liberties rest. To the outward eye it may seem a lost cause as the enemies of Zion appear to triumph and boast of their success but it is not so. The Cause is the Lord's and He will vindicate it and deliver it. He will not suffer it to be destroyed. The enemy says of Zion: “Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion.” But the prophets answers these enemies of the God of Israel: “They know

not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they his counsel: for He shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor." And the Psalmist homologates this when he says: "Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth." Then he goes on to say: "The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge."

Sermon

by Rev. J. A. Macdonald

"Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."
Rev. 3: 11.

There are three things in this portion of God's word which we shall consider on this occasion.

1. The warning — "Behold I come quickly."
2. The exhortation — "hold that fast which thou hast."
3. The reason for doing so — "that no man take thy crown."

1. The warning — "Behold I come quickly."

Christ says to Himself, Behold I come quickly." Neither saint or angel know the time of His coming. It is, as it were, a secret in the heart of God the Father until that solemn hour arrives when He shall come to judge the world in righteousness, "justice to give each one." Ps. 9: 8. It is written in Matthew chapter 25 at verse 31: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations."

Before his death Christ comforted his people in a wonderful way. He said to them: "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14: 2, 3. It is good and profitable for us, both for time and eternity, to ponder over the assurance given in Romans 5: 6, that "in due time Christ died for the ungodly." The poor leper when he was in distress understood this. He addressed the Saviour with these words: "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." Then came the gracious reply, "I will; be thou clean." Matt. 8: 2. We hear from the Saviour's lips what he had to suffer in order to set the prisoners free. In His humiliation He had to say: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath no where to lay his head." Matt. 8: 20.

Scripture reveals that "the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think

not." How necessary it is, therefore, to be prepared for that time, with our lamps burning, ready and waiting for the coming of the bridegroom, lest coming suddenly he find us sleeping, or, like the foolish virgins, who had no oil in their vessels, we hear the awful words, "Verily I say unto you, I know you not." "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

2. The exhortation — "hold that fast which thou hast."

Hold fast is a divine command which must not be neglected, come what may. The exhortation to "stand still" and see the salvation of the Lord, was first given by Moses, when he led the children of Israel at the Red Sea. What a marvellous salvation it was. The children of Israel crossed through the sea on dry land while the enemies sank in the sea like lead.

Ruth is one who held fast. She is to be admired for she cleaved to Naomi and was enabled to "hold fast" when her sister Orpah returned to the gods of Moab. Turning back to false gods and godless companions is characteristic of graceless sinners. Ruth will ever be remembered too, for her noble words: "Intreat me not to leave thee; or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried . . ." Ruth 1: 16, 17. She was not looking for a special place of burial with an ornate grave and splendid ceremony. She said "there will I be buried" — with her godly mother-in-law — wherever that would be in the providence of God. She knew that the Lord had prepared a place for her, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Satan will assail you when you endeavour to "hold fast." When he comes with his fiery darts, tell him that you have entered into a covenant with the Lord to follow Him through good and evil report in the world and, as a result that you are under the shelter of the precious blood. When he hears mention of the blood of the covenant he will flee from you.

O cleave to the truth of God and to His ten commandments and God shall be your reward when the heavens and the earth are no more. People who have been carried away with the streams of popery, modernism, etc, have little regard for the commandments of God. They will tell you that it is no longer fashionable to keep the Sabbath Day holy, and that it will shortly be a thing of the past. We feel sure that while the witness of the Free Presbyterian Church is maintained under the canopy of heaven the keeping of the Sabbath will never cease.

The Lord's people are often burdened with sorrows and distresses which

are too heavy for them. We often reflect on what the servant of the Lord, Rev. Malcolm Gillies, used to say when speaking of Simon who was "compelled to carry the cross." Nothing is revealed of the conversation between Jesus and Simon on that journey, but Mr Gillies said, "I think I hear the Friend of sinners say — 'if that end of the cross is too heavy for you — let its whole weight down on Me'."

"Cast thou thy burden on the Lord,
and he shall thee sustain;
Yea, he shall cause the righteous man
unmoved to remain."

Ps. 55: 22.

Job the servant of the Lord met with many sorrows in this world; however he kept his head in the stream, so to speak. God and angels heard him saying: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." Job 13: 15. This was an example indeed of close cleaving to the Lord, as was that of the psalmist when he said: "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee." Ps. 63: 1.

One of the divines speaks of Christ in a beautiful way. He said that when the whole church was much cast down and in need of a good tonic, as it were, to strengthen her, Christ gave her just that from his own lips: "I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys." Song of Solomon 2: 1. He points out that the rose of Sharon is one which has no thorn, and this indicates to the church that they can cast themselves upon the bosom of love and mercy at any time on their way to the celestial city — to the land flowing with milk and honey. O friend, seek grace to persevere to the end, and all shall be well. When Christ shall come to the vindication of His people, it is no wonder that the church can then say: "For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone." Song of Sol. 2: 11.

The apostle Paul sheds further light on our supreme duty of holding fast when he says: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." 1 Cor. 15: 58. Jacob, too, was also a shining jewel in the hand of the Lord, therefore in the face of many afflictions he did "hold fast" in much love to the God who shewed him such favour and kindness. While wrestling with the Lord one night, seeking the continuance of grace and love to his own soul, and the souls of many whom he loved in the world, the Lord said to him: "Let me go, for the day breaketh." But Jacob answered: "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." Gen. 32: 26. The day came when Jacob finished his course in this world and God took him home to enjoy peace and felicity at God's right hand for evermore, there to be with the redeemed family of God.

Habakkuk was also one of the Lord's jewels in a dark and cloudy day — he served the Lord well and faithfully during his sojourn here. Let us hear what he had to say in the face of all his disappointments. We see how his faith stood the test when he could say: "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." Hab. 3: 17, 18.

3. The reason for holding fast — "that no man take thy crown."

A crown is a symbol of royalty — for kings and queens. The Lord Jesus Christ had a crown of glory upon His head from all eternity. This affords his people both pleasure and joy. Before He came to tabernacle among men He had of necessity to lay aside His crown together with His glory which He had with the Father before the world was. Of course he could not associate himself with fallen men and women in such glorious garments — therefore he took upon Himself our human nature. We read of Him nailed to the cross with the crown of thorns upon His head which caused Him much pain and suffering. Nevertheless, we do not hear even one complaint.

We hear the instruction given: "Go forth O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown with which his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals and in the day of the gladness of his heart." Song of Sol. 3: 11. Let nothing in this world hold you back from witnessing for Christ in this hostile world.

It is good for us ever to bear in mind that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Heb. 10: 31. We are encouraged by the word of God to study its pages where we will find many sweet tokens that the Lord is "waiting to be gracious" and is "ready to forgive." Let me remind you in love to your soul what Christ says: "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." John 6: 37. Yes, in NO WISE.

"The Lord our God is merciful,
and he is gracious,

Long suffering, and slow to wrath,
in mercy plentious.

Ps. 103: 8.

We cannot imagine how altogether glorious and beautiful Christ and His bride shall appear in the presence of God for ever and ever. The late Rev. J. P. MacQueen, London, while preaching with a good measure of liberty would often quote the words of Augustine's prayer: "O Lord thou has made us for Thyself, and we are restless until we find rest in Thee."

It is then and then only that we will be able to get a view, and that throughout eternity, of His immeasurable holiness, together with His divine justice. God said to His beloved church in his love and kindness, "I will betroth thee unto me forever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment and in lovingkindness, and in mercies." Hos. 2: 19. O what a lovely Saviour Christ is to His people who will follow the Lord Jesus wheresoever he leads them, come what may.

It is obvious from God's word that a crown of purest gold awaits all His children upon their arrival at the celestial city. O how unworthy we are of the least of His kindnesses and His love. We often have to call ourselves "unprofitable servants" but yet he will give us a "crown of life" and will make us kings and queens and joint-heirs with Himself. That servant of the Lord, Robert Murray McCheyne, wrote in a beautiful poem on the death of a gracious child:

"Yes, parents, smile through all your tears;
A crown of life your darling wears;
The grave a shady porch appears
To where we'll meet again."

How transcendently beautiful Christ and his bride, the church, shall appear on the resurrection morning when Christ loudly declares: "Behold I and the children whom thou hast given me." Isaiah 8: 18. He never lost either a sheep or a lamb, so "fear not little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Luke 12: 32.

The Sanctuary of God

by Rev. Alex MacPherson, Perth

(Sermon preached at the opening of Tomatin Church)

"And let them make me a sanctuary: that I may dwell among them" (Exodus 25: 8).

The purpose of our meeting is to inaugurate public worship in a building newly erected for that purpose. Some dislike calling a building a church, but we follow the custom of past times and use the word in a way that avoids confusion with its other meanings. So, I repeat, we are met as the notice in the Free Presbyterian Magazine said, to open a church.

In this sense of the word, a church is a building used for worship, an enclosure within walls, covered by a roof. Certainly, public worship has been conducted in the open, as it often was in the covenanting times. In the Apostles' times it was often, perhaps usually, held in private dwellings. Tents have often been used for the purpose also, but the advantage

of a church building is that it gives reasonable protection from the elements, and from noise and other disturbances that would hinder a devout and orderly approach to God. So, to facilitate public worship, there is reason for using a church. What I now wish to do is to look at the practice of public worship as we find it in Scripture, so that we may see what are the principle features that make it acceptable to God.

1. THE TABERNACLE IN THE WILDERNESS.

The divine command in Exodus 25: 8 is the first divine appointment of public worship. God had in his providence turned the family of Israel into a nation, had redeemed them from bondage and brought them to Mount Sinai to make them a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. They were to be the organised visible church of the Old Testament period. To this end, they were to make a sanctuary, to be the focus of their worship, and God would at that sanctuary dwell among them. Omitting on this occasion much that might be said of that first place of worship, and proceeding to mark certain divinely appointed features of public worship, the FIRST feature is the light that the new sanctuary cast on *the infinite majesty of the God of Israel*.

The only persons who could enter the tabernacle were the priests, and the inner sanctuary, the Most Holy Place, where the Shekinah flame symbolised the presence of the Lord, was open only to the high priest on the annual occasion of the Day of Atonement. The divine majesty thus symbolised has not diminished, and God is still to be regarded with reverence and godly fear. Grace is needed, as Paul said, to serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear, "For our God is a consuming fire." The God of glory is to be approached in public worship with a deeper humility than subjects outwardly show before an earthly monarch. Underlying "going to church" should be the feeling that we are highly privileged, and that it is of "the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed." Our whole manner should indicate that we are approaching "the King of kings and Lord of lords".

The SECOND great feature of that early worship was *the provision for sinners to draw near*. There were priests, altars and offerings. Priests were the appointed intermediaries. The altars were the furnishings required for sacrifice and prayer, and the offerings were essential to the removing of sin. The message of the Most Holy Place was, "Approach to God is closed except to those who come in the appointed way," and the whole ceremonial was the only way. A beast must be slain, its blood poured on the altar, and its flesh burnt. In the case of the obligatory morning and evening

sacrifices, incense had also to be burnt to symbolise prayer made and accepted on the basis of sacrifice made. The simple meaning of it all was that a substitute must die before a sinner could be pardoned, accepted as righteous, and blessed.

This principle is as true as ever, so that in public worship, God's divine majesty should convince us that we must approach Him depending on the good offices of the one Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ. Something better than the old ceremonies has been provided: "In those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should put away sins." But Christ "after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; . . . for by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

Let us always remember that we come to public worship as sinners who need a Mediator to reconcile us to the God of righteousness and infinite majesty, and who know that Christ is that Mediator. Our sense of awe at thoughts of the great God we approach, will therefore be accompanied by true humility and a thankful looking to Jesus to give us acceptance with his Father in heaven.

2. THE TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM

We have considered two things that should show us how to approach public worship. I must now mention that, as far as the people were concerned, the tabernacle worship was conducted in the courtyard, in the open air. The sanctuary itself was more or less a tent, a portable structure agreeable to Israel's wandering progress at the time. Centuries later when King David had made his country secure, and he himself dwelt in a house of cedar, he spoke to Nathan of how incongruous it was that the ark of God still dwelt within curtains. He therefore wished to build a house as a permanent sanctuary for Jehovah to dwell in and bless Israel. His wish was not granted, but he was told that his son would build a house "for God's name" (2 Sam. 7). "For" means a house for the containing and manifesting of God's name, a repeat on a grander scale of the symbolism in the ceremonies of the tabernacle.

It may, however, well be asked, what is meant by "God's Name"? The expression occurs scores of times in the Bible. Among the Hebrews, a name had significance. In some way it describe the thing or person named. For example, Cain means "gotten or acquired". Eve said, "I have gotten a man from the Lord." The thing to be named made an impression on the beholder, and he or she tried to express that impression in a name. Eve,

thinking of the promised seed, took her first born to be that seed and felt such relief and pleasure that she called him Cain.

The name which described as much as possible of the object was thought to be the most appropriate one. But when the object is God, the greatest of all beings, it is not possible to do that. There is a partial description given by God Himself to Moses in Exodus 34: 5-7 — "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious . . . and to the fourth generation." Partial it is, though, and in view of the indescribable greatness of the Most High, the usage became to simply speak of "the Name of the Lord". "Name" being understood to imply God's whole nature and character inasfar as He has revealed it to us.

So, the building "for God's Name" was to be a place of public worship whose ceremonies like those of the tabernacle, would manifest God's nature and character to the worshippers. It would present the Lord as One apart from all creatures in his greatness and holiness, and also in his mercy and grace as a sin-pardoning and sin-cleansing Saviour.

The THIRD feature of public worship therefore, is that when we attend church, we are confronted with "*the Name of the Lord*" as Christ has revealed it; "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world." (John 17: 6). From the Bible read and preached, the worshippers should learn what God is, our natural relationship to Him, and the grace that calls us to a new relationship through repentance and faith in his Son. But it also has to be said, that to be a habitual worshipper and to be Christless marks that person as unbelieving and in great danger.

The temple provides another lesson. In asking Hiram, King of Tyre for assistance in the work, Solomon spoke of building "an house unto the Lord". Even small words are important in God's Word, and this word "unto" has its special meaning, namely, movement towards. Thus, "a house to the name of the Lord" meant that the place of worship was toward God and for no other purposes.

The FOURTH feature of public worship, therefore, means that this new building is *towards God*. It is not for socials, indoor games, choir practice, dramatic clubs or anything that is so common today in church buildings, but for worship. Nor is it for pre-worship conversations on matters quite unrelated to divine worship.

3. A NOTABLE PROPHECY.

At the end of his prophetic book, Isaiah speaks of Israel's return from Babylon and the rebuilding of the temple. The Jews are warned that mere

restoration of the worship would be insufficient. The worship had to be true, in view of who was being worshipped. They must not think that the temple was a sufficient dwelling place, because God is infinitely immense. His dwelling in the temple was an act of divine condescension, and Isaiah stressed this in the words in Isaiah 66: 1, 2: "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."

We know from the Scriptures that in Christ's day the Jews idolised the temple, and when they persecuted Stephen, they alleged that he had said that Jesus of Nazareth would destroy the temple. In his defence, Stephen quoted the text from Isaiah 66 to emphasise that if men would put the temple and the externals of worship in the place of spiritual worship, the Lord would not accept what they did.

Now Isaiah, clearly, was looking forward to the times of the Gospel, those we live in. Thus his words warn us also. Mark therefore that the FIFTH feature of public worship is that it is meant to be *the means by which church-attenders may become true worshippers of God through faith in his Son*. One must come to church needing the worship, viewing it as a means of knowing God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, and heartily giving God the glory. The visible church, sadly, has always had its quota of those who take pride in their church and churchgoing, and at the same time live in complete ignorance of Christ and his salvation. If there be any such present, let them take heed to the words, "to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."

4. THE FULLY REVEALED DWELLING PLACE.

In the Old Testament sanctuaries we found four features of public worship. Then in Isaiah 66 we saw God's disclosure of the insufficiency of any earthly sanctuary for a dwelling place, and a declaration that his true temple would be the hearts of saved sinners — "To this man will I look . . . my word." In the New Testament this fact became perfectly revealed, for example, "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God: as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (2 Cor. 6: 16).

In this we find the SIXTH feature, that *God alone is to be worshipped*.

It would have been a terrible sin to put an idol in Solomon's temple, and it is equally so to mix the public worship of God with any sort of idolatry. Be it noted, however, that one's god is what we trust in most, and what gives us most pleasure, and what can be seen everywhere is men making gods of self, other persons, wealth, fame, power, and much else. Christians have to be careful to keep free from all such idols. Their worship in public should therefore be dominated by the thought that God has saved them, and blessed them in many ways, not least by coming to dwell within them by his Spirit. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you" (1 Cor. 3: 16). The Lord is therefore their God and they are his people, owing Him and Him alone worship, love, obedience and service. Bear in mind too that idolatry can apply to such things as devotion to human learning, as was the sin of those who embraced rationalistic, biblical criticism a century ago. They forsook the God of Scripture for a false god which was unable to fully inspire Scripture, and brought about the spiritual ruin of multitudes of Scottish people. "Flee from idolatry" is a much needed warning.

Now, having given these six features of scriptural public worship, let me finish by saying, may this church, as long as it is used, contain as worshippers many men, women and children who would appreciate these features that I have attempted to set before you. And may they be marked among men by hearts and lives consistent with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Letter

by Rev. Neil Cameron

(This letter and others to follow were written to Donald MacMaster, Stronian, whose obituary, written by Rev. Neil Cameron, appeared in the September 1897 issue of the Free Presbyterian Magazine. They have come into our hands through Mr R. MacKinnon, Headmaster, Beaulieu, of whose wife Donald MacMaster was a great, grand uncle. We are grateful to him for sending them to us).

30 Willowbank Street,
Glasgow.

31st May 1893

My dear friend,

I am sorry that your health has not been so good for a while back, but "the Lord is just in all His ways, holy in all His works." I hope by the benefit of this wonderful weather you may get over your severe cough.

We are living in most dangerous times. The Free Church under this pernicious and soul-destroying Act has abandoned the truth of God and the distinctive principles of the Church of Scotland Free and though it has come to "Bible or no Bible", as the Rev. Mr McCaskill, Dingwall, said in a speech delivered in Glasgow a year last February, yet these men don't seem to be prepared to hold by the truth and to let lies go to their own place. Rev. Mr Macfarlane, Raasay, alone of all the ministers at the Assembly stood to the truth and principles of our church. He broke his connection entirely with the Declaratory Act church but is still and intends to be a Minister of the Free Church according to what the Free Church held forth at the Disruption. The Kilfinnan (Tighnabruaich) congregation last Monday evening broke their connection with Dr Rainy and his Voluntary Declaratory Act Church and took their stand along with Mr Macfarlane.

There is to be a meeting at Inverness on the 13th June at which all those who intend to refuse to follow a church which forsook the truth, shall join together in signing a Bond of Union, and shall be prepared to defend their persons, the truth and the principles of the Reformation against men who are determined to rob us of the truth of God and I expect that men will be sent forth from that conference to enlighten the people throughout the Highlands.

I saw Miss Cameron and Mrs Boyd today. Miss Cameron is not strong just now. The state of the cause is a heavy burden to her.

Remember me kindly to all "the few" at Strontian.

With fond regards to yourself.

I am,

Your aff. friend,

Neil Cameron.

P.S. I sent you the Northern Chronicle of last week to let you see what the elders in the North intend to do. — N.C.

Christ in the Psalms

The Psalms are full of Christ. Christ is the speaker in many of them, and of many of them He alone is the subject. "The most ignorant and senseless objection ever made to the Psalms," says the Rev Dr George, "is that they are 'Christless'. The truth is that no book in the Bible reveals Christ with such fulness as is done in 'the book of Psalms', not excepting the Gospel according to John or the Epistle to the Hebrews." "Truly,

I believe there is one view of Christ," said the Rev Dr Cooke, "that can be discovered only in the Psalms, I mean His inward life. The Holy Spirit has there laid open the inmost thoughts, sorrows, and conflicts of our Lord."

As there is so much ignorance, and particularly at present so much misrepresentation, on this subject, we shall summarise, in the words of Dr George, a few things about Christ that we may learn from the wonderful Book of Psalms —

1. His Divinity. Ps 14: 6, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." (Compared with Heb. 1: 8). Psalm 110: 1, "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." (Compared with Matt. 22: 42-45).

2. His eternal Sonship. Ps 2: 7, "I will declare the decree: the Lord said unto me, Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten thee." (Compared with Heb. 1: 5).

3. His Incarnation. Ps. 8: 5, "For Thou hast made Him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned Him with glory and honour." (Compared with Heb. 2: 9). Ps. 11: 7, "Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me." (Compared with Heb. 10: 5-7).

4. His mediatorial offices. (a) His prophetic office. Ps. 40: 9,10, "I have preached righteousness in the great congregation," etc. Ps. 22: 22, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren." (Compared with Heb. 2: 12). (b) His priestly office. Ps. 110: 4, "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent; Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec." (Compared with Heb. 7: 17). (c) His Kingly office. Ps. 45: 6. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of Thy kingdom is a right sceptre." (Compared with Heb. 1: 8). Ps. 110: 1, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." (Compared with Matt. 22: 42-45; Heb. 1: 13). See also Ps. 22: 28, and Ps. 72 throughout.

5. His betrayal. Ps. 41: 9, "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me." (Compared with John 13: 18).

6. His agony in the garden. Ps. 22: 2, "O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night-season, and am not silent." (Compared with Heb. 5: 7).

7. His trial. Ps. 35: 11, "False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge things that I knew not." (Compared with Matt. 26: 59, 60).

8. His rejection. Ps. 22: 6, "But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people." (Compared with Matt. 27: 21-23;

Luke 23: 18-23). Ps. 148: 22, "The stone which the builders refused is become the headstone of the corner." (Compared with Matt. 21: 42; Acts 4: 11, 12).

9. His crucifixion. Ps. 22 throughout, also Ps. 69. (Compared with the Gospels). The scenes attending the crucifixion are described to the minutest particulars. The mockery, the shaking the head, the parting the garments, the casting lots on the vesture, the thirst, the vinegar and the gall, the pierced hands and feet, the cry of the forsaken, the committing of His spirit to God, and the "It is finished", as many read the last verse of Ps. 22.

10. His burial and resurrection. Ps. 16: 9-11, "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life," etc. (Compared with Acts 2: 25-31).

11. His ascension. Ps. 47: 5, "God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet." (Compared with Acts 1: 11 and I Thess. 4: 16). Ps. 68: 18, "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." (Compared with Eph. 4: 8-10). Ps. 24: 7-10, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in," etc. (Compared with Rev. 5: 6-14).

12. His second coming. Ps. 1: 3,4, "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence." "He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people." Ps. 98: 6-9, "With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the Lord, the King." "Before the Lord; for He cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall He judge the world, and the people with equity." (Compared with Matt. 24: 31; I Cor. 15: 52).

Well, said Jesus: It is written "in the Psalms concerning me". "The sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow," are here unfolded, and these "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" (Col. 3: 16) are replete with Christ. If any one will examine and compare these passages, he will readily believe that when Paul wrote, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom," it was as if he had said, "Memorise the Psalms." — *Christian Banner*.

The truths of revelation are so high as to exceed our comprehension, but, at the same time, the Holy Spirit has accommodated them so far to our capacity, as to render all Scripture profitable for instruction.

John Calvin

The Constitutional Aspect of the Declaratory Act

by Rev. D. Beaton

In our Deed of Separation the consitutional aspect of the Declaratory Act is very clearly set forth in the following words: "That by passing of the Declaratory Act of 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 standard 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 the 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." In making this charge of violating the Constitution of the Free Church, Free Presbyterians have appealed to the fact that this Act was passed under the Barrier Act of 1697. The title of this famous Act indicates its purpose: "Act anent the method of passing Acts of Assembly of general concern to the Church and for preventing of Innovations." The relevant part of the Act bearing on the subject under discussion may now be quoted: "Considering the frequent practice of former Assemblies of this Church, and that it will mightily conduce to the exact obedience of the Acts of Assemblies, that General Assemblies be very deliberate in making the same, and that the whole Church have a previous knowledge thereof, and their opinion be had therein, and for preventing any sudden alteration or innovation, or other prejudice to the Church, in either doctrine or worship, or discipline, or government thereof, now happily established; do, therefore, appoint, enact, and declare, that before any General Assembly of this Church shall pass any Acts, which are to be binding rules and constitutions to the Church, the same Acts be first proposed as overtures to the Assembly, and, being by them passed as such, be remitted to the consideration of the several Presbyteries of this Church, and their opinions and consent reported by their Commissioners to the next General Assembly following, who may pass the same in Acts, if the more general opinion of the

Church thus had agreed thereunto." There are two points in this Act which have a direct bearing on the violation of the Free Church's Constitution by the Declaratory Act. (1) The Barrier Act expressly states the kind of Acts with which it deals, viz., Acts "which are to be binding rules and constitutions to the Church." These words are plain enough, and lend themselves to only one interpretation, viz., that Acts which the Church sends down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act are meant to be "Acts which are to be binding rules and constitutions to the Church," otherwise the collected wisdom of the Church, in General Assembly gathered, is betraying its utter incompetence to deal with legislation. (2) It is also clear from the wording of the Barrier Act that, while it was intended "for preventing any sudden alteration or innovation or other prejudice to the Church, in either doctrine or worship, or discipline, or government thereof," yet, though no doubt it was meant to hinder "sudden" alteration or innovation, it gave a significance to any alteration or innovation in doctrine or worship passed under it that it would not otherwise have but for the fact of having passed through the Barrier Act. It is this aspect of the Barrier Act which, it may safely be surmised, its framers never intended, that aided the wreckers of the Westminster Confessional doctrine in the Free Church of Scotland. The founders of the Free Presbyterian Church, while holding that the majority in passing the Declaratory Act were acting *ultra vires*, inasmuch as a use was made of the Barrier Act for which it was never intended, at the same time asserted that the Declaratory Act, being inconsistent with the Confession, violated the Constitution of the Free Church. In taking up positions seemingly at variance, there was no inconsistency. Both positions were tenable and consistent with the real facts of the situation created by the ecclesiastical policy of one of the astutest ecclesiastical leaders Scotland ever had, though, alas! his gifts were prostituted to a bad cause. It is true, of course, that in 1894 an Act was passed in which it is enacted "that the Assembly hereby declare that the statements of doctrine contained in the said [Declaratory] Act are not thereby imposed upon any of the Church's office-bearers as part of the standards of the Church; but that those who are licensed or ordained to office in this Church, in answering the questions and subscribing the formula are entitled to do so in view of the said Declaratory Act." This was only a makeshift, and deceived only those who wished to keep their eyes shut. When Principal Rainy found the Free Church in the serious position in which she was placed by the passing of the Declaratory Act his subtle brain immediately set to work on formulating some method whereby the Declaratory Act would not appear to have the formidable

position it really had under the Barrier Act, he fell on what must have appeared to himself and others a real inspiration in his ecclesiastical need. According to this presentation of the case, the Declaratory Act was not the serious piece of legislation that some men took it to be; it was only a "relieving Act." This phrase did ignoble service in many a speech, and captured the imagination of the facile followers of Dr Rainy to such a degree that those who thought differently were laughed to scorn. A relieving Act! What else was it but a relieving Act? It did not need Dr Rainy's subtle brain to coin this phrase, but there was one thing he ought to have laid a little more emphasis on to meet the real situation, and that was that this relieving Act relieved office-bearers from doctrines which were embedded in the constitution of the Free Church. The fact that it was a relieving Act did not nullify the damaging fact that it violated the Constitution of the Free Church.

A number who were opposed to the Declaratory Act still remained in the Church, and argued that they were not under it. This plausible argument ignored the working of ecclesiastical law. Take, for instance, a supposed case — The members of a whole Presbytery, with one or two exceptions, might refuse to licence a student because he wished to take advantage of the Declaratory Act, the case would be appealed to the Synod by the dissentients, and supposing the majority of the Synod supported the Presbytery, the matter would probably be appealed to the Assembly. The Assembly, in dealing with the case, had no option but to ask the Presbytery to licence the student and to give him the full benefit of any relief the Declaratory Act, its own Act, gave him. No amount of ecclesiastical argumentation could alter this fact, that the Assembly had passed this Act for such a purpose, and no amount of dissents could alter the fact that it was not an inoperative piece of legislation, but operative. Students, therefore, must be licensed and ministers ordained who were in the fullest sympathy with the Declaratory Act, and all the arguments of those who were opposed to it but yet remained in the Church betrayed their incapacity to realise the real logic of the ecclesiastical situation.

It has been argued by those who remained in the Church in 1893 and afterwards refused to enter the Union in 1900, that Free Presbyterians should be silent about being under the Declaratory Act, for (1) the Rev. D. Macfarlane remained in the Church a year after the Declaratory Act was passed, and during that year accepted a call to Raasay. In answer to this we have only to remind our readers that Mr Macfarlane explicitly stated in a letter to the press, reprinted in the Free Presbyterian Magazine, vol. XXVIII, p. 150, that it was at the request of the Constitutional party,

who were opposed to the Act, that he remained in the Church, in the hope that the Declaratory Act would be repealed at the Assembly of 1893. But even though, it could be proved that Mr Macfarlane was under the Declaratory Act for a year, which he denied, for the reasons stated in the forementioned letter, that does not prove that the Free Presbyterian Church was; for in the formation of the Free Presbyterian Church there was a complete break by Messrs Macfarlane and Macdonald with the Church which passed the Declaratory Act. (2) It has been argued that the Free Presbyterian Church never repealed this Act. One scarcely wishes to believe that those who use this argument are serious, as it shows an exceptionally low mental acumen, but, as it has been used time and again, and by those of whom better things might be expected, it is necessary to point out for the reason above stated that the Free Presbyterian Church, in making a complete break with the Church of the Declaratory Act, and in going back to the attainments of the Disruption Church, was under no necessity to repeal a law which never had a place on its statute book. The charge, therefore, that the Free Presbyterian Church is still under the Declaratory Act because it did not repeal the same is a piece of inconsequent reasoning that no man who wishes to be credited with even a minimum of logical acumen should ever dream of using. It was entirely different with the Free Church, which claimed to have a continuity with the Free Church up to 1892 and onwards. They were in duty bound to repeal the Declaratory Act in accordance with their profession at the earliest possible opportunity. That opportunity came in 1900, but it is a matter of history that it was not repealed until after the property case had been decided, and it is also a matter of history that the reason of this delay was owing to the question of the Church property then in dispute between the United Free and Free Churches. It has often been a question of interest to us: Supposing there had been no Union, would an effort ever have been made by those who afterwards formed the Free Church to have it repealed? We are aware we are dealing with hypothetical propositions, but propositions which nevertheless are very interesting. In the famous Church Case, Lord James of Hereford put a very interesting question to Mr Salvesen, one of the Free Church counsel: "Supposing," he said, "the majority of the United Free Church said: 'We take that view, and we will administer the Trusts according to their original form.' What would prevent their taking possession of and seeking to administer the property?" To which Mr Salvesen replied: "I think they would have to rescinded the Union, because our view is that the Union necessarily involves the abandonment of the principles of the Free Church; but if they

rescind the Union and came back to the Church, of course they would be entitled to participate along with the Pursuers [i.e., the Free Church.]” In other words, had there been no Union the Free Church would not have been able to claim the property on the pleas she put forward in the case. Such, at anyrate, seems to be the inference that may be drawn from the opinions of the learned counsel of the Free Church.

It was because those who afterwards formed the Free Presbyterian Church believed that it was impossible to remain in the Free Church without being bound by the Declaratory Act, with its anti-Scriptural, anti-Confessional teaching, that they left the Free Church as then constituted. Events have proved that they were wisely guided in this matter. Even from a worldly standpoint any little sacrifice made for the cause of truth has been made up more than a hundred-fold. The Lord has owned the stand made in 1893 in the interests of His truth, and there are many now at rest who rejoiced to see the day of deliverance when they experienced a joy which must have been akin to that felt by Israel when they left the bondage of Egypt forever behind.

The Dyke

by Rev. J. A. T. van Dorp

A confessional document is like a dyke. A dyke is to keep out the destructive inundation. Who has not heard of the legendary Dutch boy who supposedly plugged the tiny crack in the dyke with his finger for many hours until help arrived and so prevented a destructive inundation? An interesting story and although a mere legend it can teach an important lesson, such as the need to immediately rectify small faults.

A fault that developed in the national church scene in the Netherlands and did not immediately get rectified was in the probationers' subscription of 1816. Until then subscription to the constitution had been total. Then it was changed to: "that we accept in good faith and heartily believe the doctrine, which according to God's holy word, is contained in the accepted forms of unity of the Netherland reformed church". At least that is how it translates into English. The words that made the breach in the dyke were "WHICH ACCORDING TO GOD'S HOLY WORD". This clause of course appears perfectly in order and that was no doubt a great part of the trouble. It appears that no person could see anything wrong with this form of subscription. At least not until many years later. Meanwhile the water of error began to seep through the dyke. If anyone

would point out to liberals that their doctrine was not according to the three forms of unity then they would not be slow to refer to the undertaking they had given in their subscription to "believe the doctrine, WHICH ACCORDING TO GOD'S HOLY WORD, is contained in the accepted forms of unity". In other words the three forms of unity were qualified and modified by their personal interpretation of the scriptures. Dr C. N. Impeta, in his book *Kaart van Kerkelijk Nederland 1972* states that "Through the changed probationers' formula it was not clear whether the preachers held themselves bound to the confession of the church BECAUSE or IN SO FAR AS this agreed with the holy scriptures. In reality this meant liberty of doctrine". (p27)

Within a few years the trickle through the dyke became a veritable flood to the deep grief of many true believers. One deeply concerned minister writes: "Already in the first meeting of Synod 1816 a regulation for the examination and admission to the teaching office in the reformed church was drafted and introduced. This requires the probationer to subscribe 'that we accept in good faith and heartily believe the doctrine, which according to God's holy word, is contained in the accepted forms of unity of the Netherlands reformed church'. This paragraph has been compiled with so much cunning and subtlety, that the wise and good father Krieger (the president of the Synod) surely not suspecting any evil, did not notice it, and many after him did not perceive it. Everyone who carefully considers this declaration, will see clearly that it does not say, THAT THE ARTICLES OF OUR CHURCH ARE ACCORDING TO GOD'S WORD, but with reservation, THAT ONE BELIEVES THAT DOCTRINE WHICH ACCORDING TO GOD'S WORD, IS CONTAINED IN THE ARTICLES OF OUR CHURCH. The subscription is therefore not made, because the articles are recognised as agreeable with God's word, but in so far as they are agreeable with God's word. Such a subscription can be made by every Christian faction, the papists can subscribe it, yes even the Jews can do it. If they had used the words IN SO FAR AS, then every person would have noticed it and every one would have been on their guard: but now we call this way of acting cunning and subtle, and a secret undermining and rejection of our reformed doctrine". (*Documenta Reformatoria*, Vol. 2, p.114, letter of Rev. Molenaar). This letter was written by Rev. Molenaar to his reformed brethren in 1827.

The question is — Can anyone see a parallel between these events of the 19th century and what happened in Scotland in 1989? The APC constitutional clause — in so far as each and every one of the documents is consistent with the holy scriptures — may not be of the same covert con-

struction but it certainly is of the same overt tendency to let in the murky waters of false doctrine and practice.

In the Netherlands that occurred within a few years of the new subscription clause being introduced. Rev. Molenaar wrote his warning letter in 1827. By then the lowlands were inundated with the murky waters of modernism. Was there no champion to turn the tide? By this time it must be remembered it was no longer a matter of endeavouring to plug up an insignificant crack that could become a threat. The LIBERTY OF DOCTRINE CLAUSE, as it could be called, was doing the work it was meant to do. That was to give liberty to teach according to one's views and not according to the constitution. Modernism extended eventually to the theological faculties of the universities where supernatural revelation, miracles, the bodily resurrection of Christ and the trustworthiness of the scriptures were denied.

Heroic attempts were made by various ministers, notably Rev. Hendrik de Cock of Ulrum to stem the rising tide of modernism. However his witness on the side of the truth was at a tremendous cost to him of suspension from the work of the ministry, loss of reputation, financial hardship and even of liberty. He spent three months in gaol like a common criminal. How like his Master and Lord he had become. "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord" (Mat. 10: 24). A number of faithful colleagues and numerous godly people throughout the land shared in these persecutions which led eventually to the secession in 1834. On the 18th October 1834 the congregation at Ulrum signed the Act of Secession and Return; i.e. they returned to the principles of the reformation from which the national church had departed. A movement that snowballed and brought about a division that still has not been healed. A schism is no doubt a terrible wrench, the responsibility for which must be born by those determined to make a leak in the dyke.

It is interesting that the terminology chosen by the APC in 1989 is similar to the wording used by the innovators of 1816 fame in The Hague. Only the 1816 clause was much more ambiguous; a fact the godly came to rue much when the implications became clear. Had the "IN SO FAR AS" wording been used the crack in the dyke would have been too conspicuous and would not have been allowed to remain.

Book Reviews

WARNINGS TO THE CHURCHES by J. C. Ryle. Banner of Truth Trust, 171 pp, £1.95.

This selection of Ryle's writings was first published by the Banner of

Truth Trust in 1967 and is now reprinted. Like all Ryle's writings they are plain and edifying. Although they were addressed to men in his own day, yet much of what Ryle had to say has relevance for our own day. In dealing with the subject of the fallibility of ministers he had to say: "Your minister may be a man of God indeed, and worthy of all honour for his preaching and practice; but do not make a pope of him. Do not place his word side by side with the Word of God. Do not spoil him by flattery. Do not let him suppose that he can make no mistakes. Do not lean your whole weight on his opinion, or you may find to your cost that he can err." In assessing the situation in Britain he warned that the tide of events seemed to be running strongly against Protestantism and in favour of Rome. He goes on: "I am no prophet. I know not where we are drifting. But at the rate we are going, I think it quite within the verge of possibility that in a few years the Church of England may be re-united to the Church of Rome. The Crown of England may be once more on the head of a Papist. Protestantism may be formally repudiated. A Romish Archbishop may once more preside at Lambeth Palace. Mass may be once more said at Westminster Abbey and St Pauls."

We are glad to commend this paperback.

D.B.M.

THE GODLY MAN'S PICTURE by Thomas Watson. **Banner of Truth Trust, 252 pp, £3.50.**

Thomas Watson's writings are well known and highly appreciated by exercised Christians. The Banner of Truth Trust has already published several of his works including *A Body of Divinity*, *The Ten Commandments* and *The Lord's Prayer*. In this paperback we find Watson showing the characteristics of a godly man on the basis of the text in Psalm 32: 6 "For this shall every one that is godly pray unto Thee." He gives the following twenty four marks of a godly man: He is (1) a man of knowledge; (2) a man moved by faith; (3) a man fired by love; (4) a man like God; (5) a man careful about the worship of God; (6) a man who serves God, not men; (7) a man who prizes Christ; (8) a man who weeps; (9) a man who loves the Word; (10) a man who has the Spirit of God residing in him; (11) a man of humility; (12) a man of prayer; (13) a man of sincerity; (14) a heavenly man; (15) a zealous man; (16) a patient man; (17) a thankful man; (18) a man who loves the saints; (19) a man who does not indulge himself in any sin; (20) a man who is good in his relationships; (21) a man who does spiritual things in a spiritual manner; (22) a man thoroughly trained in religion; (23) a man who walks with God; and

(24) a man who strives to be an instrument for making others godly.

Here is a treatise well suited for self-examination. Let every professed Christian buy it and test himself or herself by it.

D.B.M.

CALVIN'S WISDOM by Graham Miller. Banner of Truth Trust, 392 pp, £14.95.

This well-bound Banner of Truth Trust hardback is an anthology arranged alphabetically. It is drawn from the writings of John Calvin. The source reference is given with each quotation so it can act as a reference book to Calvin's views on all the subjects with which he dealt. The Rev. J. Graham Miller, who drew up the anthology, states: "The aim is to let Calvin speak for himself, and for the reader to find for himself what I have found, 'good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over'. It is expected that the serious reader will gain most benefit by taking one theme or sub-theme a day, giving time for assimilation and reflection. In this way the Anthology may prove an ideal primer in Reformed doctrine and practice, worship and churchmanship, personal and social life. And it will serve the reader for the best part of a year if read in this way." Here is a volume then full to overflowing with Calvin's views on Scriptural themes. It should prove especially beneficial to ministers and divinity students so that they may learn from one who was truly a master in Israel, but should prove edifying also to other readers.

D.B.M.

THE WORKS OF GEORGE SWINNOCK. Banner of Truth Trust. Set of 5 Volumes, £49.95 (set), £10.95 per volume.

The volume sent for review is Volume 5 of this set of the Works of George Swinnock. The works of Swinnock have been long out of print and the Banner of Truth Trust is to be congratulated on making them available to readers once more. Swinnock lived in the seventeenth century — a time celebrated for the noted Puritan Divines which it produced. Like many of his godly contemporaries, he suffered in the Great Ejection of 1662.

The fifth volume of this set is taken up with two treatises, one on Regeneration, the other on the condemnation of the Wicked. The first treatise is entitled, The Door of Salvation opened by the Key of Regeneration, and is based on John 3: 3. The second treatise is entitled, The Sinner's Last Sentence and is based on Matthew 25: 41, 42. As was common with the Puritans, Swinnock not only opens up the doctrine of regeneration

so that none need be in any doubt of its true nature, but also applies the doctrine to the heart of his readers lest they should fall short of obtaining this great change wrought in them by God, the Holy Ghost. It abounds with solemn warnings to the ungodly.

The second treatise, as one would expect, is a most solemn one dealing as it does with the pronouncement of the sentence: "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." In it he brings out the heinous nature of sin as meriting such a punishment. He seeks to show what banishment from Christ's presence will mean for the condemned soul, that is, the awfulness of a lost eternity. As well as showing how dreadful will be the condition of such as live in sins of commission, he also points out the danger of sins of omission and that such sins are damnable. He enters very fully into these matters in order that sinners might be warned and that they might flee from the wrath to come. How much good might the men of the present generation obtain if only they were addicted to reading the noted works of the puritan divines.

D.B.M.

PREACHERS WITH POWER by Douglas Kelly. **Banner of Truth Trust**, 175 pp, £9.95.

This recently published *Banner of Truth* hardback seeks to assess the preaching of four noted preachers of the 19th Century in the Southern States of America. These men were Daniel Baker, James Henley Thornwell, Benjamin Morgan Palmer and John L. Girardeau. Brief accounts of their lives are given but it is with the character of their preaching that Douglas Kelly principally deals. All of these preachers were greatly used of the Lord in the ingathering of souls to His Kingdom and in the building up of believers in the faith of the gospel. The places where they laboured were greatly favoured in having the gospel so powerfully preached in their midst.

The lives of Thornwell and Palmer have already been reprinted by the *Banner of Truth* and some readers will be acquainted with them. However, this volume sets out the strengths and also the weaknesses — of which there appear to be very few — of these four noted servants of Christ. The aim of the author seems to be that of preaching which was displayed by these men would once again manifest itself in the preaching of the ministers of this generation. We warmly commend the book to ministers and divinity students.

D.B.M.

Eastern Europe Mission

by Rev. D. A. Ross

The mission journey to Eastern Europe by myself and Mr A. Macrae, Dundee, last October, was accomplished without too much difficulty. At one border there was a heated dispute between border guards and a church charity group from Switzerland; but at the same time we ourselves were not without our troubles with another difficult border guard who, if he had had his way, would have retained our customs papers, so essential for border crossings. However, in the Lord's kind providence, we retrieved our papers after much silent prayer to the Most High and protracted, determined pleadings with the guard, who seemed to us to be a very mischievous person. We had arrived at this border at 5.30 pm, after having been on the road from early morning, but it was 4.30 am before we finally got to bed in a hotel a few miles beyond the border. While it may seem to some that we were hard done by, our experience was nothing in comparison to what others have to put up with. A local young man told us that he was three days at a border, which seems to be a common experience for heavy vehicle drivers. Thankfully, for us, other borders were easily crossed and border officials generally were very helpful.

Having travelled the usual 5000 miles and more, from the time we left Scotland to our return, we are thankful to the Most High for granting safe travel.

As well as having had the opportunity to preach the gospel, we delivered our load of goods at various places, on a journey that took us through Hungary, Ukraine, Moldavia, Romania and Czechoslovakia. There is, we believe, genuine appreciation for the goods we delivered which included the usual Bibles, religious literature, medicines, food and clothing.

At Kishinev, the capital of Moldavia we gave a quantity of clothing, food, medicines and literature to an orphanage which has a christian teacher involved in running it. The staff were deeply appreciative and pleaded with us to return with more help if possible. Particular reference was made to the Mother's Catechism in Russian as that which would be useful among the Russian speaking children in this and other orphanages. It is hoped, God willing, that Alisdair Macrae, Dundee, and Edward Ross from Lochcarron, will go to Moldavia in March with a load of aid and religious literature for the orphanages. While the van for transporting the load to Moldavia will be donated, it is evident that there are numerous other expenses in connection with such a mercy mission.

There is undoubtedly much need for the Church to be involved, we

believe, in the distribution of material help, but our principal aim is to spread the Word of God. Indeed, one Romanian pastor said to me, "The important matter is that sound religious literature be sent to Romania. We managed, prior to the revolution, to obtain adequate provision for our bodies and continue to do so. Please send us Bibles especially."

A Pastor in Hungary writes, "Thank you very much for the gift of Bibles you gave us. Out of the hundred, I have given 80 to the Hungarian Reformed Church in the Ukraine, and reserved 20 here for distribution . . . your gift is welcome. Before the revolution our problem was lack of Bibles, now in these days of inflation it is lack of money. You might be interested to know that the monthly income of an old age pensioner would buy only about nine Family Bibles (though active church members have a fifty per cent discount), and the amount of money which church members undertake to pay annually to the church would only buy half a Bible. So you can see how much we appreciate your gift. — I would like as many as you can send."

Another pastor writes, "At the present time here in Hungary there is a great need for Bibles free of charge. We can evangelize freely anywhere and everywhere we want, and we have brothers and sisters in Christ who evangelize in schools and orphanages. For this work we need tracts and Bibles free of charge. But here we do not have a possibility to give financial support for the work." The Free Presbyterian Church is deeply indebted to the Trinitarian Bible Society for the help it gave for our last visit, providing a large grant of 2000 Hungarian Bibles. We hope that they will be in a position to continue such valuable work. A Bible in Hungary costs about £1.50, which gives some idea of the amount of money received by the old age pensioners mentioned above.

One pastor in Kiev, writing to the Free Presbyterian Church in connection with our last visit to the Ukraine, says, "We are very happy to pass on to you, via your servants the brother Donald Ross and the brother Alexander Macrae, our sincere thanks for the humanitarian help which you sent to our church. We also thank the Lord Jesus Christ, that in this difficult time for our country, He has disposed your hearts to generous sacrifice. Your help is a big support to us at this time."

The Mother's Catechism which was translated into Russian and which we took to the Ukraine had a good reception and we hope it will be much used to increase Bible knowledge. We hope, God willing, to proceed early this year with the printing of the Shorter Catechism with proof texts in Russian. The translation was done by the Russian Reformation Foundation.

We trust that all who have so liberally contributed in various ways to our mission work in Eastern Europe, will feel that the work is well worth their continued support, and we hope that others will join them in helping to help others. Above everything pray that the Lord would graciously bless His Word which we distributed, and also the preaching as opportunity arises. Even if we were to do everything possible in our seeking to comply with the commission, "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand," Ecc. 11: 6, that would not of itself bring one sinner to Christ. Not until God by His Holy Spirit breathes on the dry bones can we expect to see any fruit from the sowing of the good seed of the kingdom. The promise is that we shall reap sooner or later. "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Psalm 126: 6.

Notes and Comments

Royal Marriage Separation

The marriage separation of the Prince and Princess of Wales has brought to the fore questions about the Acts of Parliament affecting Royal Marriages. The Royal Marriages Act of 1772 requires the Sovereign's consent in all Royal Marriages. According to Press reports, the Queen favours the repeal of this Act. The Act of Settlement of 1701 establishing our Protestant throne requires that any member of the Royal Family who marries a Roman Catholic forfeits their claim in line of succession to the throne. A newspaper report said that the Queen and the Prime Minister agree that this Act is objectionable in this day and age. It is also reported that legislation is being drafted to alter or repeal these laws. If this is so, it is a serious matter for Great Britain, as the Act of Settlement ensures the continuance of the Protestant constitution and succession. It is to be hoped that any attempt to remove these safeguards will be defeated in Parliament. While it would please the Roman Catholic hierarchy, it would be detrimental to Britain's best interests.

Sabbath Trading

The European Court has ruled that Britain's 'Sunday' trading laws do not contravene the Treaty of Rome. Notwithstanding this, most of the large supermarkets have continued to defy the law of the land and open for trade on the Lord's Day. The law breakers will not cease agitating until they get a law framed to suit themselves and the Government, sadly,

is only too willing to accommodate their wishes and introduce appropriate legislation. There is, however, a God in heaven whose law it is that is being violated and he will yet deal with the Sabbath-breakers.

Euthanasia

An attempt is being made by the parents of a young man injured in the Hillsborough Stadium disaster in 1989 to get permission from the Courts to withdraw medical care, including the removal of artificial food from him. The young man is in what is called, a persistent vegetative state. The Court of Appeal granted permission and if the appeal to the House of Lords against the decision is not successful, the patient will be allowed to die. Should it be so, the law of the land will have moved a step nearer legalising euthanasia, as this is a test case. On the other hand, if the House of Lords goes against the Court of Appeal's decision, then it will be a set-back for the pro-euthanasia lobby.

Romanist Nun Resigns Professorship

An American nun recently resigned as Professor of Nursing at Edinburgh University over a false Ph.D. claim. She had been Professor since 1983. She is thought to have returned to her convent in the U.S.A. A pervert to Rome she became a Franciscan Nun and followed a nursing and teaching career. This experience ought to make Edinburgh University more careful when making appointments and should make the University doubly careful over claims from Romanist sources.

Church Notes

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

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

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

Zimbabwe: At Bulawayo on 9th March at 2 p.m.

Western: At Laide on 9th March at 6 p.m.

Commemoration Meeting in Edinburgh, 25th May, 1993

In the notice on this event written in the December issue of the F.P. Magazine, reference was made to friends outwith the Free Presbyterian Church who might wish to attend this meeting. As entry to the Assembly Hall will be by ticket only, any such interested friends can apply for tickets to:- Mr Alastair MacRae, 4 Laxford Lane, Broughty Ferry, Dundee DD5 3HF.

D. McL.

Greenock Congregation

At a meeting of the Kirk Session of the Greenock Congregation on 23rd December 1992 it was decided that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper be dispensed in the congregation once yearly on the 1st Sabbath of October (D.V.), the March Communion to be discontinued.

A. MacLennan, Kirk Session Clerk.

Outer Isles Presbytery — Letter to Prime Minister

The Rt Hon John Major PC MP,
Prime Minister,
10 Downing Street,
London SW1A 2AA.

Dear Prime Minister,

Maastricht Treaty

When our Presbytery met recently I was instructed to write and appeal to you not to proceed with the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty. Our great fear is that ratification will lead, in due course, to the total loss of our national sovereignty, our absorption into a European federal state and, above all, to the loss of our dearly-bought religious and civil liberties.

The fact that the great majority of the nations in the European community are predominantly Roman Catholic seems to be either overlooked or regarded as of no significance. It should, in our view, be regarded as of momentous importance. Chancellor Kohl, President Mitterand, M. Delors, etc., are all faithful Roman Catholics and, consistent with their beliefs, their **first** allegiance is to the Roman Pontif. The Vatican, we believe, is the major power behind the movement towards a federal Europe and, as ever, it has its own interests principally in view. The Presbytery urges you not to dismiss as far-fetched and fanciful the view that the aim is to establish another holy Roman Empire with the Pope as its head.

Official figures, available in the House of Commons, indicate that there are within the European Community as presently constituted 187 million Roman Catholics and only 51 million Protestants. Any European State would thus be a Roman Catholic state and what that would mean for other churches is clearly stated in the June, 1948, issue of the *Civiltà Cattolica* (the official organ of the Jesuit Order): "the Roman Catholic Church, convinced through her divine prerogatives of being the only true church, must demand the right of freedom for herself alone, because such a right can only be possessed by truth, never by error. . . . Consequently, in a state where the majority of people are Catholic, the Church will require

that legal existence be denied to error, and that if religious minorities actually exist, they shall have only a *de facto* existence without opportunity to spread their beliefs.”

When, in the past, the church of Rome wielded power in this land she, as you will know, persecuted to the death all who dared to differ with her. As she still boasts her *semper eadem* we cannot be other than apprehensive when our Government appears to be quite determined to press on with the ratification of this Treaty.

On behalf of the Presbytery,

Yours faithfully,

Rev. John MacLeod, Clerk.

Gospel Tracts

The Church's Outreach Committee wish to draw the attention of our congregations to the fact that it has produced a number of gospel tracts. These are available from the Bookroom in Glasgow, free of charge, to any members in our congregations who can make profitable use of them.

A few kept in your car or in your pocket or handbag could in providence be helpful to some soul or souls.

(Rev.) G. G. Hutton, Convener.

Ingwenya Mission Appeal

WANTED URGENTLY

Teachers for John Tallach Secondary School

Qualifications: University degree with teaching subjects suitable for school level, and/or Teacher Training Diploma.

Contract: 2 years.

Mission teachers from overseas **may** be asked to (1) take Bible and/or English as well as their own subjects. (2) Assist with extra-mural activities, e.g. Sabbath School, dispensary.

Reasonable accommodation with water and electricity is provided.

Applicants should apply as soon as possible. It takes 3-6 months to get a work permit.

Matron and Nursing Staff Appeal

A Matron and Nursing Staff are required for Sengera 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 acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:—

Zimbabwe Famine Relief: I. & M. MacR. £200; Stornoway Congregation (1992) £1,342.

Malawi Famine Relief: W.C. £50.

Malawi Church Building (Ngabo): W.C. £50.

Centenary (Publication): A. McP. £60; D.C.A. £10.

Centenary Commemoration: A. McP. £60; W.C. £25; D.C.A. £10; Miss C.M. £20.

Kenya Mission: Stornoway Friend £60.

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

Bracadale-Strath: Harvest Thanksgiving Coll. £115.56 for T.B.S. per D.G.B.; Anon £20, Anon £5, both for Fabric Fund, both per J.C.; Anon £20 for Centenary Fund, per Rev. G.G.H.

Breasclete: Anon £20 for Sust. Fund and £20 for Door Collection; Friend of the Cause £20 for Sust. Fund and £20 for Door Collection.

Dumbarton: Miss C. MacL. £20 for Congr. Funds, by post.

Edinburgh: Anon, Inverness £50 for Sust. Fund; Friend, Ardneaskeen £5 for Communion Expenses.

Glasgow: Anon £10 for Communion Expenses; Anon £5 for Bus Fund; Anon £10, S/S Coll. per R.A.C.; In memory of a loving brother, £30 for T.B.S.; Anon £30 for Eastern Europe; N.H., Lochgilphead £10, 3 envelopes — no numbers, £30, all for Sust. Fund.

Inverness: Anon £50; £20; £10; £20; £20 all for Sust. Fund; Anon £20; Anon £5, both for Minibus Maintenance; Anon £130 for Protestant Alliance; Anon £10 for Dominion and Overseas; Anon £10 for Publication Fund; Friend of the Cause — where most needed, £20, all per envelopes in plate.

Laide: Anon, Laide £5; Interested, Skye, to be used as needed, £200; J. & I.M. £50; D. & J.M., Laide £20; S.C.J. & L.F. towards expenses to the Ukraine £25; F.M. £15; A.F. for expenses £100; Anon £50; Isle View Nursing Home £7.57; Anon £30; D.T.R. £100; D. & A.M. £100; Gairloch Friend £220; Two Friends, Sutherland £100; Two Friends, Dingwall £70; Friend, Laide £40; A.M., Inverness £50; L.M., Raasay £20; T.M. £10 for printing Shorter Catechism; Isle View Nursing Home £4.42, all the above for Eastern European Mission and all per Rev. D.A. Ross; M.M. £20 for Eastern Europe Mission per T.M.; Mgt. L. MacK. £10 for Church Door Collection and £10 for Sustentation; Envelope in plate for Dominions and Overseas Fund £5; Envelope in plate for Sustentation Fund £10; Aultbea Friend, for Church Funds £20; Skye Friend, for Laide Tape Fund £10; Anon, for Car Fund £5; Aultbea Friend, for Church Funds £20; Lochcarron Friend, for Church Door Collection £10, last 5 per Rev. D.A.R.

Larne: Anon £10; Anon £20 for Eastern Europe; Anon £10; Anon £10, for Binga Mission; Anon £10 for Kenya Mission; Anon for the Lord's Work in Kenya £10, all by envelope in plate.

Portree: Anon £8; Anon £20; Anon £10; Anon £9; Anon £9; P.R. £50; Anon £8; Friend £10, all for Door Collection; Anon £7 for Bus Fund; J.M. McL. £25, where most needed, all by envelope in plate; Friend £10 for Sust. Fund; Friend £10, where most needed, both per F.M.; Anon £20 for Centenary Fund (envelope in plate); Two Friends £16; K.B. £10; Two Friends £10; Two Friends £15; Two Friends £15; Friend £10, all for Sust. Fund; Friend £4 for Door Collection, last seven per S.Y.M.

Raasay: Friend, Raasay, £100 for T.B.S.; Friend, Raasay £100, where most needed; M.D. £5, where most needed, per Rev. J.R.T.; Anon £25 for Communion Expenses; Anon £5; Anon £10; Anon £20, all for Car Fund (last three by envelope in plate).

Staffin: Friend, Portree £100 for Sust. Fund.

Stornoway: Friend £10 for Communion Expenses; Miss K.A. Macleod, The Cottage, Callanish £90 for Sust. Fund, both per Rev. J. MacLeod; Anon £50 for T.B.S., per church plate.