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Speak unto us Smooth Things

There were those in Isaiah's day who were saying to the seers, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits. So it is in our day. Men do not want to hear the truth. It is more than they can bear. They do not wish to have their consciences disturbed by the more solemn truths of divine revelation. The language of their hearts to the servants of Christ is the same as in Isaiah's day. To them they say: "Speak unto us smooth things".

As a result of this desire to hear only smooth things, many of the professed servants of Christ have altered the message which they declare, so that they only speak smooth things. Men and women may sit under such preaching without experiencing any alarms of conscience whatsoever. In the visible church in our land what most people are hearing today may be described as "smooth things". Much that is put abroad may tickle the fancy of men but it will never reach the heart of the hearers.

Such times have been foretold. The apostle in writing to Timothy had to say: "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." These days are upon us. So far as many of the ministers in the land are concerned, they have ceased to preach the more solemn aspects of the truth such as death, judgment and eternity. The doctrine of a lost eternity has been laid aside and in its place has come a doctrine of purgatory — a place where those who are unfit for heaven go until they are prepared for heaven. If not, men assign men immediately to heaven whatever their life may have been in this world. The doctrine of a universal salvation is preached in many churches and men are deceived

for eternity by those who were meant to proclaim to them the way of salvation. There is nothing better that men like to hear than that they are on the road to heaven, when in reality they are on the broad way that leads to everlasting destruction.

Where the doctrine of a lost eternity is preached and other solemn aspects of the truth are set forth, those who preach such doctrines are regarded as very cruel and severe and without any love to their fellow men, whereas the opposite is the truth. It is those who warn sinners of their danger and who present to them the terrors of the law, who in truth love their fellowmen. They would not wish them to be deceived for eternity but would encourage them to flee from the wrath to come to the refuge set before them in the gospel. What the Lord had to say to His servant Jeremiah the prophet was: "If thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth." A separation must be made in the preaching of the Word of God between the righteous and the wicked. To the wicked the true servant of Christ is to say that it shall be ill with them, and to the righteous that it shall be well with them. The truths of God's Word are not to be turned upside down at the whim of men. To Jeremiah the Lord had also said: "Thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord." Though it was a solemn message that the Lord was to give Jeremiah to declare, yet He said to him: "Gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them." Jeremiah was to be a swift witness against the people and their rulers for their sins and their backslidings, whatever the consequences would be. Jeremiah fulfilled his charge faithfully, as Isaiah had done in his day. There was to be no keeping back from the people what the Lord had revealed concerning the judgments which were threatened.

The Apostle in writing to Timothy also warned: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves . . . having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof . . . ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." These days are upon us. All that men wish to hear in our day is smooth things. As long as men can live in a dream world, undisturbed in their vain hope of entering into heaven — and that a heaven of their own making — they are satisfied. Unless a divine awakening will come men will perish in this fond delusion. Though they are deceiving themselves for eternity yet they are content to have it so. What an eternity awaits such a people, and what an eternity awaits those who have preached unto them smooth

things, deceiving their souls for a never-ending eternity. "There is a way that seems right to a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

It might be expected to some degree that those who remain in modernistic churches would utter these words: "Speak unto us smooth things." This spirit, however, has invaded Churches which claim to be evangelical. In some of these the severer aspects of the truth are either passed over altogether or toned down lest people should be offended by such teachings, or they are proclaimed apologetically as though people had a right to be offended by them. Men once regarded as leading lights in the evangelical world have discovered an inconsistency between the love of God and the justice of God. How can a God of love, they say, cast sinners into an eternal hell. To amend this seeming contradiction — a contradiction which exists only in their own mind and not in the Word or mind of God — they embrace the doctrine of the annihilation of the wicked, and do so in the face of the clear teaching of the divine Redeemer when He says: "These shall go away into everlasting punishment but the righteous into life eternal."

"Speak unto us smooth things" is the language of men's hearts today, and ministers are found who accede to that request. Yet the Lord is saying in His Word: "I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed. How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? Yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart; which think to cause my people to forget my name by their dreams." The Lord was against the prophets that prophesied lies, "What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord. Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces." What need there is for men and women to be warned in our day against the false prophets which abound in the land. So also ought they to be warned of the danger of lapsing into the spirit of the men of Isaiah's day who said, Speak unto us smooth things. Of what avail will it be when sinners stand before the judgment seat of Christ if they have only heard smooth things spoken to them in this life. How solemn it will be for them, if they are then to hear the awful sentence: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting burnings prepared for the devil and for his angels." How different it will be for those who have heard and given heed to the solemn warnings of God's Word and have found a place of refuge in the Lord Jesus Christ. What blessed words of consolation they will hear in that day when the Lord shall say to them: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, and inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Sermon

by Rev D. Macfarlane, Dingwall

Preached on Sabbath Evening, 30th September, 1906

(Taken down by a Hearer)

"Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come." — Hebrews 13: 13-14.

The preceding verse was the subject of our discourse this afternoon, and there is an intimate connection between that verse and what we have in these two verses. In the 12th verse we have an account of what Jesus did in correspondence to the ceremonial law. He "suffered without the gate"; and the design of His sufferings was that He might "sanctify" His people — save them from sin. That was one great reason why Christ came into the world and died. There was no way of sanctifying sinners but by the blood of Him who was God-man. The blood of bulls and of goats could not take away sins. Even although men were to shed their own blood it would be of no avail in this matter. Even although a perfectly holy man were to shed his blood it would not sanctify a single sinner. This required the blood which is called the blood of God: for we read that God "purchased the Church with his own blood;" and the blood which Christ shed belonged to God; inasmuch as He assumed our nature, and united it to His own divine person.

In these words we have three things to consider:—

I. The duty here enjoyed:— "Let us go forth unto him without the camp."

II. The reasons the apostle annexes to this exhortation.

III. Those who comply with this command or exhortation of Christ's shall have to bear His reproach, and they will do it willingly.

I. The duty enjoined here:— "Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp." You will observe that the drift of the apostle throughout this epistle is to draw people away from Judaism, or the way of serving God which was instituted in the wilderness. He wishes to call them away from those types and shadows to Jesus Christ and to His service as set forth in the Christian Church. This is the scope of the whole epistle, and unless we keep this in view, we cannot understand exactly what the apostle means by going forth without the camp. In speaking of the camp here, he has in view the camp in the wilderness, where the children of Israel encamped when brought out of Egypt. It was a large camp, the number of people being so great that it would occupy miles of space. The temple service, as afterwards observed, was of the same nature as that which was con-

ducted in the wilderness, the only difference being as to place, the one being in the wilderness and the other in the land of Caanan. And, substituting the temple for the tabernacle, the apostle exhorts, and that in the name of God Himself, the Hebrews to go outside the temple, or in other words, to leave that church state which God set up at Mount Sinai, and which served its time, for Christ Himself had now come, and had cried "It is finished" — old things had passed away, behold, all things were made new. This explanation is necessary in order that we may understand what the apostle means when he exhorts the Hebrews to go forth unto Jesus without the camp. They were to leave the camp, and to receive Jesus, in whom they would find everything that was needful. They were to sustain no loss by leaving the camp or the temple behind them, but they were to gain much — very much. If you find Jesus, my friends, you are great gainers, no matter what you may leave behind you for His sake.

But we shall say a few words on what is implied in that temple or camp. In it there was the priesthood set up by God when He gave the law on Mount Sinai. There was a whole tribe — that of Levi — set apart to minister to God at the altar. Those were to be His ministers in offering up sacrifices, and they were to act as a sort of mediators between God and the people: and they were thus a type of Him who is the glorious Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ. The services set up, the ceremonies performed, and everything about the worship of God at that time were significant of things to come; as the apostle says in the 9th chapter of this epistle, that Christ was come as an High Priest of good things to come. There were then those who stood as mediators between God and the people, but in a typical sense only, and in no other. For as there is but one God, so there is but one mediator between God and men — Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul takes care to point this out when he says that Christ was the angel who led the people in the wilderness. Christ was the rock; Christ was the great leader. From the first revelation of God's scheme of salvation, Christ was the only Mediator, but at that time, in order to educate people in the knowledge of Christ's mediation, there were typical mediators set up, and those taught of God may learn, and did learn, a great deal by means of those typical mediators. Not only were there priests to offer up sacrifices, but there were also bloody sacrifices to be offered up, for "without the shedding of blood" there could be "no remission of sins". It was blood alone that could make atonement, and although at that time the blood of irrational creatures could not make atonement for sin, still it taught the people to look forward to Him who was to come, and to shed His own blood to make atonement. Thus the ceremonial law was

full of instruction, and it was also a manifest token of God's favour to the people, for by it the gospel was preached to them, as the apostle says in the 4th chapter of this epistle — the gospel was preached unto them as well as unto us.

There was but one gospel from the beginning. It is the same gospel we have now as they had in the wilderness and in the land of Canaan, in the tabernacle and in the temple, with this difference, that the revelation under the New Testament is much clearer and more easily understood than that which was given under the typical dispensation. Although the ceremonial law was abrogated by the death of Christ, that is, as to its observance, still it is not abrogated in the sense that it is of no use to us now. Though we are not to observe that law, it is left in the Bible for our instruction. We have not only one but two revelations of the covenant of grace. We have the old and we have the new, which is the complement of the old. We can look back and read the gospel concerning the Lord Jesus Christ more clearly, so that our privileges are much greater than were those of the people under the ceremonial law. You have your Bible with these things contained in the books of Moses. Read it, and seek that the Holy Spirit would anoint your eyes so that you may behold Christ, as the saints of old saw Him before He came in the flesh and finished the work His Father gave Him to do. Then turn from that to the words of the gospel. Incline your ear and hear His own voice declaring, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Woe unto us, my friends, if we perish in our sins, neglecting the great salvation while we have these two lights, the light of the ceremonial law, and the light of the gospel shining around us!

We are to leave behind us, not only the priests who served at the altar, and the sacrifices — for there is but one Priest now, the Lord Jesus Christ, there are no sacrifices now but His — we are also to leave behind us the mode of worship observed in the tabernacle and the temple.

If you lived in the days of Solomon, and entered the temple, you would notice the greatest difference between the way in which worship was conducted then and the way it is now, or ought to be, in the simplicity of the gospel. At the door of the temple you would see the laver, a vessel containing water, in which the priests when they entered washed their hands and their feet before they dared to take part in the service, for holiness became the house of God; and then to remind them of the fact, of which they themselves were conscious, being taught of God, that everything they did was mingled with sin, they must not leave the temple without again washing their hands and their feet. There was great instruction in these

things. Well, we are to go forth from that and come to the blood of Jesus. That blood is still set before us, and before we begin worship we may "wash and be clean". We may wash our hands in innocence and surround God's altar; and when we are conscious of our imperfections in our endeavours to serve God, we may before we leave God's house, wash ourselves in the blood of Jesus, and come to God with the prayer of the psalmist, "Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." Ah, my friends, what are we doing with the provision which God made for us in the blood of Jesus? Why do we live for one moment under the guilt of sin, and under the sinfulness of our imperfections in holy things? Why not come to the blood of Jesus at once and be delivered from all these evils?

As you passed the laver there would meet you a brazen altar, upon which fire was kindled, and the beast, slain to make atonement, was burnt. You must leave that behind you too, for that was only a type of the sacrifice of Christ; and we read that He, by one sacrifice, made for ever perfect them that are sanctified. As you proceeded to walk through the temple you would find another altar. After passing through the first tabernacle you would find at the door of the Most Holy a golden altar, upon which incense was burning, in the smoke of which the High Priest was to go into the presence of God in the Most Holy place with the blood of the sacrifice, which he was to sprinkle seven times on the altar, signifying that atonement was made by blood. This was done in a typical sense at that time, but in due time atonement was to be accomplished by Jesus Christ, who was to shed His own blood, and thereby — as the Apostle tells us here — he sanctified His people. You are to leave behind you even this golden altar and the burning of incense. We know there are many in our day who profess to worship God, and yet they have never gone without the camp. They still burn incense. If you have read — and if not, you ought to read — what is taking place in the Church of England, you will see that many unscriptural rites are being introduced into it, such as the burning of incense and the sacrificing of Christ, as if He had not died at all. Well, those who do such things never went forth without the camp.

But you would notice another thing in the temple — a golden candlestick with six branches, the stem of the candlestick making the seventh, which number signifies perfection; and this lamp signified the light that God gives to His Church. This light He gives in two ways. (1) By the revelation of His Word. As we have seen, there were seven branches, which signifies perfection, so the revelation which He has given of Himself in Scripture is perfect; there is no defect in it. (2) By the work of the Holy Spirit in

enlightening the souls of men in the knowledge of Christ and of divine things. The Spirit is all-sufficient for this work. It is not merely the aid of the Spirit that is required, as Arminians teach. From the time in which the soul is quickened to life, and awakened out of its spiritual slumber, the work of the Spirit is required. Yes, from the very beginning of the good work until the soul is made perfect in holiness, and immediately passes into glory at death. By denying this a defect is imputed to the Holy Ghost, who is equal with the Father in wisdom, power, and glory.

You would again observe in the temple the sounding of trumpets and the praising of God by instruments. We are also to leave that behind us, and we are to go to Jesus Christ, whose word is the perfect rule of faith and practice, and we are to look to the Holy Spirit as all-sufficient. There are very few churches in Scotland, England or Ireland now which do not use instruments — dead instruments — to praise God; just as there are many who light candles during the day for religious purposes, not because the day is dark, but just because they refuse to comply with what God commands here. Why? They have never gone forth to Jesus without the camp; for if they had, what then is the meaning of what the apostle exhorts the Hebrews to here? And yet they tell us at the same time that religion never was so prosperous as it is now. Ah, how infatuated such men are! What a delusion they are under to think they have gone such a length after Jesus, whereas they have not moved a step outside the camp — not a foot from the state in which they were by nature. The Jews are less guilty for clinging to these things, for they were accustomed to them, than we who have received the gospel in its full revelation, if we turn back to these beggarly elements again. There is no excuse for us in this kingdom, to whom God has given the glorious gospel, if we go back to those types and shadows again. These, then, are some of the things we are to leave behind, and the meaning of the apostle is clear, for in speaking of the ceremonial law, he says, "Touch not, taste not, handle not."

Another thing you would see in the sanctuary, or first tabernacle is a table supplied with twelve loaves. What did that signify? Though some give a different meaning to that provision, I take it as a type of Christ — "the bread of life". He says, "I am the bread of life." You are now to go forth from that typical bread to Christ Himself; to feed on Him who gave His body to be broken and His blood to be shed, that His people might be reconciled to God, and live on Him as their spiritual food. "I am," He says, "the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

Lastly, on this head, if you were permitted to enter the Most Holy place, you would see there the Ark of the Covenant, containing the law of the Ten Commandments, and covered by the Mercy Seat, on which God sat as the God of salvation, and where grace reigned through righteousness. You are now to go forth from that typical representation. The vail has been rent from top to bottom by the death of Christ, and we have now free access to the Father through His incarnate Son, who was typified by the Mercy Seat, and in whom God was reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.

We are not only to go forth without the camp, but we are exhorted to go unto Jesus. A person may leave the ceremonial law, and yet not come to Christ, and unless we come to Christ, we shall perish. We may leave one error and fly to another, we may leave one refuge of lies and remain in another. Although you leave the camp, there is no safety for you unless you come to Jesus. You should come to Christ alone, now, and leave all other sacrifices behind you; close with Christ and with His finished work as the only ground of your salvation. And if God is teaching you, that is just what you do, and although it is God alone who can teach you, still it is my duty and privilege to enjoin upon you that you come to Jesus Christ, and receive Him according to the revelation given of Him in the gospel — receive Him in His divine person, in His two-fold natures, in His three-fold offices, His finished work and His exaltation now at the right hand of the Father, and His continual intercession on behalf of His people, until He brings them to be with Himself at last. Christ must pray till He has with Himself the last individual of those for whom He shed His blood. As long as you have need you pray; when your needs are made up there is no necessity for prayer. Although Christ personally has no needs, yet we may say that He intercedes as long as there is need, and there is need as long as His mystical body is incomplete. “Prayer shall be made for him,” the psalmist says, and Christ prays Himself.

You must also go to Christ in the way of worship which is set up in the New Testament, such as reading, preaching and hearing the word of God, and the administration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, prayer and singing praise to His name; offering Him “the fruit of our lips”. This is the only kind of sacrifice now. We are to offer to God not carnal sacrifices as of old, but spiritual sacrifices. These, each and all of us are bound to offer up daily to God, as the apostle says in the verse following, we are to “offer up the sacrifice of praise to God continually,” but acceptable to Him only through Jesus Christ. We are to go forth unto Jesus and to His service; we are to observe all things

appointed by Him in His service, and not to bring in anything not appointed by Him. He is the Head of His own Church, and has a right to ordain everything in His service and worship. He has done this, and given us a perfect rule in His own word and especially in the New Testament.

II. Now we come to the second head, and that is, the reasons annexed to the exhortation to enforce the duty enjoined here by the apostle.

(1) The first reason why we should go forth without the camp is the example of Christ, who went forth himself. The word, "therefore" here connects the words of the 13th verse with those of the 12th verse, where Paul says that Jesus — that He might sanctify the people — suffered without the gate, from which he infers the duty, "Let us also go forth." Christ is the great Pattern to which His people shall be conformed, and surely we ought to follow His wonderful example. He went forth to suffer and to die; He turned His back on the ceremonial law and on the typical mode of worship so long observed. If Christ's example does not prevail with you to obey the exhortation, I know not what to say to you. He took the lead, and he expects His disciples to follow Him, for He says, "My sheep follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." And those who do not follow Him show that they are disobedient, and that they are not His disciples at all.

(2) The second reason is that "here we have no continuing city". The temple was within the city, and all the worship rendered to God at that time was conducted within the city. The apostle may have had in view the fact that the temple and the entire city of Jerusalem itself were soon after this to be destroyed by the Romans, and in that sense it was indeed time for them to leave the city, as it is time for us to leave behind us all that God has abolished in His own service. Christ left the city, and was crucified outside it on Mount Calvary. He left it both ecclesiastically and politically, for the old theocracy was to come to an end. But applying this to our life in this world, let us go forth unto Jesus without the camp, for here on earth we have no continuing city. We are pilgrims in this world — strangers in a strange land. "Arise, let us go hence," for this is not our rest. We must all leave this world soon. True, this world shall last longer than we, but let us remember that the earthly house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved. Let this move us more and more to go forth unto Jesus. We are getting nearer death and eternity every day: let us redouble our efforts every day to go forth unto Jesus, for here we have no continuing city.

(3) The third reason advanced to enforce the duty inculcated here is that

we seek a city to come. Surely those who expect to go to heaven — a city whose Builder and Maker is God — ought to be very willing to go forth unto Jesus, and to follow Him whither He went. Before leaving the world He told His disciples, “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). There is a great difference between the state of God’s children in this world and their state in heaven; between the kingdom of grace here and the kingdom of glory above. In this world they are, as it were, from home. When you are from home, no matter how kind people may be to you, still you do not expect every comfort; you are a stranger, and you do not feel at rest till you get home. So it is with those here who seek another city. The citizens of heaven, my friends, are where the Triune God dwells; the citizens are myriads of holy angels, and a great multitude, which no man can number, of people redeemed by the blood of Christ: but while the latter are on earth the city is in futurity — it is still to come. When you expect a good thing, you are content to bear your present discomforts, and you console yourself with the thought of the good thing to come: so the apostle comforts himself and his fellow-believers who were sojourners in this world with the good hope of the city that was to come.

Another thing to be noticed on this point is the “seeking”. They make diligent use of the means of getting to the city: they give all diligence to make their calling and election sure. As they go forth they seek evidence of their interest in Christ, evidence of their title to the inheritance, proof that they are children; “and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.” Have *you* ever spent even a few minutes examining yourself whether you were an heir of glory? If not, it is time for you to begin, and do not say, “What’s the use?” Ah, the city to come is worth all your self-examination. It is worth while to make diligent use of all the means God has given us. Indeed, the means of grace have been set up for this very purpose — to bring many sons to glory, to call His people to the fellowship of His Son, to regenerate them, to justify them, to sanctify them, and then to glorify them.

III. But I must hasten to the last head. Those who go forth unto Jesus shall have to bear His reproach. When the sinner is awakened to a sense of his lost condition he does not at all bargain with God as to what he may suffer. He does not say, “Save me, O Lord, give me an interest in Christ, but do not give me trouble.” There is no such bargain at all; only, “Lord, save my soul for Christ’s sake.” But those who go forth to Him must bear His reproach, and this just means all the reproach cast upon

God's people on account of their connection or relationship with Jesus Christ. The very death that Jesus died was, to the Jews, a stumbling-block, and to the Gentiles, foolishness: it was an accursed death. There was thus a reproach cast upon the very means which God provided for saving sinners. There is a reproach cast by the enemies of God on all who follow the Lord Jesus Christ: but believers who are taught of God soon come to reckon such things as Moses did, of whom it is said, that he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt. The reproach is Christ's, and far from being ashamed of it, believers consider it greater riches than all the applause showered upon the great ones of this world. There is great honour put upon those who are called upon to bear this reproach. It is a cause of glory. Of themselves and of their infirmities they are often ashamed, but the reproach of Christ is their glory.

In conclusion, my friends, how are you individually with regard to what we have been discoursing upon? You have been called again and again to go forth without the camp, not only in the sense explained, but from the camp of the fellowship of this world. Have you obeyed the call? It is once more put before you, and in speaking to you we include ourselves. Let us go forth from everything that is hurtful and sinful; let us go forth unto Jesus and He will be all our salvation and all our desire.

Letter

by Rev. John Love

London, April 25, 1787

Dear Father, — The whole of this great and terrible wilderness through which we pass, is formed and governed by that infallible and unsearchable wisdom, which is to be adored and glorified by all created spirits. Nothing but that marvellous light, which shines from heaven by means of the holy oracles of God, can so guide our path, as that we may escape the fatal gins, pits, and precipices, which lie thick in the way. This light, when obtained, carries in itself demonstrative evidence of its divine origin and saving tendency. It is therefore to be sought after with much earnestness, perseverance, and importunity; to be received, cherished, and entertained, with much gratitude, submission and watchfulness. It is to be deeply lamented, that a God of such excellency, power, and love, should be at hand and yet so much neglected and forsaken by those souls which he has made. How strong and inveterate are the distempers and evil habits of soul which apostacy from God hath introduced; and which security, unbelief, and neglect of so great salvation keep alive and in their vigour!

What consternation and anguish will overtake and swallow up countless multitudes of souls in the future world, when they find how deep they have run themselves in debt to the infinite justice of God, by a course of vain, ungodly, unprofitable thoughts, words, and actions! It is mercy indeed to have a clear, undoubted separation from the character, and secure exemption from the present and future pangs, of that wretched and accursed rabble of enemies of God, with which the face of the earth has been defiled from age to age. Regeneration, justification by the blood and righteousness of the Son of God, sanctification, and genuine preparation for eternal life, are no light matters. A whole lifetime spent in pursuit of those things, though they should not be obtained till the latest period, is well bestowed. This is the admonition of the Spirit of God, "Exhort one another daily, while it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." Attempts to meditate on divine things, to pray, and to converse in a spiritual manner of spiritual subjects, ought to be often repeated, even when much indisposition and aversion may be felt as to such duties. The light of life springs up by the wonderful power of God in the midst of gross darkness, as when God said at the beginning, "Let there be light." The mountains of guilt and separation from God which have been heaping up and standing like immovable rocks for many years, flow down at the presence of the God of salvation, and are melted as wax before the warmth of infinite mercy and love. The examples of bodily cures performed by the Redeemer, in the days of his humiliation, are to be much thought of as encouragements to come to him for more important and lasting deliverances. The wings of Emmanuel, the Mediator, are extended wide enough to make room for a whole world; but how few are persuaded to make trial, how safe and sweet a retreat is to be found there! Yet there shall be many effectually drawn to embrace their own mercy; and in the future world God will disclose, to those who love him and his creatures, the most satisfying reasons why his holy arm is kept back from conquering the hearts of *all* mankind. This is one great object in pursuit of which I desire to spend all my days and years; to have all in the house securely sheltered from the touch of the destroying angel, under the sprinkling of blood. There is an excellent harmony in all spiritual pursuits and cares; those which are more extensive and enlarged do not hinder those which are more particular. The angels of light, who have the most extensive views of God and his dominion, set high value on the salvation of one soul. It can never be sufficiently considered and laid to heart, that the wrath and love of God are infinite and unsearchable in their effects and importance. The slumbers of atheism must be con-

tinually rubbed off from our eyes: realising views of that which the world sees not, in the threatenings and promises of God, must come in the room of the lying dreams and imaginations of the deceitful heart. That peace of God and fellowship with him, that holiness of heart and joy in the Holy Ghost, which the world despises and hates, must be pressed into with the most assiduous importunity. For these purposes time must be redeemed, and the proper season snatched at; and, when we have got a little of God, it must be improved and traded with for the good of others, so far as we are called and have opportunity. They who get sooner or later into this course shall find the latter end of it to be peace. I commit those things and you all to the blessing and saving mercy of God.

Events leading up to 1893

by Rev. A. MacPherson

(The second part of a paper read at the Centenary Commemoration Meeting)

The Quest for Disestablishment

In 1874, Disraeli's Conservative Government passed the Abolition of Patronage Act. Patronage had, of course, been at the bottom of the trials which led to the Disruption. Unhappily, when seeking this measure, the Established Church did not acknowledge the wrongs done by the enforcement of Patronage on those who had to leave and form the Free Church. And, what was almost as bad, they made clear their hopes that the removal of this obstacle would incite people to forsake the Free Church and return to the improved Establishment.

In the Free Church there were two responses to the Abolition of Patronage Act. The party who were becoming known as the Constitutionalists, while aware of the defects in the Church of Scotland's attitude, did approve of the Act. Dr Kennedy said, "The troublesome monster is slain . . . and we should be glad." There were others, though, the majority in the church courts, who accompanied their indignation at the faultiness of the Church of Scotland's attitude, by starting a campaign for its Disestablishment. As some saw it, if that were done, and the two churches put on the same footing, it would make it easier for them to unite. And if the U.P. Church would come in too, the result would be a united Scottish Church. Mingled with this, however, and carrying more weight with many, was the view that Disestablishment would facilitate union with the United Presbyterians.

The campaign for Disestablishment went on year after year, and was still running at the time of the Declaratory Act. Its supporters chose to disregard Dr Thomas Chalmers' words spoken on the day of the Disruption; "We have left today a vitiated Establishment; we would return tomorrow to a purified one; and we are not voluntaries." The campaign conducted by what became known as the Voluntary or Rainy party, played its own full part in convincing true Free Church people that a major part of the Church was bent on severing its connection with vital elements of the Free Church constitution.

Professor W. Robertson Smith

Without question, the matter that most clearly revealed that a majority of office-bearers in the Free Church had fallen away from the faith they professed, was the case of discipline involving Professor W. Robertson Smith. The son of a very gifted Free Church minister, Smith's scholastic career was phenomenally brilliant. In 1870, when he was only twenty-four years old, he was appointed to the chair of Hebrew and Old Testament Criticism in the Free Church College of Aberdeen. Some of the older men were unhappy about the appointment, but Rainy favoured it in view of the importance, as he saw it, of obtaining a scholar who would be abreast of the most recent phases of biblical criticism, and at the same time a strong evangelical. Rainy's judgment on this disclosed his interest in the sympathy with the advance of the Higher Criticism, and also failure to estimate accurately the spiritual quality of the young professor. During the next seven years, Smith went quietly on with his work while also spending periods abroad and becoming friendly with scholars like Wellhausen. This man was Professor of Theology at Gottingen and belonged to a school of critics who did not believe in the supernatural, nor in the verbal inspiration of Scripture.

Smith's fame as a scholar led to his being commissioned to write religious articles for the ninth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. The first article on the subject of "Angels" caused some unease, but the second on "Bible" shocked all in the Free Church who regarded the Bible as the Word of God. The article made clear that Professor Smith had embraced the views of the most extreme German critics. The books of Moses, the Psalms, the prophet and the first three Gospels were treated in such a way as to make void their claim to be God's Word.

The consternation aroused by the second *Britannica* article in 1876 prompted action by the church authorities, but it was a whole five years later that the case came to an end. During that time it passed to and fro

between the Aberdeen Presbytery and the Assembly. Professor Smith had decided to fight it out on the basis of his self-claimed superior knowledge of all Hebrew matters, but also by the use of ecclesiastical procedures. He had many supporters who showed their devotion to him by greeting the 1890 decision to merely admonish their hero, with tumultuous applause. After the admonition, Professor Smith made short reply that had some appearance of humility. But even as he spoke, he knew that another controversial article was due to appear. It did, just a few days after the Assembly ended. The article was on Hebrew Language and Literature, and in it Smith made clear that he fully accepted the Graf-Wellhausen view of the first five books of the Bible. K. H. Graf was a follower of earlier critics who denied that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, and divided these five books into productions of various authors of later times. Julius Wellhausen supplemented Graf's theory by contending that the early religion of Israel developed naturally and owed nothing to divine revelation. There were no such persons as the Patriarchs, and doubt attached to the existence of Moses himself. Neither was there in Israel's early history a central sanctuary like the one described in Exodus and Leviticus.

Smith's attempted root and branch destruction of orthodox belief in the divine inspiration of these books, affords all the proof that any regenerate person could need that the Professor had never been persuaded by the inward work of the Holy Spirit of the infallible truth and divine authority of the whole Bible. He claimed to be a loyal Free Churchman and strong evangelical, and his admirers saw him possessed of a simple, religious, Protestant evangelical faith, but what real Free Churchmen saw was a proud, arrogant, self-centred rationalistic opponent of the faith once delivered to the saints.

Instead, however, of treating his case as one of heresy, and disciplining him accordingly, he was asked to discontinue teaching; and at the 1891 Assembly, was removed from his chair. The long, slow progress of the case through the church courts showed what a large proportion of Free Church ministers, elders and students had now succumbed to the lure of intellectual respectability.

There are three other names which should be mentioned as evidence of the prevalence of hostile criticism of the Scriptures in the Free Church. A. B. Davidson became Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament in the Edinburgh College in 1863. In a quiet way he introduced Smith and others to the new views of Scripture which these pupils went on to develop publicly. Another man who made it clear that he was very unsound on Scripture and some of the doctrines was the Rev., later, Professor Mar-

cus Dods. A characteristic smoothing motion of Dr Rainy's delivered him from discipline in the 1877 Assembly. In 1890 he was again before the Assembly on very serious charges, and again by resort to specious claims for the need to adapt truth to changing circumstances, a large majority of the court tolerated his views while at the same time asserting loyalty to the Word of God and the Confession. At the same General Assembly, Dr A. B. Bruce of the Glasgow College was charged with grave errors in books he had written. He also escaped discipline by a majority which appeared willing to allow teachers of the Church's students to hold views on the Bible and its doctrines clean contrary to what the Church officially professed.

The Declaratory Act

Coming now to the final stage of the Free Church's departure from its original position, let us first go back twelve years to 1879 and hear what one of the noblest of ministers was saying about events in the Church he loved. "The places of the great men who have gone are occupied, but they have not been filled. And as breaches continue to be made, with what kind of material are they likely to be repaired? This must be asked if we are earnestly anxious about the future of the Free Church. There are still among us men whom the Lord called to the service of the Gospel, having endowed them with the requisite gifts and with the indispensable grace; but there is wanting among them men of outstanding healthful influence. There is a company of evangelical preachers, who, if not intellectually weak, are theologically hazy and ecclesiastically blind. Some of these, as to present burning questions, are but silly "doves without heart." Besides these there are men whose ambition is to be regarded as advanced thinkers, that rationalists may not scorn them, and as evangelical that the Church may not scout them. There are specimens of those who attempt the alliance of science and the gospel, while they seem to have little of either on which to lay hand in order to unite them. And in the preaching of some of the later additions to the roll of ministers, the repudiation of Confessional theology is as marked as the lack of any traces of a broken heart's experience of the power of the Cross. And what is the character of the prospective supply? Enough it is to make hopefulness difficult, that our students can not only endure to be taught by men who treat with disrespect the Word of God, but are ready to applaud to the echo, with almost one heart and voice, the men by whom rationalism is most prominently represented. If the Lord should withhold the spirit of repentance, it can not be difficult to forecast the future of our Church." It was Dr John

Kennedy who wrote these words in 1879.

In the light of the grave, yes, shocking departures from the original standards of the Free Church, identified early by Dr Kennedy and clearly exhibited in the years that followed, no-one could be surprised at the steps next taken to relax stringency of subscription to the Westminster Confession. If, as a great many thought, the new more evangelical way of looking at Calvinism was not fairly stated in the Confession, something would have to be done about the document. Something was done, and quite quickly too, first by eminent ministers speaking, and then by the subordinate courts. Approaches by these courts to the 1889 Assembly led to the appointment of a committee. Its business was to advise the Assembly of the best way to ease the consciences of the many who now disagreed with some statements of the Confession. But, of course, the committee must bear in mind that there must be no changing of "the great doctrines of the Confession." This insincere tongue in cheek language was to figure in the whole process then begun.

The committee's report in 1890 recommended the framing of a Declaratory Act somewhat like the U.P. Act of 1879. Prior to the proposed Act being read at the 1891 Assembly, overtures were presented, asking the court to state plainly and unambiguously that it accepted the Confession as it stood. The Act was then read and proved to be just what faithful Free Churchmen had feared.

A very informative background to the Declaratory Act, the text, and a full explanation of it by Rev. James Sinclair can be found in the Church History, and I recommend the reading of these portions. All that can be done on this occasion is to sum up the real purpose of the Act, as opposed to its declared purpose. The professed purpose of a Declaratory Act is to declare or explain parts of the Confession which are thought to be insufficiently clear. The real purpose was (1) To relegate to the back ground, of the Church's thinking, the fact that God's saving love is confined to the elect, and not universal. (2) To represent faith as an act which any sinner can perform of himself; to obscure men's involvement with Adam's sin, and to suggest that men can be saved without the Word of God. (3) to water down the doctrine of total depravity. (4) To undermine adherence to the principle of the national establishment of religion, and (5) To allow for differences of opinion on doctrine, and make the Church decide what does or does not enter into the substance of the Reformed Faith.

As the godly in the Assembly listened to that final part of the Act, they might think that such a Church as the Free Church now was, could not be depended to uphold any doctrine which would give offence to the new

enlightenment. Despite the care that Rainy, the convener, and others had taken to make the wording as innocent sounding as possible, the Act was obviously intended to allow persons taking office to modify to their own liking, statements of doctrine with which they disagreed. Using the Declaratory Act, they could now, to give one example, disregard the words "some men and angels, a definite number of them, are predestined unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death." In place of these scriptural truths, they could stress God's love to sinners of mankind, even to such as never heard of Christ.

Having presented the draft of the Act, Dr Rainy moved that it be sent down to the Presbyteries as an overture under the Barrier Act. Only by this method could it become a Standing Law of the Church. A motion against this by Rev. Murdo MacAskill of Dingwall gained only 66 votes.

The limits of this paper now make it necessary to be very brief in telling what happened in the next two years. The 1892 Assembly was informed that most Presbyteries had approved of the Act, although 23 did not. Dr Rainy then moved that the Declaratory Act become an Act of the Free Church, and his motion defeated another seeking delay, by 346 votes to 195. Great and unruly jubilation greeted the result. A few dissented, protested and appealed to the next Assembly to repeal the Act, but the present fact was that the character of the Church had radically changed.

In the year that followed, it became clear that the main group of the Act's opponents, known as the Constitutionalists were not now in favour of leaving the Church, whereas a number of students and elders were. Only one minister made known his purpose to leave if there was no repeal; this was Rev. Donald MacFarlane of Kilmallie. Assembly time came, and the ten overtures seeking repeal were disregarded on Dr Rainy's motion that they challenged the Church's right to legislate as it had done. A dissent was signed by 21 ministers and the same number of elders against the large majority decision. That was all the length the objectors would go. But the Rev. Donald MacFarlane went further. He went to the Clerks' table, read a protest, put it on the table, and after his action had been discussed, left the Assembly. His protest that the Church had by the Declaratory Act ceased to be the Free Church, and that he was bound by conscience and ordination vows to remove himself from it, was not received, because it repudiated the authority of the highest court of the Church. That was exactly what Mr MacFarlane meant.

The Kames Congregation and that of his own at Raasay supported Mr MacFarlane's action. So did Rev. Donald MacDonald of Shildaig and a large number of elders and people in the Highland area. That part of

the Free Church had all along opposed the backslidings. On 28th July, 1893, the separation was formalised. The two ministers and Mr Alexander MacFarlane, a Raasay elder, formed themselves into the Free Church Presbytery of Scotland in a meeting at Portree, and agreed to prepare a statement that would explain the solemn step they had taken. They licensed one student and set trials for another. At their next meeting on 14th August, the Deed of Separation was adopted.

It is hoped that the facts in this paper, condensed though they are, will show that it was imperative that the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland should be set up in 1893. The Lord has owned our continuance in various ways, and we should pray that by a great outpouring of his Spirit, He will bring it to pass that the relationship we bear to the Word of God and the Westminster Confession will become that of multitudes of our fellow countrymen. In large measure they are the victims of the errors of the Declaratory Act, and only saving grace will recover them.

Book Reviews

THE BIBLE AND THE CLOSET by Thomas Watson and Samuel Lee, Sprinkle Publications. £11.50.

The author of the first part of the volume under review was the well-known and highly esteemed Puritan divine, the Rev. Thomas Watson. His contribution, which is entitled, "How we may read the Scriptures with Most Spiritual Profit," is based on Deuteronomy 17: 19 and occupies 46 pages of excellent guidance on how to use the Word of God which, as Augustine says is a golden epistle sent to us from God. It has often been said that Watson is one of the most easily read of the Puritans and certainly there is no ambiguity in his writing about the Scriptures nor in the practical nature of the advice which he gives. "Learn," he writes, "to apply Scripture; take every word as spoken to yourselves. When the Word thunders against sin, think thus: God means my sins; when it presses any duty, God intends me in this. . . . Compare yourselves with the Word and see how the Scriptures and your hearts agree; how your dial goes with this sun. Are your hearts, as it were, a transcript and counterpart of Scripture? Is the Word copied out into your hearts? The Word calls for humility: are you not only humbled but humble? The Word calls for regeneration: John 3: 7; Have you a change of heart? Not only a moral and partial change but a spiritual. Is there such a change wrought in you, as if another soul did live in the same body?" The second part of the volume entitled,

"Secret Prayer Successfully Managed," is by the Rev. Samuel Lee who was the pastor of St. Botolph's Church in London until ejected in 1662 and is based on Matthew 6: 6. It is a most edifying and helpful directory containing many precious thoughts and observations on private prayer. "It is true," he says, "hypocrites may pray and may pray alone and pray long, and receive their reward from such whose observation they desire, but a hypocrite takes no sincere delight in secret devotion, he has no spring of affection to God. But, O my dove, says Christ, that art in the clefts of the rock, let me hear thy voice, for the melody thereof is sweet. A weeping countenance and a wounded spirit are most beautiful prospects to the eye of heaven, when a broken heart pours out repentant tears from the rock smitten by the rod of Moses' law in the hand of a mediator."

The last and longest part of the book is devoted to the important duty of family worship and could be described as a kind of anthology of the writings of Doddridge and others on the subject. While not, in the opinion of the present reviewer, up to the standard of the first two parts of the volume, it does contain advice and guidance which is particularly apposite in these days when the duty of family worship is largely neglected.

The volume, as a whole, is thoroughly recommended and will be appreciated by all who value the highly spiritual flavour of the writings of our Puritan forefathers. It is attractively produced with few errors, and the print size is very well suited to readers with failing eye sight. Spinkle Publications is to be congratulated for the high standard of this production.

DRM

THE POWER OF FAITH AND PRAYER by Samuel Rutherford, Reformation Press, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis. £4.50.

Samuel Rutherford needs no introduction to readers of the Free Presbyterian Magazine or indeed to any who appreciate the high spiritual tone of the writings of this eminent servant of Christ. The volume under review is an exposition of Matthew 9: 27-31 which records Christ's healing of the two blind men. While deeply searching this little book is replete with encouragement suited to the spiritual needs of exercised believers. The savour of Rutherford's insights are best illustrated by quoting from the work rather than writing about it. "There may be much praying," writes Rutherford, "where there is no crying. In some prayers there is much tongue, little spirit and life; so, in some others there is much spirit and little tongue. Light sorrow will speak, extreme grief is dumb and cannot command one word. The deepest floods in their motion speak least, and slide down their banks without noise; shallow brooks flow with great

tumbling and din. Some desires are above words, and come out in nothing but sad sighs and deep groans (Romans 8: 27)'".

This work was first published in 1713, over 50 years after Rutherford's death. Readers of the little volume (88 pages) will feel indebted to the Reformation Press for its republication in such an attractive format. **DRM**

THE LIFE AND WORK OF CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON by G. Holden Pike, 2 volumes, Banner of Truth. £29.95.

This biography was first published in 1894, two years after Spurgeon's death. The author, G. Holden Pike observed Spurgeon "at close quarters and knew him intimately" over a period of thirty years. While the volumes give a vivid and detailed account of the indefatigable labours of this able and greatly blessed minister of the gospel yet, understandably, they do not reflect the spiritual life of this man of God to the same degree as do the autobiographical volumes, **The Early Years** and **The Full Harvest**.

It is well-known that Spurgeon earnestly contended for the faith once delivered to the saints in opposing the propagation of heresy by proponents of the New Theology within his own Baptist denomination and beyond and that he severed his connection with the Evangelical Alliance and separated from the Baptist Union in 1887. It is surprising, therefore, that Holden Pike, who must have been aware of the extent to which Spurgeon was preoccupied with and concerned about the departures from the faith which occasioned the Down-grade Controversy, devotes so little space to that important period in his life. In spite of this defect the two volumes constitute an authoritative source of information of the life of this remarkable man and make absorbing reading.

The books are beautifully produced and up to the standard we have come to take for granted from the **Banner of Truth**. **DRM**

Notes and Comments

Continued Violence in Ulster

Recently there have been fresh outbreaks of violence and murder in Northern Ireland. The bullet and the bomb have destroyed many innocent lives, bringing sorrow and grief to many hearts and homes. In one instance a terrorist was killed when the bomb he was planting in order to destroy others, went off prematurely. Yet he was buried by the IRA as if he were a great hero who gave his life in a noble cause. Such is the perversity of man. The IRA outrages provoked a backlash from the other side in which more lives were sacrificed. As always, following these outbreaks, the cry

goes up as to where it is all to end.

The question which ought to be faced first is, where did it all begin? Over the years there has been a terrible toll of violence and bloodshed. But how did it all come about? The right of the Protestant people of Northern Ireland to retain their independence of Dublin and to continue as an integral part of Britain has never been accepted by Eire. Articles 2 and 3 of the Eire Constitution and the refusal of the Eire Government to change them makes this clear. The problem our Government has to face is not a Northern Ireland problem but it is the problem of Eire. There will be no peace in Northern Ireland while Eire continues to maintain her claim to the whole of Ireland. It should be clear to politicians and everyone else that there will be no peace in Northern Ireland while the harlot of Rome reigns in Southern Ireland. The Church of Rome remains intransigent in her undying enmity to the Protestant Cause in Northern Ireland, and to the Christian principles for which Britain professed to stand. To that cause and these principles the Church of Rome is implacably opposed. Therefore, because the Protestants of Ulster are determined never to surrender to Rome rule, they will continue to suffer at the hands of the vicious IRA murderers who have been nurtured in the bosom of, what they call, "Mother Church". Certainly the actions of the IRA are perfectly in line with the refined cruelties inflicted by the R.C. Church throughout her history.

It must be obvious then except to the wilfully blind that there is only one satisfactory solution to the situation in Ireland — that is, the conversion of the poor benighted Roman Catholics of Ireland, and their deliverance from the delusion of popery. What abject slaves of popery they have been for so long. Yet the time may not be far away when the Lord will open their eyes to see the true nature of that system to which they have been bound for many generations. If such a violent opponent and oppressor of the Church of God as Saul of Tarsus, could be arrested on the way to Damascus by a revelation of the glory of Christ from heaven, and be turned into the foremost apostle of the Gentiles, may not light — the light of the knowledge of the glory of God — break in upon the Roman Catholics of Ireland through the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ, accompanied with the power of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. What a day that would be when, instead of betaking themselves to a priest who is as blind as themselves to confess their sins, they would come to the footstool of mercy and confess at the Throne of grace with brokenness of heart their sin and idolatry, and return to the pure worship of the God of heaven! For that day let us pray.

A National Lottery

Mr Peter Brook, the National Heritage Secretary, has announced with a flourish the intended opening of a National Lottery by the end of 1994 and referred to the high pay-outs that would result from it. "Millions of people", he declared, "will undoubtedly gain great pleasure from their weekly flutter." Such is the view of the Government Minister in charge of this project. How is it that he can call evil good? How can he reconcile his conscience to the evil of gambling? His view is that the end justifies the means. The money is to be spent on good causes. His view is that "in the coming years the National Lottery will channel hundreds of millions of pounds into good causes, enriching the quality of our communal life, and at the same time enriching those "lucky" people who will become millionaires."

The history of gambling is very different from the glowing prospects the Heritage Secretary holds out for it in the future. Gambling has been the cause of grief and sorrow and loss to many. There are no winners in gambling. All are losers. Many have lost their lives through the sudden arrival of those ill-gotten gains, and not only their lives, but their souls as well. For many others who have gained in this illicit way, it has proved "easy come, easy go", and soon they have landed in greater poverty than before. The Lord will not bless those riches which are wrongly acquired. "He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him." Also we read that "wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labour shall increase." It is the Word of the Lord that will be fulfilled and not the word of the Heritage Secretary.

In 1694 State Lotteries were allowed but five years later were abolished as "common and public nuisances" and as having brought "utter ruin and impoverishment" to many families. They were later restored. In 1823 Parliament decreed the end of lotteries in Britain. Earlier, in 1808, a Select Committee of Parliament said: "The foundation of the lottery system is so radically vicious that your Committee feel convinced that under no system of regulations which can be devised will it be possible for Parliament to adopt it as an efficacious source of revenue." It will be a sad day for Britain, and a further step down the road of moral debasement, if a State Lottery is put into operation at the end of next year. It is sad to think that, as a nation, we are doing our best to cause the Lord to withdraw Himself from our midst altogether.

Mission News

Miss Katie Macaulay is home in Breasclote, Lewis, for a short furlough and we wish her a restful and happy holiday after a strenuous term. It is her intention to be back in Zimbabwe by the end of January (D.V.) for the reopening of the John Tallach School for the new session.

Miss Jessie Coote is in Kenya and expects to spend a month there with our friends Donald and Christine Macdonald and Celia Rennes. Dr Christine has made a good recovery from her attack of malaria. We have not heard if the long-looked-for Registration of the hospital at Sengera has been granted.

An interesting letter has come from Sister Anne Zekveld at Mbumba Hospital, Zimbabwe, telling something of their daily experiences. Anne says how much they appreciate having three State Certified nurses, two male and one female.

'They are a great help to us in the wards. They have have a two year training period. The female nurse has completed her midwifery training and is a real help in our maternity work. They are all Shona-speaking and for the present need an interpreter, but they will soon pick up Sindebele.

The hospital remains full and our T.B. block is full to overflowing. The increase in T.B. cases is really Aids-related. Patients with Aids have little resistance. Yesterday, one of our patients, a young girl of twenty was taken home by her parents before she completed her treatment. She had been with the Pentecostals for healing, and then to the witch-doctors before coming to the hospital. She has been having severe headaches. Sister Lia had a long talk with her, explaining the nature of her illness, the reason for her headaches, and especially speaking to her of her soul's need, but the poor girl could think of nothing but her headaches, and her desire to get rid of them. Now her parents will take her back to the witch-doctors who told her that if she did not appease the spirits of her ancestors she would lose her reason. How we need the work of the Holy Spirit! There is so much spiritual darkness around us.

Our monthly meetings at Njena have continued and on the last two occasions we have met in a classroom in the local school. The classroom is now too small as over one hundred adults and children now meet with us. In September the Rev. P. Mzamo accompanied us and held a service, after which a nurse-aid and I held a mini-clinic while the people spoke to the Rev. P. Mzamo. They are very anxious to have regular services on the Lord's Day, but as the Rev. P. Mzamo said, there are no labourers. He is to speak to the Kirk Session to see if they can arrange a Sabbath

service once a month. That would at least be a start. Meantime, we shall continue with our monthly visits D.V. May the Lord Himself bless His Holy Word. May we not forget them in our prayers. What a great need there is for preachers of the Gospel.

We had a minor crisis here with our water supply a few weeks ago. The pump on the borehole was working, but very little water was coming up. A couple of the workmen went to investigate and accidentally let the whole pipeline drop down into the shaft. By this time our reserve tank was almost empty so it caused some consternation. There is very little you can do in a hospital without water. Sister Lia was off that day so we arranged that she go to the nearby community borehole with the ambulance and trailer and all suitable drums, pails and containers. Our radio telephone was not working so we could not even let David Ndlovu know of our predicament. Imagine our surprise and relief when David came driving through the gate that afternoon. He had heard the previous day of our water problem. The pipe had corroded and the water was going back into the borehole before it reached the top. By the next day we had water again. How thankful we should be to the Lord for His goodness.' J.N.

Church Notes

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Northern: At Dingwall on 25th January, 1994 at 2 p.m.

Australia and New Zealand: At Auckland on 28th January 1993 at 2.30 p.m.

Zimbabwe: At Bulawayo on 8th March, 1994 at 2 p.m.

Canadian: At Inverness on 22nd March, 1994 at 9 p.m.

Day of Humiliation and Prayer

It was agreed by the Synod that Wednesday 1st December, 1993 be observed throughout the Church as a Day of Humiliation and Prayer to humble ourselves greatly on account of our own personal transgression and to plead for gracious and Divine intervention to halt the alarming floodtide of apostasy in religion and morality at home and abroad, and to pray for the downfall of Romanism and every other system and philosophy of life that is contrary to the Word of God.

List of Communions

The list of Communions has been corrected for 1994. If any other corrections are required the Editor would be grateful if ministers responsible for these Communion would let him know.

Theological Conference

The Theological Conference will be held (D.V.) in Glasgow on 7th and 8th December.

The following Papers will be read:—

Tues 7th Dec. 2.30 p.m. Pastoral Counselling re AIDS

— Rev. J. R. Tallach

Tues 7th Dec. 7 p.m. F.P. Missions in East Africa

— Rev. D. B. Macleod

Wed 8th Dec. 10 a.m. Present Problems arising from Ordination of Women — Rev. D. Boyd

2.30 p.m. Comparison between 1843 and 1893

— Rev. F. MacDonald

7 p.m. The Westminster Confession of Faith

— Rev. J. MacLeod.

The evening Papers will be in public.

Notice to Congregational Treasurers

The General Treasurer requests Congregational Treasurers to send their final remittances for 1993 to him by Monday, 27th December, 1993 to allow these to be banked by 31st December, 1993. All payments not banked by the end of the year will be treated as receipts applying to 1994.

Centenary Commemoration Volume

The Church Centenary Volume — One Hundred Years of Witness — is expected to be available by mid-December. The book is casebound with a four colour dust jacket. It will have 240 pages of text and 44 pages of photographs, some in full colour. It is hoped that it will have a wide circulation and be of interest to those who read it. The special price to congregations will be £8 per copy.

Acknowledgment of Donations

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

Eastern Europe Fund: Anon., £50; K. & A.M., Duirinish, £50; A Friend £100 (for the poor); Anon., £50 (for Kiev visit); Anon., £100 (for needy families), last three per N.M.R.

Foreign Mission Fund: Anon., Can \$100; Anon., £100.

To advance the Gospel in Scotland: Rev. T.R.C., Edin. £50.

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

Assynt: D. & A.M. (Strathconon), £10 for Congr. Fd.

Breasclete: Anon., £50 for Sust. Fd.; Friend of the Cause, £20 for Comm. Exps.; Uig, Friend £20 for Congr. Fd.; Friend of the Cause £50 for Collections.

Dumbarton: Miss C. McL., Glasgow £20 for Congr. Fd per M.H.

Edinburgh: Friend, Ballifeary £10 for Congr. Fds.

Farr: A.M. £100; Stornoway Friend, £20, both per Rev. J.G.

Inverness: Anon., £20, £40, £30, £3, £20 all for Sust. Fund per envelopes in plate; Friend, Stornoway £5 for Sust. Fd. per D.M.B.; Mrs M., Inverness £10; H. & C. MacL., Gairloch £20, both for Tape Fund per envelopes in plate.

London: A.G. £25 for Manse maintenance.

North Harris: Friend, Kyles, Scalpay £5; Friend, Leacklee £40; M.M., Tarbert £10; J.A. McD, Kyles £20 all by envelope in plate; Anon., Stockinish £50; Anon., Stockinish £10; Anon., Stockinish £5; Anon., Stockinish £10; last four per Rev. K.D.M.; Friend, Grosebay £20 per J.M.C., all for communion Expenses; M.M., Tarbert £10 for Door Coll.; Anon., Stockinish £10, where most needed, per Rev. K.D.M.; R.M.L., Cluer £4, where most needed (by envelope in plate).

Portree: In loving memory of a dear sister £100 for Congr. Purposes; Anon., £30 for Church Bus., both by envelope in plate; a widow's thanks offering £100; Friend £14; Friend £10 last three per S.Y.M.; Friend £10, last four where needed; Friend £15 for Sust. Fd.; Friend £10 for Door Coll., last three per F.M.

Staffin: Anon., £100 where most needed (envelope per N.M.Q.)

Stornoway: Friends £10 for Door Coll.; A Friend, North Tolsta £10; Friend £20, both for Congr Fds.; Friend £10, "where most needed"; Miss K.A. MacLeod, The Cottage, Callanish £40 for Sust. Fd.; in memory of Mrs Catherine Macleod, £100; Friend £500, both for Foreign Missions; M.M., Nuneaton, £350 for Foreign Mission Fd., £100 for Blind Pupils at Mission Station, £50 for Famine Relief, all per Rev. J. MacLeod.

Leverburgh: Friend, Stockinish £50 per Rev. K.D.M.; Friend, Kentulavig £200 per D. McK.

Uig: Anon., £10; Anon., £20; Stornoway Friend £20, all for Comm. Exps, all in Church plate.