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Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ

In writing to the believers at Rome the Apostle Paul seeks to establish them in the doctrine of justification by faith. He shows them that by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in God's sight. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God, therefore all that the law can do is to bring them in guilty before God. If they are to be justified in God's sight, then it must be freely by the grace of God, and through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. It is through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ that the sinner is saved from his or her sins, and made an heir of eternal life. The doctrine of imputation is a glorious one, setting forth as it does the imputation to Christ of the sins of the sinner, and the imputation to the sinner of the righteousness of Christ. How this doctrine ought to fill the soul of the believer with wonder — that their sins should be laid on the sinless One while His righteousness is made over to them. It is this that establishes peace between God and the sinner. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ."

In the eighth chapter of the Epistle, beginning as it does with "no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" — Paul goes on to establish their adoption and heirship with Christ to everlasting glory. He shows that all things are working together for their good. Finally he reaches a glorious climax at the end of the chapter in declaring that nothing shall separate the people of God from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus their Lord.

In this Epistle also he shows what is expected of those of whom these things are true. As he says elsewhere, "Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." He also says: "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" So in this Epistle also he points that we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh but through the Spirit are to mortify the deeds of the body.

Later in the Epistle he exhorts the believers at Rome to put on the Lord Jesus Christ and not to make provision for the flesh, to fulfil its lusts. The believing people of God are called to die unto sin and live unto righteousness. They have "put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." They are called to walk as children of light. They were once darkness but now are they light in the Lord. If they are catering for the flesh then there is no possibility of them putting on the Lord Jesus Christ. They are not to make provision for the flesh but perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. The Apostle Peter in one of his Epistles could say: "The time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings and abominable idolatries." They are now to live the rest of their lives to the will of God. They are to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts. Indeed the Apostle in writing to the Galatians has to say: "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." So it must be with all who are followers of the Lamb of God. They have been washed in the precious blood of Christ. Their sins have been put away, and they have been accepted in the Beloved.

"Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ" is the message of the Apostle to the believers at Rome. If they are to be changed more and more into His likeness, then it must be by the effectual working of His Spirit in them, conforming them more and more to His likeness. What has the Saviour to say of Himself? It is this — "I am meek and lowly in heart." Therefore His people are called to put on meekness and lowliness of mind. He has given His people an example and they are to follow in His steps. What an example to follow! — "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously."

The work of sanctification is a process by which the children of God are ultimately changed completely into the likeness of Christ. How rapidly we may expect this change to progress, where there is much intimate and living communion with the Church's now glorified Head in heaven. Moses' face shone when he came down from the Mount, after he had been communing with God there. So will those who live near to the Saviour be conformed more and more to His likeness. In the measure that the believer grows in grace and in the knowledge of Christ, so will their fellow believers see more and more of the image of the Lord Jesus Christ in them. The desire of grace is to be perfectly conformed to the image of Christ.

This desire will only be fully satisfied when the soul is made perfect in holiness at the moment of death. "Beloved," John had to say, "now are we the sons of God, and it doth not appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

Presbyterianism

The Form of Presbyterial Church Government agreed upon by the Westminster Assembly sets out, at the very forefront of it, the Headship of Christ over His Church. This is a glorious doctrine which true and faithful presbyterians will ever hold fast to. In the maintenance of this doctrine many have laid down their lives, rather than dishonour Christ by denying it. Such have received their reward: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

The Confession of Faith states the same doctrine of Christ's Headship over the Church, while repudiating at the same time in unequivocal language the Pope's claim to be the head of the Church. "There is no other head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ. Nor can the Pope of Rome, in any sense, be head thereof: but is that Antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself, in the Church, against Christ and all that is called God." Chapter 26, Section 6.

Professor Witherow, in his book "The Apostolic Church — Which is it?", outlines the six principles required for Scriptural Church government as these were manifest in the Apostolic Church. They are: (1) That the office-bearers were chosen by the people; (2) That the office of bishop and elder were identical; (3) That there was a plurality of elders in each Church; (4) That ordination was the act of a presbytery — that is, of a plurality of elders; (5) That there was the privilege of appeal to the assembly of elders; and the power of government was exercised by them in their associate capacity; and (6) That the only Head of the Church was the Lord Jesus Christ. Applying these principles to the three forms of Church Government, the Prelatical, the Independent and the Presbyterian, Witherow finds that none of these principles is found in episcopacy, only three are found in the independent system, while all six are embodied in Presbyterianism. He, accordingly, concludes that the Presbyterian is, in point of government, the only apostolic church.

The Scriptural form of Church Government is exercised at different levels. These consist of Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries, Synods and in larger Churches, General Assemblies. In single congregations, there is also the

Deacon's Court which looks after the temporal affairs of the congregation and is independent in its own sphere. The Scriptural basis for Deacons' Courts is found in Acts, Chapter 6 where a murmuring arose about the daily ministration. It was then that seven men were appointed as Deacons to look after the temporal affairs of the Church, so that the Apostles could give themselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word. This principle of setting the elders free to devote themselves to the spiritual side of the work, while the Deacons concentrate on the temporal side, still holds good. Therefore, although the greater office includes the lesser, yet the ideal would be that the elders would be wholly relieved of the temporal concerns of the congregation.

In the Apostolic Church there were some extraordinary offices, such as apostles, evangelists and prophets, which are now ceased. There remains in the Church pastors or preaching elders, ruling elders and deacons. The distinction between preaching and ruling elders appears in 1 Timothy 5: 17, where it is said: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in word and doctrine." The latter are ministers of the Gospel who are called of God to that work. While such, in being ordained to the office of the ministry, are necessarily called to administer the sacraments, yet this is not their main function. Their main function is to preach the Gospel. The main function of the ruling elder, on the other hand, is to exercise spiritual oversight in the congregation, in conjunction with the pastor. This rule and oversight is ministerial, and not lordly.

The exercise of discipline belongs to the Kirk Session and is to be administered according to the terms laid down in the Word of God. The purpose of church discipline, as outlined in the Confession, is "for the reclaiming and gaining of offending brethren, for deterring of others from like offences, for purging out of that leaven which might infect the whole lump, for vindicating the honour of Christ, and the holy profession of the Gospel, and for preventing the wrath of God, which might justly fall upon the Church, if they should suffer His covenant, and the seals thereof, to be profaned by notorious and obstinate offenders." Yet those called on to exercise discipline are ever required to keep in mind their own exposure to temptation and proneness to go aside. The Apostle counsels the Galatian Churches: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself lest thou also be tempted."

The Form of Church Government shows that Scripture holds out a presbytery in a Church, consisting of ministers of the Word and ruling

elders. That many congregations may be under one presbyterial government is proved by the Church of Jerusalem and the Church of Ephesus, both consisting of more congregations than one, and all the congregations of each city area being under one presbyterial government. The Presbytery, besides its oversight of the congregations within its bounds, its power of ordination to the ministry, and other functions, also acts as an appeal court from the Kirk Session. Further appeals may be carried to the higher courts such as Synods and General Assemblies.

If Presbyterian Church Government is the Scriptural form of church government, then we must conclude that it is the most efficient form of church government because divinely ordained. If the officers of the Church are what they ought to be then, no doubt, it would also be seen to be the most efficient form of church government. But owing to the shortcomings of men, it often falls far short of the ideal. One reason for this is that, for its efficient working, those ruling in the church have need of the wisdom that is from above, and an abundant measure of the grace of humility. Where these are lacking the wheels of presbyterian church government drive slowly. Often, through the pride of men's hearts, scriptural government and discipline is subverted. Sometimes church courts have become lordly and, as such, prove vehicles of oppression to the people of God. At other times they have been misused by men in order to set up error in doctrine and practice within the visible church. A rascally majority can ride over the pleas of a faithful minority. In a marked way this was true in the Disruption Free Church, and is ever the way where a worldly and unsanctified intellectual spirit prevails. Sometimes a gifted but graceless leader in a Church Court may by his cunning set the Church on a course which it will later come to regret. The Church in our land also has had bitter experience of interference, by kings and by others in authority, in the affairs of the Church of God. At the Disruption six hundred ministers preferred to abandon the State Church rather than suffer interference from the Civil Courts in matters which belonged to the Church of God.

Another danger, this time within the Church, to Scriptural government by Presbyteries, is when Committees begin to usurp the place of Presbyteries. Committees are necessary to oversee certain aspects of the Church's affairs between the meetings of Synod or Assembly, but every effort ought to be made to prevent them impinging on the work of Presbyteries. These Committees are appointed yearly and are given a remit which they are required to abide by, and they are accountable each year to the body that appointed them.

It may be that outwith our bounds there are Churches where many things are done that are contrary to Presbyterian Church Government but we are to be especially concerned as to what takes place within our own bounds. It should be our earnest desire and prayer that all that is done may be in accordance with the rules of God's Word and that all may be done to His glory and for the advancement of His kingdom.

Sermon

by Rev. Thomas Halyburton

(Continued from page 144)

"The voice of my Beloved; behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills." Song 2: 8.

III. Proceed to inquire, what are these affections which this sight will move in a believing soul?

1. It will occasion admiration. The spouse here is filled with wonder, and is extraordinary pressed with it, that she would have others to help her to admire the sight; "Behold, says she, he cometh skipping upon the hills, and leaping upon the mountains!" In this sight every thing is apt to beget wonder, every thing is new, surprising, unexpected, and uncommonly excellent.

2. It will excite love. If ever the heart warm to Jesus Christ, this sight will do much to put it into a flame of love. The spouse, when she sees him, is so taken, that she confidently calls him her Beloved. "The voice of my Beloved! Behold he cometh."

3. It will raise extraordinary joy. See how the church carried it, when he came unexpectedly for their delivery from that captivity, which was a type of their spiritual captivity, Psal. 126. "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing; then said they among the heathen, the Lord hath done great things for them, the Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad." And such certainly will be the influence of the sight of the glorious deliverer, when he is coming to deliver his people from their spiritual thralldom.

4. It will fill with shame, an ingenuous sort of shame, such as was that of David, upon the Lord's promising to do so many, so great, and undeserved favours and kindnesses to him; 2 Sam. 7: 18. Shame is nothing else but a sort of displicency and dissatisfaction with one's self, arising from the discovery of some imperfection, and this is done, when the Lord comes to us; for in him we may see what we are, how vile! how unkind! and how wonderfully kind he is! Enough to put the soul that sees him

to the blush. There is a remarkable scripture to this purpose, Ezek. 16: 63. "And I will establish my covenant with thee, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord; that thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never more open thy mouth, because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God." When Christ comes to a soul in peace, it will surely blush for shame.

5. It will occasion grief, an ingenuous sorrow: joy and godly sorrow are not inconsistent: nay, so far is it on the contrary, that here away that joy is not usually abiding, which has not for its companion an ingenuous sorrow; when a believing soul sees Christ, whom it is pierced by its sins, its unbelief, and unkindness, coming "skipping upon the hills, and leaping upon the mountains," it is ready to dissolve into tears of godly sorrow, which is not like the sorrow of the world, that contracts and narrows the soul; but it enlarges and sweetens the heart, and has in it a joy, which those who are acquainted with it, would not exchange for all the carnal mirth of a wicked world. This grief we are speaking of, is promised expressly as the consequence of this sight, Zech. 12: 18. "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and mourn."

6. And lastly, this sight will be attended with gratitude in the soul that sees it. Gratitude is one of the most noble and elevated passions; as much has a man of greatness and ingenuity, as he has a gratitude: if ye pronounce him destitute of this, ye pronounce him void of all that is good. Gratitude is nothing else, but a delightful sense of favours done to any without their desert; and this naturally leads to that question, "What shall I render to the Lord for all his gracious benefits to me?" Psal. 116: 12. And this much for the third general head. We proceed now,

IV. To inquire into the reasons of the doctrine; whence it is that Christ's coming is so affecting to the soul of a believer. The reasons of this are so plain, that we need scarce insist upon them after what has been said: only in a word; this sight is affecting,

1. Because it is the return of the desire of a believing soul. What is it that the believing soul longs for, and vehemently desires? Is it not to see him come "skipping upon the hills, and leaping upon the mountains"? Doth not such a one cry out with the spouse, in the 17th verse of this chapter, "Turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether?" And is it possible, that this desire should be accomplished, and the heart not be affected, therewith? "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick; but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life," says the wise man, Prov. 13: 12. And a few verses afterward, "The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul."

2. This flows from the nature of the thing, which is seen; every thing in it, as we have at length made appear, is wonderful and surprising; and therefore apt to affect the beholder.

3. It is on the account of the effects of the discovery: it removes all clouds, it lays a foundation for solid joy, it gives strength to the faint, and comfort to the disconsolate. But passing these, I shall come now to the application.

Use. In the improvement of this doctrine, that I may not encroach too far upon your patience, I shall wave the consideration of many useful doctrinal inferences, which might be drawn from it, and only speak a word to one or two sorts of persons, of whom this assembly may be composed. That I may then make way for the improvement I design, there is a question I shall put to you all; and ye are all not a little concerned in it, especially such of you as design to approach the table of the Lord. The question I pose you on, and which, I plead, ye may pose your own consciences upon, is this:

Did ye ever see this heart-affecting sight, Jesus Christ coming "skipping upon the hills, leaping upon the mountains?" Found ye ever your hearts filled with wonder, love, joy, grief, shame, and gratitude, when ye saw this lovely, wonderful one, Jesus Christ, coming over all interposing difficulties to you? Put the question home to your own consciences: it is a matter of the highest moment and the last importance, especially as to you, who design to approach the table of the Lord. This question, if put home, will, I conceive, cast this assembly into two sorts. 1. Such as never saw Jesus Christ, nor have any desire to see him. 2. Such, who, if they dare not positively say, That they have seen him "skipping upon the hills, and leaping upon the mountains;" yet dare say, they have seen that, which makes them desire above all things to see this heart-affecting sight. I shall not stand here to subdivide this latter sort, into such who dare be positive in asserting they have seen him, and those who cannot; but shall speak a few words to the two sorts of persons mentioned, without any separate consideration of these inferior divisions that might be made. I begin with the

1st Sort; those who never saw this sight. I put no doubt, there are in this house this day not a few, who have lived, it may be, some twenty, some thirty, some forty, fifty, or threescore years, and have never to this day seen this heart-affecting sight. Ye have been busy toiling for the pleasures or profits of the world; your only inquiries have been about "what ye should eat, what ye should drink, or wherewithal ye should be clothed;" if ye got food to eat, or raiment to put on, or medicine when

ye were sick, ye found no want of any other thing; how ye might escape the wrath of God; how ye might be reconciled to him, and get the well-grounded assurance of your peace, its being made with him, never entered into your thought, never brake your rest; ye never missed Christ. If a husband, a wife, a child, a friend, had been absent, or if ye had wanted any external comfort, ye could be sensibly touched and affected with it; but indeed for Christ, ye never had him more than other honest folk your neighbours, nor did ye ever miss him; you came, it may be, to the church, and it may be to communions, ye heard and saw as did others; but for seeing this sight, or hearing any thing that affected you so, as I have said, a sight of Christ coming for the relief of his people will do; that ye did never see, nor desire. Is not this the exact character of not a few of this assembly? Sure it is. Well, to any of you who are such, we say,

1. What have we to do with you, who dare not say, that you come to see Jesus? Our only business here, is to call persons to come and look at this heart-affecting sight; we have no errand here, but to direct people that would see him coming in this glorious manner, and lead them to him, and therefore we have nothing to do with you.

2. What seek ye here? "What seek we here! A very impertinent question," it may be, will some of you say. "We seek the same that other honest folks seek; we never neglected the church; we thank God, our parents taught us, that it is the way to heaven; and we see every body come to it, and we come as they do, to hear a preaching, and to get our communion, as we have ever been in use to do, and as we see others do: and what an impertinent question is this, what seek ye!" I answer, the question is not impertinent, for God has appointed the ends people should propose to themselves in coming, as well as the ordinances to which they should come; and these ends ye have named. Compliance with custom, education, and the like, are not the ends God has appointed the ordinances for: and therefore,

3. It is a small thing for you to mock men, by your assuming the name of Christians, though ye be not acquainted with Christ; but will ye mock our Lord also? Do ye think, that he will suffer you to tread in his courts, as his people, without he understand your errand? or, if he know ye come not to seek himself, will he suffer you to go away without a mark of his displeasure? No; you may assure yourselves he will not suffer such abuses to pass unpunished; the mockers' bands will be made strong. He has said, Lev. 10: 3, "That he will be sanctified in all them that come nigh to him, and that he will be glorified before all the people." And if he get himself glory in some remarkable judgment, like to that whereby he was sanc-

tified in the destruction of Nadab and Abihu, then woe to you. How terrible will your case be! And, though your stroke be not so evident to by-standers, and discernible to the eye of sense, as theirs was, yet it may be fully as severe. God may lock you up in final impenitency, clap on the chains of judicial hardness upon you, and then woe to you eternally.

4. Have ye been so long at Jerusalem, and never "seen the king's face?" have ye attended ordinances so long, and never seen Christ coming "skipping upon the hills, and leaping upon the mountains?" Then certainly ye are blind. I may venture to say, that others in the church with you, in the same assembly, nay, it may be, in the very seat, or at the table with you, have seen this ravishing sight, Jesus Christ "coming from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, glorious in his apparel, travelling, nay, skipping and leaping, in the greatness of his strength," over interposing hills and mountains. Past all peradventure, then, ye are blind.

5. We say therefore, Take heed; see that ye approach not the Lord's table: for, as the Lord liveth, if ye do, the curse of God will fall upon you: ye will "eat and drink damnation to yourselves, not discerning the Lord's body." Blind folks cannot discern this, and such are ye. Touch not therefore, we charge you, those holy things; for why should ye meddle to your hurt?

6. Saw ye never Jesus? Then ye never saw any sight worth the seeing; ye never saw any thing that could ease you of a burden of guilt which, though ye do not feel the weight of it at present, yet will sink you into hell, if he take it not off you. Ye never saw any that can go between you and wrath, the wrath of God, that is ready to break forth into a flame against you, and burn you in the lowest hell: ye never saw any that can redeem you out of the hand of the devil, who reigns in the children of disobedience, or subdue those rebellious lusts that war against our souls; in fine, ye never saw any that could save your souls: and, "what is a man profited, if he gain a world, and lose his own soul?" Can you carry a world with you into the grave? Can a world comfort you in hell? Can a world purchase heaven? Can a world redeem a soul from chains of massy darkness, with which sinners shall be eternally bound? No; "the soul's redemption is precious, and it ceaseth for ever." All the angels in heaven, all the saints above, all the men on earth, millions of worlds will not, cannot bring a soul, that is once lost, back again.

7. Saw ye never Jesus? Then ye never saw one so infinitely well worth the seeing. What is he, will ye say, whom ye talk so much of? Are ye serious in the question? or, are ye not? If ye be not serious, then it is needless to answer you; if ye be, then, O! that I had the tongue of men and angels,

to tell you who he is. O that God would grant me my desire! That he would enlarge a narrow heart, to receive just and great impressions of wonderful Christ! O that he would loose a tacked tongue, and open closed lips! Then should I speak and tell of Jesus Christ; if not what he is, yet what would, in some measure, satisfy the serious inquirer, and make those who were but in jest, to turn in earnest. Ask ye what, and who Jesus is? I tell you, his name is wonderful: "He is the brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of his person, the eternal darling of his bosom: he is the son of man, our elder brother," bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh: "He is Immanuel, God with us: God manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, believed on in the world, received up into glory:" He is earth carried up to heaven, and heaven brought down to earth: he is that man, who is fellow of the Lord of hosts: he is God in the form of a servant: he is the Amen, and faithful witness, the great prophet, the wonderful counsellor of the church: he is the great shepherd of the sheep: he is the guide of the blind, and the prince of preachers: he is the glorious high-priest of our profession, "the Lord our righteousness," the law fulfilled, the curse of the law, the propitiation for the sins of the world, the Lamb of God, the truth of all the sacrifices, the throne of grace, the true mercy-seat, and the glorious advocate of the church: he is Zion's king, the captain of our salvation, the head of the church, the Saviour of lost sinners, the prince of the kings of the earth, the death of death, the conqueror of the world, the devil, and the flesh, the Redeemer of Satan's slaves, the law giver of the church, the prince exalted to give gifts to rebels, repentance and remission to sinners. What shall I say more of him? "He is the everlasting Father, the mighty God, the Prince of peace, the desire of all nations," the heir of all things, the unspeakable gift of God, the sun of righteousness, the resurrection and the life, the wonder of angels, the terror of devils, the light of the world, the lamp of heaven, in the light of which the nations of them that are saved do walk, and the eternal song of all the redeemed and ransomed of the Lord. This, this is he, O blind sinners, to whom ye have preferred the world, your filthy lusts, and the devil. This is he whom ye expect to come down, to fill this house with his glory, and to entertain his friends at his royal banquet. But, who may abide his coming? Dare ye, O wretches, do it? Dare ye look him in the face? Once more in the,

8th and last place, we say to you, have ye yet no desires to see him coming, "skipping upon the hills, and leaping upon the mountains," that are placed between God and you? Then I say to you, we cannot tell, ye cannot tell, but this unseen Christ may lift up his mighty arm, and fetch an

unseen blow down upon you, that may ruin you eternally: he may say to you, "Sleep on;" and then, though angels should preach to you, though the threatenings should thunder out wrath to the terror of others, though the land wherein ye live, should shake with the anger of God; nay, though all the shrieks and cries of the damned were about you, ye shall never waken, till the flames of hell awaken you. If ye be awake, and have any desires, then give heed to what we are,

2nd. To speak to the other sort of person whom we named. I hope there are some here, who are longing to see Jesus Christ coming, "skipping upon the hills, and leaping upon the mountains;" and whether they dare say, that they have seen him formerly in that ravishing posture, or not; yet dare say, that nothing will satisfy them, unless they see this sight; that they have come here for that very end, and have this morning, and it may be, for some days or weeks before, been praying, that here they might see the sight they long for, him, whom though it may be they dare not call their beloved, yet whom they would fain love, skipping over hills and mountains that are between them. And are there any such here? Then our errand is this day to such a very acceptable one; we come this day to call you to see the sight ye so much long for. Up, up; come and see; "behold, he cometh, skipping upon the mountains, and leaping upon the hills!"

1. Poor soul! It may be, thou hast been full of misdoubting thoughts. What! will he, "who is the High and Lofty One, that inhabits eternity," ever let me near him? Me! sinful me! Come and see, O sinner, him whom thou longest for, skipping upon this hill, leaping upon this mountain, cheerfully coming over this difficulty: come to his table, and see, that though Christ "be high, yet he regards the poor and lowly," Psal. 138: 6. He stoops, indeed, when he receives praises, when he bends his ear to hear thy prayers: but here he is a step lower; he is willing to sit at the same table with you: nay, before you should doubt his kindness, he will step a step lower; he will set you at the table, and he will serve. "Behold him skipping upon the hills, and leaping upon the mountains!"

2. It may be, thou hast been full of fears about the wrath of God. What! will ever he bear one stroke for me! Sinful, unkind, unbelieving me! Oh, no; he never will! Away, away, O sinner, with these proud and misgiving thoughts: "Behold, he comes, leaping upon the hills, skipping upon the mountains!" He has borne the wrath of God; and though it has broken his body, he is nothing discouraged, nothing offended at thee; nor doth he rue his undertaking, but is cheerful after all that is over; and, as a sign of it, has proclaimed a feast for thee, that thou mayest be cheerful at the remembrance of all his sorrow.

3. It may be, thou fearest the enemies that stand in the way, the devil, the world: but let none of these things trouble you: he, who hath trode their strength, and knows it well, stands so little in fear of them, whom he has foiled, that lo, he makes a feast of loves, and covers a table for you in the presence of his foes! Here is a strange evidence of his power: behold him covering the table, placing the royal entertainment, and holding his enemies, to their infinite discontent, spectators of his matchless kindness to you! Here, here is indeed a heart-affecting sight!

4. It may be, many times thou hast thought in thy heart, I would not doubt but that Christ will come over all, if it were not my wretched unkindness. After I was at his table, and was feasted with royal dainties, I proved wretchedly unkind; I had forgot all he had done for me, and begun to parley and treat with his enemies; and I fear he will never get over this forgotten light, love and comfort. Whenever I look to him, behold, this looks me broad in the face. Stand not upon this; thou hast reason indeed to be ashamed, but none to be discouraged; for, behold, he comes cheerfully, skipping over all thy unkindnesses, and leaping upon the hills that thou hast raised! Behold, he comes not to upbraid thee with unkindnesses, but to win thee by new favours! Behold, he comes not frowning for faults, but smiling! He comes not to fight against thee, but to feast thee; not to take away mercies thou hast received, but to give thee new ones! he lifts not up his hand to smite unkind friends, but stretcheth them forth with mercies! He speaks to you, but it is not, Depart, unkind friends; but he cries, "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honey with my honeycomb; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved," Song 5: 1. We protest in our kind Lord's name, that if any go away from his table, without being full fed, they are not straitened in him, but in their own bowels: they are not filled; because they have not opened their mouth wide enough.

In fine, Behold, he comes triumphantly over the mountains of unbelief! Are thy sins so strong, so great, that thou findest it hard to believe a bare word, a bare promise, though even of a God that cannot lie? Behold here a wonder of goodness! He will not have thee discouraged for all that. Here he calls to thee, Come and see; nay, taste, and see that Christ is good. Here thou mayest hear him speak; here thou mayest see him bleeding, dying, broken; here thou mayest reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into his side: that wide gash that the sword of justice made, will let thee into his very heart, and there thou mayest see one-half of it full of sorrow and heavy trouble, under the pressure of the hand of justice, and the other

full of love and kindness to thee. O! be not then faithless, but believing. Tell me, poor drooping soul, what was it that thou didst see in Christ, when thou sawest him formerly? All that is still to be seen; thou mayest see him pouring out a river of blood, to cleanse such filthy wretches as thou art; thou mayest see him making a feast to strengthen, to comfort poor, weak, drooping souls, and offering all freely. He says not, take my body and my blood, if thou be one that is come to such and such a degree of love, of desire; if thou be one that art free of such and such sins: but, take me, take all, whatever thy sins be, if thou beest but willing.

I cannot stand to answer objections now; only I say, away with fruitless, groundless discouragements. I cannot tell what to say of the naughty, low, narrow, and scanty thoughts many of you have of the grace of Christ. O! says one or other, I am such a body, so vile, so naughty, and fellow-communicants, they are so vile, and so naughty, and, it may be, the ministers, they are such men, have such and such faults; and therefore Christ will not come; he will not get over these mountains. I say, all these may be true, ministers may be faulty, and people too; but, I say, your unbelief is liker to keep Christ away, than any of these things. Away with these narrow thoughts, which depress grace, and discommend Christ. Blessed, eternally blessed be God, that Jesus Christ is not so pettish as many of us, that, for a fault in a minister, or in a fellow-member, will run away. Many faults, many mountains of faults in ministers and people, will not keep him away from any poor soul that is seeking him; and blessed be God, that it is so. Away with these groundless, ignorant, and narrow thoughts. Has Christ come skipping over all real mountains, and will ye rear up imaginary ones? I protest to you, ye are not straitened in Christ, but in your own bowels. "Behold, he cometh, leaping upon the hills, and skipping upon the mountains! And the Spirit, and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth, say, Come; whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely," Rev. 22: 17. "And he which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen, even so, come Lord, Jesus," Rev. 22: 20.

The Advantages of Assurance

by Thomas Brooks

1. *It will bring down heaven into your bosoms; it will give you a possession of heaven, on this side heaven,* Heb. 11: 1. An assured soul lives in paradise, and walks in paradise, and works in paradise; and rests in paradise; he hath heaven within him, and heaven about him, and heaven over him; all his language is Heaven, heaven! Glory, glory!

2. *Assurance will exceedingly sweeten all the changes of this life.* This life is full of changes. Assurance will sweeten sickness and health, weakness and strength, wants and abundance, disgrace and honour, 2 Cor. 4: 16-18. While a man lives in the sense of unchangeable love, no outward changes can make any considerable change in his spirit. Let times change, let men change, let powers change, let nations change, yet a man under the power of assurance will not change his countenance, nor change his master, nor change his work, nor change his hope. Though others under changes turn, like the chameleon, into all colours to save their little all, yet the assured soul under all changes is *semper idem*, always the same.

Antistines, a philosopher, to make his life happy, desired only that he might have the spirit of Socrates, who was always in a quiet temper of spirit, whatever wrongs, injuries, crosses, losses etc, befell him. Let the trials be what they would that did attend him, yet he continued one and the same. Ah, Christians! the want of assurance hath made many changelings in these days; but if ever you would be like Socrates, if ever you would be like the philosopher's good man, that is, *Tetragonos*, four square, that cast him where you will, like a dice, he falls always sure and square, then get assurance of everlasting happiness.

Assurance will make your souls like the laws of the Medes and Persians, that alter not; it will sweeten the darkest day, and the longest night; under variety of changes, it will make a man sit down with Habakkuk, and rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of his salvation, Hab. 3: 17-19.

3. *Assurance will keep the heart from an inordinate running out after the world, and the glory thereof.* Moses having an assurance of the recompense of reward, and of the love and favour of him that is invisible, could not be drawn by all the honours, pleasures, and treasures of Egypt. He slights all, and tramples upon all the glory of the world, as men trample upon things of no worth, Heb. 11: 24-27. So after Paul had been in the third heaven, and had assurance that nothing should separate him from the love of God in Christ, he looks upon the world as a crucified thing: "The world is crucified to me," saith he, 2 Cor. 12: 1-3, and Rom. 8: 38; "and I am crucified unto the world," Gal. 6: 14. The world is dead to me, and I am dead to it: the world and I are well agreed; the world cares not a pin for me, and I care not a pin for the world.

The lodestone cannot draw the iron when the diamond is present: no more can the vanities of this world draw the soul after them, when assurance, that choice pearl of price, is present.

I have read of Lazarus, that after he was raised from the grave, he was never seen to smile. The assurance that he had of more glorious things,

deadened his heart to the things of this world; he saw nothing in them worthy of a smile. Ah! were there more assurance among Christians, there would not be such tugging for the world, and such greedy hunting and pursuing after it, as is in these days, to the dishonour of God, the reproach of Christ, and the shame of the gospel. Get but more assurance, and less money will serve your turns; get but more assurance, and less places of honour and profit will serve your turns; get but assurance, and then you will neither transgress for a morsel of bread, nor yet violently pursue after the golden wedge, etc.

4. *Assurance will exceedingly heighten you in your communion with God, and it will exceedingly sweeten your communion with God.* Assurance that a man is even now a son of God raises him high in his fellowship with God, 1 John 3: 2. There are none that have such choice and sweet communion with God as those that have the clearest assurance of their interest in God, as may be seen throughout the whole book of Solomon's Song. "My beloved is mine, and I am his," saith the spouse, chap 2: 16. I am assured of my interest in him, says she, and therefore he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts; and upon this account it is that she holds king Jesus in the galleries, that she is sick of love, that she is raised and ravished with his kisses and embraces: "His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me," chaps. 1: 13; 7: 5; 2: 6. None had more assurance of her interest in Christ than she, and none was higher and closer in communion with Christ than she. The wife's assurance of her interest in her husband sweetens and heightens her communion with her husband. The child's assurance of his interest in his father sweetens his dealings and fellowship with his father. So the believer's assurance of his interest in God will exceedingly heighten and sweeten his communion and fellowship with God. Assurance of a man's interest in God sweetens every thought of God, every sight of God, every taste of God, and every good word of God. God is as sweet to the assured soul when he hath a sword in his hand as when he hath a sceptre; when he hath the rod of indignation as when he hath the cup of consolation; when his garments are rolled and dyed in blood as when he appears in his wedding robes; when he acts the part of a judge as when he acts the part of a father.

5. *Assurance will be a choice preservative to keep you from backsliding from God and his ways.* Ah! assurance will glue the soul to God and his ways, as Ruth was glued to her mother Naomi. It will make a man "stand fast in the faith, and quit himself like a good soldier of Christ," Gal. 5: 1; 2 Tim. 2: 3; 2 Pet 1: 10,11, "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things,

ye shall never fall." Stumble ye may, but assurance will keep a man from falling foully and from falling utterly. Verily, the reason why there are so many apostates in these days is, because there are so few that have a well-ground assurance.

Pliny speaks of some fishes that swim backward. Ah! many professors in these days swim backward; they swim from God, and Christ, and conscience; yea, they swim from the very principles of morality and common honesty. Believe it, friends! it is not high notions in the brain, but sound assurance in the heart, that will keep a man close to Christ when others backslide from Christ. An assured Christian will not exchange his gold for copper; he knows that one old piece of gold is worth a thousand new counters; one old truth of Christ is worth a thousand new errors, though clothed with glistening robes; and therefore he will prize the truth, and own the truth, and keep close to the truth, when others that lack a sound assurance make merchandise of Christ, of precious truths, and of their own and others' immortal souls. Get assurance, and thou wilt stand when seeming cedars fall; lack assurance and thou canst not but fall, to the breaking of thy bones, if not to the utter loss of thy precious soul, 2 Peter 2: 3.

6. *Assurance will very much embolden the soul with God.* It will make a man divinely familiar with God; it will make a man knock boldly at the door of free grace; it will make a man come boldly before the mercy-seat; it will make a man enter boldly within the holy of holies. Heb. 10: 22, "Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." Assurance makes the soul converse with God as a favourite with his prince, as a bride with her bridegroom, as a Joseph with a Jacob.

Luther, under the power of assurance, lets fall this transcendent rapture of a daring faith, "*Fiat mea voluntas*, let my will be done"; and then falls off sweetly, "*Mea voluntas, Domine, quia tua*, my will, Lord, because thy will." It is the want of assurance that makes the countenance sad, the hands hang down, the knees feeble, and the heart full of fears and tremblings, Heb. 12: 13. Oh therefore get assurance, and that will scatter your fears, and raise your hopes, and cheer your spirits, and give wings to faith, and make you humbly bold with God. You will not then stand at the door of mercy with a *may I knock?* with a *may I go in?* with a *may I find audience and acceptance?* but you will, with Esther, boldly adventure yourselves upon the mercy and goodness of God. "Now verily, I think," saith one, speaking of Christ, "he cannot despise me, who is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh; for if he neglect me as a brother,

yet he will love me as a husband: that is my comfort." Assurance will remove all strangeness from between Christ and the soul; of two, it will make Christ and the soul one.

7. Assurance will sweeten the thoughts of death, and all the aches, pains, weaknesses, sicknesses, and diseases, that are the fore-runners of it; yea, it will make a man look and long for that day. It will make a man sick of his absence from Christ. It makes a man smile upon the king of terrors; it makes a man laugh at the shaking of the spear, at the noise of the battle, at the garments of the warriors rolled in blood. It made the martyrs to brave it out with lions, to dare and tire their persecutors, to kiss the stake, to sing and clap their hands in the flames, to tread upon hot burning coals as upon beds of roses.

The assured soul knows that death shall be the funeral of all his sins and sorrows, of all afflictions and temptations, of all desertions and oppositions. He knows that death shall be the resurrection of his joys; he knows that death is both an outlet and an inlet; an outlet to sin, and an inlet to the soul's clear, full and constant enjoyment of God; and this makes the assured soul to sing it out sweetly, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" "I desire to be dissolved." "Make haste, my beloved." "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." 1 Cor. 15: 55-57; Philip. 1: 23; Song of Solomon 8: 14; Rev. 22: 20. Now death is more desirable than life. Now says the soul, *Ejus est timere mortem, qui ad Christum nolit ire*, let him fear death that is loath to go to Christ. So that I may be with Christ, though I go in a cloud, though I go in a fiery chariot, I care not, says the assured soul.

The Persians had a certain day in the year, in which they used to kill all serpents and venomous creatures. The assured Christian knows, that the day of death will be such a day to him, and that makes death lovely and desirable. He knows that sin was the midwife that brought death into the world, and that death shall be the grave to bury sin; and therefore death is not a terror, but a delight unto him. He fears it not as an enemy, but welcomes it as a friend; as crooked-back Richard the Third in his distress cried, "A kingdom for a horse, a kingdom for a horse!" So souls that want assurance, when they come to die, will cry out, "A kingdom for assurance, a kingdom for assurance!" and as the martyr Severus said, "If I had a thousand worlds, I would now give them all for Christ." so a soul that wants assurance, when he comes to enter upon a state of eternity, will cry out, "Oh, had I now a thousand worlds, I would give them all for assurance, whereas the assured soul would not for a thousand worlds but die. When his glass is out, and his sun is set, he cries not out, as that

lady did, "A world, a world for an inch of time!" but rather, "Why is it, why is it, Lord, that thy chariots be so long a-coming?"

(To be continued)

The Brucefield Elder

by the Rev. W. Scott, Chesley, Ontario

Mr George Forrest, whose name has become familiar to home readers of this Magazine in connection with the Canadian Mission, passed away peacefully at his Brucefield residence, Ontario, on the evening of Saturday, 21st December, 1912. This event had been anticipated, the deceased having been in his ninetieth year. Until quite lately his mental vigour and power of memory continued remarkable. Notwithstanding his great age and infirmities, including blindness, his vision seemed undimmed and his force unabated in spiritual things. Of this the writer had experience in the summer months. Nor can we forget his then venerable presence or the glow on his countenance, when sitting with him at table even so recently, as he conversed on divine things or "engaged" before or after meals. However cut off from the world, he remained alive unto righteousness and unto whatever concerned the cause of God, which lay on his heart. Now, alas! his memory but suggests the prayer of the Psalmist: "Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men" (Psalm 12: 1).

Our personal acquaintance with the departed was confined to such contact as we had with him during our visit to Canada as last Mission deputy. Earlier deputies will doubtless have something to say about his general career. As the last to have been with him, however, and at his own desire, permitted to be present and preside at his burial, we feel prompted to give these few recollections — the main facts in which were related by himself as, on different occasions, we conversed together.

Mr Forrest was born in the parish of New Deer, Aberdeenshire, Scotland, on 1st May, 1823. At the age of eighteen he began life in the capacity of a farm servant, and a few years after emigrated to Canada, where he eventually started farming on his own account. He was in his twenty-second year when he first experienced any spiritual change. The late Rev. Dr. Robert Macdonald of North Leith (whom the writer himself remembers as a preacher), was on a preaching tour in the Disruption year. He preached twice at Mintlaw. "One of his texts," said Mr Forrest, "I never forgot, namely, 'For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord' " (Romans 6: 23). It was

a sermon which brought him under serious impressions. He might then have been arrested, he added, only that he yielded to the persuasion of one sitting near him to leave before the service closed. As a result he became more reckless than ever; showing the danger, he remarked, of stifling conviction. Yet the Lord had mercy on him, even leading him by a way which he knew not. The actual time of his conversion he could not specify. It was gradually and by degrees that the change came. But the circumstances were these: two years later he was to have left for Canada; but God, as he put it, who moves in a mysterious way, so ordered it that he was advised to remain at home till the following spring, when, it was represented, he would have a better prospect of obtaining work in Canada. He did so. In the meantime he went to St Fergus, where, as he explained, he came into contact with a companion who was the means of his being savingly changed. This person, it transpired, afterwards became his wife.

It was soon after this, or in the following year, that he was led to make a public profession of his faith. He stated that his first Communion was at Strichen, Aberdeenshire, in 1846. He belonged to New Deer Free Church congregation, and was examined by that Session, but as the date of their Communion would only fall due a week after he expected to sail for Canada, they gave him a certificate for the earlier Communion at Strichen. In relating this, Mr Forrest observed that he did not remember ever having missed an opportunity since till the previous year, when he was unable to leave the house.

Having in this way first given himself solemnly to the Lord in connection with the showing forth of His death, Mr Forrest, on 14th April of that year, crossed the Atlantic — sailing from Aberdeen to Quebec on the “St Lawrence”, and reaching Toronto on the last day of May. About three years later — being the spring of 1849 — the companion whom, in the providence of God, he had met at St Fergus — Miss Mary Henderson — followed him to Canada, and on 3rd July of the same year they were united in marriage. Mr Forrest had already taken up land in the township of Stanley. He did not dwell much on such matters, but his manuscript shows that by September, 1850, they were able, with their first child (the present Mrs Mustard), to move from Whitby and make the future farm their home. Their two sons were there added to the family — George William and William Lawrence. During these happy days (as he described them), and after some hard, pioneering work, Mr and Mrs Forrest, with their elder son, in 1866 undertook a visit to Scotland. Mr Forrest mentioned having, on that occasion, communicated in the Free Church, Peterhead.

But trial came at length. Mr Forrest's mother had died in 1862. Now

came a succession of griefs, as thus stated by himself: "My father died about the 1st of February, 1873, aged 85 years. Mrs Forrest died on the 21st of March, 1874, after two years of extreme suffering. She was thus taken from me after nearly twenty-five years of very happy married life." Nor did his troubles terminate here. In June of the same year (1874) he was ordained an elder of the Brucefield Congregation of the Canada Presbyterian Church. It was the year before "the Union" — that Union in connection with which all special testimony to the Kingship of Christ, whether over the Church or over the nations, was dropped. And to Mr Forrest, as well as to his minister, the Rev. John Ross of Brucefield, it was to mean separation in the sense of having to "go forth without the camp" for the truth's sake, bearing Christ's reproach. It was a testing time. Mr Forrest went through the proceedings as representative elder. In April, 1875, he attended the meeting of Synod with Mr Ross, in London (Ontario); and, in June of the same year, he likewise accompanied him to Montreal to the last General Assembly of their Church, at which, along with the Rev. Lachlan M'Pherson and his elder, they formally entered their dissent, and tabled their reasons. How often, in Scotland, have the witnesses had to do likewise, and be "partakers of Christ's sufferings". To Mr Forrest and others these events may be said to have been the "beginning of sorrows". In the July following the dissentient ministers and elders organised themselves into a Presbytery under the old banner at East Williams. But Mr Ross died in 1887, and Mr Macpherson had predeceased him. Brucefield Congregation soon fell away from the more faithful testimony, and Mr Forrest found himself isolated enough. He was able to resume fellowship with a minority of the congregation in 1895, when the majority formally entered the Union. This was a satisfaction. And in 1901 he led the way, along with the friends both in the South and North, to the connection formed with the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, which greatly revived his hopes. How he regarded this connection may be gathered from a brief passage in his M.S., written five years later. "The truth is (he says), that for nearly twenty years I have had so little to do with anything that is worth recording, that I find that my connection with the Free Presbyterian Church is about the only thing that I care to mention. But I am very thankful that a kind Providence led me to cast in my lot with the Free Presbyterian Church, for it is small and despised by some who ought to know better. Yet they have thus far maintained a Scriptural form of worship when larger Churches are corrupting it with men's inventions. And I may state here, that at the Communion at Brucefield this summer (1906) the Lord gave testimony to the word of

His grace by loosing the bands of some of His people. It was a time of refreshing to us all."

The experiences of those years, prior to the home connection, had deeply exercised Mr Forrest. Our intercourse in the summer shewed this. His state of mind at the Union crisis he illustrated by mentioning the following incident. Meeting Mr Ross at the time he remarked to him that by his standing against the Union he had the feeling that the other side might credit it to his thinking himself better than others. Mr Ross's ready reply had quite reassured him. Said Mr Ross, "There was a time when there was only one to acknowledge Christ's Kingly claims, and he was a thief. Will that satisfy you?" his minister added. At another time, speaking of its not being always easy to know duty, and that yet guidance is promised if sought for, he mentioned in connection with his disquietude at the separation time, that the next morning after the Union he had that comforting word given him — "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye" (Psalm 32: 8). Similarly, later on, as the prospect of losing his pastor, to whom he had been devoted, was falling heavily upon him, he stated that he had not been left without comfort. Being present at Mr Ross's end, the dying minister proffered to him a parting counsel. As his last word to Mr Forrest he said, "'Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee,' — and that whether as to official duty or private life." (Psalm 55: 22).

As the outcome of such trystings, those who knew him best testify that Mr Forrest never wavered from the distinctive position which he had taken up. This, his own letters, appearing in former issues of this Magazine, shew. A brother elder, similarly tried, remarked to the writer in this connection — "I believe the separation was a matter of principle with Mr Forrest. With some others, including elders, their action was in deference to Mr Ross, but Mr Forrest was sound." So concludes the verse just quoted as the parting word — "He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved" (Psalm 55: 22).

Among the consolations provided for Mr Forrest during those trying vicissitudes, there was his marriage to the present Mrs Forrest. He thus chronicles it in his M.S. — "On 11th May, 1876, I was married to Isabella Fraser." Moreover, they had left the farm and gone to Brucefield four years previous to Mr Ross's death, which brought minister and elder more together, and into closer fellowship. Nor was it a small consolation that when otherwise tried, Mr Forrest was not one who was ordinarily troubled with unbelief. His faith in the Scriptures was of childlike simplicity. He was one who received without questioning the ingrafted Word. Refer-

ring to this trait in Mr Forrest, one very intimate with him remarks — “He was not like me. He was steadfast. I would go there and some days have nothing to say. ‘Are you in the dumps?’ he would ask.” Any exception to this more even tenor of mind appeared only towards the end. The M.S. which he prepared extends to 1906, and its concluding sentences may be taken as expressive of his normal condition: “On looking back on what is counted a long life, there are many things that I have reason to deplore. But ‘this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.’ He is all my salvation and all my desire.”

His last days — It was evident that death’s shade became very real with him as he neared the waters of Jordan. As the waters were coming in unto his soul, he felt the need of the everlasting arms. With his soul cast down within him, he would repeat the Psalms — “Will the Lord cast off for ever, and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?” And then he would exclaim, “No! no!” whilst the tears streamed down his face. He had never been in the habit of using the imprecatory Psalms in praise, although he would read them, having, as he said, no personal enemies. Now, however, he recognised their significance, in being called to wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers — against the rulers of the darkness of this world. Thus it was night to him in the dark valley. Yet light was arising in the darkness. He was seen to rally in connection with the lines —

“In God my glory placed is
And my salvation sure” — (Ps. 72: 7).

He spoke of this as a passage which gave him uplifting after having been cast down. It also suggested the question to him — “What is the glory?” And here he quoted from the Shorter Catechism — “The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory.” This, again, he connected with Christ’s intercessory prayer: “and the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them.” The verse he indicated had brought comfort to him — from the thought of the glory being as safe in His hands as the salvation. And so, in his last audible prayer, he was heard to express an assurance even beyond his usual, thus — “O Lord, we have yielded ourselves to Thee in the day of Thy power.” He was given a measure of consciousness to the last. At the Sabbath meeting in his house, even when unable, latterly, to lead in prayer or to read the Psalm to be sung, he continued to give out the Psalm. This

was so to the end. More than once he gave Psalm one hundred and forty-three. On the very last Sabbath the Psalm which he then gave out was one hundred and forty-six, containing the verse —

“The Lord doth give the blind their sight,
The bowed down doth raise;
The Lord doth dearly love all those
That walk in upright ways.”

Although blind he was able to the end correctly to distinguish not only one Psalm from another, but the verses of particular Psalms. He used the Psalms in connection with his own state of mind. He would say, “What would I do now without the Psalms, when I cannot see to read.” He had been totally blind for about three years, although it was much longer since he could read — unless in the case of the Bible, which he still read when blind to other reading. He would dream, however, that he had recovered his sight and could see everything. Thus dreaming he, in his joy, began a letter (as he said) to one of the home ministers exclaiming —

“Extol the Lord with me, let us
Exalt his name together.”

Wondering once what would be the first thing that he would see, he said, inquiringly, “Shall it be the King in His beauty?” And so now that question has been answered, for “the Lord doth give the blind their sight.” “Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty; they shall behold the land that is very far off” (Isaiah 33: 17). And who on earth can tell how “Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see”? (Luke 10: 23).

“But as for me, I thine own face
In righteousness will see;
And with thy likeness, when I wake,
I satisfy’d shall be” — (Ps. 15)

Conclusion — His comparative seclusion notwithstanding, Mr Forrest was one who followed public events with keenest interest even to the last. There was manifestly a patriotism in his piety, which played its part “for our people and for the cities of our God” (2 Sam 10: 12). This readily appeared in conversation. But, indeed, *his life* was a testimony, in his having had so largely to be “separated from his brethren” for “the testimony which he held,” as already shown. A few points, which, to the writer, he emphasised so recently in conversation, may here be added, showing how he kept in touch with current events.

I. Romanism — He had no sympathy with the changed sentiment of our time, which ignored the evil or progress of Rome as the anti-Christ

of Scripture and of the Confession of Faith. The way in which Romanism was gaining ground greatly concerned him. Thus in July he spoke of "the alarming hold which it was getting on the country." He said the Roman Catholics already averaged forty-seven per cent of the population of Canada. And he pointed out that, after the late Eucharistic Congress at Montreal, it had been announced by the Romish dignitaries that their Church was concentrating her strength upon Britain and upon the United States, but especially upon Canada. Referring to the matter again, he stated as ominous that it was estimated that five-sixths of the public officials in the United States were Roman Catholics, with only one-sixth Protestant. He viewed such a state of things with apprehension, and expressed his belief that "a terrible time in judgement was coming on the land, *and that soon*". He said, moreover that he had been impressed by the contrast as between the overthrow of ancient Babylon and again of mystical Babylon, or the Church of Rome, as described in prophecy. Jeremiah had delivered the book of prophecy, containing God's severe judgment against Babylon (then in its strength) into the hands of the Babylonian ambassador on his returning to Babylon; after reading which he (Seraiah, the prince) was directed to bind a stone to it and cast it into the midst of the Euphrates, as significant of the utter destruction of Babylon and of *the quiet way in which it was to disappear* — like a stone sinking in the Euphrates. Whereas, Mr Forrest went on to say, in the case of the Church of Rome, as mystical Babylon, the language is: "A mighty angel took up a stone, like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus *with violence* shall that great city, Babylon, be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all" (Jer 51: 59-64; Rev 18: 21). He seemed profoundly impressed that things were hastening towards this crisis, and that this should be taken into account in connection with the low state of the cause meantime, and judgement as impending.

2. *The Reformation.* — Mr Forrest showed his belief in a historic testimony. When the elders were together at the close of the Brucefield Communion, he took occasion to emphasise the importance of the Second Reformation period in its relation to our time. In his fourscore and tenth year, it was affecting to hear him witnessing as he did against the present revolt of the Churches from the Reformation standpoint. He spoke particularly of Alexander Henderson and how nobly he had maintained his position as Moderator and leader in 1638 Assembly until the work of Reformation was overtaken. He declared his belief that God's judgments were coming on our land for its backslidings from such attainments. He believed such retribution to be at hand now. He maintained that the period

1638-1650 was the time of greatest purity in the Church. He remarked on its short duration — Alexander Henderson himself dying heart-broken at its overthrow — and instanced the sequel of this in “the killing time”, adding, that the blood of the martyrs in Scotland, so much forgotten, was still in the skirts of the Church of England. He lamented the direction events were taking in Scotland, and its changed attitude to Prelacy, notwithstanding the curse so solemnly pronounced by Alexander Henderson on whoever should attempt to rebuild Jericho as then thrown down.

3. Mr Forrest was no Voluntary. He recognised to the last the obligation upon nations, as such, to acknowledge and do honour to Christ as “Head over all things to the Church” — (Eph. 1: 22). Any action that mitigated against the doctrine of National Religion he deplored. It pained him, therefore, that, when (as he said) it had been proposed a few years ago to amend the Constitution of the United States by embodying in it an acknowledgement of Christ, even the Associate Synod of North America declared themselves against it. In a sermon which appeared in their Magazine, he added, one of their ministers had been allowed, without exception being taken to it, to go the length of saying that, whilst as Mediator Christ was Head of His Church, He had no power or authority as such beyond that: that only as God was He over all things. Against such defection he testified.

With a mind thus clear and active at so advanced an age Mr Forrest was yet “patient in tribulation”. Those constantly about him, as so disabled, say, without reserve, that “he was easy to wait upon”. “I am weak and weary,” he would remark at times; yet, “why should I complain,” he would add. And never did he seem happier than in the fellowship of his brethren, as they “spake often one to another”. One — a co-office bearer — says, “I had many nights with him; he talked on passages of Scripture. ‘What do you think of this passage, or the other?’ he would ask, and we would discuss the passage together, and come to agree on it. We never had a word of difference. He was often at me for not coming often enough. The very day he died he wanted those about him to watch the stage-coach to see if I was on it.” Now, however as come at length to the Church triumphant, he may say without any intermission, “Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”

— *F.P. Magazine*, Vol 17, pp 425-432.

“If I had not sailed this sea-way to heaven, but had taken the land-way, as many do, I should not have known Christ’s sweetness in such a measure.” — *Rutherford*.

Popery Another Gospel

by Rev John Willison, Dundee

(Continued from page 84)

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed, or be under an anathema," Gal. 1: 8.

I still proceed in my argument to prove the Romish religion another gospel than that of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ninth Argument. That religion which makes nature vainly proud, in allowing a man to glory in human works and merits, in puffing him up with a vain conceit of perfection here, and of his ability to do more than God hath required, and even to merit salvation for others, as well as for himself, that religion is another gospel than Christ's, and falls under the anathema of the text: but Popery is such a religion; therefore, &c.

The Christian religion, or gospel of Christ, is a self-denying and creature-humbling way of saving sinners; allowing no place for human merit, or for our glorying in anything, but in our Lord Jesus only, and the free mercy of God in him. Besides what I said before on this head, Arg. 7. concerning justification, I shall here adduce some of the arguments brought by the Spirit of God against the Popish doctrine of merit either for ourselves or for others.

1. The Holy Spirit asserts, that God cannot be made a debtor to man, as the Popish doctrine would make him; for saith he, to him that worketh or meriteth, the reward is not reckoned of grace, but of debt, Rom. 4: 4. But it is absurd to think it can be of debt, for a man cannot be profitable to God, Job 22: 2. This our Lord confirms, Luke 17: 10, "When ye shall have done all these things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do." Now, how can any man merit by doing what was his bounden duty to do? Papists would do well to consider three things about the best human works. 1. We do only what we were bound to do. 2. What good we do we receive grace from God to do it. 3. The reward which God bestows, infinitely exceeds the worth of our doings. Which three things cut off all pretence of merit in us.

2. The Spirit of God teacheth us, that no man in this life can attain to absolute perfection in keeping God's law, or perfect freedom from sin; and that the best of men fall short of their duty in many things, being only renewed in part, and having the remains of corruption in them, which fight against the spiritual and renewed part: and all this the best saints acknowledge, and mournfully complain of their imperfections; see Eccl.

7: 2; 1 John 1: 8; Jam. 2: 3; Rom. 3: 23; 7: 18, &c.; Gal. 5: 17; Job 19: 2, 3. And hence it is, that our best performances are imperfect and defiled with sin, and all our righteousness as filthy rags, Isa. 64: 6. And how can such works as these merit eternal life? nay, seeing the divine law requires a perfect righteousness, and denounces a curse against every breach or defect, surely our polluted performances can merit nothing from God but a curse. No man but Jesus Christ, our infinitely perfect Surety, could perform the perfect meritorious righteousness, which the law required from us.

3. The Spirit of God intimates to us, that, seeing the covenant of works was broken by our first parents, none of their posterity can have salvation by it; and that God hath revealed another way to justify and save sinners, to wit, freely, by grace, through the redemption of Christ, and by faith in him: and therefore eternal life is now the free gift of God to men through Jesus Christ, who satisfied the law for us; so that no flesh, in this fallen state, can look for justification by the deeds of the law, or his own doings; see, for all this, Psal. 130: 3; 143: 2; Eph. 2: 5, 8; Rom. 3: 20, 24; 6: 23; Gal. 2: 16.

4. The Spirit of God, in order to cut off all dependence on our own works or merits, teacheth us, that justification is only to be had by faith, in opposition to justification by works; in regard faith is the mean or instrument whereby we lay hold upon our Surety's righteousness, and get it imputed to us for our justification before God: and, upon this account, it is called the righteousness of God by faith; and Christ, who performed it, is called the Lord our righteousness, and is said to be made of God unto us righteousness; see Rom. 5: 1; Gal. 2: 16; Phil. 3: 9; Jer. 23: 6; 1 Cor. 1: 30.

5. The Spirit of God teacheth us, that the great scope and design of the gospel-way, contrived by God for saving sinners since the fall, is to exalt and glorify the free grace of God through Jesus Christ, and to humble man before God, and exclude all boasting in himself. But the Popish doctrine of merit impiously derogates from God's free grace, and Christ's perfect righteousness and merit; and so would rob God of his glory in the salvation of sinners, and give ground to men to glory in themselves; which is evidently another gospel, and a way that is both contradictory to God's word, and destructive to men's souls; see Rom. 3: 24, 27, 28; Eph. 1: 6; 2: 8, 9; 1 Cor. 1: 29; Tit. 3: 5.

The Papists maintain, that men by their good works, and satisfactory deeds, may not only attain to perfection in this life, and merit heaven for themselves; but they may supererogate, that is, they may do more than what is required of them, and so have superfluous merits and satisfac-

tions to spare to such as need them. But the scripture-arguments before adduced against human merits, quite overturn all the Popish works of supererogation, for, if a man cannot merit for himself, he can far less merit for others. The best saints in scripture acknowledge the defects and short-comings of their best duties, and, after all they have done, that they are unprofitable servants, and have nothing to plead before God but the greatness of his mercies, and that their sufferings here are not worthy to be compared to the glory that is to be revealed, see Luke 17: 10; Jam. 3: 2; Neh. 13: 22; Rom. 8: 18. Now, if our doings or sufferings here be not worthy to be compared to the glory of heaven, how can any man have worth, merit, or satisfactions to transfer to others? Instead of trusting to such imaginary helps from others, the Spirit of God requires every man to prove his own work, and then he shall have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another; for every man shall bear his own burden. And he tells us, that every one of us shall give an account of himself to God; Gal. 6: 4, 5; Rom. 14: 12. So that, at the great day, no man can answer for nor benefit another by his merits: for the wisest virgins will have no oil to spare, to supply others, at that time, Mat. 25: 9. But pray, what is the need of men's having recourse to the merits of creatures to help them, when there is an infinite sufficiency in the merits and sufferings of Christ to supply and save all that come to him? Surely this must be nothing but a device of Satan or antichrist, to throw disgrace and contempt upon Christ's satisfaction and sacrifice.

Notes and Comments

Crime

According to recent reports the police have had success in cutting the number of crimes, so far as certain categories of crime are concerned. However in other areas of crime the relentless rise in crime has continued. This is not to be wondered at when we consider the lack of Scriptural teaching on morality in homes and schools throughout the land. In many cases young people are so ignorant that they hardly know the difference between right and wrong. This state of affairs did not arise overnight. For far too long the claims of the divine law have been set aside, and now everyone does as is good in his own eyes. It appeared as though the Prime Minister was to spearhead a campaign for a return to proper moral values. When challenged about it, however, the Prime Minister backed down, and so failed to give a lead to the nation in this matter. The nation has fallen into depths of moral depravity where murder and rapine have become

commonplace. There is no hope for the nation but in a return to the Lord in repentance. Only an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the land can accomplish this.

Anglican Church in Wales Rejects Ordination of Women

The Anglican Church in Wales voted against the ordination of women to the priesthood. A two-thirds majority was required from the laity, clergy and bishops for the motion to succeed. The clergy vote prevented the motion being carried. This decision, no doubt, will raise a storm of protest from those in favour of the ordination of women. It would be gratifying to think that those who opposed this measure did so on Scriptural grounds but we fear that this was not so. Many would vote in opposition to the proposal from an unscriptural high Anglican view of the priesthood. Some of those who opposed the same proposal in the Church of England have now found a congenial home in the Church of Rome.

Avoidance of pregnancies in Young Teenagers

Baroness Cumberlege, a junior Health Minister, said that as a last resort it was acceptable to provide 12-16-year-olds with the means to avoid pregnancy. In this she was supported by the Health Secretary, Mrs Virginia Bottomley. Head teachers thought that parents should not be informed. The Health Secretary said that the Government's main aim was to reduce the number of teenage pregnancies which, at present, are almost 8000 a year among under-16-year-olds. Mrs Bottomley also said that the important thing is that children are given sex education in a moral framework, with the emphasis on the importance of family life. It was to reduce such pregnancies that sex education was brought into schools. The current statistics show how lamentably it has failed. This could have been predicted by anyone except the willfully blind. It is more scripture teaching the schools need, and not sex education, which is one of the concomitants of a permissive age.

Mission News

They had a pleasant Communion at Mbumba in April. Rev. P. Mzamo and Rev. Z. Mazvabo were greatly appreciated. There were large congregations — about five hundred on Sabbath. There were eighty men and women living on the Mission who had come from out-lying stations. One of the visiting teachers from Ingwenya, Miss Norma MacLean, was impressed with the fact that the sermons were exactly the same as one would hear

in Scotland. Tribe or clan or language make no difference where the spiritual needs of sinners are concerned. All need the salvation that is to be found in the Lord Jesus Christ. There were five new members received, among them a young man who, as a boy, had been a schoolboy at Ingwenya in the 1960s. He and his family are now living at Mbuma. During the communion the fellowship in the homes was warm and spiritual.

Mr Dick Vermeulen has written an interesting account of his experiences since he returned to Kenya and Malawi. A visit was paid to the Clinic at Sengera by the Ministry of Health Team to see if it qualified as a Health Clinic, and a full report was prepared to be sent to Nairobi for final approval. There were some additional facilities required, such as a laundry, a kitchen and a store-room. Arrangements are underway for a good water supply to be available and the main electricity lines are to be extended to Sengera.

Mr Vermeulen also writes of services held at South Mugirango on a Sabbath morning and at Riamangata in the afternoon. The roads were in a very bad condition after the heavy rains. The distances are so great that Mr Vermeulen spent three hours in travelling and three hours in taking the services. However, quite a number of the people who attended the services had walked for three hours to get there!

From Kenya Mr Vermeulen travelled to Malawi. He stayed first in a guesthouse in Blantyre and then moved into the new Mission house. There the water had not been laid on, nor was there any electricity. The Water Board is busy extending the main water-line and it is hoped that before long the Mission House will be connected. For the present, water is carried from the village water-pipe.

Mr Vermeulen finished his Report by saying: "Pray that the work may prosper, and that poor sinners may be added to the Church in this part of the world, and that everything be done to the honour and glory of God's Name. And may we also remember that many are praying that you will continue to help them. Without your help we cannot continue. Are you amongst those who have supported the work with all your might. It shall not be unrewarded."

Church Notes

Meeting of Synod

The Retiring Moderator, Rev. D. MacLean, Glasgow, preached from Isaiah 8: 16, 17 at the opening of the Synod. Rev. Neil Ross, Dingwall, was appointed the new Moderator.

Presbytery Meetings D.V.**Western:** At Laide on 14th June at 6 p.m.**Zimbabwe:** At Bulawayo on 14th June at 2 p.m.**Skye:** At Portree on 21st June at 11 a.m.**Outer Isles:** At Stornoway on 21st June at 1 p.m.**Northern:** At Dingwall on 28th June at 2 p.m.**Southern:** At Glasgow on 28th June at 6 p.m.**Australia and New Zealand:** At Gisborne on 21st October at 2.30 p.m.

Acknowledgment of Donations

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

Eastern Europe Mission: Miss I. M., Glasgow £30; Mrs W. W. M., Caithness £30; Friend, Perth, per A. N. M. £20; Ds G. F. Taverne, per T.B.S. £200.

Foreign Misison: Anon., U.S.A. (December) U.S. \$400; Anon., Canada (March) Can. \$100; Anon., Canada (April) Can. \$100; The following for Blind and Needy Children: Breasclate Congregation, per C.M.M. £100; Stornoway Congregation, per C.M.M. £100; Mrs Miller, Aberdeen, per C.M.M. £50; Inverness Sabbath School (1993), per C.M.M. £400; Glasgow Sabbath School (1993), per C.M.M. £1000; Toronto Ladies (1993), per C.M.M. \$115 and \$110; Ballifeary Home, per C.M.M. £100; Children, Aberdeen, via J. Miller, per C.M.M., 2 tape recorders with accessories.

Leverburgh Home of Rest: A Friend, £50.

Outreach: South Edinburgh Friend, "To advance the Gospel in Scotland" £55.

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

Bracadale - Strath: Mrs C. A. MacL. £200 for Portnalong Communion Expenses, in memory of loved parents, per D.J.M.

Daviot-Stratherrick-Tomatin: North Tolsta Friend, £10 for Congr. Purposes.

Dingwall: Anon., £7 for Eastern Europe; Mrs M.C. £10; D.M., Strathpeffer £5, both for Sust. Fund, all per Rev. N.M.R.; Anon. £10 for Communion Expenses, per I.M.

Dumbarton: M.G. £15; J.C. £25; M. MacK. £20; Anon. £50; Anon. £20, last two in plate. (The Deacons' Court also wish to acknowledge Manse furniture received from kind friends in different parts of the Church).

Greenock: Friend £50.

Inverness: Anon. £40; £10; £40; £20, all for Sust. Fund; Mrs M., Hilton £20; £20; Miss D., Tomatin £10, all for Tape Fund; Anon. £25 for Blind Pupils at Ingwenya — per envelopes in plate.

Larne: Envelope in plate, £10 for Dominions and Overseas (Italy); Anon. £10; Anon. £10; Anon. £8; Anon. £13, all for Eastern Europe; Anon. £10; Anon. £8; Anon. £17, all for Kenya Mission; Anon. £10; Anon. £20, both for Mozambique; Anon. £12 for Zimbabwe Mission, all by envelope in plate.

North Harris: Anon. £10; M.M., Tarbert £10, both for Door Collection; Anon. £10, where most needed; Anon. £10; M.M., Tarbert £10; Friend, Leacklee £40, all for Communion Expenses; Friend £5 for Church Funds, all by envelope in plate; Anon., Kyles £50, where most needed, per Rev. K.D. McL.; M.M., Cluer £10; Friend, Grosebay £15, both for Communion Expenses; In Memory of the late Walter Balfour £50 for Church Funds, last 3 per J. McL.

Portree: Friend £500 per N.B.; Friend £10 per F.M., both for Sust. Fund; Friend, Colbost £40, where most needed, per F.M.; Friend £10 for Sust. Fund; Friend £14, where needed, last two per S.Y.M.

North Uist: C.A. McD. £50; M.B. McD. £50; The MacD. Family £100, all for Car Fund.

Raasay: Friend, Stornoway £10 for Sust. Fund, per Rev. J.R.T.; Friend of the Cause £20, where most needed, per M.D. MacK.; Anon., Inverarish £40 for Car Fund.

Stornoway: Miss K. A. MacLeod, The Cottage, Callanish £150 for Sust. Fund, per Rev. J. MacL.; Anon. £12 for Door Collection, per Church plate; Anon. £200 for Manse Heating and Maintenance, per General Treasurer.

Ullapool: A Friend, £50 for Congr. Funds.