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God — A Promising and Threatening God

At the beginning of another year, it becomes us to consider anew, the revelation that God is giving of Himself in His own Word, as a promising and threatening God. It ought to be of the greatest concern to us in what relation He stands towards us. Is He to us a promising or a threatening God? While many in our day regard the revelation that God is love, as necessarily excluding any revelation of Him as an angry God, yet this is not so. Rather are they different aspects of the nature of the same infinitely glorious God, the God of eternity. The One who reveals Himself as a sin-pardoning God in Jesus Christ, is at the same time the sin-hating and sin-avenging Jehovah. With regard to the rejection of the Jews and the ingathering of the Gentiles, the Apostle had to say: "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God."

God revealed Himself to man at the very beginning of his existence in this world, when he was still in the Garden of Eden, as a threatening God. The terms of the covenant, into which God entered with man at the beginning, had embedded in it this proviso: "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." The faithfulness of God to His threatening rendered it certain that, if our first parents ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they would die. It was no idle threat, such as a man might make yet never fulfil. It was a most solemn threatening, and would necessarily be carried into effect on the breaking of the Covenant. Man had nothing to lose, but everything to gain by adhering to the Covenant. It held out to him not only the continuance of the enjoyment of God, which he then possessed, but future blessedness unto eternity. What folly, what madness took possession of our first parents when they gave place to the lie of the devil when he said that they would become as gods, knowing good and evil.

God — the God of whose glory they were not unaware, and in whose

favour is life — had made it plain to them that by disobedience they would incur the divine displeasure and come under the wrath and curse of God. He had left them in no doubt of this yet, through the subtilty of the evil one, they became blind to the threatening of God and yielded to the temptation. Immediately, they fell from their first estate, and the voice of God, instead of filling them with holy delight, as had formerly been the case, filled them with fear and dread. Had God changed? No, He was still the same, infinitely glorious Being, but they had changed in their relationship to Him. Because of this, He was to them now a threatening God and they fled from Him.

When God delivered His people Israel out of the land of Egypt what tokens they received of His favour to them. He was a promising God to them, though these promises were contingent upon them being obedient to His revealed will. When this people, who had been so highly favoured, turned aside from the God of their salvation, who had delivered them out of the house of bondage, and made a golden calf and worshipped it, while Moses was on the Mount, the anger of God was kindled against His people. He is jealous for His own glory, and will in no way pass over such idolatry as the children of Israel were guilty of at that time. To Moses the Lord said: "I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people: now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation." Only the intercession of Moses prevented this outcome, yet the Lord plagued the people, because they made the calf.

On the heathen, the Lord has often poured out His wrath and indignation. The cities of the plain perished in their ungodliness and unnatural vices. Fire and brimstone from heaven destroyed them. The old world because of its godlessness perished in the flood. Because of the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up. In every age of time God has been revealing Himself as the sin-avenging Jehovah. He will by no means clear the guilty. He has declared that sin shall not go unpunished, and so it shall be. Men and nations that go on in sin shall surely be punished. As it is said of God in relation to His people: "Verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth", so it can be said in relation to the wicked. God is angry with the wicked every day.

How very solemn is this revelation of the glory of God! He will be glorified in the destruction of the wicked. If men will go on in sin, if nations will go on in sin, the end is inevitable. They must meet God in His wrath. We are warned in the Word of God that "our God is a consuming fire".

If the kings and rulers of the earth are warned: "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his anger is kindled but a little," how will it be with those against whom His wrath is kindled greatly? When Israel provoked the Lord to jealousy with strange gods, He had to say: "A fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell." Edom was called: "The people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever." These are solemn matters and ought to be weighed up by every one, lest the day should come when the Lord will meet us as an angry God.

Another revelation altogether is given to us of the God of eternity in His Word where He is made known as a promising God. He is so in Christ Jesus to all His people. All the promises of God are yea and amen in Christ Jesus. In this aspect of the glory of God, that is, in His goodness and mercy and love, we have a revelation which ought to draw out our love to Him in Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament God was a promising God to His people as well as in the New Testament. Yet all these promises were bound up with the promise of a Saviour who has to come. It was through faith that the Old Testament saints embraced the promises. Indeed in embracing the promise of Christ as the One who was to come, they embraced all the other promises in Him. The New Testament saints embraced a Saviour who had already come and all the promises of God's Word became theirs in Him.

The good news of the Gospel declares to sinners in need of salvation that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." What a promise of blessing is contained in that declaration, even the promise of everlasting life to all who believe on the name of the only begotten Son of God. The invitations of the gospel do not set forth promises that may or may not be granted, but promises that will indeed be fulfilled for all who believe. The soul that is truly brought to seek salvation in Jesus Christ, will find in Him the salvation that their soul needs, and they will be made heirs of eternal life. The promise of eternal life includes in it all the other promises of God's word. All who are brought into a reconciled state with God, through faith in Christ's name, have a right to the blessings held out in the promises. Christ has purchased all spiritual blessings for His people at infinite cost. He is the store-house of all good to His people. They may come to Him, pleading the promises, being assured that what God has promised He will surely fulfil.

God was saying to Abraham: "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." To Jacob He said: "I am with thee, and

will keep thee in all places whither thou goest." To His people Israel He had to say through His servant Isaiah: "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." To His covenant people He had to say again, through the prophet Isaiah: "For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed." Again, "For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee." When the great Prophet of the Church came, He could say to His followers: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." To His people, He also had to say: "Fear not, little flock; for it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." The Apostle Paul had to declare: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things." These form but a selection of the promises given in the Word of God on which His people can rely and by faith appropriate to themselves, so that they may be strengthened on their way Zionwards.

What of the promises concerning the prosperity of Zion? In a dark day what encouragement they should be to the Church of God! To Moses the Lord said: "As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." Through David, He declared of Christ: "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river into the ends of the earth." Through Habakkuk He proclaimed: "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." At the dedication of the first temple, the Lord honoured that temple with His presence, for the glory of the Lord filled the temple, and He declared to Solomon: "I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put any name there for ever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually." When the work of the building of the second temple was held up for a time, God sent His servants Haggai and Zechariah to stir up the people to the work, encouraging them with the promise that the glory of this latter house would be greater than of the former. To His disciples as they were sent forth with the glorious gospel of His grace to disciple all nations, the Lord encouraged them with the assurance: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

In the light of all these promises given to His people as individuals and to His Church collectively, it should be clear to us that God is a promising God to those who serve Him and that He will never leave them nor forsake

them. Though having much reason to be cast down by the darkness of the day at this present time yet, when the Church of God remembers that God, who is a promising God to His people, is the same yesterday, and today, and forever, they have cause to rejoice in the Lord their God, and encourage themselves in the Lord their God, as David did in his time of distress. The Lord is the One who maintains His Cause and He will uphold it in its darkest day. In His own good time, He will make it "to blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God." For this let the Church of God pray, pleading the promises of His own Word.

The Glorious Prospects of the Church of Christ

by Rev John Love

Lift up thine eyes around about, and behold: all these gather themselves together, and come to thee. As I live, saith the Lord, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all, as with an ornament, and bind them on thee, as a bride doeth. Isaiah 49: 18.

"Great and marvellous," saith the assembly of redeemed spirits in heaven, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." It is, however, through thickets of apparent contrariety and contradiction, that the eternal wisdom makes its way to fulfil the designs and purposes which, when accomplished, shall occupy the search and the wonder of everlasting ages.

The complaint recorded, verse 14th of this chapter, hath a very glorious sound. It hath been frequently in the mouths of individual believers, and hath staid them when their feet were stumbling on the dark mountains. And if we consider the prospects of the Christian Church, the foundation on which she rests, the words of divine promise put in her mouth, and the spiritual weapons of warfare she holds in her hands, and compare with these the present state of religion through the habitable parts of this whole earth, it may, perhaps, be considered as a complaint to be justly assumed by the whole multitude of Christian believers now in the world, as a collective body. The Zion now existing on the earth may say, "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me."

Such expostulations, however, cease to appear strange when we consider such words as we see recorded, verse 4th, as coming from the lips of the beloved of the Eternal Father, in whom his soul delighteth. "Then I said," — I, whom Jehovah hath called from the womb, whose name he hath

mentioned with delight from the bowels of my mother; I, whom he hath made a polished shaft and hid in his quiver; I, to whom He said, thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified; I said, pierced with anguish, and worn down with disappointment, — “I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain.”

But the reply to such complaints from the Church and from her Redeemer, complaints that as it were, touched the heart-strings of Deity, is emphatical indeed.

To the majestic though humbled Redeemer, the answer is in these terms: “It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the ends of the earth: In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and I will give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, that thou mayest say to the prisoners, go forth, to them that are in darkness, show yourselves.”

And to the spouse of the Redeemer, the answer issues forth from on high in accents of still more tender condolence, “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb; yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee; behold I have graven thee on the palms of my hands, thy walls are continually before me.”

From the same bowels of compassion and love, but in a tone which rises with each sentence in grandeur, significance, and triumph, proceed the words of the text. “Lift up thine eyes round about and behold; all these gather themselves together and come to thee: As I live, saith the Lord, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all as with an ornament, and bind them on thee as a bride doeth.”

Where is the faith which is prepared to meet such words as these, and to follow them out to their vast extent? It shall be created, it shall be expanded, it shall be inspired with conquering vigour, while we inquire into the meaning and certainty, while we drink in the sweetness, while we bow to the authority and grace, of those words of the living God.

I. The Church's attention is summoned to a vast multitude of converts pouring in upon her from every side, “Lift up thine eyes round about and behold; all these gather themselves together and come to thee.” “Lift up thine eyes,” thy dejected eyes suffused with tears, those eyes which conviction of sin hath sharpened, and which have looked far into eternity, those eyes which have seen scenes of desolation, defilement, and mourning; those dove-like eyes, which nothing can delight but the view of thy Redeemer coming in the glory of his kingdom. Behold the object which will soothe every drooping spirit, which will satiate and replenish every

sorrowful soul. See what a throng! How numerous! How beautiful! Multitudes! not in the valley of decisive judgment, but in the fields of blessing. Myriads! Nations! A world travailing in birth! A world newly created!

The early promises of grace opened wide the door of hope. They spread out an ample bosom prepared to embrace immense numbers of perishing sinners. But through the long series of ages, the Church was taught the preciousness of salvation by its rareness. Hope was sustained by a succession of converts, small in number, and forming to the eyes of sense, an inconsiderable minority in the midst of crowds who passed on into eternity, under the curse and power of iniquity.

But the enlarged promises of the everlasting covenant assume a largeness of grace worthy of the love of Him, before whom all nations are as the drop of a bucket, in whose eyes systems of worlds appear little objects.

The Spirit of promise draws the picture of a whole earth, thick set with living converts, like the sky bespangled with stars, or like the surface of the earth, whose shrubs and trees twinkle with the dew of the morning. He displays a multitude which no man can number, which no imagination can completely apprehend, a multitude surpassing far, it is to be believed, the number of those hosts which fell from heaven, yea, probably far surpassing the hosts of blessed angels which remain there; a multitude sufficient to occupy the whole habitable places of this great earth, successively through a long train of blessed ages.

What an object is this to the truly illuminated Church, which understands the value of salvation, and perceives how many salvations are wrapped up in that of a single soul. For it is not a mere crowd, important by mere numbers, which stands held forth in the promise as the ultimate result of infinite love, and of the travail of the Mediator's soul. It is a crowd, every individual of which appears rich with divine glory. For we must notice,

II. That this great multitude is a selected throng of human beings, on each individual of which, the distinguishing electing love of God hath particularly and personally rested from eternity, and in connexion with this, a particular influence of the power of Jehovah is to be recognised as universally impressed on this whole multitude, wherein the Church is permitted to triumph. Causes and effects must be proportioned to one another. But sometimes great effects are produced with such ease, and seem so congenial to these subjects, that the cause is almost overlooked. This is the case in the ordinary works of the Almighty. When we stand on the bank of a great river, and observe its waters moving forward in

silent majesty, we are apt to forget, while the movement seems so easy and natural, that there is implied in it an operation of immense power, and that, in a manner which no philosopher has yet been able to explain, the power of the Creator in what is called gravitation, is impressed on every particular drop in the great body of flowing waters. So while the benevolent Christian forms ideas, corresponding to the promises of God, of countless multitudes flowing together to the goodness and salvation revealed in his Church, the movement seems so desirable and so reasonable, that he needs to be reminded of the greatness of that power, by which an effect so great is produced. It is proper, therefore, to think of the strong native opposition in each individual who comes truly to the Saviour. It is necessary to think of the accumulating force of that combined opposition, which hath formed, through so many ages, that fatal course or current of the world which hath appeared irresistible. Then it will be necessary to apprehend a greatness of power, not merely resembling that which secretly bears on the waters of the river in their natural course, but rather like that which turned back the overflowing streams of Jordan towards their source, or which divided the waters of the roaring ocean.

We contemplate the revealed arm of Jehovah as the immediate cause of this confluence of true converts. Still, however, a further cause must be sought. Why is that arm of power which lay hid through many ages, while millions on millions were perishing, at length so signally displayed? Here we approach the awful sacred fountain of love — we revolve that lofty name, “I am that I am.” Our thoughts flow back as far as the wings of imagination and of faith can carry them into the abyss of the past eternity. We think of the self-existing essence of the Person first in Deity, in the earliest stirrings of divine counsel and affection, opening its ample stores of condescending love and compassion towards unworthy human transgressors. “Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us.” See him looking forth from the height of paternal Deity, towards those countless multitudes of sinners, involved in the same condemnation and depravity which bring eternal ruin on their equals in transgression; but taking hold of each individual soul in all that multitude, with a love unspeakably more tender than that with which any human heart ever embraced the most select object of its dearest regards. Sacred awful fountains of love! In thee I discern the sublime cause of the great effect. How sovereign, yet how tender! How unobliged, yet how strong and determinate are thy movements! How personal, yet widely expanded! Let me, with revering ecstasy, approach this fountain of love of the first in Deity, while I hear its determinate voice in the word of promise, “All these

gather themselves together and come to thee; as I live, saith Jehovah, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all.”

III. A third subject of inquiry invites our thoughts in the words before us. They transfer to the Church of the living God, the honours of his surprising works of love. These converted multitudes become his ornament, “Thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all as with an ornament, and bind them on thee as a bride doeth.” What an image is here! I know not whether most to admire its august magnificence, or its condescending delicacy and sweetness. It reminds me of similar emblems in other parts of the sacred oracles, such as that, Rev. 12, “A woman clothed with the sun, having the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.” I think of an ancient distinguished member of the Church, the Patriarch Abraham, led forth by the divine hand under the star-bespangled glowing vault of heaven, and turning thither his heavenly-directed eyes, to see the emblem of the brighter multitude of believers who should call him father. In my text, honours like his are extended to the whole Church existing previously to those surprising and joyful enlargements.

Let this now be the subject of our inquiry, in what wonderful ways the vast extension of the powers of converting grace through the world shall be enjoyed, with the most delicious sense of ornament and honour, by the genuine Church.

1. By those converted multitudes the Church is honoured, while they acknowledge the inexpressible value of the formerly existing spiritual Church of Jehovah. What are these peculiar treasures and excellencies? I hope, my brethren, many of you know them well. They are the treasures of divine truth, unfolded by a wisdom coming from above: they are the influences of the Spirit of truth, conveying into the inmost soul, with certainty at once sweet and demonstrative, the most interesting and extensive discoveries of divine eternal truth. The treasures and prerogatives of the Church are the stores of salvation; they are the unsearchable riches of merit, righteousness, and redemption, the ransom price, powerful to rescue from the flames of eternity, and to open the paradise of immeasurable joys, and to do this for worlds upon worlds of the guilty. These treasures are the true medicines of diseased souls, the healing, purifying fountains; they are the riches of inimitable universal sanctity; they are the rivers, the floods of divine condescension brought down from heaven to earth, and lifting earthly beings to the delights and dignities of heaven.

While the multitudes of converts in the various climes of this otherwise poor earth, discern those glorious treasures deposited with the once

despised Church, they come into the posture in which prophecy exhibits them, "And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising," Isaiah 50: 3. "They shall fall down unto thee; they shall make supplication unto thee, saying, surely God is in thee, and there is none else; there is no God," Isaiah 45: 14. "They shall bow down to thee with their face towards the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord; for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me," Isaiah 49: 23.

2. Benevolence, philanthropy, good will to men. Venerable names, but often abused, and falsely assumed. But it is to the singular and genuine benevolence of the true Church of the living God, that the converted world shall gather its flowers and wreath its laurels. That heaven-breathed benevolence, those supplications, those self-denied, persevering exertions, which originate in the knowledge and communion of the crucified Saviour, these bear the palm of victory in this warfare. I commiserate those well-meaning people who deceive themselves with words, and reasonings, and human authority, while they disregard the loud testimony of Scripture and experience concerning the inutility of all the productions of unrenewed human nature, when brought to the work of subduing the stubborn pride and rebellion of an apostate world.

It is in the period to which our thoughts are guided by the prediction in the text, when the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail spread over all nations, shall be destroyed, — it is then that the sentiments of mankind shall be rectified on this subject, and that the world shall discern its real enemies and its true friends. When the fruits of that benevolence, which long sighed and mourned in secret places, or pursued its unostentatious exertions under the shade of obscurity and contempt, appear overspreading and beautifying the whole earth, then the delivered nations shall bless that pious love, that heavenly kindness which, from the days of Abel, the Redeemer of sinners hath infused into the breast of his spiritual spouse.

The unfolded secrets of error, superstition, and vice, in every land, shall spread new lustre on the fair lines of eternal truth and holiness. The multitude of human beings inspired with heavenly energy, combining all the variety and extent of human genius and industry, in investigating and adorning the truth, and in showing forth the praises of the God of salvation, and through the attending influence and blessing of the Spirit from on high, shall enrich and adorn the cities of our God in an unexampled, unimaginable manner. Blessed shall be those eyes which shall see a new train of Christian heroes, philosophers, politicians, princes,

patriots, orators and poets, walking forth in every clime, and gathering in the honour and glory of the nations, to be collected at the feet of the Lamb who was slain, and to decorate the bride, the object of his eternal conjugal regards. Instead of the iron bond of connection, formed by a selfish, sordid, and often blood-stained spirit of commerce or of conquest, the nations, drawn into union by the silken cords of heavenly love, and formed into fair, symmetrical, peaceful combination, shall be actually assumed by the Church of the Redeemer, as her ornament and glory, and "she shall clothe her with them all, as with an ornament, and bind them on her as a bride doeth."

3. But in what diversified forms, and in what overflowing abundance, shall the honours of the Church, mingled with those of her high Redeemer, flow in upon her from every quarter of the world!

This adorning, these honours, however, shall by no means be confined to the happy race of believers then found on the earth; when such august scenes open they shall reach backward through all ages, — they shall embrace the spirits of the righteous in glory, especially "the souls under the altar of them who have been slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held." In the living esteem and honour, of these truly enlightened and dignified ages, the sufferers of all periods shall virtually rise from the dust of death, and appear as having judgment given to them from on high, as clothed in white robes, as sitting on thrones, the objects of universal esteem, admiration, and praise throughout the new-born world.

IV. But have we entered the regions of airy fancy, the fairy land of fiction? Are those things a dream, or is there certainty attached to them? A distinguished heathen poet, addressing himself to one of the fictitious objects of his admiration, speaks in this manner: "Do you hear her, or am I deceived by a lively fancy? I see myself wandering with delight among the groves of the blessed, watered with sweet streams, and fanned with delightful breezes." Such elegant pathos of a poor idolater will be pardoned by the philosopher, and will command the admiration of the man of classical sensibility; but both the philosopher and the man of classical sensibility, if impious, will pronounce it an intolerable enthusiasm, a madness not to be forgiven, if our souls are set on fire by the burning rays of truth coming from the true and eternal God. Shall we stand in awe of such censures? No; we are bound to despise them; for we have examined the grounds of our confidence; we have heard in the sacred oracles that inimitable voice of the Holy One, which shall at length silence all their voices; we know with a certainty, firm as demonstration, and sweet

as the joys of heaven, that the Spirit of inspiration speaking in the Scriptures is truth. That Spirit summons us to joy, while he spreads out the wonderful scenes of salvation to be transacted in this sinful world. And he exhibits the bright seal of Deity, assuring us that, in the indulging such hope, we do not follow cunningly devised fables. "As I live, saith Jehovah, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all, as with an ornament."

The oath of Deity! The life of Deity! What securities are these!

1. It is difficult for us, who know so little of God, to apprehend, in a becoming manner, the solemn grandeur and authority of the oath of God.

The habits of a devilish profaneness debauch the human mind, otherwise we would feel inexpressible awe under the idea of an oath, when emitted by the meanest individual possessed by the power of reason. What, then, would be the solemnity attached to the oath of a seraph, one of the sons of the morning, in the celestial regions? The oath of an angel would rise in its solemnity and force above that of the wisest of human beings, in proportion as he possesses deeper reverence of Deity, and is capable of looking farther than morals can do into those infinite perfections to which the appeal is made. But, when the uncreated Majesty itself in the heavens rises from the throne, and before the appalled multitude of angels, assuming the posture of swearing, appeals to that life of immense glory, whereof he is conscious, to procure belief of his promissory engagements, who shall then hesitate? Shall not unbelief then shrink away with horror? Shall not faith then lift up its head, and, walking on its high places, tread lightly over the tops of obstructing mountains of opposition? "As I live, saith Jehovah, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all, as with an ornament."

2. The infinite life of Jehovah is the source of all existence, strength, and excellency; while, therefore, it is appealed to for the purpose of giving assurance of the promises, it exhibits the rich fountain of all those multiplied energies which shall operate as the instrumental means of fulfilling these great promises; "I have girded thee," saith God, to the yet non-existing hero, "I have girded thee, though thou hast not known me." Even the irrational animals are witnesses of the divine power to impart vigour, sagacity, and invincible fortitude. The horse prancing fearlessly in the valley, the behemoth advancing among the shady trees, with bones like bars of iron, the leviathan with a heart like the nether millstone, looking forth like the eyelids of the morning, making the deep to boil around him; these are some of the innumerable visible monuments of the efficacy of divine operation in inferior animal beings. But what

shall be the effects when Immanuel, the lion of the tribe of Judah, shall pour from the heavens the spirit of wisdom and of might, and shall bring into the world armies of such lions as the world never saw, excepting in some comparatively rare examples, in the days of bloody persecution. The man who shall bear the triumphant cross round the globe, shall exhibit strength and fortitude, not like the terrifying fierceness of partial selfish heroes, but holy, benevolent, irresistible, heaven-tempered, like the prowess of angels. Before such men in whom Jesus shall put forth his living powers, what obstructions, what terrors, can earth or even hell exhibit?

Jehovah lives; therefore the promise shall be accomplished.

3. After such securities, it is hardly necessary to reason on the subject, otherwise a long train of arguments, in confirmation of the promise, might be brought forward. We might vindicate the superior preferableness of the Church's claims, above those of any other of her haughty rivals; we might show that so many millions of creatures made for eternity are too costly a sacrifice to be always offered up to the wild freak of bloody ambition, or to the equally careless but more sordid monster, commercial avarice, or to the vain-glorious insolence of unfounded impotent philosophy. Such competitors as these must quickly retire when the Church of the living God rises in her brightness. Even the awful sovereign justice of Jehovah, which, in its mysterious range, through the ages that are past, has devoured so many victims, will, at length, say, It is enough! and smelling an odour of rest in the sacrifice of Jesus the Son of God, suffer the earth to become the joyful dominion of triumphant mercy.

Let me be permitted to make a little further demand on your time and patience, while I attempt, in the spirit of the subject, to address a few words.

First, To the directors, members, and friends of the Glasgow Missionary Society.

My beloved brethren and fathers, it belongs to the duty of my present situation to speak comfortably to you in the name of the Lord. Let me beseech you to suffer the word of exhortation, and to consider the aspect of the subject which hath been before us, on your past and future exertions in this important work.

In the day when the keepers of the house do tremble, and the strong men bow themselves, it will be no grief of heart to any of you, that the concerns of the kingdom of salvation among the perishing heathen, found a place in your affectionate regards. Wherever unfeigned faith, operating by heavenly love, hath roused to such attempts, the sweet approving voice and smiles of the supreme Judge will attend them, not in proportion to

the eventual success, but according to whatever was truly in the heart of the humble Christian to devise and accomplish.

When you look towards the howling wilderness, which it was your desire and hope might be turned into a fruitful field and garden of spiritual pleasure — you may be ready to adopt the mournful complaint in the context, “Zion said, the Lord hath forsaken me, my Lord hath forgotten me.” I trust a share belongs to you in the consolation also imparted by the answer which comes warm from bowels of infinite love, “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the fruit of her womb; yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.”

It is included in the promissory oath of the Almighty which the text exhibits, that your most enlarged wishes shall be actually fulfilled, respecting those very countries which you have attempted to visit with the knowledge of salvation. Those gloomy, those burning shores shall become, sooner or later, a part of the triumphal ornaments of the Christian Church, and by whatever means, at whatever time, Jehovah shall appear on those African coasts, in the glory and power of his salvation, it shall then be recognised that the dead bodies of your Missionaries took infetment, in the name of Christ, of the polluted abased territories, as the dead body of the ancient patriarch went before his living posterity to the promised land.

Your generous perseverance and assiduity, in strengthening the hands of other societies whom the Lord has been pleased sooner to encourage by symptoms of success, have attested at once the purity of your motives, and a living humility, which is in itself a sure forerunner of good.

Let me request you to go forward a little further; the night of your discouragement I trust is far spent, the day is at hand. He who has given you a heart towards this precious work, He who has kept you fixed upon it, in the face of multiplied discouragements, is of power to create and commission fit messengers to the heathen. Perhaps he will do so at this very hour, before we leave this place.

I, therefore, wish to turn round the light and warning energy of the subject we have been contemplating, for the purpose.

Second, Of rousing to this work such persons as the Lord of the harvest may incline and prepare for it.

He walks invisible in the midst of us, who, in the days of his flesh, said to chosen individuals, with irresistable immediate efficacy, “Follow me”. Perhaps those eyes which are as a flame of fire, see somewhere in this assembly, or perhaps his creating power will now give existence to generous, though humbling, aspirations of heart towards the high exertions

and comforts of the successful Missionary, which, strengthened by influences of grace, and with the furniture and armour from above adapted to this work, shall ultimately issue in a joyful harvest of souls in some heathenish lands.

Lord Jesus, lover of souls, director of saints, conqueror of hearts, we are before thee; choose thy own instruments, prepare thy weapons, select thy own sacrifices, open to some understandings the glory of thy work among the heathen; touch some hearts with the irresistible constraints of thy dying love. Let him that is feeble, be as David. Let souls, formerly wavering and timid, be so bound to this work by thy sovereign hand, as to account it a privilege — a triumph to stand forth in this work, though it should require their being cut in pieces, to open the way for more successful labours.

My brethren, whatever be the present impressions of any individuals, whatever the future fruit of these impressions, this is certain, that the subject before us hath enough in it, if brought home by the Spirit of truth, revelation, and power, to form those Missionaries against whom the gates of hell shall not prevail.

In the meanwhile, let us not forget the situation of unconverted persons now present in this assembly, and who, for anything that is known on earth, may soon be in the eternal world. It may be the Lord will crown this meeting of his people by the quickening of some souls who came hither dead in trespasses and sins.

Fellowship Meeting Address

by Rev. Donald MacLean

(Closing of the Question, at the Fellowship Meeting at St. Jude's in April, 1994. Taken down by a hearer.)

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away: behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God. . ." 2 Cor. 5: 17.

You have heard much already with regard to this work of God in the souls of God's people. And, as we read here, '*all things are of God*': the creation is entirely the work of God. Now, as the brethren were speaking to the question and spoke about the new things and the old things passing away, it occurred to me that, in endeavouring to close that question, I would take up the matter of a new thing that came into the experience of God's people in connection with this new creation.

Just as in the old creation, when '*the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and God said, Let there be light: and there was light*',

so, in this new creation in the souls of God's people, the Apostle, who refers to it here, also says this, that the '*God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts.*' That is a new thing in the experience of God's people. There were times, I have no doubt whatsoever, in connection with those of them who were under the gospel, when they had light of sparks of their own kindling in their souls. The effect of that was to give them concern lest they should die, and lest they should die Christless, and they made many resolutions and many promises to God that they would forsake many sins that appeared to them to be displeasing to God. But because there was nothing there but sparks of their own kindling, not the true light, that all passed away.

When the true light shines, it is the darkness that passes away. That true light is the light of the word of God, the Holy Spirit shining that light in the soul of the sinner in connection with the new creation. It is a new thing, and, as God Himself saw with regard to the light of the old creation, '*He saw that it was good.*' This light is good and it is pure. '*And in that purest light of thine we clearly light shall see.*' And this people experience in their souls what that meant when the light of the word of God began to shine in their hearts. That light was pure, and because it was pure it revealed the darkness, the evil, the sin, the guilt and the condition of soul in which they were, without God and without hope in the world. And in this '*purest light of thine*' they also saw that God was; and God was pure, and He was holy and He was just; He was unchangeable; and sin was "that abominable thing which He hateth." They felt cut off by their sins from God. They knew in the light that shone in their souls what God Himself says with regard to sin, 'your sins and your iniquities have separated between you and your God.' And that separation, as seen by the light of the word of God in their experience, they knew was a separation that they could never overcome by any works of their own. Yet at the same time there was created in the soul — and that was a new thing too in connection with this light — a desire to be reconciled to Him. That desire expressed itself in the thirst that was in the soul then for the word of God and the light of the word of God. They would often now wish that they had the thirst again, that they had at the beginning, when they first realised that they were without God and without hope in the world; how they read the Bible, how they pored over its pages, and how, with the means of the throne of grace, they pleaded with the Lord to have mercy upon them.

They now came to see, in the light of God's word, that they could not be reconciled to God but by one way, and that was the way mentioned

here, through this glorious Person, the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Therefore their desire now became a desire for Christ, a desire to meet with Christ, a desire to embrace Christ in the gospel of the grace of God. But they discovered, and they were taught that, and that was something that was beyond their power too, that they would need another new thing, and that was the gift of God which is faith — faith is the gift of God.

The faith that is common in our day and generation is well known to those who have a name to live and are dead. It is faith that stands in the wisdom of men, but not in the power of God. But this people, they were taught that they could not embrace Christ in the gospel because they were destitute of that faith, and indeed they did not understand what it meant to embrace Christ in the gospel. This new light dispelled the darkness in this respect also, that there came a time in their experience when, whether it was under a sermon, whether it was reading the word of God, or whether it was their mind being exercised in a portion of the word of God, when they got a view of Christ of such a nature that they could not but embrace Him, and they could not but rest in Him for the salvation of their souls.

This was the way that they came to be in the condition mentioned here — to be in Christ Jesus, united to Him by faith of the operation of God. Therefore the old condemnation, and the old separation between their souls and God passed away, and they came to know what it meant to have nearness to God in His word, nearness to God at the throne of grace. It is true of them that they are not satisfied with a form of godliness while denying the power, but desire spiritual nearness to Christ and to God in His word, and to have fellowship with Him through His beloved Son. There is now a longing in this new creation, *'Like as the hart for water-brooks in thirst doth pant and bray: so pants my longing soul, O God, that come to thee I may.'* Where that is, it is something new — something from the Spirit of God. This is what they are looking for when they are at the throne of grace. They are not content with mere words, but desire nearness of soul. The same thing is true in listening to the gospel, and with regard to the Lord's Table.

I just mention this in conclusion — one of the new things mentioned by the Apostle here is *'The love of Christ constraineth'*. There is a constraining nature in the love of Christ — *'Because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.'*, that is to say they died in Christ, *'and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves but unto him which died for them and rose again.'* Now the love that they have to Christ constrains them to be of the mind to desire to live to Him and for Him in the world. That means, of course,

being obedient to Him. We may be obedient to Him in many ways, and we may be in danger of thinking we need not be obedient to Him in all things. But that is not the constraining nature of the love of Christ, which is to be obedient to Him in all things and this among them: *'This do in remembrance of me.'* This is what the Saviour requires of His people in whom there is new creation, in the light of the word of God and in the light of the love of Christ which we were speaking of recently when He instituted the Supper, *'In the night in which he was betrayed.'* This people are affected by the constraining love of Christ.

I remember that the late Rev. D.N. Macleod in Ullapool, on one occasion, when no-one came forward to the Session, said to me, 'What is missing in our day and generation is the constraining love of Christ.' That is true. That is what is missing — the constraining love of Christ. So that whatever doubts and fears, whatever difficulties and trials the people of God may have, and they have their difficulties and trials — and no-one is more sympathetic to them than I am — nevertheless, *"The love of Christ constraineth"* when He says *'This do in remembrance of me'*. The love of Christ constrains His people to be obedient to Him.

May He bless our meditation.

Obituary

Mr Duncan Mackay, Flashadder

Duncan Mackay was born in Broadford, in the parish of Strath in May 1909. There was no Free Presbyterian church in Broadford at that time, but the Church of Scotland was given them when supply was available, until the congregation built their own church.

From the age of nine years Duncan attended these services on his own, as those who brought him up were of the Church of Scotland, and seldom went to church at all. He, however, felt more and more drawn to the Free Presbyterian cause, which attachment deepened into a life long relationship. He became a member at the age of 17 years. His conversion appeared to be a gradual drawing, and who can tell how? This was a great concern to him, but near the end of his pilgrimage he got full assurance. The text given was Psalm 50: 5, "Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice."

Duncan attended Skerries College in Glasgow for a time, and after that was appointed as missionary to Laide in 1933. He was there until 1941, after which he was sent to Breasclete, Lewis, and in 1945 was transferred to Glendale, to act in the same capacity. He was ordained an elder in 1948.

In 1936 Duncan was married to Jessie Munro, daughter of John Munro Ullapool, an eminent elder in that congregation. They were together for thirty years, until she died in 1966. He later married Christina Stewart, Flashadder, where he kept services until March 1993. He was widowed for a second time in 1974.

Duncan was in failing health for some time; but refused to go into hospital until 1993 when it was discovered that he had an internal cancerous growth, but he refused surgical treatment, as he maintained that the end was drawing near, and he wanted to die at home. This wish was granted on 4th October 1993. The Saturday before he died he told the writer that he was going home. His condition gradually deteriorated, and he was unable to speak much, although he remained conscious almost to the end. Shortly before the end he said to his niece at his bedside, 'the door is open', meaning heaven. Shortly after he lapsed into unconsciousness, and ten minutes later he passed away to be with his Lord and Master.

Our friend was blessed with a very clear voice, and he excelled in prayer. His petitions were impressive and earnest, and remembered by the audience. His preaching was interspersed with interesting anecdotes of the godly men and women he was privileged to know in his earlier days.

"Help Lord; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men" Psalm 12: 1.

(I am deeply indebted to a friend for the above details.) — F.M

The National Lottery: Debasing the Tone of Public Life

by Rev. D. M. Boyd

"What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Mark 8: 36-37.

National lotteries are not new. "All through the history of the modern world lotteries have been used as a source of income by governments. They have proved a reliable and convenient means of replenishing depleted treasuries, but more often than not they have resulted in impoverishing and demoralising the people, particularly those with low incomes. In the latter half of the eighteenth century the powerful and growing anti-lottery element in Britain published pamphlets describing in heart-rending detail the havoc brought to individuals and their families by the lottery craze. In spite of these strictures, however, lotteries survived a further half century. Intensified agitation against their harmful influences revived in

1819, and this crusade was supported by Wilberforce and other influential men, but so powerful were the vested interests that it took seven years to secure their suppression. In October 1826 the last state lottery was drawn and immediately afterwards an Act of Parliament came into force making all forms of lotteries unconstitutional and illegal. The lottery, however, was not completely dead. It lay dormant for a hundred and thirty years and then, in 1956, it came to life again with the Premium Bond and the ERNIE draw.” (*Gambling Yesterday and Today: A Complete History*, J Philip Jones, 1973.)

On 14th November, 1994, tickets for the national lottery went on sale and the nation took another step down the path of further debasing of the tone of public life. The nation is encouraged by our Government to feed the covetous spirit in the heart of man and to take up gambling.

National Gambling

There have been other forms of gambling introduced this century, but this form of gambling is for the nation. If the Lord Jesus Christ tells us: “What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” then we may legitimately say: “What shall it profit if he shall gain the winning ticket in the national lottery and lose his own soul?”

Lost revenue

We may ask the question, Why should a Government, which prides itself in prudent financial policy, encourage the nation to gamble? The main reason brought forward is that it is another method to raise revenue for “good causes”. But there are other considerations. Gaming is the 12th largest industry in the European Union. Because other nations have national lotteries, there is the fear that money will go out of this country into other ones. The national lottery is therefore an attempt to keep this money here. Further, by taxing gaming the Government will increase its own revenue.

But surely, truly “good causes” commend themselves for direct giving or even for taxes. Also, if the Government is afraid of money going out of the country, then let school children be taught the evils of gambling. If we can teach them healthy living by avoiding smoking, drinking and promiscuity, then we can also teach them to stop supporting raffles.

Greed versus benevolence

Already charities are worried about the adverse effect the national lottery will have on their givings. The national spirit in support of charitable causes will be damaged as the lifestyle of covetousness is promoted. Instead of

straightforward giving, it will be replaced by the covetous spirit: "I won't give something unless I have the prospect of something in return."

Harnessing greed

The covetous spirit of man is being harnessed. In order to obtain money for good causes, the Government is encouraging gambling. But the end does not justify the means. Greed has been given a benevolent face and gambling is being encouraged. It is true that Premium Bonds did so also, but this national lottery will enter into the national consciousness.

National consciousness

This will take place in various ways. It will be on our streets. Whereas other forms of gambling had restraints around them, such as licensed betting offices, the outlets of sale will be in post offices, department stores, service stations, grocers and supermarkets. There will be national advertising to make sure it is a success. The outlets are to be doubled to 40,000 as soon as possible. It will be on television. The prize draw is expected to be the most popular programme on television. As the nation gathers around the television, the covetous spirit will be reinforced. The donations to "good causes" will keep it before the minds of the public, and these donations may even become a bone of contention.

Encouraging gambling: a green light

With this nod in the direction of gambling, it will become more difficult to maintain the current restrictions upon other forms of gambling. Already there are attempts to change the restrictions upon licensed betting offices. In addition, last month the Scottish Office issued a consultation paper on extending the opening hour of licensed bingo clubs and casinos to include Sabbath afternoon. The gaming industry has been given a green light.

The vulnerable

The nation has been compromised. A terribly bad example has been given, and especially to the vulnerable. Although the rich engage in gambling to a terrible extent, so do the poor — and they can least afford it. The poor are just as covetous as the rich — sometimes more so — and more vulnerable. When large prizes are put before their eyes and the vain, slim hope of winning, they are the most tempted and the most vulnerable. The winners will be feted on television, and maybe five or ten years down the road, we will have a television documentary on the baneful effects of the national lottery on the poor.

Some Quotes on the National Lottery

"I suppose as a nation we are collectively daft enough to fall for it all

and the money will pour into the lottery. It could have poured into more deserving causes I suppose. But then that's life." (Inverness Courier 11.11.94)

"The official Episcopal Church in Scotland position is that they do not have an official position on the issue. 'We don't have anything particularly against gambling,' said a church spokeswoman. 'I mean, we have tombolas, raffles and so on'. Even more relaxed about the whole thing was Fr Alistair Doyle, of St Ninian's RC Church, Inverness. 'As a church, we are not against people who want to use their surplus for a flutter.' Nairn's only functioning National Lottery outlet, R S McColl's, found its ordinary takings were down by about £600 for the week — because it was mobbed by would-be millionaires. Regular customers were either put off by the queues, or spending their cash on the Great Draw." (Highland News, 26 November, 1994.)

Notes and Comments

The British Government and Sinn Fein

In December the British Government entered into exploratory talks with Sinn Fein, the political wing of the I.R.A. The announcement of these talks came three months after the start of the I.R.A. ceasefire. It is clear that the I.R.A. have given no assurance of a permanent cessation of violence though this was made a condition for talks to begin. It is also clear that the I.R.A. are still in possession of their weapons and that they will not give them up until a comprehensive political settlement has been reached in Northern Ireland — and, no doubt, that will have to be a settlement which meets their requirements.

It is sad to think that the representatives of those, who were so lately murdering their fellow-men in cold blood, should be given any opportunity to talk with British Government officials. Were they truly penitent for the evils they have done, it might be different, but it is evident that this is not so. Our nation may reap terrible judgments yet for contending in this way, men who are enemies of civilised government and perpetrators of fearful atrocities.

The Theology of the Archbishop of York

It is reported that the Archbishop of York said that there was nothing in the human body that departs when we die. He maintained that an individual's identity was held in the mind of God. He also expressed the view that hell is not regarded as a serious option these days. "We must

all die," he said, "so that others may live." If one of the leaders of the Church of England speaks in this way, then what can be expected of the people under his teaching.

The Pope and his Book

The Pope has written a book called "Crossing the Threshold of hope." The book has been described as the last testament of a waning Papacy. How good it would be if this came to pass! With seeming condescending deference, the Pope says that, though the Roman Catholic Church knows that it has received the fulness of the means of salvation, it rejoices when other Christian communities join it in preaching the gospel, What arrogance! When, we may ask, did the Romish Church begin to preach the gospel? Commenting on the Churches originating in the Reformation, he acknowledged that the gap between them and the R.C. Church was greater than that between the Eastern Orthodox Churches and the R.C. Church. He claimed that several fundamental elements established by Christ were not respected by the Protestant Churches. So says the Antichrist.

Opening of Licensed Bingo Clubs and Casinos in Scotland

At present, bingo clubs open on Sabbath afternoons in England and Wales. In Scotland, they open only in the evening, from 7.30 p.m. to 11 p.m. The Bingo Association for Great Britain has submitted representations to the Home and Health Department at the Scottish Office claiming that social attitudes have changed since the 1960s, and there is now a genuine demand for Sabbath afternoon opening in Scotland. The Scottish Office have issued a consultation paper seeking view on possible amendment of the Gaming Act 1968, and at the same time they have asked for views about opening casinos as well.

The following response has been sent by the Kirk-Session of the Inverness Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

"I write on behalf of the Kirk-Session of the Inverness Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland to advise strongly against the suggestion to open bingo clubs on Sabbath afternoons in Scotland.

1. The MARC Europe Census co-ordinated through the National Bible Society for Scotland, *Prospects for Scotland*, 1984, showed that 17% of the adult population of Scotland attended church, which was a much larger figure than England (9%). (The current survey, October 1994, is not to hand yet.) This shows that there continues to be a difference between Scotland and England, so that the argument by the Bingo Association for

Great Britain that the law of Scotland should be brought into line with that of England is not sound.

2. There is still a considerable demand for evening worship in Scotland (often from about 6-6.30 p.m. till 8 p.m.) — 53% of all churches — so that there should be no change to bring forward the opening time of bingo clubs from 7.30 p.m. as at present, rather these clubs should be shut on Sabbath.

3. The Rothschild Royal Commission on Gambling recognised that one of the principles for gambling policy should be that the demand for gambling should not be positively encouraged because, if taken to excess, it can cause misery for the individual and his family, and have damaging consequences for society as a whole. Sadly, the provision of a National Lottery has given a measure of respectability to gambling which will lead to further attempts to derestrict gambling. This request from the BAGB can be read as such an attempt. The Scottish Office should not be seen to be giving encouragement to further gambling. If this is allowed, where will it end?

4. A Government which wishes to promote fiscal prudence is undermining personal prudence in management of private finances if it promotes the gambling instinct.

5. It therefore follows that we are as totally opposed to casinos opening on Sabbath afternoon. The lack of demand from casinos can be viewed as a piecemeal approach to breaking down Sabbath restrictions. It would not surprise us that they are holding back until bingo clubs obtain this further concession. If bingo clubs are allowed to proceed, we may expect a request from casinos in order to be “brought into line” with the bingo clubs. It is therefore all the more imperative that bingo clubs be not allowed to open on Sabbath afternoons; it is the thin edge of the wedge.

6. While the evils of gambling should be apparent, this further desecration of the Lord's Day is offensive to the Most High and is not conducive to the good of society. Those who are responsible for implementing such further desecration need to be reminded that they will be held accountable by the Judge of all the earth at the last day for the abuse of their authority.

Those who would like to respond to this matter can write to: Mr I. F. Cuthbertson, The Scottish Office, Home and Health Department, Room 31B, St Andrew's House, Edinburgh EH1 3DG.

D.M.B.

Sabbath Working — The Legal Position

The Biblical position on Sabbath working is clear: except for works of necessity and mercy, no such work is to be done, for the whole Day is to be devoted to the public and private exercises of God's worship. But what about the legal position? As far as the UK is concerned, sadly the law of the land is far from being in agreement with the law of the Lord. At a *Christians at Work* conference in London in July, a Christian barrister, Mr Paul Diamond, surveyed both British and European law. Amazingly there is no general legal provision covering Sabbath working. Indeed, "There are no statutory provisions safeguarding the rights of Christians. There is statutory protection for people of some other faiths under the Race Relations Acts. But Christians, who are not regarded in law as a minority in need of protection, fall into a gap."

This is of great concern of course, for many employees are being asked to work on Sabbaths or to accept revised contracts which are drafted to include unjustifiable Sabbath working. If an employee refuses to sign such a contract, and is then dismissed, what can be done? This very thing happened to Mr Andrew Dutton, who also spoke at the Conference. He was dismissed for refusing to sign such a new contract. On legal advice, he took a case of Unfair Dismissal against his employer to an Industrial Tribunal, and won. After 14 months of unemployment, happily he has been re-instated, with a special contract giving him the option not to work on Sabbaths.

However, for such a case to be successful, the employee has to show that the employer behaved unreasonably when dismissing him. The Tribunal system can be frustrating and lengthy, and the outcome is by no means certain. In the absence of detailed statutory provision concerning Sabbath work, the legal position will be established only as one case after another is decided. Mr Diamond concludes, "The more cases which arise, the more clear the legal position will become regarding the rights of Christians not to work on Sundays." Although legal rights may be unclear, Biblical duties are very clear. Perhaps the people of God may be called upon to suffer temporal loss, but it is certain that the Lord will not forget any Christian employee who remembers the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

K.M.W., Clerk pro-tem, Sabbath Observance Committee

Eastern Europe Mission

Our intention to visit Eastern Europe was reported in the September issue. This was accomplished in the kind providence of God. Edward Ross

accompanied me and did most of the driving which on this occasion was over 5000 miles. We also towed a trailer. This meant that our train weight was over 7 tons, whereas the van on its own is only capable of 5.2 tons gross. However, with trailer, the added cost on the ferry from Hull to Rotterdam was considerable. The total amount was given at £751.00. We decided therefore to go further south via the Ramsgate to Ostende ferry, at a cost of £304.00.

We left Lochcarron on Monday the 10th at 2.30 am and arrived at Ramsgate at 7.30 pm. On the same day we sailed at 11 pm and arrived at Ostende in Belgium at 3 am. We drove during the night and got to the other side of Brussels, and rested for a few hours, proceeding from there at 9 am, to arrive at Regensburg in Germany at 8 am. These long hours of driving were the only way we could reach Kiev in time for the Sabbath. We actually arrived in Kiev at 2.30 pm on Friday.

We had to do the same on the way back. In fact, we had to drive even longer hours because we returned by Moldova. To enter Moldova we had to make a detour of 250 kilometres because of unrest through what would have been the shorter route into Moldova. We left Kiev at 1.40 am on Monday the 24th October and arrived at Achnasheen on Friday the 28th at 3.30 am. Here we parted company, I proceeded home to Laide, Edward to Lochcarron.

We had the advantage of our bed bunks in the van, when one of us could rest while the other drove, and also when it came to a proper rest for ourselves and the vehicle we would pull into a safe parking area, or near a fuel station and sleep for a few hours.

It is cause for thankfulness that over this long distance the Lord graciously afforded travelling mercies. The only snag that arose was a puncture, and this was discovered in its early stages as we rolled into a fuel station. As one can well imagine we witnessed quite a number of accidents in these long travels, but the Lord was pleased to carry us safely from start to finish. For this we wish to express our thankfulness to Him. We have no doubt the Lord's people were remembering us in connection with this aspect of our mission as well as other matters.

The work of the Bible distribution is very much routine and follows the pattern of our past visits. While distributing Bibles we do wish that we had more reformed literature to distribute. We did have a small amount, but the purchase of such literature is very costly. We have of course the Mother's Catechism which is readily accepted as also the tract exposing Mormonism. It was hoped that the second print of the Shorter Catechism would be ready for this visit, but the printer is snowed under with work

and hopes to have it ready for January. The previous edition of the Westminster Shorter Catechism, done by a translator in America, was not a very satisfactory translation. The present one however, is done by our own Church employing a translator from St Petersburg in Russia, a Mr Andrei Valtsev, and his work checked by a second translator from Moscow, a Mr Vladimir Lotsmanov. This translation we are assured is a good translation. There have been quite a few enquiries for the Shorter Catechism in Russian, and we look forward to the receiving of the Catechism and the distribution.

I preached for the two Sabbaths I was in Kiev, in a neighbouring town called Borispol. Mr Igor Belozyerov kindly interpreted on all occasions. Mr John H Gudgeon, of The Roundwood Trust, pertaining to the Strict Baptists in England, has invited Igor to Britain. Mr Gudgeon has kindly organised that Igor come north to Scotland for a few days. We look forward to this, especially to return some of the kindness he and his mother have shown us during our stay in their home while in Kiev.

The first Sabbath we preached in the home of a Mr and Mrs Ilchenko. Here 15 people gathered and I preached from Ecclesiastes 12: 14, and Luke 14: 15. We had a short break in between the services of about 15 minutes, and each service lasted about one hour. There was also considerable time spent in questions and answers.

To us it appeared a profitable occasion, but it is only the Lord who knows the heart of man and can tell who indeed is profiting under His word.

The following Sabbath we had again two services in the home of Miss Burbelo. Here eight people gathered and we preached from John 4: 24 and Luke 18: 13. A number of questions asked related to the Lord's Day, particularly the change from the seventh day to the first. This arose because of the activity of the 7th Day Adventists in Borispol. Also there were questions in connection with the Jehovah's Witnesses who are also active and aggressive in Borispol.

As far as we can judge there was an interest in the preaching of the Word. Many also expressed wishes that we return and continue our work. In both homes we were provided with a beautiful meal in Ukraine style, which was much appreciated by us.

During the week we visited the same two homes in Borispol, and left a considerable amount of Bibles, calendars, clothing, medicines, etc., which our friends in these homes distribute to those in need.

We were given 25,000 Calenders by way of free grant from the Trinitarian Bible Society. These were in Russian, Hungarian, and

Romanian and very much appreciated by all to whom we distributed. We owe a debt of gratitude to the Trinitarian Bible Society for their production of sound versions of the Word of God and the constant supply over the years of much literature which is donated to our work in Eastern Europe. It was also very much appreciated, before my departure on this occasion, that Mr Paul Rowland the Secretary of the Trinitarian Bible Society sent his prayerful wishes for work, and I conclude this news letter with an extract from his letter. "As you are well aware the situation in Eastern Europe is not very encouraging from a reformed perspective and it is therefore with this in mind that I wish you much of the Lord's blessing in the coming days. I do trust that the Scriptures supplied by the Society will be of assistance and be the means of profit to those who receive them."

"That man who, bearing precious seed,
in going forth doth mourn,
He doubtless, bringing back his sheaves,
rejoicing shall return.

Psalm 126: 6

Trinitarian Bible Society

A service of thanksgiving was held on Saturday, 19th November 1994, at the new premises of the International Headquarters of the Trinitarian Bible Society. Over the past few years, the work of the Society in distributing accurate and trustworthy translations of the Scriptures throughout the world has expanded greatly. This expansion has necessitated the acquisition of larger premises. Thus, in the gracious providence of God, the Society has recently moved in to new facilities for use as their headquarters. This property, renamed 'Tyndale House' in commemoration of the famous Bible translator William Tyndale, is located on Dorset Road, London, within one mile of the Society's previous location on Kingston Road, London.

Prior to and following the Thanksgiving Service, the Society opened its doors to allow friends and supporters to tour and examine the new property. Exhibits and displays were set up throughout the building to show the day-to-day operation of the Society as well as various aspects of the work. The service began at 2.30 p.m., during which those who spoke expressed their gratitude to God not only for providing the building but also for all aspects of the move itself. During the service, the Rev. Prof. H. M. Cartwright, a member of the Committee of the Society, ministered the Word of God. (The Rev. A. McPherson, a Vice-President of the Society, had been scheduled to speak but was unable to do so because

of ill health). Mr Cartwright preached from 2 Thessalonians 2: 13-14, stressing the sovereignty of God and the need for continuing to spread God's Word throughout the world.

Tyndale House is a building of three wings in a triangular formation around a central patio area. These new premises, which are approximately three times the size of the old property, required extensive refurbishment and redecoration. As well, after twenty-seven years at the old location, a great deal of work was required to prepare for and facilitate the actual move. Staff members and friends executed the move, with the offices at the old location closing on 6th October, the anniversary of the death of William Tyndale. The Society's offices re-opened on 10th October in Tyndale House amidst great joy.

The Society invites all friends to join in with us in praising God for His gracious provisions. The Society seeks your prayers as we continue in the work of spreading the Word of God among all nations.

Mission News

On the fifth weekend of October friends gathered at Mbumba mission for the Communion Service. On this occasion there had been heavy showers of rain during October, and the beautiful trees were showing fresh green leaves. On Friday there was the customary Question Meeting, when the verse was given out by one of the men: "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him." Four men spoke suitably on the text.

On Saturday and Sabbath a Mission car brought people from distant stations. Those who came on Saturday slept in the classrooms. There are about 500 pupils attending Mbumba School. Food was cooked over the weekend for those living on the Mission.

The first service on Sabbath was taken by the visiting minister Rev A. B. Ndebele. The text was taken from Zechariah 12: 10. The church was filled to capacity with old and young. A good number gathered at the Lord's Table. One of the verses spoken on was: "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom". The text at the evening service taken by Rev P. Mzamo was from II Kings 7: 3, "Why sit we here until we die?"

The scene at Mbumba Church during the Communion reminded one of Paul Ncube's assurance: "The whole Reserve will yet be lit up with the Glory of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ." We trust that that will yet be fulfilled.

One of the elders, David Ndlovu, himself in indifferent health, pressed with a multiplicity of duties, motor transport, building and repairs, and last but not least, preaching, said of Rev P. Mzamo: 'Mr Mzamo is working harder than ever before, with all the stations to supply.' The same could be said of Rev A. B. Ndebele and of Rev Z. Mazvabo and their elders. No one could tell of men of like calibre who were coming forward to help in the great work of making known the Gospel. May they be enabled to say as the Apostle said, "When I am weak then am I strong,"

A few patients were still being admitted at Mbuma with symptoms of plague. One little girl was asked what was wrong with her, and she replied: "Plak." She was correct in her diagnosis. It was good to hear that Louise Leiper was expected to arrive in Bulawayo on November 22nd. We hope that Louise will enjoy her work and find it rewarding.

At Ingwenya during November the final Government examinations were held. After breakfast, and prayers conducted by the boarding-master, Mr James Mpofu, the six hundred boarding pupils and a small proportion of day-pupils were seated in the large assembly hall or in classrooms with supervisory teachers. The envelopes containing the question papers were slit open by the Headmistress in the view of the pupils, according to Government regulations. The blind pupils used their braille machines and had their work transcribed into print by a seconded teacher, before being sent to the appropriate Government office.

On Saturday, 5th November, the annual prize-giving day was held. The prizes and certificates were given for work done during the year. A few hundred parents and visitors arrived by bus and car and some on foot. Special mention was made of the fact that ninety years before, on 4th November, 1904, the late Rev J. B. Radasi had set foot in Bulawayo. Some details of his origins, his providential connection with the Free Presbyterian Church, and of his excellent work as a missionary and teacher in that part of Matabeleland, and also in Nkai, were given. Mention was made of some of the remarkable conversions that took place during his ministry. It was interesting that one of Mr Radasi's grandsons was present at the prize-giving, and his own little daughter handed out a bouquet.

It was impressive to see 600 young people seated with adults listening to the Word of God preached with faithfulness each Lord's Day. We trust many will be blessed for Time and Eternity.

We understand that in Mozambique the situation is desperate for our people through starvation. The Foreign Mission Committee is sending some help but more will be required over the next few months. **J.N.**

Church Notes

The New Year

As another year opens, we would take this opportunity to wish our readers the blessing of the Lord for time and eternity. How swiftly do the years of our life pass away! They are gone before we are aware of it. What need there is to be ready when the midnight call comes, lest we should be found as the foolish virgins with no oil in our lamps. How many have gone to the eternal world during the past year, many of them to an undone eternity, others to the Father's house of many mansions. May the new year prove one of blessing to the Church of God in our own land and throughout the whole world. May many be brought from darkness to light and many raised up and sent forth into the harvest to preach the glorious gospel of the blessed God.

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Australia and New Zealand: At Auckland on 27th January at 2.30 p.m.

Skye: At Portree on 14th February at 11 a.m.

Northern: At Dingwall on 14th February at 2 p.m.

Southern: At Glasgow on 21st February at 6 p.m.

Zimbabwe: At Bulawayo on 14th March at 2 p.m.

Kenya Mission

Mr and Mrs MacDonald and their infant daughter left for Kenya early in December. There is reason to acknowledge the Lord's goodness in restoring Dr Christine MacDonald to a measure of health so that she felt able to resume her work at Sengeru. As the hospital has been finally approved by the Kenyan medical authorities, the way is now open for the work to proceed. Mr Ian MacLean, builder, Daviot, has gone to Sengeru for eight weeks to supervise building work there. Rev. John Goldby is due to return to this country in March. We pray that one of the Lord's servants may be directed to labour premanently in that part of the Lord's vineyard.

Church Deputy to Africa

Rev. D. A. Ross, Laide, accompanied by his wife, expects to leave on 11th January for a six week visit to Africa. Mr Ross hopes to visit Malawi, Zimbabwe and Kenya. We trust that they may be preserved from all danger during their travels and that Mr Ross' visit may prove a blessing to the Mission in Africa.

Acknowledgement of Donations

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

Bookroom Fund: "A Friend", £100; Providence S.B.C., Irthlingborough, £75.

Foreign Mission Fund: Providence S.B.C., Irthlingborough, £150; Anon., (Canada) (Nov), Can \$120.

Legacy Reserve Fund: C.I.H. ("for the Cause") £10.

Publications Fund: Mr and Mrs Butcher, Cambridge, £5.

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

Aberdeen: Friend, £700, per Rev J. MacLeod, Stornoway.

Beaulie: Friend £10 for Sust. Fd., per Rev. N.R.

Bonar Bridge: Anon., £10 for Dornoch Communion expenses.

Bracadale-Strath: J.S. £500, in loving memory of my mother, Mary Straiton, for Portnalong Church Fds; Anon., £30 for Church Door Coll, both per D.J.M.

Dingwall: Mrs M. G. £10 for Sust. Fd per Rev N.M.R.

Edinburgh: Friends, Inverness £100; Anon. Friend, £500 both for Edinburgh Church Repairs Fund; Anon., "G", £20 for Congr. Fd.

Glendale: Anon., £200 for Sust. Fd (envelope in plate).

Glasgow (St Jude's): In memory of loved ones, £50 "where most needed"; Mrs M. (two donations) £70; Anon., £100, both for Congr. Fd., both per Rev D.M.; R.M. £10; Anon., £10; R. McL., £10 per Rev D.M., last three for Bus. Fund; Anon., £10; Mrs M. (two donations) £40 per Rev D.M.; Anon., £35, last three for Sust. Fd; Anon., £5 for Outreach Fd; Anon., £25 for Home Mission Fd.; Anon., £30 for Dominions and Overseas Fund; Anon., £50 for Eastern Europe Fd; Anon., £50 for African Mission; Anon., £100, sponsor a blind child; Anon., £20; Anon., (three donations) £120, last two for T.B.S.

Greenock: Anon., £30 for Congr. Purposes.

Kames: Friend, Kyles of Bute, £120 for General Church Funds.

Laide: London Friends, £500; N.Z. Friend, £200; Friend, Laide, £5; Friend, Edinburgh, £20; Friend, Ballifeary Home, £30; Shieldaig, £15; Interested, £300; Anon., Shieldaig (1) £15, (2) £15; Friend, Gairloch £100; Anon., Zimbabwe £50; M.E.N., £100; R.E.P.M.J., £50; C.F. £40; H.C.M. £20; Applecross Collection Plate £20; Gairloch Friends, £75; Anon., £250; Residents Isle View Nursing Home, £11, £7.50, £7.50; all the above per Rev D.A. Ross, all for Eastern Europe Mission.

Larne: Anon., £15; Anon., £9; Anon., £10; Anon., £20, all for Foreign Mission (Zimbabwe); Anon., £6; Anon., £10, both for Foreign Mission (Kenya); Anon., £8 for Lord's Work in Italy; Anon., £6; Anon., £9, Anon., £10; Anon., £7; Anon., £40, all for Eastern Europe Mission, all the above donations by envelope in plate; Anon., £40 for Manse Expenses.

Portree: Anon., £200 for Sabbath School (envelope in plate); Friend, £10, where needed; Friend £5 for Sust. Fd., both per F.M.; Anon., £15; Anon., £10, both where needed, both per S.Y.M.

Raasay: R.G. £500 for Sust. Fd.; Raasay Friend in memory of loving parents £2000 for Raasay Church where most needed; M.D. (envelope in plate) £10, in appreciation of Rev J. R. Tallach's visits, use where most needed; J.G. £10, where most needed, per Rev J.R.T.

Stornoway: Miss K.A. Macleod, The Cottage, Callanish, £130 for Sust. Fd.; Friend £10 for Sust Fd; Harris Friend, £10; Anon., £10, both for Congr. Fd., all per Rev J. MacL.; Anon., per church plate £5 for Overseas Mission; Kenya Mission Coll. £140.

Uig: Mrs J. £20; Anon., £10; Anon., £10; Uig Friend, £20, all in church plate; Raasay Friend, £5; Friend, Stornoway, £10, all for Communion Exps; Friend, Skye £50 for Congr. Fd, last three per Rev D. J. McD.; Anon., £30 for Free Distribution of F.P. Magazine (church plate); B.B. £10 for Church Door Coll., per Rev D.J. McD.