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The Gates of Hell Shall Not Prevail Against It

HUMANISTS and secularists are heartened by what they see as a fact: that we are in a post-Christian era and that the Christian Church is in its death throes. The Church is well and truly on its way to extinction and utter oblivion, they tell us.

It is true that various denominations which were once more or less orthodox are experiencing a drastic drop in the numbers attending church. It is so in our national Churches in the United Kingdom, and in other old denominations such as the Baptists and Methodists. Every week, hundreds of people terminate their connection with the Church.

It was recently reported on Church Net UK that in the Methodist Church for example, the current rate of decline "is 26 members a day. More than 50,000 members have been lost, out of 1.2 million." The *Daily Telegraph* reports that "the Church said that if the trend continues it could only survive financially for two or three more years."

The last Scottish Church Census shows that only 14 per cent of adults attend church. In the Church of Scotland itself, the membership declined last year by 17,018 to a low of 701,914.

The situation is worse in England where only 10 per cent attend church. In the Church of England, according to its new report 'Youth a Part', since 1987 there has been a fall of 35 per cent in the numbers of 14 to 17-year-olds attending church services.

It must be said that much of this decline in attendance and church commitment is due to a decline in the national Churches themselves in the matter of giving Scripture teaching to the people. If professed ministers of the gospel call into question the doctrines of Scripture, or even deny them, need they wonder that the people will treat the Christian faith as an irrelevancy?

But even in Churches which on the whole are yet adhering to the Reformed Faith, there is a steady decrease in numbers. In our own Church, when we make comparisons between our strength now and that of two or three decades ago, we see that there has been a slow diminishing, (apart from that caused by the schism of 1989).

The enemies of godliness are heartened, as we said, by the decline in the Christian Church. But, on the other hand, the godly in their concern for the Church, have great reason to be heartened. Christ's promise still stands: "Upon this rock I will build my church." The day is coming when there will be a large and speedy extending of His Church.

This seems hard to believe when we see the steady growth of false religions. Also, the ungodly are apparently having it all their own way, and in numerous instances they spew out their blasphemies against Heaven and heap scorn on the enfeebled Church. In doing Satan's work they echo the words of God's enemies of the past, "With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us?" But they shall not prevail. "Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" - this is the pledge of the Head of the Church.

Not only will Satan and his numerous and powerful agents fail to demolish the true Church - they will not prevail also in the sense of resisting the Church when it marches forth under the banner of the great King against her enemies. It is He who shall prevail, both by successfully resisting His enemies and also by overcoming them. Therefore, the Church shall be more than conquerors through Him. What a heartening prospect!

The building up of His Church will never occur until He Himself will work by sending forth His Spirit. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." Then there will be a great upbuilding. "I the Lord build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate: I the Lord have spoken it, and I will do it." Here is a promise which is as applicable to the true Church today as it was to the Old Testament Church.

But we are to note that if ever there was a day when it was necessary to cry to God to come down to build His Church, it is our day. His building His Sion in this world will be in answer to the prayers of His people. "He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer." Then they, and multitudes with them, will behold His glorious majesty.

"When Sion by the mighty Lord
built up again shall be,
In glory then and majesty
to men appear shall he." (Metrical Ps. 102:16).

Notes of a Sermon

*preached by the late Rev. M. MacSween, M.A., Oban.**

(on 27th November 1960).

They Made Light of it

Text: "*But they made light of it, and went their way, one to his farm, another to his merchandise,*" Matthew 22:5.

WE shall consider three things which are to be learned from this verse in the parable of the marriage feast: *first*, the blessings which are prepared and which we are invited to receive; *secondly*, those who made light of the invitation; and *thirdly*, the folly and sinfulness of making light of the invitation, and despising so many opportunities.

First: *the blessings prepared and to which we are invited.*

A marriage feast is prepared for Jesus Christ, the Son of God in our nature, and His bride, the Church. Christ and His bride are united at this feast; they become one spirit, for "he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit". She becomes His beloved. He is "all in all" to her.

The feast contains all the blessings of grace and glory. "The Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." There is nothing that can cleanse the soul, direct the soul, or delight the soul but is provided in this feast of gospel blessings.

The Church, in being united to Christ the bridegroom, is reconciled to God the Father. She becomes His daughter. The bride was drawn to the Son by the lovingkindness of the Father, and she can therefore say,

"God is of mine inheritance
and cup the portion,
The lot that fallen is to me
thou dost maintain alone."

What else can she then desire for time and for eternity? Christ is hers and therefore all things are hers. All good things that we can desire for time and eternity are found in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Receive them freely - enjoy these rich blessings. Jesus said, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." He calls, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else."

God sends many messengers to invite sinners to the gospel feast. The

* Rev. Malcolm MacSween (1904 - 78) was Church Deputy to Canada (1946 - 47), and minister in Bracadale (1947 - 56) and Oban (1956- 78). He was a Church Tutor from 1952 until his death.

invitation comes to sinners with the declaration that no unworthiness will keep the sinner from the feast. The "poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind" are all invited to come. In coming they shall be freely provided with a wedding garment. Accept the gospel invitation, and the blessings shall be yours - the blessings of pardon, peace, holiness, comfort, cleansing, support, food and water. All are provided and made over to the soul when Christ is received in the exercise of faith, and united to Him by faith. Jesus said, "I am the bread of life," and, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." Receive Christ and you have everything.

Secondly, we see that the message is much disregarded. Many make light of it. Who make light of it?

They make light of the message who make excuses for declining the invitation of the gospel. They are in a slippery place - in a very slippery place indeed. They are on dangerous ground. The excuses which we read of in the parable are not worthy excuses. All excuses for refusing the gospel and rejecting Christ are unworthy. Those people who made light of it were dealt with most solemnly and severely. We ordinarily excuse ourselves from receiving Christ and laying hold on the blessings offered to us in Him. It is a common but a dangerous thing to make light of the Gospel.

The second class of people who make light of the invitation are those who do not accept the gospel with all thankfulness. Gospel blessings are of first importance to those who receive them with gratitude. Are they of first importance to ourselves? Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith. Try yourselves by this mark.

Yet others make light of the message by devaluing the blessings of the gospel. How valuable the blessing of liberty is! Many portions of Scripture show the bondage of those whose sins are not pardoned. Jesus says, "Come unto me for pardon; come now for freedom." Bondage under Satan is blinding and terrible. What liberty there is in Christ! In His service is perfect freedom.

Again, how valuable are the riches imparted by Christ to the soul in union with Him! What are the riches of the world in comparison to these? Value the riches imparted by Christ above everything else. Do you so value them?

Thirdly, let us consider the folly and sinfulness of rejecting the gospel - of making light of the invitation.

What folly and wickedness it is to reject that only Saviour whom God has sent. "Neither is their salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Words cannot express the folly and sinfulness of making light of the Gospel.

Unless the Holy Spirit applies the gospel to men they will not receive it but will reject it - and they will be held responsible for their rejection of it. On the other hand, those who by grace do receive the gospel will value it above everything else.

They estimate the value of the blessings of the gospel by the price paid for their procurement. Every spiritual blessing - pardon, peace, and so on - was bought by the precious blood of God's coequal, coexistent Son in our nature. If ever you shall be saved, what value will you be able to put on pardon? All your dreadful guilt will be removed. All your debts to divine justice will be paid to the last farthing. Is it not foolish and wicked to make light of God's provision which was procured at so great a price? Surely it is!

Those who receive the blessings of the gospel also estimate their value by weighing them against other things. Of what value are all the pleasures of the world and all that the world contains when compared to the blessings of the gospel? These worldly things are lighter than vanity and are as the small dust of the balance. "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities, all is vanity." The things of this world are truly vanity. Worldliness, as well as every other sin, deserves God's wrath and curse. May the Lord awaken us by His Spirit to realise the folly and wickedness of putting more value on the world than on the blessings of salvation.

There is this solemn declaration in the truth: "For the fashion of this world passeth away." It is a passing world, and we ourselves are hastening from it. Great changes take place in families and homes, by sickness, death, and other means. Think of this awful truth: men are being continuously hurried out of the world into eternity. These things are tremendously solemn. Great changes occur throughout the world. Once flourishing cities have vanished; powerful kingdoms have been destroyed, vast empires have risen and fallen. Scripture informs us that even the very "heavens shall pass away with great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

When we read these things in the word of God do we say to ourselves and others, "Why concern ourselves about worldly betterment?" We ought to use temporal blessings thankfully, and "use this world, as not abusing it." We are in the world but we are not to be of it. Build no hope of salvation or happiness on the sand of this world. We are counselled in the truth to build on Christ, the Rock of Salvation, and then all will be well in sickness, in health, in life and in death. Beware of the folly and wickedness of refusing Christ and embracing the world.

Christ calls to us, "All things are ready: come unto the marriage." God the

Father says, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." All is well with each one who obeys the call. On the other hand, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" There is no safety or true happiness for us if we are without Christ. The world at best is a broken cistern, but the believer who has Christ is happy even though he may be destitute. All things are now ready. Come ye, sit down with great delight at the marriage made for the Beloved of the Church. Of Him she says, "My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand, ...yea, he is altogether lovely."

Consideration of Missionary Subjects

By the Rev. Robert Murray McCheyne

This article by Robert Murray McCheyne (1813 - 43), which describes the benefits of frequent, thoughtful and prayerful consideration of Christian missions, originally appeared in the Scottish Christian Herald in 1836, and is reprinted (in somewhat abbreviated form) from an early issue of The Free Presbyterian Magazine.

THE advantages which the Christian mind derives from a constant intercourse with missionary subjects are very many and very great.

First: a spirit of intercession on behalf of the heathen is encouraged.

It was when Jesus "saw the multitudes," that "He was moved with compassion on them," and bade His disciples, "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest," (Matt. 9:36-38). This shows how completely the Son of God was also the Son of Man, for with men it is always the sight of the object that calls forth the emotion. We come, we see, we are conquered. It was when Paul "saw the city wholly given to idolatry" that "his spirit was stirred in him," (Acts 17:16). The eye affected the heart.

Just so will it be with every Christian mind. Set him down, like Buchanan [a missionary in India], among the myriads that shout around the vehicle of Juggernaut, the Hindu god; or, like Gutzlaff [another missionary], among the more civilised idolatry of China, and he will be stirred. The man who is a follower of Paul, as Paul was of Christ, will be stirred in his spirit, and moved with compassion, and one vent of the full heart will be in prayer to the Lord of the harvest.

But we who sit at home cannot see the spirit-stirring sight; we are cut off from this influence to drive us to our knees. Nor can any written information wholly make up this deficiency. The hearing of the ear will never produce so powerful an effect as the seeing with the eye. Yet, in the absence of the greater

influence, how dare we neglect to use the lesser? When we cannot see, how dare we refuse to hear and read and consider? If we live in ignorance of the state of the heathen world, how can we pray intelligently on its behalf? If we content ourselves with general notions of its idolatries, and barbarities, and resisting the Light, shall not our petitions be general, unfeeling, and ineffectual? On the prayers of the children of God depends the coming of the kingdom of God and the conversion of the heathen. Should not every child of God then bring himself under those influences which shall bind him to intelligent, fervent, effectual prayer on this behalf.

Come, then, true child of God, who art bound to the service of Christ in thy native soil, come and let us gather from the records of faithful men who have jeopardized their lives in the high places of heathenism, food for meditation, and incitement to prayer. Let us give ear to these spies of the land of darkness when they tell us of some spot where grace is beginning to drop from above "like the first of a thunder shower," so that our prayers, mingled with thanksgivings, may arise with interest and intelligence on this special behalf: or, when they tell us of some stronghold of Satan, fortified on every side by the triple brazen shield of superstition, self-righteousness, and lust, our united cry may ascend into the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth: "Have respect unto thy covenant, for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty."

Secondly, intercourse with missionary subjects helps forward personal holiness.

We find in 1st Thessalonians 2:16, that those who were forbidding the preaching of the word to the Gentiles were looked upon by God as filling up the cup of their sins. Conversely, the bidding and helping of faithful men to preach the word to the Gentiles, is one of the essential virtues of the child of God. And if it be a good and gracious thing to send them, it is but the continuation of this good thing to look after them, to sympathise with their difficulties and encouragements, to weep with them when they weep over obstinate sinners, to rejoice with them and the angels when they rejoice over one sinner that repenteth.

But love increases and abounds the more it is conversant with its object. Appetite seems to grow by what it feeds on, and the sure effect of increasing and abounding in love toward all men is a surer establishing in personal holiness, (1 Thes 3:12,13). The very effort of sending a man to be an instrument to convert others, makes us ask the question, "Am I myself converted?" The very sight of so many millions left in ignorance of the only name whereby they may be saved, whilst we have heard it from our infancy,

overpowers the believing mind with an abiding sense of the sovereignty of God and the freeness of His electing love. Privileges are used more ardently; thanksgivings are offered more feelingly. "What have I that I did not receive," is graven more durably upon the heart.

And if God does bless the efforts of our missionaries, how is every grace of the new nature stirred into a burning flame. When the Greenlander, the Hindu, or the Chinese becomes a believer in Jesus; when the same gracious feelings which sparkled in our bosoms when first we saw the Lord have evidently got possession of these barbarian souls; when we can trace a kindredness of sentiment and affection, a oneness of spirit with these last of men, then we remember that it is written, "We, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." Our lagging faith is by sympathy quickened into active service. The flame of our first love is rekindled, and we hasten to "do the first works."

Thirdly, *intercourse with missionary subjects makes us watch more anxiously for the coming of the kingdom of God.*

The saints are to be watchful and intelligent as to the signs of the times. And is not the state of the Jewish and heathen world the very page to which we must look chiefly for signs of the latter day glory? When the branch of the fig tree is yet tender and putteth forth leaves, we know that summer is nigh. So likewise shall there be infallible signs of the coming of the season when the Beloved shall say unto His bride, "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone."

These buddings of the coming summer of our world, "none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand," (Daniel 12:10). And why? Just because the wise, the taught of God, are not fools nor slow of heart to believe all that is written concerning the coming of the kingdom of Jesus. They are on the watch for the first vibrations of that shaking of the earth and the heavens that shall usher in His kingdom that cannot be moved.

Where is the intelligent child of God who is not even now looking for the first streaks of the breaking of the day - the day when the fulness of the Gentiles being come in, all Israel shall be saved - and then at last the day when the whole temple being completed (of which Christ is the foundation stone, corner stone and top stone), the Lord shall be glorified in His saints, and admired in all them that believe.

Child of God, sleep not thou as do others, but having thine own heart established with grace, be ever asking the anxious question, "Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?" And then shall the answer be returned to thee, "The morning cometh."

The Effect of Christ Being Lifted Up

*Rev. Donald MacFarlane**

The piece below is an extract from a sermon, entitled "Christ Drawing All Sorts," on the text, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me," (John 12:32). The sermon may be found in *Sermons on the Love of God and Cognate Themes*. This book was republished in 1986 by Free Presbyterian Publications under the title, *Sermons - Rev. Donald MacFarlane*, and is available from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom, Glasgow.

THE effect of Christ being lifted up is that all men shall be drawn unto Him. "I will draw all men unto Me." "All men" here does not mean every individual of the human race, for in the past it is evident that many of the human race have not been drawn to Christ. The promise is absolute, there is no condition to it, and therefore it shall be fulfilled without fail. By "all men" here we are to understand all sorts of men, Gentiles as well as Jews. The context leads us to this view. There were certain Greeks, or Gentiles, who desired to see Jesus, and He told the two disciples, Philip and Andrew, that after His death and resurrection, He would draw all sorts of men throughout the world to Him - black and white, bond and free, sinners of every description, even the chief of sinners. He would draw to Himself all for whom He died.

Those who hold the false doctrine of the "larger hope" quote this passage of Scripture in support of their error. They hold that those who died in their sins, and were cast into hell shall be brought, after a period of suffering, from the place of perdition and brought to heaven by Him who says, "I will draw all men unto Me." I heard a minister pray and say in the course of his prayer, "All spirits are united to God, and He will bring all these to be with Him in heaven." Those who hold the "larger hope" say, not only men who are in hell, but also the devil and his angels, shall be brought to heaven by Christ, but these false teachers shall never be in heaven unless they are brought to repentance during their lifetime on earth. Their "larger hope" shall then disappear, and everlasting despair shall take its place.

In drawing sinners to Himself, there is a putting forth of effectual power on the part of Christ, and a willingness on the part of those drawn.

* Rev. Donald MacFarlane (1834 - 1926), one of the founding fathers of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, was called as minister to Moy, 1879; to Kilmallie, 1888; to Raasay, 1893; and to Dingwall, 1903.

He does not say that He will drag them against their will, but that He will draw them. He will renew their wills, and make them willing in the day of His power to come to Him.

The drawing of sinners to Christ is ascribed to the Father as well as to the Son, as He told the Jews who would not come to Him, "Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him" (John 6: 43,44).

There are many attractions in Christ calculated to draw sinners to Him. "He is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His Person." He is fairer than the sons of men, the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. He is merciful and gracious, and His wonderful condescension in dying for sinners ought to melt the most callous sinners, and constrain them to come to Him.

In drawing sinners to Him, He quickens them by His Spirit, for no dead man will come to Him. He draws them to Him, by the effectual work of the Holy Spirit, through the means of the word of the Gospel.

The word of the Gospel is necessary to the salvation of adult sinners. None such can or will come to Christ, although some people say, without Scripture warrant, that the heathen may be saved without the word of the Gospel. Faith in Christ is necessary in order to be saved. The Apostle Paul shows the impossibility of believing in Christ without hearing of Him in the word of the Gospel. "How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?" And he concludes his argument by saying: "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:14,15,17).

In his Epistle to the Ephesians, 2nd chapter, he reminds those to whom he writes of their condition *before* the word of the Gospel came to them: that they were then without hope, and without God in the world (verse 12). In his first Epistle to the Thessalonians written to men who were originally heathen but were now true believers in Christ, he tells them that the change was effected by means of the word of the Gospel which came to them. "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance" (1 Thes. 1:5). The effect of the Gospel coming to them in this manner was that they "turned from idols to serve the living God." It is the testimony of missionaries who went to preach the Gospel to the heathen who never heard the Gospel before, that they never saw the heathen turn from idols to serve the living God before they heard the Gospel. We are therefore warranted to conclude that the Gospel is

necssary as a means of drawing sinners to Christ.

Christ will draw all men whom He saves into union with Himself, secondly, into conformity to His image, thirdly, into fellowship with Himself, and fourthly, to be with Him where He is in heaven. This was His last petition in His intercessory prayer on earth, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am: that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world" (John 17:24).

In conclusion, what think ye of the glorious Person that was lifted up from the earth? Have you been drawn unto Him, or are you still as far away from Him as you have been before the Gospel came to you? If you continue to the end in that deplorable condition, you will perish forever. We are all hastening on to the world of eternity. There are two places in that world - heaven and hell. Those who have been drawn to Christ shall go to heaven when they leave this world, while those who die without Christ shall be cast into hell, to be tormented forever, with the devil and his angels.

A good number of the Lord's people were removed by death from our congregation during the last thirteen years. These are now, so far as their souls are concerned, with Christ where He is, and their bodies, though in the grave, being still united to Christ, shall be raised up at the resurrection, glorious bodies, reunited to their souls, to be made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity.

Oh! how they shall ascribe in a sweet song the glory of their salvation to the Son of God who died for them, and to the Father who sent His only-begotten Son to redeem them by His humiliation unto death, and to the Holy Spirit who quickened them when they were dead in trespasses and sins, and who worked faith in them to believe in Christ. They shall sing their song of praise under a deep sense of their obligation to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God. Amen.

The Drawing of the Cross of Christ.

"What gives peculiar attraction to the Cross of Christ, and communicates to it the most powerful influence in bringing nigh those that were far off, is the love therein manifested to the sinful, perishing sons of men. Much of the goodness of God in creation may be seen by an enlightened eye, much in His providential care over His creatures; but it is in the Cross of Christ that the glory of divine love has been most eminently displayed, and shines forth with a lustre surpassing all wonder and praise."

Rev. Charles Calder (1748 - 1812), of Ferintosh

Shieltaig Free Presbyterian Church Looking Back 100 Years

Rev. D. A. Ross

ONE hundred years ago, the 26th day of February witnessed the opening of the church of the Shieltaig Free Presbyterian Congregation, three years after the founding of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. What is a church more than another building? It is to be used for the assembling of worshippers, worshipping the living and true God in the manner prescribed by Himself. We are thankful that during the past one hundred years this has been done in the Free Presbyterian church at Shieltaig.

This scriptural worship was precious to the Rev. Donald Macdonald, the first minister of the Free Presbyterian Congregation in Shieltaig. No doubt he was raised up by God and obtained grace to depart from the then Free Church in 1893 because of the extremely unbiblical Declaratory Act introduced into the Church by its liberal professors and ministers. When the present Free Presbyterian church was built in Shieltaig it was with the intention that within it there would be the true worship of God, free from the trammels of the God-dishonouring Declaratory Act.

Rev. Donald Macdonald was by all accounts a faithful servant of Christ and was noted for his godliness. The first few years of his ministry were spent as a probationer in the Free Church; then he was ordained and inducted to the Shieltaig Free Church Congregation in 1872. However, in 1893, when the Free Church rejected the appeal to repeal the infamous Declaratory Act, introduced the previous year, and which demoted the truths of God's Word, Mr Macdonald had no hesitation in departing from that unfaithful Church. Along with Rev D. Macfarlane and other godly persons, he took part in the founding of what is now the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Mr Macdonald's congregation (apart from a very few persons), being in full agreement with the step he took, adhered to him as their pastor.

However, this step in faithfulness to Christ earned him a considerable degree of persecution. "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution," says Scripture, and Mr MacDonald was no stranger to that experience. Sadly, some of that persecution came from the Free Church when it deprived him and his congregation of the church and manse gifted to them in 1877.

They then had to worship in the open air in a hollow in the moor not far from the church. This particular spot faces the sea, is on a fairly steep slope,

and has rock boulders at the back and at both sides which afforded some shelter from cold north-east winds. A dyke was erected on the south-west side which would have served as a wind break to some extent. In good weather the area was evidently an excellent sun trap. It was also wonderfully suited for the projecting of the preacher's voice. The pulpit was a portable wooden structure with a roof and enclosed back and sides but open at the front, where there was a bookrest. It was raised a few feet from the ground and was capable of housing two persons. In some parts of the Highlands this type of pulpit for the shelter of the preacher was known as "the tent", meaning a portable, temporary structure. The "tent" at Shieldaig was used even after the erection of the new church building in 1896 because at communion times the church, although large, was not large enough to hold all the people who gathered for the solemn occasion, and therefore the services had to be held in the open air again. This particular "tent", having now outlived its usefulness, is presently housed in the Gairloch Museum.

How long after 1893, and before the building of the church, the congregation and its pastor worshipped in the open moor, we do not know exactly, but it seems to have been less than two years. Then, in the kind providence of the Lord, the present church building was erected.

On Wednesday, the 26th day of February 1895, the new church was opened by Rev J.R. MacKay, who preached from Hebrews 1:10-12 to a congregation of about 700 people. We can well imagine what a happy occasion it was for the people after having suffered so unjustly for taking their stand along with their faithful minister in defence of the Word of God. The Most High had now favoured them by providing a church which was described then "a handsome building, having the appearance of being substantial, commodious, comfortable, and well finished". Indeed, even by today's advanced standards in building the church fits this description well.

After the formation of the Free Presbyterian Church, Rev. Donald Macdonald's ministry was greatly valued throughout the whole Church as well as by his own congregation, of which he continued to be the pastor until his death on 20th August, 1901.

As a man of God there were few like him. Rev. D. Macfarlane says in his *Memoir and Remains of Rev. D. MacDonald, Shieldaig*, "Mr MacDonald had not in his day many equals, and but few, if any superiors... He was a Christian of deeply rooted piety... Another feature of his character as a Christian was his prayerfulness... On some occasions under a sense of desertion he added fasting to prayer... Mr Macdonald was a Christian who, like Enoch, walked with God... He was a holy Christian - not perfectly holy,

for that is not attainable by any Christian till death... He was a humble Christian; he considered himself less than the least of all saints... Another outstanding feature of his character was his spiritual-mindedness. His affections were set on things above, not on things on the earth; his conversation was in heaven... Mr Macdonald was a hopeful Christian... a tried Christian... a sympathetic Christian... a steadfast, immovable Christian". (pages 45-55). Many other beautiful things Mr Macfarlane has to say about Mr Macdonald; for example, that he "was strictly Calvinistic in his views and teaching." In his preaching "his great theme was Jesus Christ and Him crucified. A sermon without Christ he never preached. Christ was the all and in all to him.". Those of us today who are ministers of Christ would do well to constantly imitate the piety and faithfulness of Mr Macdonald in his being a follower of Christ. Mr Macfarlane concludes his memoirs of Mr Macdonald thus: "By the Divine blessing, Mr Macdonald left the Free Presbyterian Church on a sure footing, and in a prosperous condition. Ours is the duty of maintaining the position to which the Lord has called us, and which He has hitherto owned and blessed."

Ninety-five years have passed since the death of Mr Macdonald, but the Shieltaig Congregation continues under the same gospel, which is cause for much thankfulness to the God of mercies. Over the years, while some ministers ministering to the Shieltaig congregation did not prove faithful, others, along with elders and church members, continued to the end to be faithful followers of Christ Jesus. There is one difference however: the large congregation of Mr Macdonald's day is now reduced to a handful of people. What used to be numbered in hundreds is now numbered in tens. This has necessitated the joining of Shieltaig Congregation with the Applecross Congregation.

What has caused this reduction in numbers? There are a few causes. No doubt, one reason is that over the years an awful malady of carelessness regarding eternal issues has progressed steadily and now has taken a deadly hold upon whole communities in the West Highlands. People no longer attend the house of God as they used to do. Also, there has been the depopulation of these districts. Many of our Church people had to move south and east to obtain work. Rev. D. Macdonald saw this drift in his own day, and in addressing the young who left home to work elsewhere, he most earnestly directed them to continue attending their Church. While our congregations in the larger cities benefited by the arrival of such people, it is a sad fact that many who left their home congregations drifted away to other Churches or ceased attending church. The loss is theirs.

What of the future? By the grace of God the Shieldaig Congregation came into existence in 1893, and by the grace of God, the congregation, though small in number, continues to the present time. Only by Divine grace shall we continue to exist and also grow. What we need immediately and especially, is an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. He alone can bring about a true reviving in the Church and an awakening in the souls of men. We need the blessed Holy Spirit to come to stir up not only those in our churches but also those who presently absent themselves from church. Only then will they come to listen and give earnest heed to the truth, as those who have a great burden of heart about being prepared to meet their Creator. Meanwhile, we labour and pray for such a day. May God hasten it in His mercy.

“Turn us again, O Lord our God,
and upon us vouchsafe
To make thy countenance to shine,
and so we shall be safe.” (Psalm 80: 3,7,19).

Sir William Mackinnon of East Africa - 1823-93

Rev. John Goldby, M.A.

Part One - From Campbeltown to Africa

SIR William Mackinnon was the Chairman of the Imperial British East Africa Company, from its incorporation on 18th April, 1888, and he was also the founder and head of the British India Steam Navigation Company. He was a staunch member of the Free Church of Scotland from its beginning in 1843. He used his great wealth unstintingly for the furtherance of the cause of Christ and for the good of his fellow men. From his own and his friends' resources he founded one of the earliest Christian missions in the interior of what is now the Republic of Kenya. Sir William vehemently opposed the Rainyite movement in the Free Church. Although his illness and death in June 1893 prevented him from joining the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland there is no doubt that his sympathies were with those who founded that Church in 1893.

Childhood and parentage

William Mackinnon was born in Campbeltown, Scotland, in March 1823, in the humble cottage in Argyle Street which was the family home. Duncan Mackinnon, his father, whose family came from the Island of Arran, was the captain of a revenue cutter. Duncan's wife was the devoted mother of a large family of which William was the fourteenth child. The Mackinnon family was

among the more serious and faithful worshippers in the Church of Scotland of those days. Providence, remarked one writer, placed him in a home where religion was the ruling impulse. In after life, Sir William made frequent and grateful reference to the piety of his father and his mother.

He proved a faithful son who laid to heart the wisdom of Solomon, "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: For they shall be ornaments of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck," (Prov.1:8,9).

Young William received an ordinary education in the local school run by Duncan Morrison, and also had private tuition from Dr. Brunton, the Rector of the local grammar school. He began his working life in a Campbeltown grocer's shop.

The Disruption of the Church of Scotland - 1843

William Mackinnon was twenty years of age when the Disruption of the Church of Scotland, which resulted in the formation of the Free Church, took place in 1843. It would appear that he had an intelligent grasp of the issues involved and of the threat posed to the gospel. We read that he was "full of the fervour of the day" when he took his stand with founders of the Free Church in defence of the doctrine of Christ's Crown prerogatives. He believed firmly in the Establishment Principle or the Principle of the National Recognition of Religion.

According to the teaching of the Bible, the civil power is a divine ordinance to which we all owe obedience in their lawful commands. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God," (Romans 13:1). On the other hand, it is the duty and privilege of nations and civil powers to honour Christ as King of Nations by observing His truth and promoting His true gospel, (Psalm 2:10-12). This has been the universal view expressed in the Confessional statements of the Protestant Churches of the Reformation. In 1843, as many as 450 ministers of the Church of Scotland felt compelled to take up a separate position and to form the Free Church of Scotland because of unlawful interference in the spiritual affairs of the Church by the civil courts. This stand had to be made in order to honour the kingly office of Christ and preserve the freedom of the Church in spiritual matters.

These Biblical principles William Mackinnon held fast till the day of his death. Later when the subtle Dr. Rainy and his party emerged to trouble the Free Church, he, unlike most, had the discernment to reject their policies as being detrimental to the interests of the gospel and foreign to the doctrine of the original Free Church.

Success in Business

After a short time in the Campbeltown shop William MacKinnon moved to Glasgow where he obtained work as a silk-merchant's clerk. His diligence in business soon gained him advancement and in 1847, at the age of twenty-four, he accepted a partnership with another Campbeltown man, Robert Mackenzie, who was in business in India. Together they ran a general stores business in a small town situated on the River Ganges. The Lord prospered the enterprise and it soon moved its head office to Calcutta.

Following the suggestion of a sea captain, Mr. Mackinnon became the owner of a ship. From the first small beginning in 1854 his shipping company developed rapidly to become the famous British India Steam Navigation Company, one of the largest shipping companies in the world. Other groups came under Mackinnon's control, such as the Netherlands India Steam Navigation Company. By the 1880's, his Companies had 181 ships at sea. His business interests also spread to East Africa.

God's Providence Unfolding in Africa

We have seen that William Mackinnon was a firm believer in the Bible and a faithful supporter of the Free Church. To understand him aright and what motivated him to become involved in East Africa we must look beyond his interests as a mere man of business to those Christian beliefs which were the real springs of his actions in connection with East Africa.

He followed with deep interest the progress of missionaries like Moffat, Livingstone, Mackay of Uganda and Stewart of Lovedale. Professor J.S. Galbraith in his book, *Mackinnon and East Africa, 1878-1895*, has observed that economic considerations alone would not have aroused businessmen or governments to action in Africa and that no businessman dominated by considerations of profit would have embarked on the schemes projected by Mackinnon. The movement for opening up Africa was not a mere cloak for exploitation, and the zeal for carrying out the injunction of Livingstone to open up Africa to both the gospel and commerce was widely and honestly held. For a secular historian, Galbraith's analysis of Mackinnon's motivation is striking. "He accepted unquestionably the superiority of his own moral standards and the truth of the precepts of his church. He undoubtedly believed that Africans would benefit from British trade, British institutions, and British religion."

We must also observe that this was the era of the British Empire and the period of industrial revolution in which Scotland was in the forefront. The advances in transport and technical achievement were immense. The mighty British Empire, like the empires of Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome before

it, was a mere instrument of God's purposes in providence, and it was through this channel that the gospel was being disseminated in Africa.

The Evangelisation of Africa

William Mackinnon's involvement with East Africa must be seen also against the background of the exploration and evangelisation of a continent whose people and interior were largely unknown until the second half of the 19th century. The Christian Church, especially, had a great reason for entering this unknown continent: the gospel commission of Jesus Christ. "And He said to them, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," (Mark 16:15). Such was the obligation Jesus laid upon his disciples and the whole New Testament Church.

The Protestant Churches had been hitherto very slow to heed the divine commission. In Scotland, at the 1796 General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, an attempt was made by the Synods of Moray and Fife to interest the Church in foreign missions. The Synods' pleas fell on deaf ears. "It was vain," they were told, "to Christianize the savage... Why should they go so far for a field of labour? Was there nothing to do at home? Was there no heathenism at their own door?" Yet though these were the universal sentiments of the day, and though the first ordination of a minister specifically for missionary work did not take place in the Church of Scotland until 1843, the Christian conscience of the nation was aroused and expressed itself in the formation of missionary societies.

In 1796 the London Missionary Society, which had a prominent Scots element, was formed. Rev. Dr John Love was one of the founder members, and Robert Moffat and David Livingstone were notable among its missionaries. The Glasgow Missionary Society was also formed in 1796 followed, a few weeks later, by the Edinburgh Missionary Society. When Dr Love moved from London to Anderston, Glasgow, in 1800, he became the secretary of the Glasgow Missionary Society. The Africans themselves observed this slowness in fulfilling the great commission, as the question put to Livingstone by Sechele, chief of the Bakwains, illustrates: "Since it is true that all who die unforgiven are lost forever why did your nation not come and tell us of it before now?"

At home in the early 19th Century there were men like Rev. Robert Murray McCheyne, who ever cherished a missionary spirit. He read missionary reports for his own use and often to his people at the weekly prayer meeting. When an opportunity of evangelising occurred there was none in Scotland more ready to embrace it. Letters to his friends were sealed with this seal, "The Night Cometh." (*Memoirs*, pp 83-84).

An example of the kind of concern now manifesting itself for the souls of Africans was recorded in a letter in which Livingstone reproaches himself on the occasion of the death of one of his chief helpers. "Poor Sehamy, where art thou now? Where lodges thy soul tonight? Didst thou think of what I told thee as thou turnedst from side to side in distress? I could now do anything for thee. I could weep for thy soul. But now nothing can be done. Thy fate is fixed. Oh, am I guilty of the blood of thy soul, my poor dear Sehamy? If so, how shall I look upon thee in the judgement? But I told thee of a Saviour; didst thou think of Him, and did He lead thee through the dark valley? Did He comfort as He only can? Help me, O Lord Jesus. Remember me, and let me not be guilty of the blood of souls."

Among the disappointments there were also notable successes as the light of the gospel began to penetrate the "Dark Continent." Dr. James Stewart, Free Church missionary at Lovedale (named after Rev Dr. John Love) in South Africa, records an interesting account of two African students from Lovedale. Stewart wanted to start another mission on Lake Nyasa among the fierce and warlike Ngoni. Volunteers were called for from among the Lovedale students as they were able to speak the language of the Ngoni. A friend and helper of Stewart said, "Black men will listen to black men who come with white men, and to white men who come with black." One volunteer was William Koyi, an ex-bullock driver, who made a wonderful impression upon both blacks and whites. He said that he could only go as a hewer of wood and drawer of water, and that he only had half a talent but that he wished to use it for Christ. Of him Stewart said, "He was the human agent largely used by God in opening the way for the gospel among the Ngoni - a tribe as cruel, as fond of bloodshed and raiding as any in Africa." Near the end of his life Stewart declared with deep feeling that William Koyi was one of the best men he had ever known.

Stewart, it seems, had great patience with the erring. He "often exercised his prerogative of mercy" in preventing the dismissal of some who had broken the rules, for he hated putting away. William Koyi and Shadrach Mgunana were both guilty of offences which warranted dismissal and yet ultimately they both rendered very great service at the Livingstonia mission.

God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness was to shine in many African hearts with the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, (2 Cor. 4:6). William Mackinnon was destined to play a significant role, in God's purposes of mercy, in East Africa, for great obstacles had to be overcome.

John Welsh

Rev. K.D. Macleod

Continued from page 119 of the April issue

10. Ministry in St Jean d'Angely

Banished in 1606, for the sake of the gospel, from Scotland to France by the Scottish Privy Council, at the command of the King, Welsh landed in Bordeaux. Eventually, a door was opened for him to preach the gospel regularly in France, when he was appointed the minister of Jonsac, a small town near Bordeaux, at the end of 1608. He removed to Nerac about 1614.

IN 1617 John Welsh still had important work to do for his Master. He was to spend four further years as minister of the more important town of St Jean d'Angely, just more than 30 miles south east of La Rochelle. It was probably in that year that he was called to be one of the two pastors of the large charge there. It was the last place to benefit from his devoted and gracious ministry. But, though he still suffered from poor health, his preaching there, Robert Fleming tells us, "was much blessed with success".

During their time in St Jean d'Angely the Welshes sometimes had Scottish students staying with them. One of them, a relation of Mrs Welsh, became seriously ill and, to all appearances, died. Welsh was very fond of this young man and was convinced that he was not actually dead. With difficulty he managed for 48 hours to prevent the body being put in a coffin, in spite of the fact that the weather was extremely hot. Then, to convince him, doctors were called, who tried to prove that the young man was dead by twisting his flesh with pincers. Everybody except Welsh was only more convinced than ever, but he asked for a further delay and prayed earnestly. And after some time the young man did indeed regain consciousness. One recognises the danger of such a story gaining further dramatic details in the telling, but the incident illustrates again Welsh's fervency in prayer. He also had on this occasion a gracious confidence that his cries would be heard in heaven, a confidence granted to very few of God's children in this degree.

May 1621 saw St Jean d'Angely under siege by the French army, King Louis XIII himself arriving at the end of the month to take command. St Jean d'Angely was one of the towns of France which some time earlier had been assigned to the Huguenots, but in 1620 the French Government had made unconstitutional demands on these Protestants, demands to which an Assembly held in La Rochelle refused to submit. St Jean d'Angely was among the towns which supported this decision - hence the siege, for the attitude of the town was completely unacceptable to the Government. The

town should have had no reasonable hope of holding out indefinitely, but they did at least get better terms when they surrendered than they would otherwise have obtained. During the siege Welsh himself narrowly escaped death when a musket ball passed through the bed he was lying on. And, while the townspeople held out, Welsh gave them all the encouragement he could, even on one occasion using his hat to supply a gunner with gunpowder.

After the surrender some of his friends tried to persuade Welsh that he should not appear in public on the Sabbath; to hold public Protestant worship so near the King and his court would give offence, it might even put his life in danger. Welsh was not in the habit of deferring so easily to earthly kings and went on with the service. In due course the Duke of Espernon appeared along with some soldiers, all sent by the King. Recognising from his clothes that the Duke was a man of some rank, he asked the people to make way for them and give them seats so that they might listen to the Word of God. Whether they were overwhelmed by Welsh's authority or whether they felt it unwise to risk a disturbance by arresting Welsh there and then, they all sat down and listened, before leading him away at the end of the service to answer to the King.

The King angrily demanded why Welsh dared to preach heresy when he himself was so near at hand. "Sir," replied Welsh, not in the slightest overawed, "if you did right, you yourself would come and hear me preach, and you would make all France hear me likewise, for I preach not as those men whom you are accustomed to hearing. My preaching differs from theirs in these two points: first, I preach that you must be saved by the death and merits of Jesus Christ and not your own, and I am sure your conscience tells you that your good works will never merit heaven for you; next, I preach that as you are King of France you are under the authority and command of no man on earth. Those men whom you usually hear subject you to the Pope of Rome, which I will never do."

No doubt Welsh's last point was highly attractive to the monarch's ears, and he told Welsh, "Well, well, you will be my minister". The more is the pity that he was not more serious in making the statement. And although, contrary to the terms of surrender, Louis commanded St Jean d'Angely to be razed to the ground, he yet instructed his captain to look after "his minister" and to provide wagons to carry his stuff to La Rochelle if he wanted. This reminded Samuel Rutherford of the time when the King of Babylon gave orders about Jeremiah, "Take him and look well unto him, and do him no harm".

To La Rochelle Welsh did indeed go, but in these disturbed days he could not think of staying there for long. He toyed with the idea of going to the newly-founded colony of Nova Scotia, but that was quite impractical because no vessel would be sailing there from France in the foreseeable future. Then, like many another Scottish refugee, he decided to make for Holland. Welsh landed in Holland on the island of Walcheren, for he wished once more to see his former companion in travail, John Forbes, who had settled in the town of Middelburg. Unwell as Welsh was, it must have been an enjoyable time which he spent with his old friend.

To be continued

Book Reviews and Notices

Old Testament Evangelistic Sermons - *D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones*

Banner of Truth Trust hardback, 304 pages, £12.95. Available from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LE

THIS volume of sermons by the well-known preacher of Westminster Chapel, London, includes an interesting and informative introduction by his biographer Iain H. Murray.

Those who do not believe in the organic unity of the Bible would likely question the validity and propriety of the title, *Old Testament Evangelistic Sermons*. For us, however, the title is meaningful, and the sermons savour of the Gospel of Christ, and show that Christ is the Alpha and Omega of the whole Word of God.

The texts chosen are well calculated to arouse a degree of interest, and in the main the addresses are solemn, edifying, direct and appealing. They help to prove the relevance of Scripture for all ages. In point of fact, we would say that Scripture, instead of becoming obsolete with the passage of time, is thereby becoming increasingly relevant.

A pleasing feature of the volume is the Doctor's reverence for the Word of God. There is also a refreshing directness pervading all the sermons. For all that, we feel that these addresses are inferior to his other volumes. His more than frequent reference to psychology seems to us to account for his coming short of the spirituality of preachers of a former generation.

That apart, we cannot subscribe to the main thrust of the author's view on Jacob at Peniel. If there was nothing saving wrought in Jacob at Bethel, why the vision of Christ's mediation, the promise of God, and Jacob's mingled feelings of awe and joy?

These defects detract from the value of this book, and forbid us to give the unstinting praise lavished on the author by so many others. Nevertheless, we would warmly recommend this volume to our people. *F.M.*

Standing for God - The Story of Elijah by *Roger Ellsworth*.

Banner of Truth Trust paperback, 152 pages, £3.95. Available from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LE.

THIS attractive little book on Elijah does not touch the depths of Krummacher, nor scale the heights of Pink or Duff. For all that, it has some fresh and stimulating insights on a well-trodden path of the lively oracles of God.

Perhaps the most significant feature of the book is that the author has highlighted the despondent mood engendered by an evil age as ours is, with the consequent readiness to abandon all, or attempt to short-circuit the work assigned to us. For such a temptation there is more than a caveat given; there is comfort, assurance, and direction.

We feel that the production is impoverished by the absence of the reverent and majestic language of the Authorised Version. Even so, we would say, buy it, and read it for yourself. *F.M.*

The Embattled Christian by *Bryan G. Zacharias*.

Banner of Truth Trust paperbacks, 164 pages, £4.95. Available from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LE

THIS book is prefaced by an introduction of which the most interesting part is a biographical sketch of William Gurnall, the author of the Puritan classic, *The Christian in Complete Armour*. It is with this, Gurnall's *magnum opus*, that the author particularly deals.

At the close of the book, not less than 33 pages consist of notes and a bibliography. Consequently, the book contains but a skeleton of Gurnall's original classic. Add to that, the additional comments on the Puritan's view of Christian warfare, and you have little else to read. The arrangement of the subject matter did not appeal to me.

The motive behind the author's abridged product, is, no doubt well intentioned, but I fear he has failed to achieve his objective. His snippets from Gurnall are tasty and could possibly whet the reader's appetite for the full treat, but that is a rare art not given to many. That apart however, Gurnall's work is so precious, and so full of marrow, that it is difficult to compress or to know which page to omit. *F.M.*

Mission News

Zimbabwe

AT Mbumba Mission Hospital the staff has had the much appreciated voluntary help of a nurse from England, Miss Nicola Jempson. She came at the beginning of the very busy season and has been a tremendous help for the past two months. Miss Jempson was due to return to England at the end of March.

In a letter from Mbumba Hospital there are comments on the wonderful rains and of good growth in the fields. Children are seen running to school with long sticks of sugarcane to munch during the day. Watermelon and squash are eaten from the fields as are sugar beans and peanuts. Corn on the cob is the most prized food. Anne Zekveld says, "The Lord has not dealt with us as we have deserved. It is so nice to see everyone with something to eat. The animals also look well fed."

With the abundance of rain comes the malaria. More than 600 people have been treated for malaria during the last two months, and the wards have been overflowing. Some have been treated as outpatients but others are too ill to be sent away. "We have patients in bed, patients under the beds and patients on the verandah." The staff is thankful that there have been few unconscious malaria patients.

There have been a few sets of twins born in the hospital. Some have had to be readmitted as the mothers were not able to feed them as they themselves were in poor physical condition. "Last night we had another tiny baby, only 780 grams. So far she is doing well. It amazes us how well they do. At home they would be hooked up to all kinds of machinery, intravenous fluids and in incubators."

The hospital Evangelist is on duty in the wards and hopes to begin small Bible Classes in the expectant mothers' ward and in the children's ward. It is good to have someone to read to the seriously ill patients who cannot go to the hospital worship on the verandah each morning and evening. "There is much spiritual work to do. Would the Lord's people please pray for a blessing, especially on the little ones, from the Good Shepherd Himself? 'Suffer the little children to come unto Me'."

Kenya

At their meeting on 19th March, the Foreign Missions Committee appointed Dr. de Jong from Holland to be the Medical Superintendent of Omorembe Health Centre at Sengeru. His present appointment in Holland terminates in June and it was agreed that he and Mrs. de Jong and family proceed to Kenya in September, God willing. Dr. de Jong, who had made known his interest in

our Mission in Kenya some time ago, first felt drawn to the work when reading reports about it.

He and his wife recognise the difficulties in taking a young family to Kenya, but we trust that they will be under the Lord's care. It is necessary that their children be taught by the "distance learning" method, but as Dr. and Mrs de Jong cannot be expected to tutor them in English it is hoped that there will be a favourable response to the advertisement for a teacher.

Miss Peta van de Ridder, who was a most useful member of the hospital staff in Mbumba for a number of years but who had to remain at home in Holland during her late mother's illness, has been accepted by the Committee to go to Kenya as a nursing sister. She hopes to leave in May, God willing.

A Dutch nurse, Miss Henriette Burggraaf, who has been doing voluntary nursing at Sengeru, was taken onto the permanent staff in January. J.N.

Keep Me From Turning Back

MY hand is on the plough;
But all in front of me is untilled land,
The wilderness and the solitary place,
The lonely desert with its interspace.
What harvest have I but this paltry grain,
These dwindling husks, a handful of dry corn
My courage is outworn, keep me from turning back.
The handles of my plough with tears are wet,
The shears with rust are spoiled, and yet, and yet,
My God, keep me from turning back.

(These lines were found among the possessions of a lone missionary who died in the forests of Thailand. They are extracted from *James Fraser - A Record of Missionary Endeavour in Rhodesia in the Twentieth Century*, by the Rev. Alexander McPherson.)

Protestant View

Priests praised and helped murderers

THE hand of Rome in the troubles of Ulster is well known but not so easily seen. However, its sympathy with the IRA can not be hid altogether. The fact of that sympathy and support for IRA bloodshed and brutality is confirmed by an article in *The Spectator* of 20th April. The author is a certain Sean O'Callaghan who was an active IRA member and who is serving a life sentence for murder.

Although born and brought up in an Irish Catholic family, and educated by nuns and monks, O'Callaghan eventually saw what he calls Rome's "rather unique form of criminality." It is unique, he says, "because it consistently conspired with the worst elements of extreme nationalism to produce a dogma based on the racial purity of a mythological 'Irish race'."

He says that in 1969, in Northern Ireland, "the nationalist cause was sermoned and preached from pulpit and Dail, and, fool that I was, I fell for the big lie... I, to my lasting shame, became a political gangster."

In Omagh, he and others murdered a RUC Special Branch detective-inspector who was an Irish Catholic. After the murder they were driven by colleagues to the house of two priests. "We were greeted joyously, showered with holy water and prayers and fed like kings. 'An abominable man who abandoned his faith and sold his soul to the devil.' That was how the senior of the two priests described the murdered man to us - two young murderers - as we sat at their table." Next day the two priests scouted the road ahead to ensure that there were no army roadblocks ahead.

He soon became aware of the fact that these two priests were not exceptions and that there were many others like them who gave assistance to IRA murderers, and that the contacts between the Roman Catholic Church and the IRA were very extensive.

In looking back on Rome's powerful influence in Ireland, he rightly says, "The Catholic Church's crimes against decency and humanity on this island threatened to submerge us in a sea of superstition, ignorance and hatred of all that was not totally obedient to its will."

We ought to be praying that the day will soon come, as we believe it will, when the eyes of Roman Catholics in that troubled land of Ulster will be opened to see the true nature of "the beast" of Scripture - the Papacy and its cruel power. There can be no lasting peace in Northern Ireland as long as those who are duped and deluded by Rome are being subtly manipulated by her in her pursuit of total dominion and the ousting of Protestantism.

Rome's inter-religion policy and activities

IN his efforts to present the acceptable face of Rome to the world, the peripatetic Pope of Rome has recently completed his 70th official foreign visit - a one-day visit to Tunisia. According to EWTN News Service, he called on the small Roman Catholic minority there to develop relations with Islam, based on "dialogue and collaboration with believers of other faiths". He spoke of Islam as "a religion of toleration and moderation".

A mark of the true Church, when it goes out to face false religions, is that it

presents to them the truth of Christ and His claims upon men, even although these run counter to the teachings and practices of these religions. Rome on the other hand, down through her history and in pursuit of her overall aim of increasing her power, does not condemn the falseness of these religions but cleverly adapts herself to them.

This inter-religious policy of Rome was in operation last month when the Pope invited Rabbi Elio Toaff and other leaders of the Jewish community in the city of Rome to visit the Vatican to mark the anniversary of the Pope's visit to their synagogue in 1986.

For Rome to fraternise with Christ-rejecting religions is not difficult, considering that she herself rejects Christ as the only way of salvation. Conversely, true religion, in presenting and insisting upon the sole Saviourship and Headship of Christ, will feel the weight of Rome's wrath, when she has the opportunity to show it - as was evidenced when the Pope, in his going to and fro in the earth, condemned what he called the "sect" of Protestantism in Latin America.

Let us never cease to present the uniqueness of Christ as the only way to peace with God. Let us ever proclaim the watchwords of the Reformation; "Solo Christo" - Christ as the only Saviour; "Sola Scriptura" - the Scriptures as the only rule of faith and practice; "Sola Fide" - only faith in Christ as the means of being justified; "Sola Gratia" - grace alone as the basis of salvation, and "Soli Deo Gloria" - to God alone be given all the glory.

Notes and Comments

Divorce reforms setback in Parliament

ABOUT a third of the Conservative Party in Westminster opposed the Family Law Bill on 24th April by voting for the amendment to retain the concept of "fault". The Lord Chancellor argues that the Bill, which removes the element of "fault" from divorce law, will put an end to so-called "quickie divorces". Apart from the removing of "fault" being completely contrary to Scripture teaching, this proposed legislation, like all other previous reforms to divorce law, will increase the divorce rate.

CARE organisation is right when it says that "the effect of the Lord Chancellor's proposals is to treat marriage as little more than living together on a short term contract, the sort of agreement we may move in and out of at will. A partner will be able to simply announce that he/she no longer wishes to be married, without being required to give any reason why."

It is high time that the Government implemented substantial measures to

reinforce the institution of marriage, rather than undermine it. As former trade minister Edward Leigh said, in opposing the Bill, "What is needed is not a Bill for easier or slicker divorce, but a campaign for marriage."

Growing pressure for euthanasia legislation

THE pro-euthanasia lobby has received a boost in recent days from the statement by Scotland's Lord Advocate, that no criminal charges would be brought against hospital staff if they stop treatment of a patient who has no apparent chance of recovery, provided it is done in good faith and had authority under civil law. Another boost has been the support voiced for Derek Rowbottom who last month gave a lethal dose of morphine to his mother who was dying from cancer. Again, they take encouragement from the historic decision of Lord Cameron, in the Court of Session, Edinburgh, on 24th April, that Law Hospital, Carlisle, be allowed to withdraw treatment from Mrs Janet Johnstone who has been in a coma for more than four years. Finally, they are boosted by the decision of the Government of Northern Territory state in Australia to permit euthanasia.

The pressure to legalise euthanasia in this country is growing steadily. While the movement for euthanasia presents many arguments of an apparently humanitarian nature we believe that there is not so much a desire to alleviate suffering as a reluctance to use scarce medical resources for the seriously ill who do not have any hope of recovering. This is all the more culpable when the hospice system is working well and when so much progress has been made in the field of palliative care.

Apart from all that, there is God's command that we take all lawful steps to preserve human life. How brutal our society has become when we are close to the point, if we are not already at it, when some old people will be afraid to go to hospital lest they should be killed rather than cured.

BSE and "mad cow" disease

BSE in cattle and its link with Creutzfeldt-Jacob disease (CJD) or "mad cow" disease in humans, has dealt a devastating blow to our country's beef trade. Already, our Agriculture Minister has promised the beef industry £200 million in compensation for recent market disturbances. Should there be the slaughtering of cattle herds to control BSE, the cost will be astronomical.

We see the hand of God in these severe economic setbacks. It is God who enables a nation to get wealth (Deu 8:18). It is God who sees fit in His perfect wisdom to withdraw that wealth, and He does so because of the sins of the nation. We are wilfully blind if we shut our eyes to the fact that God not only

constantly governs all his creatures but also intervenes in the affairs of nations in a sometimes striking and solemn manner.

During the epidemic of foot-and-mouth disease in this country some years ago, the tract by Bishop J.C. Ryle of Liverpool about the 1865 outbreak of foot-and-mouth was timeously republished. In it he asks, "Whence does the cattle plague come? I answer, unhesitatingly, that it comes from God.... The finger of God is in it... Why has the cattle plague come? It has come upon us for our national sins... What does the cattle plague summon everyone to do?... Let us all humble ourselves before God... Let us each resolve to offer special prayer to God for the removal of this judgement upon us." His words are most applicable to us today.

Church Information

Meeting of Synod

The Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland will meet, the Lord willing, within the Free Presbyterian Church, Glasgow, on Tuesday, the 21st day of May, 1996, at 6.30 p.m., when the Retiring Moderator, the Rev. Alexander McPherson, Perth, will conduct public worship.

Meetings of Presbytery (D.V.)

NORTHERN: At Dingwall on Tuesday, 18th June at 2.00 pm.

SOUTHERN: At Glasgow on Tuesday, 25th June at 6.00 pm.

WESTERN: At Laide on Tuesday, 11th June at 6.00 pm.

SKYE: At Portree on Tuesday, 18th June at 11.00 am.

OUTER ISLES: At Stornoway on Tuesday, 18th June at 1.00 pm.

Induction of the Rev. Donald John MacDonald, M.A., to the Dornoch Congregation

ON Friday, 29th March, 1996, the Northern Presbytery met in the Dornoch Free Presbyterian Church for the induction of the Rev. Donald John MacDonald to the pastoral charge of the Tain, Fearn, Lairg, Creich, Dornoch, Rogart and Helmsdale Congregation.

More than 200 people from the Outer Isles, Skye, the west, the north and the south, as well as some local visitors, filled the church to capacity. Ministers present from other Presbyteries of the Church were associated with the Presbytery, namely, the Revs Donald MacLean, James R. Tallach, George G. Hutton and Kenneth D. Macleod. The Moderator of Presbytery, the Rev. John

L. Goldby, conducted public worship, preaching from Exodus, chapter 6, verse 13, about the Lord's charge to Moses and Aaron.

Public worship being ended, the Clerk read the Narrative of the proceedings in the Call to Mr MacDonald. The Moderator addressed to Mr MacDonald the questions appointed to be put to ministers on their induction to a pastoral charge, and he, having returned satisfactory answers to the same, signed the Formula in the presence of the congregation. The Moderator engaged in solemn prayer and did, in the name of the Presbytery, and by the authority of the Divine Head of the Church, induct Mr MacDonald as Minister of the pastoral charge of the Tain, Fearn, Lairg, Creich, Dornoch, Rogart and Helmsdale Congregation. The Moderator and members of the Presbytery then gave Mr MacDonald the right hand of fellowship.

Thereafter Mr MacDonald was suitably addressed by the Rev Neil M. Ross, and the Congregation was addressed by the former interim Moderator, the Rev. Donald M. Boyd. The Clerk gave messages of prayerful goodwill from the Kirk-Session of the Uig Congregation, from the Rev. Alexander McPherson, Perth, a former minister of Dornoch Congregation, and from the Rev. Keith M. Watkins and the London Congregation. The Moderator invited other ministers to speak on the behalf of their respective Presbyteries; the Rev. Donald MacLean for the Southern Presbytery, the Rev. James R. Tallach for the Skye Presbytery, and the Rev. Kenneth D. Macleod for the Outer Isles Presbytery. After the benediction, the people were made welcome to partake of the plentiful provisions which had been laid on by the ladies of the congregation in the Dornoch Academy canteen.

Mr MacDonald is a native of Lewis and was educated in the Nicolson Institute in Stornoway. Before entering the ministry, he gained his M.A. degree with Honours in History at Aberdeen University and subsequently taught history at the Nicolson Institute. Thereafter he was appointed principal teacher of history at Back Junior High School, Lewis, and at a later period at Portree High School. After studying for the ministry, he was ordained and inducted to the Bracadale Congregation in 1970. He moved to the Perth Congregation in 1979, and to the Uig Congregation, Lewis, in 1989. In 1991 he was appointed Moderator of the Synod. Mr MacDonald is married with three adult children. He is the Convener of the Training of the Ministry Committee and of the Bookroom Committee.

This extensive charge has been without a minister since the A.P.C. secession in 1989. At that time it was two congregations, but the extent of the secession necessitated the union in 1991 of the Tain and Fearn Congregation with the Lairg, Creich, Dornoch, Rogart and Helmsdale Congregation. Not

only did the A.P.C. misappropriate Northern Presbytery Records, but it left these now depleted congregations with the burden of outstanding loans to the Forsyth Bequest Fund. Notwithstanding this, the manse in Evelix has been refurbished with Forsyth funding and the congregation is in a satisfactory state. It is a closely knit congregation which has remained faithful and which attends regularly the public worship. Since 1989 the congregation has grown to more than 30 people, and nine adults have moved into it during the last five years. There is a wide spread of age-groups in the congregation, and some young children growing up now have a settled minister for the first time. The Dornoch Bridge has increased the strategic importance of Dornoch. There are schools, a hospital and hospices within the area. The congregation is greatly favoured in obtaining a pastor and it is the Presbytery's hope and prayer that this newly begun ministry will be greatly blessed among them and bear fruit for years to come.

Rev. D. M. Boyd, Clerk of Presbytery

Perth Communion

There will be no communion in Dundee on the first Sabbath of June, as in the past. Instead, the communion will be held in Perth, God willing. The times of the services will be as follows:

Thursday, 30th May:	7.30 pm
Friday, 31st May:	7.30 pm
Saturday, 1st June:	3.00 pm
Sabbath, 2nd June:	11.00 am and 6.30 pm
Monday, 3rd June:	7.30 pm

It is expected that Rev. D.M. Boyd, Inverness, will be the assisting minister.

Larne Communion

By decision of the Kirk Session, there will no longer be a communion in Larne in June. Instead, the communion will be held on the second Sabbath of September, D.V.

Rev. K.M. Watkins, Interim Moderator

Deputy to Chesley

Rev. G. G. Hutton is at present visiting Chesley and has been conducting the communion season services in the congregation there. He is due to return to this country at the beginning of this month, God willing. We pray that his work there may be blessed.

London Communion

By decision of the Kirk Session, the meetings and times of London communion services will be as follows, God willing:

Thursday service	7.00 pm
Friday service	7.00 pm
Saturday prayer meeting	2.30 pm
Saturday service	3.30 pm
Sabbath morning service	11.00 am
Sabbath evening service	6.30 pm
Monday service	7.00 pm

It will be seen that the arrangements for the Saturday have been changed, and tea will not be served in the church any longer. The Kirk Session would like to take this opportunity to record its grateful appreciation to the ladies of the congregation for their kindness and labours over the years in providing teas.

If the Lord will, these new arrangements will begin at the next communion, the second Sabbath of May 1996, when it is hoped that Rev. D. A. Ross, Laide, will be assisting.

Rev. K.M. Watkins, Moderator

Acknowledgements of Donations

The General Treasurer acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:

Eastern Europe Fund: A Friend, Skye, £10; Anon, Ross-shire £40; An Inverness Friend, £100; A Friend, Perth, £20; D.M., Applecross, £50; Anon Sheildaig, £20; "Psalm 60 v 4", £100.

Foreign Mission Fund: D.M., Applecross, £50; Psalm 60 v 4, £50; "Psalm 60 v 4", £100; Anon, Sheildaig, £30; Anon, £257.50.

Sustentation Fund: Estate of the late Mary I. Macleod, Broadford, £400.

Congregational Treasurers acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:

Beauly: *Sustentation Fund:* Mrs. M. Thomson, in memory of Grace MacDermid, £60.

Dingwall: *Welfare of Youth Fund:* Anon in appreciation of Youth Conference, £10, per Rev N.M.R.; Anon for Youth Conference expenses, £20, per Mrs G.M.R.

North Uist: *Sustentation Fund:* Friends, Inverness, £20; H. Scott, £40; *Congregational Fund:* M. Macleod, £150; *Car Fund:* M. Macleod, £50.

Portree: *Congregational Purposes:* Tunbridge Wells Friend, £20; D.N.McF., £50; *Sustentation Fund:* Friend, £10; *Communion Expenses:* Friend, £20.

Raasay: *Manse Extension:* Anon, Inverarish, £60; *Car Fund:* B. Nicolson, £20; *Where Most Needed:* M. Duncan, £50; *Car Fund:* D. Mackenzie, £10.