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The Devaluing of Human Life

OUR society has sunk low indeed when there are so many in it who, while fighting tooth and nail for “animal rights” and “conservation of the planet”, enthusiastically promote abortion, euthanasia and the self-destruct practice of sodomy. While we condemn cruelty to animals, and the despoiling of the earth’s resources which the Creator requires us to use wisely, we are appalled and alarmed by the increasing devaluing of human life.

The last recorded figures for abortions in Britain show that one in five pregnancies were deliberately terminated. This represents the slaughter of 160,000 children in the womb - a shocking statistic. We cannot doubt that a living person exists in the womb of the mother-to-be when we read that “when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb;” and that Elizabeth said to Mary, “Lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy,” Luke 1:41, 44.

Campaigners for the legislating of euthanasia are beginning to scent victory, following Lord Cameron’s decision to allow doctors at Law Hospital, Lanarkshire, to withdraw artificial feeding from coma patient, Mrs Janet Johnston, and to let her die a “dignified” death. Doctors and relatives who wish to withdraw treatment from a patient in Persistent Vegetative State (PVS) will not now necessarily have to apply for the approval of a court.

As we write, Mrs Johnston is dying a slow death, not because of her coma but because she is no longer being given food and drink. She is dying of starvation and dehydration - and this is termed “dignified” dying. How contrary to God’s law, let alone cruel and barbaric! We cannot but agree with the correspondent to a daily paper who said, “The judicial decision sanctioning what can only be described as medical killing shames Scotland and dehumanises its people.” We are well aware that doctors are faced with exceedingly difficult ethical decisions with regard to the care of certain medical cases, and that it is not easy for the layman to appreciate these

circumstances, but we believe that Ann Winterton MP was right when she said, "We are now seeing a determined attempt by doctors to bring more cases to the courts with a view to opening the door still wider to euthanasia."

God requires that everyone, not excluding members of the medical and legal professions, makes "all lawful endeavours to preserve our own life and the life of others." On the other hand, the sanctioning of the unlawful taking away of life, whether of unborn infants, PVS patients, or terminally ill geriatric patients, brings not only shame but also guilt upon the nation.

How long is God to bear with us? Must we not sorrow over our national sin of taking away life contrary to God's command, "Thou shalt not kill"? There was national mourning, and rightly so, for the little ones slain at Dunblane. Where is the mourning for the slaughter of the 160,000 unborn children? And where is the sorrow for the sin of unlawfully killing them?

If we, as a professedly Christian nation, are to be obedient to God's word with regard to preserving human life, we must repeal the abortion law, and promote pro-life teachings and laws. We should also build on the good base which has been laid in the field of palliative care. Human life is precious.

It is true that we, as sinners, are unworthy and do not deserve any blessing whatsoever. Indeed, because of our sins we deserve to be cast away as of no value. But Scripture also teaches the worth of man as the creation of God. So valuable is the soul that the whole world is insufficient in value to exchange for it. And the body, as the house of the soul, is of incalculable worth. Human life is more valuable than we can estimate.

The value and sanctity of human life is clear from the fact that man was made in the image of God. "God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him," Gen.1:27. Also, man was given dominion over the rest of creation and therefore he is above and apart from every other creature. We must therefore conclude that human life is precious and that to treat it as of little worth is to belittle the divine Creator.

It is to God that we owe our existence. In Him we live, and move, and have our being. Life is a gift given by God when He determines to give it, and taken away when He purposes. For man to claim that he has a "right" to die is to claim what is not his and to rebel against God. Much less does man have the right to unlawfully take away the life of a fellow human being. Let us strongly resist the increasing trend to regard life as cheap.

Let us also remember that God has given us life so that we may glorify Him and enjoy Him forever. One of the martyrs said, "Life is sweet, and death is bitter. Eternal life is more sweet, and eternal death is more bitter." May our own lives upon earth issue in everlasting life in glory.

Sermon - The New Birth

Rev. D B Macleod

Preached at Inverness Communion, on Friday 24 June 1994

Text: *"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,"* John 3:3.

WE see that Nicodemus, a Pharisee and a ruler of the Jews, came to Jesus by night and acknowledged that He was a teacher come from God, and could not do the miracles which He did except God were with Him.

The Saviour immediately answers Nicodemus and sets his greatest need before him - his need of the new birth. Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." And the Saviour is saying to us from His exalted glory, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." And surely we ought to lay this matter to heart when He is testifying to the truth of it by these words, "Verily, verily", or, "Truly, truly."

It is very evident from what follows in this chapter that the Saviour began to instruct Nicodemus in the things concerning the Kingdom of God. What a blessed instructor Nicodemus had, for He was one who knew all things.

Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews, a Pharisee and a "teacher in Israel"; yet it is evident from what the Saviour said to him that he had not yet learned the ABC of true religion. We ourselves will never learn even the ABC of true religion until we come face to face with this: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." The Queen of Sheba came from a far country to hear the wisdom of Solomon; how much more should we go to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is greater than Solomon, to be taught by Him. Who can teach like Him, when He teaches poor sinners?

We now desire to notice in connection with the text: **first**, *the absolute necessity of the new birth*; **secondly**, *the nature of the new birth*, and **thirdly**, *the evidence of the new birth*.

First: the necessity of the new birth. Before coming to address this matter directly, we ask three questions which are not easy to answer. First, how far in sin can a person go and yet be saved? Surely that is a solemn question indeed! It is clear from the Word of God that there were those who went to great lengths in sin and yet were saved. One of those was King Manasseh who made the streets of Jerusalem run with the blood of the saints; who introduced all manner of evil and idolatry to Jerusalem and Judea; who opposed the worship of God, and slew the prophets. Great was his enmity to the true worshippers of God. Yet we are told that when he was taken away as a

prisoner from his own land, he was brought to repentance and returned a different person. He had gone very far in sin; yet the Lord had mercy upon him and made him "a new creature" and an heir of everlasting life. But while that was true of Manasseh, others went far in sin and were never saved. Therefore the case of Manasseh ought to be no encouragement to anyone to go on in sin.

His case is indeed an instance which may give encouragement to a soul ready to perish, and who finds himself sin-laden and guilty. It gives encouragement to hope that the Lord might yet look their way, though they have a load of sin and guilt that is ready to sink them to a lost eternity. But we know that though Manasseh himself was saved, the sins of which he was guilty sealed the fate of the people of Judah, (2 Kings 21:11,12). They were to go into captivity for seventy years, and all on account of the wickedness of Manasseh.

Another person who went far in sin is the thief on the cross. He spent his life in godlessness, and he was now reaping the wages of his sins in being put to death by crucifixion. He was crucified beside the Saviour as He suffered on the Cross of Calvary, and we know what took place there. The thief became a subject of saving grace, and began to rebuke the other thief who was crucified. Also, he came to the defence of Jesus. He could say of himself and the other thief that they were receiving the due reward of their sins, but of Jesus he had to say, "This man hath done nothing amiss." His request to the Saviour was, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom," and he received the answer, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise."

As with the case of Manasseh, so with the case of the thief on the cross: there is no encouragement given to sinners to go on in their sins and carelessness, until they are on the very brink of the eternal world. For though you should say to yourself, "Here is a thief who at the very end of his life got mercy," you must remember that the other thief neither cried for mercy nor received mercy. And while the instance of the thief who obtained mercy may be of encouragement to a poor soul on the brink of a lost eternity, it gives no encouragement to any sinner to go on in sin.

How far in sin may a person go and yet be saved? Let us not put it to the test. The sins of which we are already guilty are sufficient to sink us forever to the lowest hell. Therefore we are not to take strength from these or any other instances to go in the way of sin and evil. We must lay to heart our own great need of a saving change; of being born again.

There is another question, How far may a believer go on in backsliding? What a solemn question this is! And what a searching question it is for a soul in a state of backsliding! What solemn instances there are of those who went

very far in backsliding from God. It is often true of those in a state of backsliding that they now have no assurance of their hope. They fear that their backsliding is a state from which there is no return. They cannot take themselves out of it; the Lord must rescue them from that state. David himself, who had been raised so high, went down far in his backsliding; yet the Lord looked upon him in mercy. It was said to him, "The Lord hath put away thy sin." But because of his sin, trouble was to be in his house.

What of Solomon himself? His heart was carried away by the heathen wives whom he married. Were it not for the record of the word of God one would be ready to wonder what was the end of Solomon.

How far may a believer go in backsliding? Let none think of putting it to the test. Let us flee from backsliding. Let us heed the call of God to return. This is His message to the backslider always, "Return O backslider."

Now, to return to Nicodemus, he professed religion and yet needed to be born again. Therefore, we may ask, How far can a person go in the profession and practice of religion but yet be lost at last? We have some very solemn instances of those who for many a day made a profession of religion, and engaged in the practices of religion, but yet were cast off at last. King Saul at times almost appeared to be one of the true people of God. He prophesied among the prophets. And after he had been pursuing David, and David showed mercy to him, he seemed to speak to David with great contrition, and to mourn over his folly. Yet he went on in his sins, and perished in his sins.

We have the most outstanding case of all in Judas Iscariot. We have no indication in Scripture that any of the other disciples were pointing at Judas Iscariot and saying, "He is not a true disciple." He engaged in the duties of religion, and held a place in the visible church as a disciple of Jesus Christ among His close band of followers. Yet the time came when Judas Iscariot betrayed his Master to His enemies for thirty pieces of silver, and then went and destroyed himself when he saw what he had done.

Another solemn example of how far some may go in the profession and practice of religion and yet be lost is seen in the cases of those who shall say to the Saviour, "Have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name done many wonderful works?" What shall the Saviour say to such? "I never knew you, depart from me all ye that work iniquity."

Surely these examples ought to make all the more real to us what is brought before us by our text - the absolute necessity of the new birth. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Of course, none of those who perished after a profession of religion were ever born again, for when the Lord does this work, it is a work

that is done forever, and that soul, now in Christ, is secure forever.

So a person may go far in the profession of religion and yet perish. John Bunyan saw that there is a way to hell even from the very gates of heaven. How searching these things are, on this day set apart for self-examination. They show us the absolute necessity of the new birth. Nothing else will do. If we come short of this we come short forever. If this great change be not wrought in us, then we shall be lost forever. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." What need we have of examining ourselves to see if the Lord has wrought this work in us. The great question for each one should be, "Am I born again?" Without this all is vain. The question is not, "How high a profession in religion do I make?" We may make a very high profession in religion; we may be accepted by the people of God as one who has experienced the new birth; but the question must be, "Am I born again?" The question is not, "How diligent have I been in religious duties," or, "What knowledge do I have of the doctrines of God's Word," but, "Am I born again?" The Saviour had to say to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." The soul is wholly unable to understand the spiritual and eternal things of the kingdom of God apart from being born again; born from above.

Let us go on, *secondly, to the nature of the new birth*. Very clearly it is a great and radical change; a change of passing from death to life, and from darkness to light. What a great difference there is between these opposite things! So the change that is wrought in the soul in the new birth is very great. It is the work of God, not the work of man. It is a mighty work.

It is also an inward change by the divine implanting in the soul of a new nature. By nature we are fallen, depraved and sinful; nothing will suffice but the receiving of a new heart. "A new heart also will I give you," the Lord is saying in His word, "and a new spirit will I put within you." We need to be changed at heart. A superficial, outward change will avail nothing. We need this inward, spiritual, gracious change within, in which the soul is quickened into newness of life and delivered from the bondage of sin and death. It is a change in which light penetrates into the soul, which is darkness itself, and which transforms the soul. It is a change whereby the will is renewed and the affections set on things above.

What power in heaven or on earth can effect this change in your soul or mine? How may we be changed so radically that we become what we were not? Well the Scriptures make it plain that the agency by which this change comes about is God the Holy Ghost. He is a divine person, one who is very God of very God. He alone can effect this mighty change, the new birth, in our

souls. It is not a mere influence which effects this change; it is this glorious, divine person, the Holy Ghost, by His almighty power.

The greatness of this change may be reckoned in this way: we know the great wonder that was performed in creation when God brought all things into being by the word of His power. We look with wonder upon creation, and say, "Surely it is the handiwork of God!" Well, it is clear that the new birth is a greater and more glorious work than the creation of the whole universe. To create a soul anew in Christ Jesus, to deliver it from the darkness in which it is held and bring it into light, requires the almighty power of God.

It is also a secret work; a hidden work in the soul of a poor sinner. We see this from what the Saviour declares, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

So the soul is now brought to see the kingdom of God. What a blessed day for a poor sinner when that work is wrought in him or her. What a blessed day when the Lord comes to the soul dead in trespasses and in sins, quickens that soul by His almighty power, and brings it alive from the dead. It is a spiritual resurrection from the grave of spiritual death. It is a creative act of the God of heaven in the soul of a poor sinner.

We said that this is the great question, "Am I born again?" What a great question it is when you consider the nature of the new birth. You must ask, "Has this necessary, radical, secret change been wrought in me by the power of God the Holy Ghost. Without it I have nothing; all my religion is vain. My hope is gone if I am not a subject of the new birth. Let me have as much religion as I wish, it all goes for nothing if this is not done."

What a high thing it is to profess that the Lord has wrought this change in the soul. On the other hand, what a solemn thing it is not to profess that this change has been wrought in one when it has been wrought. What dishonour to Him that wrought this great work! There are two sides to it. One side is the solemnity of professing true conversion. The other side is the solemnity of denying it when the Lord hath wrought this work in us.

This great work is bound up with the effectual calling of sinners from darkness to light. We know that a preparatory work, that is, conviction of sin, runs before. We know also that there are convictions that never end in conversion. When a sinner is being convinced of his or her sins, it is not possible to distinguish between that conviction by the Spirit of God which is the preparatory work in the soul, and the common convictions and strivings of the Spirit. The only way they can be recognised as the effectual striving of the Spirit is when they issue in salvation. Therefore, how tender we ought to be

with regard to the strivings of the Spirit of God with us. How solemn when the Lord is speaking to us, convincing us of sin, and bringing us to see that we are sinners who are lost, ruined and undone. Yet, we cannot deliver ourselves from the curse of the broken law.

What a wonderful day it is for the sinner, when he or she is brought from the bondage of sin and unbelief into the light and liberty of the gospel, through the effectual working of God's Spirit in them, and through the gospel being made a living word to them. They are enabled, through the quickening power of the Spirit of God, to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered in the gospel. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power." The soul is made willing to embrace what he was unwilling to embrace before, that is, Christ in the gospel. The soul now has an eye to see the glory that it had no eye for before - the glory of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The soul now has the opening of the understanding, the renewing of the will, and the outgoings of the affections. The affections are drawn out by the cross of Christ so that the soul is brought to close in with Jesus Christ in the everlasting gospel.

We must ask ourselves therefore, "Do we know anything of this closing in with Jesus Christ in the gospel, constrained by the mighty power of God, by the effectual working of His Spirit in us? Are we new creatures in Christ Jesus?" If so, the beginning of likeness of Christ has been imprinted upon our souls. When the Lord comes to work effectually by His grace and in His sovereignty, He delivers the soul, and imprints His own image on it.

Let us go on to consider, *thirdly, the evidences of the new birth*, that is, how we are to know that we are born again.. One thing is true concerning the grace of God in the soul of man: it cannot be hid. You cannot hide it; it will manifest itself. The woman who touched the hem of Christ's garment wanted to hide, but she could not be hid because she had received the blessing. If you received the blessing you cannot hide it away. Surely it would not be to the glory of Him who wrought such a work in you, that this would be your mind. Certainly grace will manifest itself in one way or another so that others will see that a work has been wrought in that person, or that some good thing is in his heart toward the Lord God of Israel.

In bringing the soul into newness of life and living union with Jesus Christ, the Spirit of God shows the soul its need of Christ by showing its sinnership and guilt. Now if we have come to embrace Jesus Christ as our own personal Saviour, He is precious to us, "Unto you therefore which believe he is precious." Christ is a precious Saviour to His people; as the Psalmist said,

"Whom have I in the heavens high but thee, O Lord, alone?

And in the earth whom I desire besides thee there is none."

Can you put your amen to that? Great is the preciousness of the Lord Jesus Christ to the living soul, for the soul is united to Him by bonds that shall never be broken throughout time or eternity; bonds of the covenant which is ordered in all things and sure.

Those who are born again are like the blind man who had been healed. When the Pharisees were challenging him about the Saviour, he had to say, "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." Can we say with regard to our souls, "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind now I see." If you have been brought out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son, this, among many other things, will be true: the world itself will be a new place to you. (We do not mean the world lying in wickedness, but the world that God created by His almighty power). You will see it differently from how you saw it before. You will see the glory of God in it. You will think you have entered into a new world altogether. "How did I never see it like this before?" Because you were blind, and now you see.

Those who are delivered out of Satan's dark kingdom by being born again are brought into the school of Christ. Therefore you have to ask yourself if you are in the school of Christ. Is He your teacher, your leader, your guide? Is He daily instructing you in the things that belong to His kingdom and glory?

The new birth also evidences itself by the exercise of the graces of the Spirit in the soul, for in the day of regeneration the beginning of every grace is implanted in the soul. As it is true of the sinner that the seed of every sin is in his heart, so in the new heart is implanted the seed of every grace - love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. These fruits of the Spirit are evidences, when they evidence themselves in the heart and life of the believer, that he has been brought out of darkness into God's marvellous light, and that he is on the way to the celestial city.

You may say with regard to the grace of love, "Oh where is the evidence in me of love to Jesus Christ? How little love I show to Him who showed such love to me; who loved me and gave Himself for me. Where is the return of that love?" Well, if you mourn over your lack of love to Him, that is an evidence of your love to Him. This is not what you desire: that your love would be cold. You desire that your love would be stirred up; that you would be embracing Him, and that you would be embraced by Him in His love.

So it is also with regard to these other graces of the Spirit. The people of God have to mourn how little progress they have made in the life of faith. They are called to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, but they say, "I am making no progress at all." Well, there is another way to look at it, and it is this: what progress are you making

in the knowledge of yourself? You will never progress in the knowledge of Christ but in the measure that you progress in the knowledge of yourself. The more you find sin within you, the more you will realise your need of Christ to be all and in all to you; your Saviour, your Deliverer, your Lord.

In the born-again person there is also the crucifying of the flesh with the affections and lusts. The soul desires to put on the Lord Jesus Christ; to put on holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. The soul desires to die daily unto sin and to live unto righteousness. Is that process of sanctification, which is carried on in every soul in which the work of regeneration has been wrought, going on in your own soul? If so, it shall be perfected at death, for "the souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness."

There is another way by which you may test if you are born again. What of a conflict within? When the new nature is implanted, the remnants of corruption remain in the soul, and therefore there is a conflict in that soul. A war is going on, the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. Is that going on in you? Are you finding that you have to cry with the apostle, "Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death"? And can you say, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord"? What a blessed people they are in whom this conflict is, for the conflict will not end with the victory of the flesh but with the victory of the spirit over the flesh. Christ has conquered all the powers of evil and darkness, and therefore His people, through Him, shall have the victory over all enemies within and without. They shall give a shout of victory when they finish their course. They shall finish their course with joy because they have overcome, and overcome in the strength of their glorified Lord.

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, ye must be born again."

May the Lord bless His word to us. Let us pray.

Sir William Mackinnon of East Africa - 1823-93

Rev. John Goldby, M.A.

Continued from page 147 of the last issue

Part Two - Two Kinds of Trade

MAN by nature is spiritually wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked (Rev.3:17), but to have the saving knowledge of Christ is to have what is precious. This wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not be compared to it (Prov. 8:11). Here is gold tried in the fire that we may be rich (Rev.3:18).

Sir William Mackinnon possessed two kinds of wealth, the one spiritual and the other temporal, both of which place obligations upon those who have them. Though few are seen to take these obligations seriously this was not so with Sir William. He displayed uncommon liberality in regard to both.

The gospel is far too precious to keep to ourselves, or to lose by neglect. Solomon speaks of a sore evil which he had seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt (Eccl. 5:13). John urges the Christian to the duty of love on the ground of God's love to him. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (1 John 3:16,17).

In Africa, many missionaries had already given their lives whilst others continued to labour in isolated and dangerous places in order to give the precious gospel to the people. Ethiopia had begun to stretch out her hands to God. Africa was calling for help and Sir William was one among others whom God raised up to assist. He spent little of his wealth on himself but much upon others. He dedicated his life and wealth to promoting the cause of Christ and to the good of his fellow men both at home and abroad.

At home, for example, Sir William supplemented the stipends each year of Free Church ministers in extension charges. He contributed to the building of many churches and manses throughout the Highlands. He gave assistance to poor Highland students and founded the well known Keil School in Dumbarton where his statue now stands. A British Prime minister paid tribute to him by tracing the spring of his Christian principles and actions to the grace of God that was in him and the influence of a godly mother.

The slave trade an obstacle to missionary endeavour

One of the greatest obstacles to the progress of the gospel in Africa was the slave trade and its attendant evils. "Men-stealers are reckoned among those wicked ones against whom laws must be made by Christian princes," (M. Henry on 1 Tim 1:10). Sir William was strongly opposed to the slave trade, and its destruction was one of the main objectives of the latter part of his life.

In Britain, Christian campaigners like William Wilberforce MP, had fought to have slavery outlawed. An 1807 Act of Parliament forbade British subjects from taking part in the slave trade, and ships under the British flag were not allowed to carry slaves. In 1833 Parliament passed a Bill abolishing slavery throughout the British Empire.

Those chiefly responsible for the traffic in slaves from Central and East Africa were the Arabs and to a lesser extent the Portuguese. In the mid-19th

century, estimates suggested that something in the order of half a million slaves were being shipped overseas every year.

British naval squadrons were given orders to apprehend the Arab slave traders. We learn from *The Dictionary of Scottish Business Biography* that in 1872, hard on the heels of a renewed British commitment to the eradication of the East African maritime slave trade, Sir William commenced the British-India Aden-Zanzibar Line, which no doubt contributed to the effectiveness of the naval squadrons' activities.

Sir William had associations with leading members of The Church Missionary Society (CMS), whose East Africa Mission started in 1844 when Rev. Dr. Johannes Krapf, a Lutheran, visited East Africa to ascertain if there was a "door" open for the introduction of Christianity, and began translation and linguistic work in Mombasa. In 1846 he was joined by Johannes Rebmann. They were brave and dedicated men who endured much suffering and made a number of useful missionary journeys inland to Kilimanjaro and other areas. Progress, however, was slow and a visitor to their mission near Mombasa in 1864 found only six baptised converts and another six under instruction. But their vision was not limited to the coast. Krapf wrote in 1848, "The coast mission must have a broad basis towards the west, and be the first link of a mission-chain between East and West Africa!"

A fresh impetus to the CMS work came when large numbers of slaves freed by the Navy began to be put ashore on the Kenya coast where the CMS set up church schools and plantations for the slaves. The more able of the freed slaves were schooled with a view to evangelising the tribes from which they had come.

As the missionaries penetrated deeper into the interior, the horrors and cruelties of the slave trade became ever more apparent. David Livingstone spoke of finding women dead, tied to trees, or lying in the path shot and stabbed, their fault having been inability to keep up with the party. Their cruel owners, in order to prevent them becoming the property of anyone else, had put an end to their lives. "O how piercing," said one, "are the cries of the enslaved and oppressed African! How surely do they enter into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth." The well-known Scottish missionary, Alexander Mackay of Uganda, observed Arab slave caravans continually passing by. Even children were being led, necks linked together with chains. African chiefs were being given extra incentive to indulge their warlike spirit for they could sell their captured enemies as slaves in exchange for cloth and guns. Mackay describes an Arab trader who arrived with guns and cloth for buying slaves; "prices thus: one red cloth, one slave; one musket, two slaves." Writing to the *Times* as to

measures by which the slave trade might be stopped, Mackay affirmed that force alone could not do it. He suggested the control of arms sales, and the replacement of trade in human beings with legitimate commerce. To rid Africa of the Arab slaver, he said, "We only need to take the trade out of his hands."

Commerce as an aid to missionary endeavour

The idea of establishing a legitimate trade to replace the slave trade had taken a powerful hold of Livingstone as early as the 1840's. British and other merchants, he thought, could come in to establish markets. "By driving away the slave-trade, much would be done to help Christian missions, which could not thrive in an atmosphere of war and commotion." This view became universally accepted as an essential measure in the suppression of slavery, and the missionaries found themselves looking to men of commerce, like Sir William Mackinnon, who could help to promote an environment in which the gospel could advance.

Mackay of Uganda, writing to his father in June 1886, said, "There is a greater bondage than slavery to be grappled with here, and it must be grappled with." Sir John Kirk, the British Consul in Zanzibar, was the official most experienced in East African affairs. He had a genuine interest in the good of the region and in the ending of slavery. He saw William Mackinnon as the man most likely to be able to effect a change for the better. In 1878, prompted by Kirk, the Sultan who controlled much of the coast offered Mackinnon the lease of a huge territory stretching 1,150 miles down the coast of East Africa. It included the region now divided into the modern states of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. Mackinnon realised that such a treaty was also dependent on obtaining the goodwill and co-operation of the tribal chiefs of the interior. He was willing to take on the risk and responsibility of such a lease, provided that the backing and support of the British Government could be obtained. However, the Foreign Secretary, Lord Salisbury, had little interest in East Africa and overruled Kirk's plan, for reasons which had little to do with Africa and more to do with Europe and pleasing the Germans and Bismark. Yet, a short time later, German colonial ambitions forced Salisbury's hand, and Sir William was called in to administer a smaller territory which now forms the states of Kenya and Uganda. A charter was granted and Mackinnon founded the Imperial British East Africa Company on 18 April, 1888.

The chief objectives of the newly formed Company were: (1) The abolition of the slave trade; (2) Perfect religious freedom; (3) The administration of justice (having careful regard to local customs and laws); (4) No trade monopoly; (5) Restrictions regarding the importation of spirits, opium, arms and ammunition; (6) All nationalities to be treated alike.

Lord Salisbury's foreign policy let the Germans into Tanganyika, but their brutality to the local Africans provoked the Abushiri rebellion which had a detrimental effect on the progress and success of the British East African Company and had a de-stabilising effect on the whole area.

The British Government wanted influence in Africa but not the associated responsibility and expense. These were to be borne by private enterprise. It was companies such as the Royal Niger Company, the British South Africa Company, the African Lakes Company and the British East Africa Company which carried the responsibility and cost of development. The Government's niggardly policy was short-sighted because no private company could be expected to develop and run whole states without proper government support.

In Africa, Mackinnon met with Livingstone and H.M. Stanley, and it was Stanley whom he employed to negotiate treaties with the chiefs through whose lands he passed. Mackinnon also held discussions with international figures as to how waterways, roads and railways might be linked in order to span the vast continent. Queen Victoria, after entertaining Sir William, Stanley and others at dinner, expressed in her diary the great interest she had in the developments taking place in Africa.

In Uganda, Mackay and his brother missionary, Rev. R.P. Ashe, observed that the directors of the British East Africa Company were "full of zeal for the extension of Christ's kingdom." The missionaries therefore welcomed the advent of the Company as a force for good which might be instrumental in assisting the spread of the gospel and in restraining the awful and bloody inter-tribal wars which prevailed. Mackay also felt that, humanly speaking, the persecuted Christians of Uganda could not hold together against the weight of heathenism and Mahometanism without the presence of a stabilising influence; such as might be provided by the British East Africa Company.

Sir William had a high regard for Mackay of Uganda. When news reached him that Mackay had died, he wrote, "I cannot tell you how deeply I felt the intelligence of Mackay's death. He seemed to me a man among a thousand." While Sir William had been building roads in East Africa for some time, Mackay had been envisaging a railway or tramway reaching to Uganda. Now, the first steps were taken to set up the Mombasa to Uganda railway under the auspices of Mackinnon's British East African Company.

In the good providence of God, the energy of the little Scotsman from Campbeltown greatly contributed to the extending of the Kingdom of Christ and the peaceful development of the modern independent states of Kenya and Uganda, whose governments are still supportive of Christian missions.

Princeton Seminary — Faith and Learning

Rev. John MacLeod

A review article on **Princeton Seminary: Volume 1 (1812-1868) - Faith and Learning** by David B Calhoun. Published by the Banner of Truth Trust. Hardback, 304 pages, and available from The Free Presbyterian Bookroom, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow G3 6LE at the discount price of £12.95.

THIS book is the carefully-researched chronicle of the history of the Princeton Theological Seminary from 1812 to 1868. History it may be, but what particularly enhances its value and makes the reading of it so absorbing is the wealth of biographical information contained within its covers.

Princeton, the author tells us, was, above all, the place of a remarkable group of people who shared a common vision – a seminary dedicated equally to “piety of the heart” and “solid learning”. Most of us will already be familiar with the names of Archibald Alexander, Samuel Miller, Charles Hodge, Joseph Addison Alexander, James Waddel Alexander, and Archibald Alexander Hodge – and these are but a few of the eminent men who made Princeton what it was.

Founded in 1812, the Seminary soon came to be regarded as the centre of American evangelicalism, and with the passage of time it also became famous world-wide as “an intellectual and theological school of great importance”. In 1846, for instance, a collection of Theological Essays from the *Biblical Repertory* (the theological journal published by the Seminary) was reprinted in Scotland and Patrick Fairbairn, Professor of divinity in the Aberdeen Free Church College, and no mean judge, had this to say of the writers: “For an exact and discriminating knowledge of the peculiar doctrines of Calvinism, of the fundamental grounds on which they rest, of the false admixtures on the one side, and the dangerous concessions on the other, with which at successive periods they have been associated, and of the relations in which they stand to a true and a false philosophy, the Essays under consideration could not easily be surpassed. And it adds materially to their value that they are not dry vindications of a theoretical and systematic orthodoxy, but the profound and earnest reasonings of men, who felt that, in contending for Calvinism, they were contending for the great interests of truth and righteousness – of men, of whom it is scarcely too much to say, that on them, the mantle, not merely of Edwards, but of Calvin himself, seems peculiarly to have fallen.” Calhoun, however, concedes that “they were not always right in everything they taught or wrote” and we must remember that the Westminster Confession was amended by the American Church, in 1788, to

bring it into line with their views on Church Establishment and the place of the civil magistrate in relation to the Church.

It is, nevertheless, not surprising that Fairbairn should pronounce such a high eulogy on the Princeton theologians and that we should find him to be so much in harmony with their theological views. It was, after all, Scotland and the ministerial ranks of its Church that provided the man who was to play the most important and significant part in the establishing of Princeton College as a centre of learning. His name was John Witherspoon. "His going to the New World", Principal John MacLeod wrote, "linked Presbytery at an early stage in the States of America, or, as they were when he went, the American colonies, with Presbyterianism in its old home in the English-speaking world. His influence on and connection with the Orthodox Westminster teaching, that came afterwards in the early days of the Princeton Seminary to be called Princeton Theology, show the importance of the part which he played in the exposition and defence of the Reformed Faith. In his days before the Seminary was set up, Theology was taught in the Princeton College. Witherspoon also introduced to the American public the Scottish Apologetic Philosophy of Common Sense. Though so much of his mature work or that of his later years was done in the land of his adoption to which he rendered such conspicuous service, yet Scotland will not give up her hold on one of the best gifts she bestowed on the New World." The link with Scotland was underscored in 1843 when the Disruption Free Church sent William Cunningham to Princeton with a view to obtaining spiritual and temporal help from the American brethren. Needless to say, that help was ungrudgingly given. Another Scotsman, Thomas Halyburton, was set before the Princeton students as the "ideal of piety". His autobiography, reprinted by the Seminary, was declared to be unsurpassed "as an exhibition of Christian experience, simple, unaffected, scriptural, and richly instructive."

Archibald Alexander was the Seminary's first professor, being appointed by the General Assembly in 1812. The Seminary's desired goal was defined as follows: In order to receive the seminary's certificate, the student must be able to demonstrate in an oral exam that he had "laid the foundation for becoming" an effective minister. He must be "a sound biblical critic," with skill in the original languages of the Bible and knowledge of Bible content, history and geography. He must be "a defender of the Christian faith," with knowledge especially of the issues relating to deism. He must support the doctrines of the Confession of Faith and Catechisms by "a ready, pertinent, and abundant quotation of Scripture texts." He must, by his study of theology and church history, become "an able and sound divine." He must have read "a

considerable number of the best practical writers on the subject of religion." He must be skilled in sermon preparation and know the duties of pastoral care in order to become "a useful preacher and a faithful pastor." He must study the Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church so that he would be "qualified to exercise discipline and to take part in the government of the Church."

The great and erudite professor was of humble origins and the sidelights cast on his early life are full of interest. Born in a log house, he was wont in his old age to tell of how it had been his lot "to draw the first breath of life at the foot of a lofty mountain, and on the bank of a roaring torrent; where the reveille was often the hideous howling of hungry wolves." On his eleventh birthday we are told that he received his first rifle! Notwithstanding isolation, "by the time he was five he was reading the New Testament, and by seven years of age he had learned the Westminster Shorter Catechism and was working on the Larger." The "university" that Archibald Alexander went to was "a hewed log-house, twenty-eight feet by twenty-four, one storey and a half high" and there he was taught Greek, Latin, science and philosophy. The main theological textbook was Francis Turretin's *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* in Latin. Assisting the principal teacher, we are told, was "the remarkable James Priestly, who had the school classics so completely memorised that he never used a book when hearing his classes recite Ovid, Virgil, Horace or Homer." At the age of nineteen Alexander was licensed and for three years he was to be an itinerant preacher travelling from place to place on horseback, with his saddlebags full of tracts and Bibles, and composing his sermons *en route*. In the process he learned to preach effectively without notes. Calhoun tells us that early on in his ministry a puff of wind blew his notes into the congregation and there and then he determined "to take no more paper into the pulpit." Archibald Alexander died in 1851, in his eightieth year. Among the last visitors to his deathbed was Charles Hodge who afterwards said that "he never saw and never imagined a deathbed where there was so little of death." A A Hodge recalled seeing his father standing in the study weeping and exclaiming, "It is all past, the glory of our Seminary has departed."

Charles Hodge's writings are well known: his *Systematic Theology*, for instance; also, his Commentaries, that on *Romans* being described by Archibald Alexander as a book that would "do more to confirm the orthodox faith of our church than any book which has been published for a century." There was, however, a difference of view between Alexander and Hodge on the place which was to be assigned to the emotional phenomena which

accompanied revivals. Charles Hodge may have been no more affected by "German rationalists and sceptics" than Addison Alexander, that is, no more," than the eagle is affected by the dew on his plumage as he soars nearer the sun" as Hodge himself put it, but one wonders if his spirituality and discernment were blunted over the course of his two years' study in Europe. Aware of the dangers, it was with reluctance that his senior colleagues agreed to grant him leave of absence in the first place, and Alexander's concern was expressed in letters written to him at the time: "Remember that you breathe a poisoned atmosphere. If you lose the lively and deep impression of divine truth — if you fall into skepticism or even into coldness, you will lose more than you gain from all the German professors and libraries." In Berlin, we are told, he "met regularly for fellowship and discussion with a group of men and women of different churches, including Roman Catholic." Back in America he was to defend the proposition that the Church of Rome is a branch of the Christian Church and, in opposition to Thornwell and the vast majority of the membership of the General Assembly of his own Church, he upheld the view that Romish baptism was not invalid. It strikes us also as strange that Hodge and the Princeton fraternity generally should make use, as they did, of hymns of human composition in the public worship of God. Witherspoon surely did not import that practice!

But in expounding the cardinal doctrines of the Reformed faith these men were, in their day, peerless, and the fact that we still use their books as textbooks speaks for itself. Some of us will, for instance, be familiar with the name of William Henry Green and his books on the Canon and Text of the Old Testament. Of him it was said that on becoming a student at Princeton "he took to Greek as if he had been born in Athens; he took to Hebrew as if he had been the son of a rabbi in Jerusalem." Joseph Addison Alexander, son of Princeton's first professor was, by all accounts, the most accomplished scholar of them all. Charles Hodge spoke of him as "incomparably the greatest man I ever knew." Calhoun leaves on record that by the age of ten "he had mastered the rudiments of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew" and that, having found an old copy of an Arabic grammar on the top shelf of his father's library, he was soon reading the Koran! At the age of fifteen he entered the Junior Class at Princeton College and Calhoun tells us that "some of his fellow students believed that he was superior in learning to most of the College's instructors"! In 1834, at twenty-five years of age he was appointed Charles Hodge's assistant. His death at the age of fifty was a stunning blow to the institution. The following Sabbath, we are informed, Charles Hodge broke down while attempting to read the words, "Let not your hearts be

troubled" and had to pass the Bible to a colleague. Thornwell wrote to Hodge *inter alia*: "I was proud of him as a product of the Presbyterian Church in America, and he had not a friend on earth who felt a heartier satisfaction in the growing brilliancy of his name. His commentaries on Acts and Mark I regarded as models, as nearly perfection in their kind as human skill could make them, and I have been in the habit, not only of recommending them, but of insisting on my classes procuring and studying them. Then his modesty was equal to his worth. So free from vanity, from ostentation, from parade and pretensions. But my dear brother, God reigns. Let us rejoice that we have had this bright and beautiful light among us. It was given in grace, and it was removed not without wisdom and mercy." In writing his famous commentary on Isaiah, it is of interest that J A Alexander treated the book "as the work of both God and man, a divine revelation and a human composition, the contents of which are never dealt with in a manner inconsistent either with the supposition of its inspiration or with that of its real human origin." J W Alexander predeceased his brother by five months. He was also a prolific writer; one who was heard saying that "the only trouble he found in writing was turning the leaves."

This is a book which, once taken up, is difficult to put down! The author has thoroughly researched his subject and the result is that a mine of information has been placed at the disposal of the reader. Digging therein is a pleasant and rewarding activity.

John Welsh

Rev. K. D. Macleod

Continued from page 150

11. Faithful unto Death

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, and then to St Jean d'Angely in 1617. When this town was destroyed by Louis XIII in 1621, Welsh went to La Rochelle and then to Holland.

WELSH'S health had deteriorated too much for him to consider looking for a charge in Holland. His doctor advised that his only hope of recovery was to return home to breathe his native air. Welsh petitioned King James for the necessary permission, but it was refused. Welsh might, however,

come to London "to be dealt with". When Welsh arrived in London the King sent the Dean of Winchester to negotiate with him. Some general approbation of the present arrangements in the Scottish Church would have been enough, however superficial it might be. But, as so often before in similar circumstances, Welsh refused; duty was always dearer to him than life. So permission to return to Scotland was peremptorily refused.

At last, through the influence of some of her relations, Mrs Welsh gained her famous audience with the King. He asked who her father had been. "John Knox", she told him. "Knox and Welsh," exclaimed the King, "the devil never made such a match as that!" "It's right like, Sir," she answered, "for we never asked his advice." The King then asked how many were left of her father's family, and were they lads or lasses. Mrs Welsh told him that all three were lasses. "God be thanked," responded James, lifting up both his hands, "for if they had been three lads I had never enjoyed my three kingdoms in peace." She then urged the King to allow her husband to return to his native air. "Give him his native air," the King exclaimed with further irreverence, "give him the devil!" "Give that to your hungry courtiers!" she rejoined. At last James told her that her request would be granted provided she would persuade him to submit to the bishops. She then held up her apron to the King and said, with that self-possession for which her father had been so noted, "Please your Majesty, I had rather receive his head here."

Welsh's friends at court pleaded with the King for permission for Welsh to preach in London. This too was refused until James realised that Welsh would not be long spared. Welsh preached once - long and fervently, we are told. He then returned to the place where he was staying and died within two hours. Welsh was buried on 4 April 1622, having reached the age of possibly no more than 54. In that same grave his grandson John, the Covenanter, was to be laid 57 years later.

"When dying," says Fleming, "he was so filled and overcome with the sensible enjoyment of God that he was sometimes overheard in prayer to utter these words: 'Lord, hold Thy hand, it is enough. Thy servant is a clay vessel and can hold no more'." We need not be surprised that someone who was so consistent in seeking communion with God throughout his life should have been granted such a high degree of communion when he was about to pass from it. Even in London, when he was so weak, he continued to spend a great deal of time in prayer and study. When someone suggested that he should relax his efforts Welsh replied, "I have my life from God and therefore it should be spent for Him."

"If the joy of the cross is so great," Welsh wrote in one of his books,

"what will be that of the crown? If the sufferings of Christ are mixed with consolations so great and superabundant, what will be those of His glories? And if it be the gift of God to suffer for the testimony of His kingdom, how superlative will be the gift of reigning with Him?" He already had a real understanding of these things, but he now knows the answers to his questions in a way that he could not do on earth.

Elizabeth Welsh returned to live in Ayr after her husband's death, but survived him by less than three years. If the strain of his sufferings had told on her husband's health, we can be sure that, while she did not have to endure the hardships of imprisonment in Blackness Castle, she suffered with him and for him in many other ways.

The Welshes had a second daughter Louise, but nothing is known about her, except that it was probably she who was born in Jonsac in 1613 and that she survived her mother. William, the oldest son, qualified as a doctor, but died in Holland as the result of an accident. The youngest son Nathaniel was shipwrecked; he was able to swim to a rock, but perished there, probably from exposure. It was a comfort to his friends to know that, when his body was found, he seemed to be in the posture of prayer.

When Robert Boyd, his longtime friend and correspondent in France, heard of Welsh's death, he exclaimed, "He was a man filled with the Holy Ghost, full of zeal, of love, and of an incredible labour and diligence in his station and calling. In these he spent his whole life . . . under burdens of all sorts, afflictions in his body and his spirit, crosses in his ministry, in his outward estate, bearing always in his body the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose life was manifested in him in a most excellent degree and measure, if it was so in any man of his time. Blessed forever be the name of God, who gave him and raised him up to His Church in a time of so much necessity!" What better epitaph could anyone want?

And may the God who is still able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham raise up in our time another John Welsh! Not that we should be satisfied with one great ambassador of the King of heaven, for the world needs multitudes of them. May He then grant such multitudes, and pour out the Holy Spirit in rich measure to accompany their preaching, so that David's plea would at last be completely fulfilled, "Let the whole earth be filled with His glory!"

Note: Brief accounts of Welsh's life appear in the *Scots Worthies* and in *Select Biographies*, volume 1. Far more complete is *The Life of John Welsh* by James Young (Edinburgh, 1866). Young was a Secession minister who came into the Free Church in 1852 with the majority of

the United Original Seceders. Because of ill health Young did not hold a charge after 1843; instead he devoted himself to writing. His work on Welsh is well written, and he shows genuine sympathy for the position of his subject. He seems to have left no stone unturned in attempting to discover information about Welsh. A volume of Welsh's sermons, 35 in number, first appeared in 1744. A larger volume, *Forty-eight Select Sermons preached by that eminent and faithful servant of Jesus Christ, Mr John Welsh, sometime minister of the gospel in Ayr*, came out later the same year. Prefaced to the sermons is Kirkton's brief life of Welsh.

Concluded

Report of Missionary Meeting in Holland

Rev. N. M. Ross

FOR more than 30 years now our Church has been receiving much help for our missionary work in Africa from our many friends in Holland, under the leading of their mission committee, Mbumba Zending. Each year, they have a large missionary meeting; and this year the Free Presbyterian representatives invited to speak were Mr Buthi Mziya, Bulawayo, and myself.

The meeting, which was most efficiently organised, was held on Saturday, 4th May, in the huge fruit market at Geldermalsen, and was opened by the Convener of Mbumba Zending, Rev. Tj. de Jong, Staphorst. There were 6000 people present - a most impressive sight.

In addressing the gathering, (I am indebted to friends for a few brief translations of what was said in Dutch), Mr de Jong stressed that although we live in a very dark time God continues to work for the gathering in of His elect. He underlined the importance of missionary work and of supporting it, and stressed the commission of the Lord to His church: to proclaim the whole counsel of God, law and gospel, even unto the ends of the earth.

After the writer gave his address, Rev J. Roos, Opheusden, spoke on Psalm 9:2, "Put them in fear O Lord: that the nations may know themselves to be but men." After showing the necessity of men knowing themselves to be guilty before God, he spoke of the way of free grace in the Mediator, and that this is the doctrine which is to be preached on the mission fields.

Mr G. Nyhof, Urk, then spoke about the vision of the valley of dry bones, (Ezk.37), stating that it is man's guilt that he is spiritually dead; that the Lord knows who shall be saved whether in Holland, Scotland or Africa; and that the work of the true servant of the Lord is to proclaim the word of the Lord to the dry bones, looking to the Lord to cause breath to enter into them.

After Mr F. Snoek, Urk, addressed the children, of whom there were very

many present, Mr Buthi Mziya, Mission Administrator, gave some information to the meeting about an aspect of mission work in Zimbabwe.

The final speaker was Rev T. Klok, Kinderdijk. He spoke on the last verses of Mark 16, especially verses 15 and 16, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved...." In true conversion, he said, there must be first a "cutting down" or humbling of the sinner in which sin is made bitter to him. Mr Klok stressed the wonder of God making Himself known in His Son, the "altogether lovely one".

We believe it is a reflection of the desire of our friends in Holland that the gospel would indeed be preached to every creature that they give such generous support to our work in Africa. The collection made at the meeting amounted to 100,000 Dutch guilders, or £40,000.

We were shown much kindness, especially by Miss Truus Ringelberg, home on furlough from Kenya, who kindly looked after myself and my wife and daughter in her comfortable home at Nagele for the few days we were in Holland. We are her debtors. We are also indebted to Mr van Vliet, Secretary of Mbuma Zending, and his wife, for their kind help and hospitality. It was a pleasure to meet many friends again, including members and ex-members of mission staff such as Dr Janette Hak, Nursing Sister Anne Zekveld, and Mr Donald MacDonald and his wife, Dr. Christine.

The Lord provides for His cause - and as far as His cause connected with the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland in Zimbabwe and Kenya is concerned, we must acknowledge with humble gratitude that He has been showing, through the instrumentality of our Dutch friends, that He is Jehovah Jireh, the God who sees and provides.

Mission Meeting Address

Given by Rev. N. Ross at the Mbuma Zending Meeting in Geldermalsen on 4th May 1996.

IT is my great pleasure and privilege to be present with you today. I bring to you the warm greetings of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and I also convey our heartfelt thanks for your help in the past and at present.

I wish to emphasise that we are deeply indebted to you, the Mbuma Zending Committee and all of you who loyally support us, for your prayerful interest in our missionary work in Africa, and also for your generous material support given to our work. Under the hand of God, you have been enabled to give valuable assistance, and as the Scriptures say, "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name."

Your help is a great encouragement to us, both in the United Kingdom and Africa, as we undertake this solemn responsibility which Christ lays upon His Church: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

Furthermore, without your coming to our aid, the work would be seriously hampered, and would have to be curtailed, or maybe even abandoned in one place or another. I have recently returned from Zimbabwe and Kenya, and I have much first-hand evidence of how invaluable your help is.

Of course, our main aim in Africa is to preach the gospel and teach the truth, but we must also engage in medical work and educational work. Not only are these activities a help in the work of preaching the gospel, but also they alleviate, to some extent, the need of the peoples among whom we work.

Obviously, there is no greater need that men have than that of their souls, whether they are Dutch, British, Zimbabwean or Kenyan. Therefore, there is no better gift to give to men in their spiritual need than the good seed of the kingdom, even the word of God. In stressing this point I wish to make a few remarks about verse 6 of Psalm 126, "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

The word of God is seed which is precious indeed. It is precious because it is God's word, inspired by the Holy Ghost. It is precious because it sets forth Christ as the One who became poor so that sinners such as we are might be made rich. It is precious because it is the word of life which, by the work of the Holy Spirit, begets new life in their souls, and brings them into possession of eternal life. It is precious because it has been blessed to multitudes to make them heirs of the inheritance reserved in heaven for them.

It is with this precious seed that we, as a Church, have gone to Africa. How solemn is this responsibility! It was this precious seed which the first Free Presbyterian missionary, Rev John Radasi, faithfully broadcast among the people to whom he was sent, more than 90 years ago. It is this precious seed which our ministers and missionaries in Africa today are enabled, by grace, to continue sowing faithfully.

The man who has a right to go forth as a preacher of the gospel, bearing this precious seed, is the man who is called by God. It is God's prerogative to send forth labourers, and it is a blight on the Church when men go forth of whom the Lord says, "I sent them not nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all," (Jer. 23:32). There is great and urgent need of more labourers being sent forth; therefore there is great need that we be praying that the Lord of the harvest would be pleased to send forth labourers into the harvest.

Although the man who bears this precious seed is commissioned by the Lord, his task will not be easy. There will be disappointments and trials; so much so, that he will have times of weeping, as our text shows. The seed often falls on hard ground and is snatched away. At other times it falls where there is some soil and begins to grow. It looks promising, but then it withers away in time of persecution. In other cases it is choked out by the cares and riches and pleasures of this world. It seems that the labourer's work is in vain.

The true servant of Christ, whether a missionary or minister in Africa, or a minister elsewhere, will be no stranger to sorrow and tears, not only on account of his own sins and faults and shortcomings, but also on account of those trials connected with the ministry of the gospel. He is tempted by Satan, opposed by the ungodly, and maligned by the world. Not least, the awful plight of sinners on the broad way to destruction lies heavily upon the heart of the true minister. It is little wonder then, that the ministers of Christ make this request, "Brethren, pray for us."

However, there shall be joy and gladness, sooner or later. The text tells us that the servant of the Lord, "shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." The promise of the Lord is, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it," (Isa. 55:11). The days will come when there shall be "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear," (Mark 4:28). There was such fruit seen when Rev John Radası sowed the precious seed, and there continues to be fruit from time to time even in this dark day.

Meantime, the duty of the Church is to persevere in faithfully sowing the seed, in obedience to the command of Christ, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you..." (Matt. 28:19,20). This is what our Church, by divine aid and with your help, is endeavouring to do in Zimbabwe and Kenya.

There is another responsibility laid upon the Church of Christ. She is to plead with the Lord that he would make the seed to be fruitful. Only He can do it! The Apostle Paul said, "I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase," (1Cor. 3:6,7). There are many people in and around our missions in Zimbabwe and Kenya, who are in gross spiritual darkness, and in whose souls the precious seed has not yet taken root. Our prayer is that the Lord would give an outpouring of His Holy Spirit - that He would send "showers of blessing" (Ezk. 34:26), so that in Zimbabwe and

Kenya, and in all Africa, there would be abundant fruit - and all to the glory of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost.

On behalf of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland and our Foreign Missions Committee, I sincerely thank you for being workers together with us in this great work. Amidst all the difficulties which the Church of Christ has to face in this wicked age, she is to take encouragement from the fact that her labour, in sowing the seed, is not in vain in the Lord. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

Report of Recent Visit to Eastern Europe

Rev. D. A. Ross

AS was planned, Mr MacRae and myself left for Eastern Europe on 19th March, departing from Inverness at 8.25 that Tuesday evening after attending Church Committee meetings. We travelled all night to arrive at Ramsgate at 10.30 the following morning, which gave us ample time to prepare for departure at 11.30 am on the cross-channel ferry. Thereafter we made good progress through Germany and Austria even although we were hindered by tyre problems. However, due to another problem, we were delayed in Hungary for almost four days. On Friday morning, when we were about 40 miles from Miskolc, the windscreen of the truck suddenly cracked into a myriad of cracks all over its surface. It remained intact until we reached the suburb of Miskolc; then it shattered into pieces. We had to wait in Miskolc from midday on Friday until Tuesday morning, when a new windscreen arrived and was fitted. During our stay we were shown much kindness by several friends who have been very helpful to us for a long time. We had the opportunity also to meet new friends who showed interest in our work and were anxious that we would help them, if possible, by providing Christian literature. We also met teachers from Scotland and Ireland who appreciate reformed doctrine and were very grateful to receive our reformed literature, which they were in a position to use among the students whom they teach.

We eventually arrived in Kishinev, the capital of Moldova, three days late, having had to drive long hours into the night to make up some lost time. Here we disposed of about one third of our load to the orphanage which has formerly benefited from our visits. Although our truck was securely parked during the night and was under guard, it was cleverly broken into and tools and other items were stolen. However, we were very thankful later that this

did not hinder us during the remainder of our journey.

We left Kishinev at 7 am on Thursday and arrived in Kiev at 7.45 that evening. We were welcomed by Mrs Belozyorov and her son Igor into their hospitable home where we spent the remainder of our time, and where, as on former occasions, we were shown much kindness. Due to lack of time we had to work very hard on Friday to have our load cleared by the Customs authorities. This work went remarkably well, being done in one day as opposed to the three or more days of past occasions. We got full clearance apart from the temporary impounding of some of our medicines. The clearance of these was left to Pastor Grishchenko and Igor Belozyorov to arrange. I have received news since our return to Scotland that the medicines were released by Customs and distributed according to our instructions. A considerable amount went to the Cancer Hospital in Kiev.

It was a pleasure yet again to meet old friends, who have shown much kindness to us over the years, and to distribute Bibles and reformed literature to them. We were glad also to be led to use some new outlets for literature distribution. The highlight for us is the opportunity to preach the Word of God. This opportunity was afforded us in Borispol at the invitation of a family there. Sixteen people attended, most of whom were friends of the family. I preached from the words, "For I determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified," 1 Corinthians 2:2. The people listened most attentively and asked questions which were very appropriate to what had been preached. We look to the Lord alone to open the hard heart to receive His Word, confess sin and cry to Him in the name of Christ for mercy.

Having prepared on Saturday for early travel on Monday we set off from Kiev at 1 am. We were not far from Kiev when we encountered heavy snow which looked more daunting than usual because of the enormous size of the flakes. Our brakes began to bind because of the snow and we had to repeatedly free them by rapid pumping of the handbrake. On more than one occasion we had to snowball high standing road signs which were plastered by snow, in an attempt to knock off the snow and read the sign. It snowed for most of the night and well into the day, but thankfully we did not become snowbound like some other vehicles. Because of the delays caused by the snow we had to omit our intended visit to the city of Liviv, and bypassed it. This meant greater benefits for our last recipient, Rev Horkai Laslo, to whom we gave the remainder of our load. As ever, he was most appreciative of our help, and especially for the Bibles and Shorter Catechisms.

We finally reached home on Thursday, 4th April, at 1.30 am, with profound thankfulness to the Lord for "journeying mercies" given to us over

thousands of miles, and especially for the opportunity, in His gracious providence, to spread His precious Word, which is the appointed means for bringing sinners from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God's dear Son. With what zeal the Church of God should engage in this work because it is to the Church, and to the Church alone, that the Head of the Church says, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you," Matthew 28:19, 20.

Mission News

Zimbabwe

THERE was a Communion recently at Ingwenya at which Rev. P. Mzamo was assisting Rev. A. Ndebele. The old elders who had passed away since the previous Communion were greatly missed. The three remaining elders are well known to us as they were former pupils at Ingwenya. Mr. Paul Moyo taught in the Primary School and took services at the Mission and elsewhere. Mr. Sipho Nxusani is a brother-in-law of Rev. A. Ndebele. His mother taught at Ingwenya for many years, and he himself taught at Cameron Primary School; a school which is named after the late Rev. Neil Cameron and is ten miles from Ingwenya. Mr. Isaiah Sibanda belongs to Libeni and preaches there. These men need the prayers of the Lord's people that, God willing, they may be kept in health and usefulness.

None of the African ministers will be present at the Synod this year but Mr. Buthi Mziya, Mission Administrator, hopes to be present. He attended the Mbumba Zending Meeting in Holland on 4th May.

Miss Marion Graham was on her own for some weeks in April, as far as having her Scottish colleagues with her was concerned. It was holiday time and she had plenty to do in winding up affairs after the school closed, and in preparing for the new term. Now she is enjoying the companionship of Katie Macaulay, and also of Ishbel MacCuish who is there for three months while Norma MacLean is on furlough.

At Mbumba Hospital there is a great shortage of staff. Dr. Janette Hak has been at home for some time owing to health problems, and Miss Anne Zekveld is on furlough. There have been 200 malaria patients arriving each day at the hospital and Margaret Macaskill, Louise Leiper, and Lia Terlouw have been working literally night and day. Miss Peta van der Ridder was to have gone to Kenya about the middle of May but the Committee arranged for her to go to

Mbumba instead for six weeks to relieve the situation. She flew to Zimbabwe on 14th May, but she will proceed to Kenya, D.V., at the end of June.

Anne Zekveld visited Holland on the first few weeks of her leave, and then England briefly, where she showed Mission slides in a friend's house. She paid a hurried visit to Scotland, hired a car at Edinburgh and proceeded to the Island of Raasay. After being at Glasgow Communion, and then going for another short visit to Holland, she went to Canada where her home, parents and other relatives are. This was Anne's first visit to the U.K.

It was interesting to hear that in Rev. Z. Mazvabo's area, a new church has been built in Chibi, (near Masvingo, or Fort Victoria as it used to be known, the oldest town in Zimbabwe and a tourist centre). The first communion season was held there in April and the church was very full. The District Commissioner was present at the Sabbath service. The text was Hebrews 10:12, and in the morning, and Rev. 22:6 in the evening. Rev. A. Ndebele was assisting Rev. Z. Mazvabo, and no doubt he would have an interpreter as the language spoken in Mr Mazvabo's area is Shona. We prayerfully hope that this new church will be a means of blessing in the Chibi area. *J.N.*

Kenya

MR Ian MacLean, who has recently recovered from a particularly weakening bout of malaria, has begun conducting a Bible class at Sengera each Wednesday evening and a Psalmody class on Friday evenings, in addition to the usual services and worships on Sabbath and weekday. Also, on each Monday evening he meets those who wish to ask questions about the sermons on Sabbath - an exercise which he finds to be profitable to both himself and them. He continues to hold services and Catechising sessions at Maiga and pays a visit to the Kuria group periodically. He has also commenced holding services once a fortnight at Magenche (about an hour's drive from Sengera) where about 35 people gather.

Mr MacLean is kept extra busy with building two new staff houses. The repair of the concrete water tank under the clinic has been completed, and it is now hoped that there will be enough rain to fill it for the needs of the compound. There is concern that the new well is recharging more slowly than it did at the beginning of the year, despite the water authority saying then that their recharge test result was good. It may be necessary to deepen the well.

Another "malaria season" has begun. There is much illness in the area and the nursing staff at the Health Centre are exceedingly busy.

We are glad to hear that the 4 kms earth road from the main road to the Mission (which is a sea of mud during the heavy rains) is being surfaced with a mixture of gravel and sand to give a solid surface. *N.R.*

Protestant View

The need to curb Rome's increasing influence in the EU

THE Home Secretary, Michael Howard, has aired the possibility of withdrawing from elements of the European Union treaties. He has strongly criticised that powerful arm of the Union, the European Court of Justice, branding it as a "menace" and warning that its endeavours to increase its powers for political ends is "potential tyranny".

With this we agree. It has been the view of the Free Presbyterian Church all along that membership of the Roman Catholic dominated EU (or Common Market as it was known) would mean "a giving away of our independence and sovereignty as a nation" (1962 Synod Motion), and that it would pose a threat to our religious freedom and endanger the Protestant succession to the British throne (Religion and Morals Report. 1963 Synod).

That Rome's finger is deeply in the EU pie is shown by its having a major say and powerful influence in the framing of EU policy, especially in social matters - and this despite the Vatican not being a member state of the EU.

Rome skilfully presents itself on Internet

MANY churches and religious groups now have information about themselves listed on Internet (the worldwide information system which may be accessed by a computer linked to the telephone - it is used by millions).

The Church of Rome is no exception. It has various items on Internet, one of which is a 14-page document, *Pillar of Fire, Pillar of Truth*. In language, which seems at first glance to be very Biblical, it presents "basic Catholic truths" and assures the reader that in the "the Catholic faith answers to life's most troubling questions" can be found. It skilfully gives a picture of Romanism which will undoubtedly be attractive to some who are seeking religious teaching which is authoritative and positive.

Of course, there is the bold presentation Rome's heresies - "the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, the sacrificial nature of the Mass, the forgiveness of sins through a priest, baptismal regeneration, the existence of purgatory, Mary's special role", to give a few from its own list of "beliefs".

Protestantism must use the same method to expose Rome's errors and pretensions. Down through the ages, said Dr Wylie, "the Man of Sin... has been piling assumption upon assumption, and prerogative upon prerogative, till at last, he raised himself to a height from which he looked down not only upon all churches, but upon all kings and kingdoms." It is through the presentation of the truth by the Church of Christ that "that man of sin" shall be unmasked.

Notes and Comments

Shocking confession by Lord Runcie about ordaining homosexuals

THE former Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Runcie, has admitted that he knowingly ordained practising homosexuals to the ministry of the Church.

Bishops and other senior churchmen have been taken by surprise and are privately appalled. They need hardly be surprised when they have effectively sanctioned homosexual relations among the laity by allowing homosexuals to be members of the Church.

How preposterous for such churchmen to be claiming that they are Christians, let alone the spiritual guides of the people. That the sin which brought divine destruction upon Sodom should be condoned or promoted by political leaders is exceedingly serious, and is provoking to the infinitely holy and just God. That it should be permitted and condoned in the national church is much more serious and altogether shocking.

Religious education is destroying children's religious beliefs

"MOST children can't cope with a multi-faith approach in primary schools. They just get confused... so that they end up thinking Moses is Moslem." This is the conclusion, not surprisingly, of senior research fellow, Dr William Kay, in his book, *Drift From The Churches*.

Multi-faith education, introduced at primary level in the 1970s, is helping to destroy children's religious beliefs, he says, and has contributed to both the decline in church attendance and the growing secularisation of society. Also, youngsters in Church of England schools are being driven away from Christianity by "wishy washy" lessons.

On the other hand, says Dr Kay, in RC schools where teachers stand up for their beliefs the children are being strengthened in their religion.

It is past time that in this nominally Christian and Protestant country there be a scrapping of multi-faith education in our schools and a return to the teaching of the truth of Scriptural Christianity.

Ban on homosexuals serving in the armed forces is retained

ANOTHER attempt in Parliament to end the ban on homosexuals serving in the armed forces failed. Campaigners against the ban continue their efforts, and it seems they will go to the European Court of Human Rights, and maybe the European Court of Justice. Labour leader Tony Blair has made it clear that he believes the ban is not fair and that his party backs the principle that people should not be barred from the military because they are homosexual.

During the debate in Parliament, Edwina Currie MP, who spearheaded the move against the ban, said that failure to end it was "to our country's shame". It is our shame that sodomy has been legalised by our Parliament. God, whose law takes precedence over human law, will not be mocked. He will deal in judgement with those who condone or commit this vile sin if they refuse to repent and seek His pardon. Certain people in Corinth who committed this sin in Paul's day obtained forgiveness. (1 Cor 6:9-11).

Church Information

Meetings of Presbytery (D.V.)

NORTHERN: At Inverness 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, 11th June at 11.00 am.

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

Acknowledgements of Donations

The General Treasurer acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:

Bookroom Fund: A Lewis Friend, £5.00 per Bookroom.

Eastern Europe Fund: New Zealand Friend, £200; A Friend, £50.

Foreign Mission Fund: Zimbabwe Fund: A friend, £100; Kenya Fund, A friend, £100.

Free Distribution of Magazines Fund: A. Macgregor, £3.50 per Bookroom.

Outreach Fund: R.J. Saba, £50 per Bookroom

Congregational Treasurers acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:

Breasclete: Sustentation Fund: Friend of the cause, £60; M.G., £5; Dr. Dickie, £35; Friend of the cause, £30.

Dingwall: Communion Expenses: Anon, £10 per envelope in plate; Anon, £50 per Rev. N.M.R; Sustentation Fund: A friend, £45 per D.M.

Gairloch: Congregational Funds: A friend, Lewis, £10; Skye friend, £100; Friend, £10; N. Uist friend, £20; Anon, £10; all per Rev. A.E.W. MacDonald.

Inverness: Sustentation Fund: Anon, £10; Anon, £20; Anon, £30; Anon, £50; all per envelopes in collection plate. Tape Fund: Anon, £10, per D.M.

Kyle - Plockton: Where most needed: Anon, Portree, £250, per Rev. D.A. Ross.

North Harris: Sustentation Fund: A friend, £30; Anon, £6; both per Rev. R.M.L. For Petrol: friend, Stockinish, £10, per Rev. R.M.L. Bus Fund: R.M.L. £4 per envelope in plate.

Portree: Congregational Purposes: Friend, £1,000 per I.G.M.; Friend, £10 per F.M. Bus Fund: Anon, £50; Anon, £10; both per envelopes in plate.

Staffin: Communion Collection: A friend, £10 (Portree postmark). Where Most Needed: Anon, £50, per envelope in plate.

Shieldaig: Congregational Fund: Anon, £10; Anon, £10.