

The
Free Presbyterian Magazine
and Monthly Record

Vol. 82

November 1977

No. 11

Submission to the Word of God

'Submission' is a word that men do not like. Proud man would prefer to rule rather than to yield submission to any other. It is true that 'submission' can have evil overtones, as, for example, when it is subjection and submission to tyranny that is implied. From such a rule and from such submission men naturally recoil. When we think, however, of submission to lawful authority, then 'submission' far from having a freedom denying connotation is in reality part and parcel of true liberty.

When we come to the Word of God we have to ask the question — why ought men to yield submission to it? The answer is that it has no authority beyond that of its author. Its author is God, for it is the Word of God. It has, therefore, divine authority and to this authority men ought to bow. Having divine authority it has paramount authority. No other law or revelation can claim either superiority over it, or even equality with it. Every other authority, all other rule is subject to it; be it that of earthly Kings, Queens, Potentates or Rulers of whatever sort, or even that of principalities and powers in the spiritual realm.

It is honouring to God to show deference to His Word, for this shows respect for His authority as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Yet none by nature will willingly yield that submission to the Word of God which God Himself requires. To yield submission we must be the subjects of supernatural enlightenment and of divine regenerating grace. Man's apostacy in the beginning involved rejection of divine authority and the setting-up in opposition to it of human authority and power. If we are ever again to submit to the Word of God, our will must be renewed. Nothing less will do if we are to yield that obedience and submission to the Word of God which is required of us.

When the Holy Spirit comes, He comes to enlighten the mind and renew the will, as well as to convince of sin. He does this by bringing the sinner to see that the Bible is indeed the Word of the living God — the

Word before which the sinner must bow. To find out the divine authority of the Scriptures is a profound discovery in the experience of any sinner.

Submission to the Word of God comes with conviction of the sinner's own rebellion and sin. Because the divine authority of the Scriptures is recognised there is no longer any quarrelling with the Word of God even when it condemns. That God has rightful claims against the sinner is acutely felt and that his continued rebellion is an affront to the Majesty of Heaven — an affront which, if not forgiven, God will surely punish. What deep concern such conviction brings! There is a realised sense of condemnation and of need of deliverance from it. With this there is an understanding of the fact that unless God will deliver him from his rebellion, he will never willingly yield submission to Him.

Oh, how suitable is the Gospel then with its promise of deliverance from the power and dominion of sin. "A people shall be willing in a day of Thy power." God is able to subdue the sinner and bring him to that submissiveness to His will that is pleasing to Himself. How suitable is the Gospel to a sinner who is hopeless and helpless and lost. When Christ and salvation is revealed in the word of the truth of the Gospel, how heartily is He embraced and with what willingness is submission given to His yoke and burden, whose yoke is easy and whose burden is light.

No oppressive yoke is this — to walk in wisdom's ways, for "wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace." So the saved soul finds it to be. The law of his God is now the rule of his life. There is a willing acquiescence in the will of God in all things. There is no coercion here. The law is written in the heart. Submission to the Word of God is as natural to the heart of the renewed child of grace as rebellion was natural to the heart of the unrenewed sinner. The 119th Psalm becomes meaningful in the experience of the living soul. There is a delighting in the law of God after the inward man and there is a warm, loving submission to the will and word of God.

Sermon

by the Rev. George Smeaton, Auchterarder

(Continued from page 369)

II. A Church is only so far a witnessing Church as it is thus baptised with the Holy Ghost. The connection between the two is plainly pointed out in the text: "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me." The Redeemer does not

send skilful orators, but witnesses, such as have seen with spiritual eyes and heard with spiritual ears. A witness must know what he testifies, and he has little liberty to speak of what the Lord has not wrought in him; he believes, and therefore speaks. Witnesses shall testify, while the world stands, of the love of God in Christ — of redemption through his blood, and of the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace. Their sound must go into all the earth; but they do not testify what they have heard, or read, or thought out upon the things of God, for the Holy Ghost gives them a savoury experience of the tidings of great joy which they proclaim to others. Many called ministers have nothing they can testify; for can he be a witness unto Christ, whose heart is not filled with the presence, the love, the life, the Spirit of Christ? Can he be a witness of the cross of Christ, who does not daily look to the dying Lamb for pardon, peace, and cleansing? Can he be a witness of the Lord's abiding with his people to the end of the world, who knows not in his heart a daily intercourse with Jesus — who has not the witness of the Spirit that he is a child of God?

They who have Christ in them, therefore, can alone bring men into living contact with God. Christ makes it plain that a new unction must visit his followers before the blessing spreads to the impenitent; and to look for an awakening, therefore, before we ourselves receive that baptism is repeatedly renewed; and to hold forth, like many declining cannot long continue to display a living testimony, unless this fresh holy baptism of the Spirit, that make a witnessing Church. However, not Churches of the Reformation, a form of sound words, when the Spirit is sinned away, is but like a removed sign-post carried down a swollen river. For it is not protests, or creeds, or formularies, but living souls under the baptism of the Spirit, that make a witnessing Church. However, not apostles alone, but every believer waited for the Spirit before Pentecost. And nothing, it seems to me, will strike the heart of this callous age, but new holiness in believers' lives — the awe-inspiring spectacle of men glowing with love to their Lord, openly separating from the world. But can those believers be witnesses for Christ, who trifle with the Spirit's presence — who tremble not at decays in holy communion with God — who do not hourly rekindle their torch in God's own presence? Can those believers be really witnesses for Christ, whose life savours of the spirit of the world more than of God — who lie in doubts and fears, with no peace within and no zeal for God? May they not tremble to see how many, by their worldliness, they keep at ease on the brink of an eternal hell?

Why do we so seldom see a Pentecost, a day of the Lord's right hand, when Jesus still lives as Lord, and the Spirit is waiting to descend? Times there are, indeed, when believers are anew baptised with glowing first love, and continue pleading for the salvation of the Christless, as if this were their only work, when breathless assemblies are hushed in death-like stillness before the felt presence of the Lord Jesus; and the awe on every soul is only chequered by the bright joy of reconciled countenances. Times there are, when the sharp arrows of the King pierce many hearts — when heaven and hell seem to open before our face compelling many to decide amid all men's overwhelming earnestness — when the general feeling is, the Lord is here, and a wide-spread fear prevails lest others should be taken and they be left. But why, O why, are such times so rare? Is it because our desires are so slender, our expectations so narrow? Is it because we too much select the post in which we choose to serve? Is it that, without being hourly led by Jesus as a child is led — without waiting for the Lord's direction — without following his guidance and complying with his Spirit, we trust to our own wisdom and to our own power — alas! found unavailing in the kingdom of God? "Awake, awake, O arm of the Lord" — awake as in the ancient days, for our toil and study end in nothing. We may yet be far from testifying with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, but who, in reviewing the past, will not exclaim. Had I given the same proportion of my days and nights to prayer which I gave to toil, to other pursuits, or even to study — had I fallen down at the feet of Jesus, pleading for the Holy Ghost, till my lips were touched with fire, and my heart with love — till he shewed me how to do his work, it might have pleased him to make use of me. Had I not run without this unction from on high — had prevailing prayer for the Spirit gone before all my work and followed it, I should not have spent my strength for nought. The review of the past shows what our present course should be; but let us not faint or be discouraged. The disciples were not to testify at all before they were anointed. They would not have succeeded in awakening a soul had they not waited for the shower from heaven. And can we succeed without the precious method that the Saviour has enjoined? Without this fiery unction the disciples were not to go forth; and with child-like dependance on Christ's grace and power, we too are to follow the same rule. O if we would take him at his word, and let him act! If we waited for the Spirit, should we toil in vain? They only who are chosen vessels, themselves baptised with the Spirit, can preach the gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven — can be unto God a sweet savour of Jesus Christ in them that are saved, and in

them that perish. This coming of the Spirit with unction and power, with light and life, made the word quick and powerful, piercing to the dividing of soul and spirit, and discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart. No sooner were the disciples replenished, than others, yea thousands were inflamed. It was said by the holy Livingston, "There is sometime somewhat in preaching that cannot be ascribed either to the matter or expression, and cannot be described what it is, or from whence it cometh, but with a sweet violence it pierceth into the heart and affections, and cometh immediately from the Lord. But if there be any way to attain to any such thing, it is by the heavenly disposition of the speaker."

To the same purpose said the heavenly-minded Brainerd, "When ministers feel these special gracious influences on their hearts, it wonderfully assists them to come at the consciences of men, and as it were to handle them. Whereas without them, whatever reason or oratory we make use of, we do but make use of stumps and not of hands."

Fathers and Brethern, in fulfilling our testimony, this church is in special danger of settling down upon its lees. Is there no danger lest we take the wonderful prosperity of this Church as a compensation for the spiritual glory of a church? Is there no temptation to be less dependent upon God amidst success—to say my mountain standeth strong—than when apprehensions of unknown evil beset us on every side? The Lord breathes over Israel the affecting complaint, "I remember thee, the kindness of thy love, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness; what iniquity have your fathers found in me that they are gone far from me?" And is there no danger lest we too surrender ourselves to carnal slumber, content with past exertions, and enjoying an inglorious repose before the rest of eternity arrive? Is there no risk of beginning in the Spirit, but seeking to be perfect in the flesh? If not watchful unto prayer, may we not ere long be surprised with sleep, and grow weary of well-doing, or give way to a reaction? The eminent Hooker, on embarking to New England with the pilgrim fathers, thus expressed his apprehensions, destined too soon to be realised: "Farewell, England, I expect now no more to see that religious zeal and power of godliness which I have seen among professors in that land. Adversity has slain its thousands, but prosperity its ten thousands. I fear that those who have been zealous Christians in the fire of persecution, will become cold in the lap of peace." May the Lord keep this Free Church awake at whatever cost!

But another temptation, no less perilous, is the expenditure of time and

energy on thankless schemes and delusive enterprizes. Should it not be the answer of this Church to every such allurements, I am engaged in a great work and cannot come down? Perhaps the most powerful temptation with which the enemy can ply this Church, is to cast ourselves down from the pinnacle of the temple, in the presumptuous hope, that, because protected in positions which our Master chose for us, we shall be equally protected in those chosen by ourselves. May we be kept from the seductive idea that we could render better service in some other post than in that which the Omniscient Saviour bids us occupy. It is a blessed discharge from every kind of work that forces us back on this land for which we are especially responsible, till we see the reception of our message. Let schemes be as bright and captivating as they may which divert us from our post, which draw us off, I suspect them, and the quarter whence they come; and while we confess our readiness to fall asleep at our post, or to be seduced from it, let us at every interval afresh resume our work — let us ever and anon encourage one another to greater love, and zeal, and faith, and prayer — let us fall back afresh on the humiliation, the devotedness, the vows of other days, when we were most sensibly baptised with the Holy Ghost as with fire.

In sending forth this discourse, let me briefly add, that all who have the Spirit of Christ, ought equally with ministers to stand forth as witnesses, and feel that they are kept for a season on the earth to do a work for God, after their title to the heavenly joys is secured. Would not God's people tremble, if they saw how many their lukewarm lives embolden to abide in sin? God will be with us while we are with him, nor will he withdraw the Spirit till we sin him away. And what if God's own people themselves mar his glorious displays of grace and power in this dark age, because the salt is losing its savour when the land needs it most, and their love is waxing cold through abounding iniquity, when, if ever, it should burn most brightly? Say not, O that a dead world were quickened; but, O that I myself were quickened. Do not many grow weary and faint in their minds, because the example of those most eminent for gifts and graces tends not to encourage, but to dishearten them.

Nor can I omit a call to prayer. When an ardent desire is cherished for the Holy Ghost — when the spirit of extraordinary supplication is poured out from on High — the time to favour Zion, the set time, is come. But the prayer that breaks through the clouds, and opens heaven, asks on a scale no lower than according to God's riches in glory, and expects, with joyous confidence, such great things as Christ's great merits can procure,

and as it is God-like and worthy of God to bestow. For all the persons of the Godhead are the more highly honoured by the greatness of the benefits conferred. While God's glory is the highest end in prayer, let us, with believing hearts, hold up the one-prevailing name of Jesus, neither expecting an answer for the inward peace, the enlargement, the fervour of the holiest frame; nor apprehending a denial for an uncomfortable frame, for the merits of that name that prevails with God is evermore the same. Let us look at the prayers in Scripture, and we find that God's glory, the Church's growth and welfare, her holiness and progress, were ever highest in the thoughts and breathings of the saints of God. And if we are animated with any other frame — if that weighs lightly with us that weighs most with God — if our aim does not harmonize with God's in seeking the glory of his name — neither can it be prayer taught by the Spirit, nor prayer offered up in the name of the Son. For the prayer which is of God maketh intercession according to the will of God. (Rom. viii. 27.). The greatest work, perhaps, that some can do for God — and who does not long to do something for him? — is to give him no rest, and never to keep silence, till the Spirit is sent like floods upon the dry ground.

Fragments

from the late Rev. Malcolm Gillies, Stornoway

by Rev. J. A. MacDonald, Fort William

(Continued from page 335)

Even in the company of the godly, we often noticed how Mr Gillies used to be in deep meditation on the truth he was to declare the following day. When with him at Communions he often said, "Oh, I wish I could get a little manna, with the sweet wine of the Gospel for weary and longing souls tomorrow." He found many of the Lord's people throughout the Church a tremendous help while he expounded the truth from the pulpit, because he could detect, from the expression on their countenance, their joy in getting a draught from the wells of salvation. He used to say, "We have some men and women yet in our midst who can draw water out of dry wells."

At one of the Breasclete (Lewis) Communions the portion given out on the Friday for the Fellowship meeting by Duncan MacKay, Missionary, was from the Song of Solomon 1:5, "I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem." Duncan asked for marks of grace on those who

were thus taught by the Holy Spirit, black, carnal, broken vessels, as well as poor and needy in their own estimation, and who so often cry with David, "I poor and needy am" (Psalm 70:5); as distinct from many making a profession while as yet ignorant of the Church's petition, "Yea, wash thou me, and I shall be whiter than snow." Faith in living exercise in the former, however, caused her to conclude that she is comely in His sight.

As Mr Gillies proceeded to open the "Question", he said: "The poor Pharisees were never black in their own eyes; oh no, but as white as driven snow on the Switzerland Mountains, just like the one in the temple with the poor Publican. The poor Publican, on the other hand, stood afar off smiting upon his breast praying, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' During our sojourn here God will be showing to us how black we are at the heart, but remember that He will have eternity to manifest how white and beautiful you are, clothed in the righteousness of His dear Son.

'Behold, the daughter of the King

all glorious is within,

And with embroideries of gold

her garments wrought have been'." Psalm 45:13.

One Sabbath he had wonderful liberty while serving the Lord's Table from the words "And the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces." Isa. 25:8. You shall not have one regret throughout eternity, he said, because of the sorrows, tribulations and the disappointments which you encounter in this weary wilderness. The Lord Jesus Christ has a white silk handkerchief with which He shall wipe away all tears from your weeping eyes at death — but not before, I don't think. He must have wiped David's eyes with it when he said:

"Dumb was I opening not my mouth

because this work was thine."

The eyes of the Church, too, must have got a good wipe of the heavenly handkerchief when she said, "My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand." You are today at His table and very often you feel lonely and as a speckled bird in the world. So did Mary Magdalene as she wept solitarily at the grave while the disciples went to their own homes. Jesus took notice of her weeping as she mistakenly said, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him." He, however, took the silk handkerchief, and with one wipe — "Mary" — wiped away her tears so that she recognised Him and said, "Rabboni." He then, I believe, put her tears into His bottle. So shall He do to yours too, as you close your eyes in death, for "God

shall wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of His people shall He take away from off all the earth . . . ” You are at His table, and soon you shall be at the one above. You may be desiring that the minister would quote some truth that often comforted you. Well, that very often happens, but if not, be of good cheer, keeping your eye, by faith, focused on the promise in Revelation 7:17, “For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

Mr Gillies loved listening to the late Kenneth Maclean, missionary, Breasclete. Speaking to the Question at Achmore on one occasion, Kenneth gave as the first marks of saving faith in exercise in the soul of believers that of humility, sobriety and unfeigned love to Christ and His Cause in the world. It was a time of keen dispute over the validity of a Protest in the Supreme Court. In referring to the matter he pointed out the danger of pride and arrogance, some wishing to vaunt themselves above others in learning, wisdom and understanding. He illustrated the matter in this way. “The other day I was in a shop in the village” he said, “when an English lady came in holding a three year old boy by the hand. The wee fellow insisted on his being lifted up so that he could see what was on the other side of the counter, and pleaded with his mother, O Mother, Mother, lift me up high, lift me up high. Indeed no, answered his mother, not at all, you are high enough where you are.” After the Question I said to Mr Gillies, “Kenneth was very precious today.” “Yes” replied Mr Gillies, “he put the matter in a nut shell.”

Another note Kenneth told that day was as follows: “Last week a letter arrived addressed to my sister Catherine and I. When she opened it there was a sum of money enclosed with a wee note. In this we saw the good providence of God before a Communion season. Catherine continued remarking on the goodness and sovereignty of the Most High in this with which I fully agreed. But then I said to her, Well, Catherine, it is not the money enclosed which I marvel so much at, but that note at the foot of the letter which reads, ‘Kenneth and Catherine there is more to follow’.” In his application of this he said, “When the souls of true believers get a crumb from off the Gospel table they rejoice as they are lifted up in their soul with the sweet thought of ‘more to follow’. O Yes, here there is a little taste of the grapes of Canaan, and the remainder is on the other side of Jordan.”

As Assistant Clerk of Synod, as well as Clerk of Presbytery, Mr Gillies had much to do. The sound of his typewriter was heard early and late at night. One evening I read to him some Synod Minutes which he typed. I

could see that he was in severe distress of mind as he often rubbed his hands together with his usual exclamation, "De so? De so?" (What's this? What's this?). The devil was very real to Mr Gillies. Turning round in his chair, he said, "Well, they will arrive here tonight." With tears in my eyes I asked who they were who were to arrive. "Certain documents," he replied, "which are not calculated to help the Cause and when you go out tomorrow you shall see a man delivering them." This actually happened.

"The secret of the Lord is with

such as do fear His name;

And He His holy covenant

will manifest to them." Psalm 25:14.

My last communion with Mr Gillies in time was at Breasclete, which I shall never forget. This is true also concerning many who heard him that Lord's Day and are now with him inheriting the blessings which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1 Cor. 2:9), and "where the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick." On Saturday I asked him if he had a text for Sabbath morning. "Not yet" was his ready reply, "but I believe God will give me one." I then left him alone and visited some old people in the congregation. When I returned he had this to say: "Well, John Angus, as I stood at the door, I was attracted and melted in my soul by the singing of those at the prayer meeting. I went up to the Church to refresh my soul further with this heavenly music as the congregation sang the Saviour's words in Psalm 22, verse 11, with Kenneth Macdonald, Missionary giving out the line:

'Be not far off, for grief is near

and none to help is found.

Bulls many compass me, strong bulls

of Basham me surround.'

I was also impressed with the fervent prayers and entreaties of the praying men on our behalf in view of tomorrow. I came back with a fresh text."

Well may he have said so. His text on the Sabbath morning was the title to Psalm 22, which is also inspired, "Aijelet Shahr." "The hind of the morning"; in Gaelic "Ailet-sachar," "The hind of the morning." "The hind" he said, "has a wonderful power of resistance in whatsoever circumstances she may find herself. She can swim through lochs, rivers and seas until her hoof punctures her neck. Our blessed 'hind of the morning', the Lord Jesus Christ, during His ministry swam through rivers, lochs and seas of blood and sorrow." He then quoted this

beautiful and touching truth: "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, where with the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger." (Lam. 1:13). "Just think of the time" he said, "when it shall be enquired, 'What are these wounds in thine hands?' and the remarkable reply that shall be given, 'Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.' However, not a bone of Him was broken, as was prophesied of Him. Oh, the blessed 'hind of the morning,' 'Who when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not: but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously'."

On the Monday he looked tired as he preached from the Song of Solomon 8:6, "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, and as a seal upon thine arm . . .", but in a similar frame of mind. The bus which took us back to Stornoway was packed with those returning from the mount of ordinances. He was the last to arrive and, sitting on the top step of the bus, closed the door. Many offered him a seat. He thanked them all, saying, "I am unworthy of the one I have." He then took out his Bible. Let us sing Psalm 46, he said. He continued singing (giving out the line) all the way to the Manse. None realised that it was a farewell song to the communion seasons here below. He knew, we believe, that his next Communion would be where neither bread or wine will be handled any more. As the Saviour Himself said: "For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." Luke 22:16.

Notes of Address

by John MacInnes, Kyles-Scalpay

"Whose fan is in his hand and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather his wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable." Luke 3:17.

These are solemn words my friends. The entire word of God is solemn but parts of it are more solemn than others and these words are exceptionally solemn. These words pertain to every human being that has been, is and will be until the end of time. As the apostle says:—"We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." No one can run away from this as the Psalmist says:—

"From thy spirit whither shall I go
Or from thy presence fly,
Ascend I heaven, lo, thou art there
There if in hell I lie."

These are the matters we ought to be thinking about — but oh! man is so lost so utterly depraved — so hypocritical and so full of himself; and we are all every one of us the same. We are of the same mould — from the Queen on the throne to the poorest and most despised person on earth — we are all the same as far as spiritual matters are concerned. We have all to run the race God has ordained for us. When I myself look back upon my life — what have I? It has gone like a flash and supposing I were to live as long again, What have I? As the Psalmist says —

“Lo thou my days an handbreadth madest
Mine age is in thine eye
As nothing sure each man at best
Is wholly vanity.” Psalm 39:5.

There is only *one* thing needful. One thing only is praiseworthy. The word of God and the Gospel of the blessed Lord is the only thing worth paying attention to. When we shall come to the end of our life and shall come face to face with the endless eternity, there is then only *one* thing needful and that is the word of God and the *One* whom the word of God reveals — the Lord Jesus Christ — the sum and substance of the entire Bible.

The words of our text were spoken by the Holy Spirit through John the Baptist. The Jews looked upon John as a saint and the Bible says he was sanctified from the womb. He was the forerunner of Christ as the prophet Isaiah prophesied 800 years before it happened.

John knew through the teaching of the Holy Spirit that there was no other way of salvation but through the Lord Jesus Christ. He boldly rebuked Herod and told him where he was guilty — and oh, my friends, what a monster of iniquity Herodias was when she asked for the head of the blessed John on a dish.

We are told that the big city of Aberdeen has been contaminated by a tin of bully beef. Oh, my friends, what a tin of bully beef the heart of man is — how full of germs — worse than the typhoid germs. It is the well from which proceeds all sin and iniquity. But, my friends, when grace enters it finds the soul full of thieves and robbers. The first prayer of grace is “Create a clean heart in me.” When the sinner is taught by the Holy Spirit and he realises where he is going, that prayer is uttered in all sincerity. Grace comes in and directs the sinner to the blessed Saviour. Grace will make a person small and insignificant in his own estimation — as I once heard the late worthy Mr Beaton, Gairloch, saying — “It is nature of grace to be emptying the creature.”

Isn't it amazing, my friends, how careless we are about these things? — which goes to prove how utterly depraved and lost we are!

Oh, my friends, I am eternally lost, apart from the Lord Jesus and the efficacy of His sacrifice.

But He will gather His wheat into His garner. The eternal Father is here revealing more and more the power of the Son. All power in Heaven and earth was given to Him by the Father. By the fan in his hand we understand His power. The hosts of heaven and the peoples of the earth are His. Through Him and by Him all things are created. He summoned the worlds out of nothing.

But oh, my friends, we hear such a lot of rubbish today about the creation — millions of years it took the creation to evolve. The Bible says that He created everything in six days, and if the Bible said it, we believe He could have created everything in a *split* second.

Is it not a very good thing for us, my friends, the hand that holds the fan? This was the One that took pity on us when there was no one to pity. The everlasting wealth of the Gospel is here and we have a little of it here yet in Harris. Oh how thankful we should be that we still have the Bible and are allowed to open it.

Christ came and gave to his own the rules of life that will stand firm until the day of judgment. But, oh my friends, what an example He left us — when He was reviled, He reviled not; when He suffered, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgest righteously.

Oh, may He deal with us with His word before it is too late. If you will not bow your knee to him here, you will do so at the day of judgment. When His enemies shall lick the dust in obedience to Him.

Christ with His fan is purging the world. He will gather home the wheat and the chaff he will burn. Is it not a good thing for you, poor soul, that the fan is in Christ's hand? Why then should ye be afraid? It is the merciful hand, the powerful hand, the unerring hand that will not let one grain, however small, fall to the ground.

He is protecting and guiding us, and tonight again we are hearing and reading about Him in whom all the fullness of grace meets, the fullness that can satisfactorily fill our emptiness.

We have need of grace — grace that will take us home out of this terrible world — grace that will empty us out of everything that is our own, that will make us bend our knees, that will keep us running the race set before us, that will make us pray without ceasing, that will make us read the Word. May He bless His word. Let us call upon His Name.

Obituary

The late Mr John MacInnes, elder, North Harris

John MacInnes was born on the 1st of April 1902 in Kyles-Scalpay, Harris, sixth in a family of four sons and five daughters. From his youth he was taught by his parents in the Scriptures and brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Of a bright and lively disposition as a boy, he was also mannerly and circumspect, but as yet in those days he remained ignorant of Christ as his Lord and Saviour.

When he was still a young lad, John was for some time in hospital suffering from disease in his right leg. In order to save his life, his doctors regarded it as necessary to amputate his leg, but young John would not consent. Although he had not the saving grace of God in his heart then, he yet believed that his leg would heal and that he would recover his health. Some time after his discharge from hospital, his leg did begin to heal, he regained his strength and was never again afflicted with that disease.

As a young lad, he joined first the Royal Navy and then the Merchant Navy. Although still without God and without hope in the world, the Spirit of the Lord was striving with him. He had at times conviction of sin but he often silenced the dictates of conscience, continuing in the ways of the world. While in a foreign port at one time, he went ashore for the evening but he found he could not enjoy the company and the ways of the world, owing to his being under deep conviction of his sin and misery. On his way back to his ship, he was tried with a sore and terrible temptation. In later relating to his painful experience under this temptation he would say with an air of solemnity and thankfulness, "Oh, how God supported me and kept me!" During the remainder of his voyage he was learning by bitter experience that "the law is holy and the commandment holy and just and good", that he was a lost sinner on the way to eternity, and that no flesh shall be justified by the deeds of the law in the sight of God. Under the painful lash of an awakened, condemning conscience, he had no rest either day or night.

After returning to the United Kingdom, he journeyed as soon as possible home to Harris. He was searching for peace with God but not finding peace, seeking Christ without finding Him. John's heart was sighing, "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him." At that time a godly young man asked him to accompany him to a communion in Lewis but John courteously declined the invitation, because he felt so utterly unworthy of the company of the people of God. Not long after this, he

came by the grace of God to experience consciously the liberty of the Gospel. While praying and thinking seriously as he stood on the hillside not far from his home, the Word of God came into his soul with calm power and sweetness, and by faith he saw Christ in the Gospel as his own personal Saviour.

On Sabbath 16th September 1933, he came forward to the Lord's Table and from that day until the end of his sojourn here, he was a shining witness for his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He was ordained to the eldership in the North Harris Congregation on 14th November 1945. He was excellently suited to that office because of his intelligence and great gifts and talents sanctified by the grace of God. He was widely read and an attractive and perfect Gaelic speaker, also possessing a very good command of English. He excelled in humility and meekness but in the Cause of the Lord he was graciously bold and firm.

As ministers and elders took notice of his talents and gracious deportment, the Outer Isles Presbytery appointed him as a lay preacher. He laboured in Breasclete for three years and in Uig, Lewis, for six years, but he spent most of his time labouring in the service of his Master in his own native Isle of Harris. He would say that he had no special call from the Lord to preach the Gospel but that he was trying to help the Cause of Christ. Being deeply conscious of his spiritual poverty, and much exercised in prayer for the presence and unction of the Holy Spirit, his Discourses were edifying to those who loved the Lord, while at the same time he solemnly warned unconverted sinners to flee from the wrath to come.

John was of a bright disposition, an amiable and loving man blessed with a sanctified sense of humour, but he knew experimentally the depths of soul exercise as expressed in Psalm 130 — "Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord." The Lord's people were fond of his company and often refreshed by his savoury conversation and occasional hearty laugh. He likewise proved judicious and helpful in the Kirk Session and Presbytery. He wasn't a man who paraded his admiration for and faithfulness to the witness raised and the noble stand made on the side of truth in Scotland in 1893, but he *did* admire and love that honourable witness.

Owing to ill health, John was confined to his home for the last six years of his life. He endured his afflictions patiently, with calm resignation to the will of God. His doctor often remarked on what a fine, intelligent Christian Mr MacInnes was. Shortly before he passed away, I reminded him of the very happy times we had spent together in the Cause of the Lord. "Ah, yes," he said, "but there are happier days ahead

of us." He meant Heaven, being with Christ. Taught by the Holy Spirit of the depravity of his own heart, he would say with feeling in his native tongue, "Se plaigh a th' anns an inntinn fhèdmhor." ("The carnal mind is a plague.'). The Name of Jesus was fragrant to John MacInnes; he savingly understood the divine, infinite virtue of the meritorious righteousness of Christ.

On Monday morning, the 28th day of February 1977, while on the way by ambulance to the Lewis Hospital, John MacInnes departed this life at the age of 74 years to be forever with the Lord. "Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven." (Psalm 107:30).

We extend our sympathy to his sorrowing widow, brother and sisters, and pray that they be blessed by the Lord.

A. McK.

Eadar-Mhineachadh air Salm CXXX

2. Tha earrann eile de na doimhneachdaibh anns am bheil anaman air an cur do bhrìgh peacaidh, a' coimhsheasamh ann an *smuaintibh imcheisteach timchioll ro mheud am mi-chaoimhneis thruaigh a thaobh Dhè*. Is amhuil a tha Daibhidh a' gearain: Salm lxxvii. 3. "Chuimhnich mi air Dia," tha e 'g ràdh, "agus bha mi fo bhuaireas." Cionnus a thàinig e gu bhì 'na chuis-buaireis dha gu'n do chuimhnich e air Dia? Ann an àitibh eile tha e'g aideachadh gu'm b'e so a bha na fhuasgladh agus na chumail suas dha. Cionnus a nis gu bheil e 'meudachadh 'amhghair? Cha robh na h-uile cuis gu maith eadar Dia agus e féin; oir roimh so 'nuair a bha e 'cuimhneachadh air Dia, bha a smuaintean air mhodh àraidh air an cleachdadh timchioll a ghràidh agus a choimhneis; ach a nis is ann a tha iad air an lionadh le a pheachadh agus a mhi-chaoimhneas féin. Tha so a' dùsgadh a bhròin. Ann an so, ma seadh, tha earrann de'n imcheist a th'ann an lorg a' peacaidh. Deir an t-anam ann féin, "A cheutair amaideich, an ann mar so a dh'iocas tu do'n Tighearn? An e so an didladh a rinn thu ris air son a ghràidh, agus a chaoimhneis, agus a chomfhurtachd, agus a thròcairean uile? An e so do chaoimhneas do d'charaid? An e so an uail a bha thu 'deanamh ann, gu'n robh thu air a' shamhuil sin de mhaitheas agus de òirdheirceas 'fhaotainn ann, as ged a dheanadh gach uile dhuine a threigsinn, nach treigeadh tusa a chaoidh e? Am bheil do gheallaidhean uile a thug thu do Dhia ann an aimsir d' àmhghair, 'nuair a bha thu fo fhiachaibh ro chomharaichte dha, agur a

bha làmh chumhachdach a Spioraid mhaith air d'anam, a nis air tighinn gu so, gu'n deanadh tu air dhòigh cho amaideach a dh'i-chuimhneachadh? Mo thruaighte! tha e nis air tionndadh a thaobh uait; agus ciod a ni thu? Nach 'eil eadhon nàire ort iarraidh air pilleadh?" B' iad an samhail so de smuaintibh a rinn cridhe Pheadair a bhioradh gu goirt 'nuair a thuit e. Tha an t-anam 'gam faotainn an-ìochdmhor mar am bàs, agus làidir mar an uaigh. Tha e 'ceangailte 'nan cuibhrichtibh, ionnus nach urrainn e comhfhurtachd a ghaibhail. Agus ann an so tha earrann nach 'eil beag de na doimhneachdaibh mu'm bheil sinn a' labhairt: oir tha am mi-chaoimhneas so a thaobh Dhé a' geurachadh uile chleachdaidhean àmhgharach sin a' bhròin agus na nàire, leis am feudar anam duine a chur fo bhuaireas.

3. Bhuinidh mar an ceudna *mothachadh as ùr de chorruich air a thoilltinn* do na doimhneachdaibh so. Tha so mar fhosgladh sheann chreuchdan. 'Nuair a tha daoine air dhol troimh mhothachadh feirge, agus air saorsa agus suaimhneas 'fhaotainn tre fhuil Chrìosd, gu'm bitheadh na seann smuaintean eagalach a' faotainn aiseirigh a ris, a' dheanamh gnothuich ri ifrinn, ris a' mhallachadh, ris an lagh, agus ri feirg Dhé, tha so da rìreadh 'na dhoimhneachd. Agus tha so gu tric a' tachairt a dh' anamaibh gràsmhor do bhrìgh peacaidh: Salm lxxxviii. 7, "Luidh d' fhearg orm gu teann," deir an Salmadair. Rinn e a theannachadh agus a chlaoidheadh gu goirt. Feudaidh fèin-dìteadh a bhi ann a thaobh a bhi 'toilltinn feirge, eadhon far am bheil dearbh-bheachd chomhfhurtail air còir ann an Chrìosd. Agus ann an so tha'n t-anam a' faotainn mòr mhillseachd, mar ni a tha cuideachail ann a bhi 'g àrdachadh saor ghràis. Ach anns a' chùis a tha r'ar n-aghaidh, tha an t-anam air 'fhàgail fo mhothachadh feirge as eugmhais na saorsa sin. Tha e 'ga thilgeadh fèin fo mhallachadh an lagha agus do theine ifrinn, gun shealladh sòlasach sam bith a dh' fhuil Chrìosd. Tha an t-anam a' còmhradh ris a' bhàs, agus ri nithibh a tha cosmhuil ri bhi treòrachadh thuige. Tha an Tighearn, mar an ceudna, chum a bhi 'meudachadh nan imcheist, a' cur spionnadh nuaidh anns an lagh,— a' toirt ùghdarrais as ùr dha, mar gu'm b'ann, an t-anam ud a chur 'n làimh; agus gu brath anns an t-saoghal so cha bhi an lagh air dheireadh a' dol 'an ceann a dhleasdanas.

4. Tha *eagalan deuchainneach roimh bhreitheanasaidh aimsireil* a' comh-chuideachadh nan doimhneachdan ceudna; oir bheir Dia breth air a shluagh. Agus tha breitheanas gu tric a' toiseachadh aig tigh Dhé. "Ged nach deanadh Dia," deir an t-anam so, "mo thilgeadh uaith a chaoidh, — ged a mhaitheadh e m' euceartaibh; gidheadh feudaidh e a'

shamhuil sin de dhioghaltas a dheanamh air mo ghniomh-araibh as a bhitheas 'na dhomblas dhomh ré mo làithean uile." Chriothnuich m' fheòil le h-uamhunn romhad," deir Daibhidh, Salm cxix. 120, "agus bha eagal orm roimh do bhreitheanasaidh." Cha-n'eil fios aige ciod a dh' fheudas an Dia mòr a dheanamh air; agus air do gheur-mhotheachadh peacaidh a bhi 'na anam, a tha aig freumh a' chor so gu h-iomlan, tha gach uile bhreitheanas Dhé làn uamh uinn dha. Air uairibh saoilidh e gu bheil Dia a' rùnachadh *uile shalachar a chridhe a chur am follais*, ionnus gu'm bi e 'na mhasladh agus na chùis-mhagaidh anns an t-saoghal. "O," deir e, "na dean ball-maslaidh an amadain dhìom," Salm xxxix. 8. Air uairibh bithidh eagal air gu feud Dia a bhualadh sìos gu h-obann le breitheanas comharaichte éigin, agus gu'n dean e a ghearradh a mach as an t-saoghal ann an dorchadas agus ann am bròn: is amhuil a tha Daibhidh ag ràdh, "Na buin air falbh mi ann ad fheirg." Air uairibh bithidh eagal air gu'n tig e do chrannchur Ionah, agus gu'n *tog e ànradh stoirm ha theaghlach*, no anns an *eaglais* d' am buin e, no anns an *rioghachd* anns am bheil e: "Na bith eadh nàire orra-san air mo sgàth-sa." Tha na nithe so a' taiseachadh a chridhe, mar a tha Iob a' labhairt, ionnus gu bheil e air leughadh 'na chòm. 'N uair a tha àmhghar no breitheanas follaiseach sam bith o làimh Dhé ann an comh-chuideachd geur-mhothachaidh peacaidh anns a' choguis, tha e 'claoidheadh an anama, co ac is ni e a mhain roimh am bheil eagal air, no ni a tha da rìreadh air a leagadh; mar ann an cùis bhràithrean Ioseiph anns an Eiphit. Tha an t-anam an sin air a luasgadh o dhoimhne gu doimhne. Tha mothachadh d' a pheachdh ga chur a bheachdachadh àmhghair, agus tha 'amhghar 'gu thilgeadh air ais air a mhothachadh peacaidh. Tha doimhne a' gairm air dhoimhne, ionnus gu bheil uile thonnann Dhé a' dol thar a cheann. Agus tha gach aon diubh a' maothachadh an anama, agus a' geurachadh a mhothachaidh do'n aon eile. Tha 'amhghar 'ga thaiseachadh, air chor as gu bheil mothachadh peacaidh a' gearradh ni's ro dhoimhne, agus a' fàgail nan lotan ni's ro mhò; agus tha mothachadh peacaidh a' lagachadh an anama, ionnus gu bheil 'amhghar ni's dorra a ghiùlan, agus uallach air a mheudachadh.

Book Reviews

Romans by Geoffrey B. Wilson. pp254. Price £1. Banner of Truth Publication.

This small Banner of Truth paperback contains 'multum in parvo'. It is what it claims to be a Digest of Reformed Comment on this great

Epistle of the Apostle Paul, and because of its size, could be a most useful 'vade mecum', especially for preachers. On each verse we find edifying and concise remarks. As can be seen from the Bibliography at the end of the book, the author draws widely and wisely from many different sources. The writers own comments are in a similar vein. His ability to co-ordinate and give continuity and cohesion to strands of thought, from a range so wide and varied, indicate skill as well as labour. The orthodoxy of many of the authors quoted is above suspicion. Other names appear, of whom this may not be so, but as far as we can determine, what is cited from their pens is in the orthodox tradition. We feel however, the author's own preference for the American Standard Version throughout, greatly mars this book. Nevertheless, if read with prayer and care, much useful information can be gleaned. F.M.

The Puritan Experiment in the New World. Westminster Conference Papers, pp. 121, price 95 pence.

The Pilgrim Fathers who in the 17th Century fled from religious persecution in England had to face formidable church problems in the New World to which they had betaken themselves. General ideals of religious freedom, cherished so highly and conserved at such a great price in sacrifice and suffering, must now be more closely defined as they were put into practice in an unfamiliar environment. Mistakes were no doubt made and definitions were not always approved. Controversies raged and church courts engaged in trials for heresy over questions which even today have not been completely solved. It was a time of experiment. The Puritan Conference of December 1976 heard some of these problems dealt with in six papers which were read to the Conference and are now published under the title "The Puritan Experiment in the New World." Each paper is centred around the name of a well known minister whose views not only influenced the proceedings of the New England divines but may be regarded as fairly representative of Puritan thought as a whole.

The first paper is by Stephen Brachlow on John Robinson and the Separatist Ideal. And there follow papers by Robt. M. Horn on Thomas Hooker — The Soul's Preparation for Christ (this is not the Richard Hooker, the Anglican Divine); R. T. Kendall on John Cotton — First English Calvinist?; Leighton H. James on Roger Williams — The Earliest Legislator for a Full and Absolute Liberty of Conscience; David Boorman on The Halfway Covenant; the last paper is by D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones on Jonathan Edwards and the Crucial Importance of Revival.

These are all important papers which are the result of careful study and wide reading on problems which are still found in the Church today. What preparation, for example, is considered necessary to open the heart to receive the salvation of Christ is still exercising thought among the churches of Holland. It will come as a surprise to many to learn that on the ground of the general invitation of the Gospel to all men, that Kendall maintains that Calvin held the view that "Christ died for all." It is heartening to read again the quotation given in the words of John Cotton, the eminent minister of Boston, Massachusetts, which will awaken a ready response from Calvinists, as, when asked why in his latter day he indulged nocturnal studies more than formerly, he replied: "Because I love to sweeten my mouth with a piece of Calvin before I go to sleep." The doctrine of the "Halfway Covenant" which later became a term of derision, gives the Puritan conception of the place which should be accorded in the visible church to its general and reputable members with their children by the sacrament of baptism. The Reformed position on Baptism is clearly stated in the Westminster Confession of Faith, ch. xxviii, sects. i and iv.

The final paper by Dr M. Lloyd-Jones, as has been so often true of Conference papers in past years, is perhaps the most helpful and valuable of the series. Jonathan Edwards was the greatest figure, both as philosopher and theologian, that appeared on the New England scene. Dr Lloyd-Jones would rate him even higher, above both Calvin and Luther — in whom Puritanism reached "the very zenith or acme" of its development. Jonathan Edwards rejected both the Halfway Covenant doctrine and the idea of preparation for grace. It is good to learn that a definitive Edition of the Complete Works of Jonathan Edwards is in preparation and will in due time be published, containing much fresh material such as sermons, letters, miscellaneous articles, etc., not found in the two editions of his works already in print, the two large volumes by the Banner of Truth and the six volume edition, printed in New York and Edinburgh.

This Westminster Conference publication is fully up to those of previous years and the 121 pages of such a well bound and attractively prepared booklet are well worth the low price of 95 pence. A.F.M.

The Golden Treasury of Puritan Quotations. Compiled by I. D. E. Thomas. Banner of Truth Trust Paperback. Price. £1.50. 321pp.

In this very extensive selection of quotations from the Puritan writers we have indeed a golden treasury. No less than one hundred and

forty-four Puritan writers are quoted on a large variety of topics. Those most often quoted are Thos. Adams, Richard Baxter, Thos. Brooks, John Flavel, William Gurnal, Thos. Manton, John Owen, Henry Smith, George Swanock, John Trapp and Thos. Watson. Quite a few quotations are also give of Stephen Charnock, Thos. Fuller, Thos. Goodwin, Joseph Hall, Samuel Rutherford, William Secker and Richard Sibbes; as well as a smaller number from a host of other Puritan divines. The Scottish divines do not figure prominently but are not altogether overlooked. The quotations are classified under different headings according to their subject matter and the subjects are placed in the book in alphabetical order, affording easy reference to the Puritans' pithy statements on a great variety of topics.

We recommend the purchase of this digest to those who enjoy strong meat. It is not, however, to be consumed at one go. It contains food for thought for many days.

D.B.M.

Letters from Rhodesia

Dear Friends,

It is now some months since we returned safely to Rhodesia. The Most High in His kindness gave travelling mercies to and from Scotland.

Our stay there was most pleasant and a great pleasure it was to meet relations and friends once more, and to be encouraged by the interest shown by many in Mission work.

The interest shown by the various congregations in Mission work was apparent when I was asked by several to give a lecture on work in Rhodesia or to show slides. It was not possible to accept all invitations, but at those we were able to accept, keen interest was apparent from the attendance and liberality.

After a most enjoyable but busy holiday, the time came for our return to the Mission Field. It seemed more difficult than previous to leave the Lord's people and various friends, especially when the change that most impressed us was the blank places in our congregations. Some of these we are sure have gone to their eternal rest. What will another three years unfold? Oh to be ready for eternity.

Our safe arrival in Rhodesia was welcomed by various friends, and the feeling on arrival was that we had never been away. Strange, it seemed like a dream, and here we are once more back to former work.

It was only when we returned that the reality of Mr Van Woerden and his family leaving Bulawayo struck us. Mr van Woerden who was an elder in the Bulawayo Congregation spent his spare time assisting in the building of the Congregation, while his normal working hours were spent in establishing and organising the Thembiso Children's Home. Mr van Woerden has now resigned from his work in Ebenezer Scripture Mission.

To this present day, the Most High has graciously inclined the hearts of a goodly number from the surrounding townships to attend the services in our Bulawayo Church. Our longing is that He would also open their hearts as He did that of Lydia; "whose heart the Lord opened." That is a work beyond the power of man, but not beyond the power of God. Once again I take the opportunity to ask you to plead at a Throne of Grace for an out pouring of the Holy Spirit to break the hard hearts and open these hearts to acknowledge sin, and the need of Christ as Saviour to save from the wrath which is to come. "Brethren pray for us".

Yours sincerely,

Donald A. Ross

Ingwenya Mission
19/9/77

Dear Friends,

Nearly three months have passed since our loaded vehicles passed through the south gate of Mbumba, leaving behind a few sad staff members and deserted buildings. A strange quietness had befallen the scene which only a week or two before had been bustling with activity. We had been given three days in which to pack up valuable hospital equipment and our personal effects. You can imagine our feelings as we broke the news to the few remaining patients, (some had sensed trouble and had already left) and proceeded to dismantle the result of years of work. Over the preceding few months we had been particularly busy re-organising aspects of the work and had been pleased with the results. Now it seemed as if all was in vain. A tearful nurse helped to pack up equipment from the Isolation Block which had only just been put into commission. X-ray equipment, patients' records and most of the drugs from dispensary were hastily stowed in crates, as we feared that hospital property might have been a target for terrorists, even in our absence.

It was with a sense of relief that we arrived at Ingwenya on the evening of 24th June. No doubt there are many lessons for us to learn from the strange Providence that had overtaken us. We were somewhat encouraged recently when reading a sermon of the late Rev. D. Beaton. Preaching

from Ezekiel chapter one, verse six he spoke of many aspects of God's Providence. We quote the following:— "Remember this, dear friend, of the One Who is sitting on the throne, it is no weak hand that is holding the sceptre. There is never a time when He is taken unawares. It is unnecessary for Him to revise His plans and His purposes because of any new situation arising. He has seen them from Eternity and He knows the full force of the opposition, knows the method that will be adopted by those who oppose Him, and His plans will go forward."

As the weeks have passed we have had reason more than once to acknowledge the goodness of the Most High in delivering us from the "snare of the fowler." Up to the time of writing the situation has not improved. Two weeks ago three Africans were murdered by terrorists at the Dagamella store about 30 miles from Mbuma. The terrorists were looking for the European owner of the shop and ordered the Africans to lie down. When they tried to run away, all were mercilessly shot.

It is a sad day when Governments and Churches support organisations whose "liberation" campaign entails the withdrawal of essential health services from their own people, and the interruption of the education of thousands of school-children.

At the time of writing a small clinic is functioning at Mbuma. The African Medical Assistant in charge is Mrs Sithandiwe Mlio who was educated at Ingwenya Mission where she was taught by Mr Mzamo. She was employed at another Mission Hospital until it also was forced to close this year. We ask you to pray that the Clinic will continue to function free from molestation by terrorists.

Over the past few weeks the houses and hospital at Mbuma have been virtually stripped of furniture and equipment. Easily replaceable items are being sold and the rest is safely packed in a Bulawayo warehouse.

Some of you will already have had an opportunity to speak to Mr Neil Murray who returned home at the end of August. In a very short time the rest of us expect to leave this country and return to our homes in different parts of the world.

In conclusion we would like to express our sincere gratitude to Christian friends in various countries, whose prayers have been our great support over the years and especially in recent trying times. We trust that we in turn, will be enabled unceasingly, to remember at a Throne of Grace, the Lord's people whom we are leaving behind.

Yours very sincerely,

C.A. Turner,

J.A. Cox,

M. van Saane

Church Notes

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Outer Isles: At Stornoway on 15th November at 11 a.m.

Northern: At Bonar on 15th November at 2.30 p.m.

Southern: At Glasgow on 29th November at 6 p.m.

Barnoldswick Communion Services

The Kirk Session of the Barnoldswick Congregation have authorised the administration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, on Sabbath, 11th December, 1977 (D.V.). Services as follows:

Thursday, 8th December, 7.45 p.m.; Friday, 9th December, 7.45 p.m.; Saturday, 10th December, 3.00 p.m.; Sabbath, 11th December, 10.45 a.m. and 6.30 p.m.; Monday, 12th December 7.45 p.m. Will anyone who wishes to have accommodation provided please contact Rev. J.M. Brentrall, Interim Moderator, in good time.

An Interesting Development

In 1958, a book entitled *Revelation and the Bible* was issued in which articles were written to deal with the situation in contemporary evangelical thought on the subject of the authority of Scripture. Among these articles was one by Merrill C. Tenney, a New Testament scholar, in which he dealt with *Reversals of New Testament Criticism*. He made the following interesting statement. "The most recent venture in the field of textual criticism, the creation of a larger critical text of the New Testament based on the *Textus Receptus* and including collations of all the major manuscripts, will doubtless show that the WH text was not infallible, although it was undeniably the best up to its time." While we do not agree with the value placed upon the Westcott and Hort, we were very interested at the movement to return to the *Textus Receptus*, which is the Greek text underlying the Authorised Version of the New Testament and which we have always believed to be much superior to the modern forms of text which have formed the basis of the unsatisfactory new translations. Over the years we have been waiting with some impatience, to hear more about this new development.

We have read with considerable pleasure a book just issued called *The Identity of the New Testament Text* by Wilbur N. Pickering. It is a scholarly and powerful defence of the *Textus Receptus* and a devastating

criticism of the modern productions of the text of the New Testament. The book is probably too technical for a review in the *Free Presbyterian Magazine*. As it is also very expensive, we are endeavouring to obtain a copy for the Church Library and hope to place it there in the near future for the benefit of ministers interested in the subject. At the close of this book we are given the following information — "In terms of closeness to the original, the King James Version and the *Textus Receptus* have been the best available up to now. Thomas Nelson, Inc, Publishers, is sponsoring a forthcoming critical edition of the Traditional Text (Majority, "Byzantine") under the editorship of Zanes Hodges, Arthur Farstad, and others which while not definitive will prove to be very close to the final product, I believe." We shall have to wait, of course, until we have an opportunity of examining the efforts of these scholars before passing any comment on their work, but it is a pleasure to know that the movement noticed in 1958 is now coming to fruition. D. M., Glasgow

Plockton/Kyle Manse Fund

The Congregation of Kyle and Plockton have agreed a site at School Road, Kyle of Lochalsh and have accepted a tender of £19,400 to build a suitable Manse for the congregation. As the congregation is not large help in the way of interest-free loans and donations to the above fund would be most welcome from friends throughout the church. These should be sent to M. Stewart, "Bushy Creek", Kyle or I. MacCuaig, Arnesdale by Kyle.

Alex Murray, *Chairman, Deacons' Court*

Iain MacCuaig, *Clerk, Deacons' Court*

"Oh, what wisdom is it to believe, and not to dispute; to subject the thoughts to His court, and not to repine at any act of His justice. He hath done it: all flesh be silent. It is impossible to be submissive and religiously patient, if ye stay your thoughts down among the confused rollings and wheels of second causes; as, 'Oh the place' Oh the time'. 'Oh, if this had been, this had not followed' Oh, the linking of this accident with this time and place! Look up to the aster motion of the first wheel".

Samuel Rutherford
