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Grace and Glory

It is on the promises of God's Word that the hope of the believer relies. If our hope is in God, then what need we have, at the beginning of another year, to lay hold on the promises of God's Word which are all "Yea and Amen" in Christ Jesus. The believing soul rejoices in the steadfastness of the promises, knowing that they are the Word of Him who cannot lie and who will surely fulfil all that He has spoken.

If it is true of us that we have not yet come to know in our own spiritual experience the reality of Gospel blessings, then it is to Christ that we must look as poor needy sinners in order that we may know God as a promising God in Christ, a God who promises to blot out sin, iniquity and transgression for His own Name's sake. If we come to know Christ as our own personal Saviour through the effectual working of His Spirit in us, then all the promises of the Gospel are ours in Christ Jesus. By faith we may lay hold on them, and on Christ who is the centre and substance of them all. What a beginning for 1978 if Christ was made all in all to us!

The Lord has promised to give grace and glory to His people. It is by grace they are saved through faith in Christ Jesus. It is by grace they progress in the life of faith — "by the grace of God I am what I am", the Apostle Paul could say. It is by grace they stand; it is by grace they endure. It is by grace that they grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. It is by grace they are kept through faith unto the day of redemption.

What a noble thing grace must be when its uses are so varied and its effects so wonderful! This will make us ask, What is grace? The answer may not be easy to arrive at. Perhaps the more we look into it, the more deep and amazing it will appear to us, so that we will be compelled to cry out, Oh, what is grace? What is grace then? As it is manifested by God

in His grace towards sinners of our fallen race, it is the manifestation of His free, overflowing favour and love to the hell-deserving. Grace in His people, on the other hand, is the disposition which the favour of God in Christ produces in them. Grace is also the fruit that flows from that disposition. Grace is divine in its origin, it is heavenly in its nature and it draws the soul upwards towards God. The possessor of it can only marvel at it and glory in the Giver of it. Its effect, whether given in large measure or small, is not to lift up but to humble the soul in the dust. It causes the soul to say:

Not unto us, Lord, not to us,
but do Thou glory take
Unto Thy Name, ev'n for Thy truth
and for Thy mercy's sake.

Those who have shone conspicuously in this world because of how richly grace was bestowed upon them were, in their own eyes, but worms of the dust. Dependence upon God for renewed supplies of grace is the hall-mark of grace in the heart. Oh, how we need this dependence at the beginning of another year!

But grace is not glory. Grace and glory are joined together. What God has joined shall never be put asunder. He will give grace and glory. Death or hell cannot sever these two. Grace is glory begun. Glory is grace perfected. There is but a step between the gracious soul and everlasting glory. In what will glory consist? The unveiling, in never-ending display, of the glory of God's grace in Christ Jesus. In time, the outflowing of grace is through Christ. He has opened a way for grace to flow out to the undeserving through the rent veil of His flesh. So in glory, through the vehicle of His glorified humanity, shall the riches of divine grace stream forth to the objects of His love. Its effect will be to fill their hearts with love and peace and joy. But not only this, for it will also so overwhelm them in its rich profusion and glory, that it will make them fall down before the throne of God and "cast their crowns before the throne, saying 'Thou are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power'."

Heaven must be in thee before thou canst be in heaven.

George Swinnock.

Heaven

by Robert Bolton

The Glory of Heaven

The excellency, glory and sweetness of heaven, no created understanding can possibly conceive, much less comprehend. The eye of man hath seen admirable things, even all the wonders of the world; the ear hath heard the most exquisite and ravishing melodies; the heart can imagine worlds of comforts and strange delights. But if, as Paul tells us (I Corinthians 2:9), the heavenly wisdom and divine sweetness revealed in the gospel on earth is incomprehensibly sublime and glorious, far surpassing the utmost which the eye, ear or heart of man hath seen, heard or conceived, how transcendently unutterable is their full accomplishment in the highest heavens through all eternity, where we shall enjoy the face and beatifical presence of the most glorious and all-sufficient God, as an object with which all the powers of our souls will be satisfied with everlasting delight? With what a vast disproportion, then, doth the unimaginable excellency of heavenly bliss transcend the most enlarged created capacity? Infinitely, infinitely.

But why is the glory of heaven not fully revealed to us? Our gracious God, in His holy, unsearchable wisdom, doth detain from the eye of our understandings a full comprehension of that most glorious state above, in order to exercise in the meantime our faith, love, obedience and patience. In this vale of tears we must live by faith.

Besides, it is a fruit of our fall in Adam, and the condition of this unglorified mortal state here upon earth, to know but in part (I Corinthians 13:12), from which our knowledge above shall differ, as the knowledge of a child from that of a perfect man. "It is not for us," saith Bernard, "in these earthly bodies, to mount into the clouds, to pierce this fulness of light, to break into this bottomless depth of glory, or to dwell in that unapproachable brightness. This is reserved to the last day, when Christ Jesus shall present us glorious and pure to His Father without spot or wrinkle."

Of necessity also, our understandings must be supernaturally irradiated and enlightened with extra-ordinary enlargement and divine-ness, before we can possibly comprehend the glorious brightness of heavenly joys and full sweetness of eternal bliss. It is as impossible in this life for any mortal brain to conceive them as to compass the heavens with a span or contain the oceans in a nutshell!

Yet although we cannot comprehend the whole, we may consider a part. Though we cannot take a full draught of that over-flowing fountain of endless bliss, we may taste a drop. For to this end the Scriptures afford us a glimpse of heaven, by comparing it to the most excellent, precious and desirable things on earth.

First, it is called a kingdom (Matthew 25:34; Luke 12:32). Now a kingly throne is reckoned the crown of all earthly happiness, the highest aim of the most eager and restless aspirations and ambitions of men. It is a confluence of all riches, pleasures, glory and royal pageantry. What stirs and stratagems, murders and mischiefs, mysterious plots and machiavellian depths, have been hatched to catch a crown! But heaven is a kingdom which surpasseth in glory and excellency all earthly kingdoms, as much as heaven transcendeth earth, and inconceivably more! Moreover, it is called the kingdom of God (Acts 14:22), a kingdom of God's own making, beautifying and blessing, replenished and shining with majesty, beseeming the glorious residence of the King of kings.

Secondly, it is called an inheritance (Acts 20:32) — not a tenement, to be possessed or vacated at the landlord's pleasure, but an inheritance, settled upon us and sealed unto us by the dearest and highest price that was ever payed, which will be as precious and acceptable after many millions of years as it was on the day it was laid down. Besides, it is called a rich and glorious inheritance (Ephesians 1:18), fit for the majesty and mercy of Almighty God to bestow, the invaluable blood of His Son to purchase, and the dearly-beloved of His soul to enjoy. It is called an 'inheritance of the saints in light' (Col. 1:12) — every word sounds a world of sweetness! Add to this, that it is "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away" (I Peter 1:4), and there can never possibly be the least diminution, much less abolition, of heavenly glory, but all bliss above will be as fresh and full innumerable years hence, and so through all eternity, as at our first entrance.

Thirdly, it is called a crown — "a crown of righteousness" (2 Timothy 4:8), fairly come by, and full dearly bought; "a crown of life" (James 1:12); "a crown of glory" (I Peter 5:4); "glory" itself (Romans 9:23); nay, an "exceeding eternal weight of glory" (2 Corinthians 4:17) — a superlative transcendent phrase, such as is not to be found in all the rhetoric of the heathen, because they never wrote of such a theme, nor with such a Spirit.

Lastly, it is called "fulness of joy", "everlasting pleasures" (Psalm 16:11); "a swift-flowing river and torrent of pleasures" (Psalm 36:8); the very joy of our Lord and Master (Matthew 25:21).

The Place of Heaven

But now let us consider the place itself, where God and all His blessed ones live eternally.

But how can an infinite God be said to dwell in a created heaven? Before the creation, there was neither "when" nor "where", but only God, an incomprehensible perfection of indivisible immensity and eternity. Because there was nothing to which He might manifest Himself, He cannot be said to have dwelt anywhere. He was neither out of Himself, nor in anything else, but only in Himself. He was therefore a heaven unto Himself. But when He pleased, He created the world, that in so large and goodly a theatre He might declare and convey His power, goodness and bounty, some way or other, to all His creatures. Especially, He prepared this glorious heaven of which we speak, not that it might enclose or enlarge His happiness, but that He might unspeakably beautify and irradiate it with the inconceivable splendour of His majesty and glory, and so communicate Himself beatifically to all the elect, saints and angels, even for ever and ever. Even now, He is said to be without the heavens, inasmuch as His infinite essence cannot be contained in them, but necessarily contains them (I Kings 8:27). As Bernard saith: "He is nowhere", because no place, whether real or imaginary, can comprehend or contain Him, and "He is everywhere", because no body, nor space, nor spiritual substance, can exclude His presence, or avoid the penetration of His essence.

Where then is heaven? This glorious place, where nothing but light and blessed immortality, joy and tranquillity, doth dwell, even for ever and ever, is seated above the visible heavens or starry firmament (Deut. 10:14; Josh. 2:11; Luke 24:51; Acts 7:49; 2 Cor. 12:2; Eph. 4:10). It is called the third heaven. The first is that whole expanse immediately above the earth, where the birds fly, and whence rain, snow, hail and meteors descend (Gen. 7:11; Deut. 28:12; Psalms 8:8; Matt. 6:26).

The second consists of the visible firmament, in which God hath placed the sun, moon and stars (Gen. 1:14; Deut. 17:3; Psalms 8:3; Psalms 19:1).

The third is where God is said specially to dwell, whither Christ ascended, and where all the blessed ones shall be forever (I Kings 8:30). No natural knowledge can possibly be gained of this heaven; nor can mathematics, astronomy and philosophy help us here, for it is neither observable nor movable. But God's Book assures us that this heaven of happiness and house of God is above all visible heavens whatever.

The Excellency of Heaven

This most excellent place, replenished with those unknown pleasures which attend everlasting happiness, where God, blessed for ever, is seen face to face, is made admirable and illustrious by its magnitude and its beauty.

Its **magnitude** is evident from the description of it, in Rev. 21:10, as "that great city". And even if the chapter refers to the glory of the Church here on earth (as many learned and holy divines think), when both Jews and Gentiles shall be happily united into one Christian body and brotherhood before Christ's Second Coming, yet it proves no less that the heaven of heavens is a place most glorious above all comparison and thought. For if there is to be such amplitude, beauty and majesty in the Church militant, how infinitely will this beauty be more beautified, and this glory glorified, with incredible additions in the Church triumphant!

Its vastness is most evident also from the multitude of mansions prepared for many thousand thousands of glorified saints after the last day (John 14:2). "There are in heaven," saith Rollock, "habitations sufficient to contain infinite worlds," besides the numberless numbers of blessed angels, the present residents of those heavenly palaces.

The incredible distances between the earth and the remotest stars also hint at its largeness. If I should here tell you the various computations of astronomers, the distances would seem to exceed all credibility. And yet, since heaven encompasses all these, how incomprehensible must its greatness be?

Consider also what a large expanse and immensity it becomes the mighty Lord of heaven and earth to choose for revealing His glory in the highest and most transcendent manner to all His noblest creatures, infinitely endeared to Him by the death of His dearest Son, even the Son of His love, through all eternity. For He doth all things like Himself: if He loves, it is with a free, infinite and eternal love; if He works, it is to make a world; if He be angry, it is to flood the whole earth; if He sets His affections upon a mortal worm, who trembles at His Word and is weary of sin, it is to make him a king, give him a paradise, crown him with eternity; if He builds a house for all His holy ones, it must needs be a None-such, most magnificent, stately and glorious, far above the reach of the thoughts of men.

Lastly, what a spacious and incomparable inheritance, what a rich, supereminent and sumptuous palace was the precious blood of the Son

of God by its inestimable price and merit, able to procure at the hands of His Father for His redeemed!

Its beauty. To pass by that notion of the glorious projection and transfusion of ethereal light from the sun and stars upward into heaven, whence ariseth a mass of shining beauty, as a groundless conceit, for "the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof" (Rev. 21:23), let us take a scantling of the incomparable brightness and splendour of heaven, by that which orthodox divines soberly tell us from Revelation 21 and other places (Psa. 36:9; Col. 1:12; I Tim. 6:16), to wit, that it is wholly light; not like the stary firmament, bespangled here and there with glittering spots, but all as it were one great pellucid sun, from every point pouring out abundantly whole rivers of purest heavenly light. Hence in allusion to the brightest things below, it is said to have walls of jasper, buildings of gold, foundations of precious stones, gates of pearl, being clear as crystal, shining like glass, transparent in brightness as a molten looking-glass. "O how beautiful, how glorious, how admirable a city is this! For if the gates be of pearl and the streets of gold, then what are the inner rooms? what are the dining chambers? and what are the lodging rooms? O how unspeakable is the glory of this city, that kings shall throw down their crowns and sceptres before it, counting all their pomp and glory but as dust in respect of it?" (Dent).

Ancient divines also apprehended this glorious beauty and brightness in the beatific heaven. "If those who are condemned," saith Basil, "be cast into utter darkness, it is evident that those who walked worthy of God have their rest in supercelestial light." "The eternal city," saith Augustine, "is incomparably bright and beautiful, where there is triumph, truth, dignity, sanctity, life, eternity."

Besides the superexcellency of its native lustre, this blessed heaven is made infinitely more illustrious and resplendent by all the most admirable and amiable shining glory of that dearest ravishing object to a glorified eye, the glorified body of Jesus Christ. In comparison to its beauty and brightness, all sidereal light is but a darksome mote and blackest midnight (Matt. 17:2).

Add to this the incredible and unspeakable splendour of many millions of glorified saints, whose bodies also will outshine the sun (Dan. 12:3; Matt. 13:43; Phil. 3:21; Col. 3:4; I John 3:2), and what a mighty and immeasurable mass of most glorious light will arise from this illustrious concurrence and these mutual shining reflections — of heaven itself, of the Sun of that sacred palace, and of all its blessed inhabitants, all which every glorified eye shall be supernaturally enabled and ennobled to

behold and enjoy in a kindly and comfortable manner with ineffable delight and everlastingness!

Consider too, that if the porch be so stately and glorious, garnished and bespangled with so many bright shining lights and beautiful stars, what majesty and incomprehensible excellencies may we expect in the palace of the great King itself, and the heavenly habitations of the saints and angels? How full of beauty and glory are the chief rooms and presence chamber of the great and royal Monarch of heaven and earth!

(to be continued)

Prayer — A costly and glorious privilege

by Rev. M. MacInnes, Toronto

"The church has many organizers, but few agonizers; many who pay, but few who pray; many resters, but few wrestlers; many who are enterprising, but few who are interceding. People who are not praying are playing. Two pre-requisites of dynamic Christian living are vision and passion, and both of these are generated in the prayer closet. The ministry of preaching is open to a few. The ministry of praying is open to every child of God. Do not mistake action for unction, commotion for creation, and rattles for revivals. The secret of praying is praying in secret. A worldly Christian will stop praying, and a praying Christian will stop worldliness. When we pray, God listens to our heartbeat. Hannah's 'lips' moved, but her voice was not heard (I Samuel 1:12, 13). When we pray in the Spirit, there are groanings which cannot be uttered (Romans 8:26). Tithes may build a church, but tears will give it life. This is the difference between the modern church and the early church. Our emphasis is on paying, theirs was on praying. When we have paid, the place is taken. When they had prayed, the place was shaken (Acts 4:31). In the matter of effective praying, never have so many left so much to so few. Brethren, let us pray" (Author unknown).

The above quotation pinpoints the cause of our ineffectiveness as Christians in our generation. We may have the form of sound words, and some measure of outward activity, but too often our lives lack that vitality which comes from a close walk with God. Winslow has no hesitation in stating that the most marked characteristic of personal declension is the decay of the spirit of prayer. Prayer is one of the first

evidences of spiritual life, and the declension of prayer is strongly indicative of the decay of real grace in the child of God. "God has no dumb children" (Angell James). What a blessed exercise is prayer as it is directed to God, through Jesus Christ, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit! Strange it is, that God's children must so often be reminded and exhorted to "avail themselves of **the most costly and glorious privilege this side of glory**". Prayer is not only a duty; it is a privilege. How remiss is the person who goes first to the creature for help! Such conduct was condemned by God who called it "going down to Egypt for help" (cf. Isaiah 31:1). The Jews were afraid of an invasion from the Assyrians, and sought help by an alliance with Egypt. In this alliance they were trusting in the Egyptians and not in God who had promised to be their protector and Who had prohibited alliances with surrounding nations. God is able to do great things, and will do as is best in His wisdom. Our first recourse must be to Him, and His provision in the ordinance of prayer has made it possible for sinners to come to a Holy God.

Jesus instructed His disciples saying, "Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and, when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret . . ." (Matthew 6:6). The hypocrites love to pray "that they may be seen of men". A person who is praying in public is seen and heard by many, so pride and self-love are encouraged by the foolish thought that people are listening. It is one thing to repeat words in public prayer; it is another to agonise in the secret place, unseen by any eye and unheard by any ear but God's. There, in the place of secret prayer, your heart may be poured out without reserve, and you may enjoy heart-melting visits of the love of Jesus. The promises of God with respect to secret prayer are so rich, we ought not to be surprised that such formidable forces as self, Satan, and the world are arrayed against it. Give all the more diligence to the pursuit of this holy and profitable exercise. It has been justly observed that there is little of public reward from the heavenly Father because there is little of prayer in secret. Philip Henry's advice was — "Be sure you look to your secret duty; keep that up whatever you do. The soul cannot prosper in the neglect of it".

The Christian, diligently engaged in his lawful calling in the world, needs God. To God he may constantly breathe in the spirit of prayer. To live so that you are above your work, not engulfed by it to the strangling of your soul, you need God. To be prepared to answer the question from your fellow-worker about your Christian hope, and to react in a Christian way to his words or actions, you need God. Nehemiah, questioned by the king, was afraid, but he tells how he conquered his fears with success.

"So I prayed to the God of heaven". His heart and soul went to God for help and guidance. It may be that your Christian witness at work has been rendered ineffective because you have not acted nor answered as a Christian should. To avoid such pitfalls make secret prayer a regular and precious exercise, asking God to give you an abiding "spirit of prayer". Then it will be "natural to grace in you" to breathe to God your requests. Jonathan Edwards said of his early Christian life — "I was almost constantly in ejaculatory prayer wherever I was. Prayer seemed to be natural to me, as the breath by which the inward burnings of my heart had vent".

Neglect of secret prayer by one member of a family affects the whole domestic circle. Family worship, if not abandoned, becomes a ritual hastened through without reverence and without feeling. Upleasantry in the home, a word spoken in haste, a bad example to children, and a failure to respect parents can all be traced to neglect of prayer. Many broken homes, broken marriages, and broken families would not have been broken had the duty and privilege of prayer been attended to. "This exercise throws a hallowing influence around the domestic circle — it cements the hearts, fortifies the minds, awakens and concentrates the sympathies, and it softens the cares and trials of each individual member".

God sets a high value on prayer. In Old Testament times He provided the Mercy Seat to be the meeting-place between sinful men and a Holy God. In this New Testament time, that Mercy Seat has been replaced by the Saviour Jesus Christ in Whom God reconciles the world unto Himself. Prayer is to be "in the name of Christ". It is on account of the finished and perfect work of Christ that the way is open for sinners to come to God in prayer. It is on the same account that sinners are to ask for mercies and blessings from the divine riches. You are to pray to God for **spiritual blessings**, laying hold with boldness to the promises of the Bible which speak of confession of sin and a free pardon, of the poor and needy seeking water when there is none and of the Lord's saying, "I will hear them, I, the God of Jacob, will not forsake them", of salvation by grace and of God's carrying on a good work until the day of Jesus Christ. Lay hold of such promises in the Bible, and have your faith fortified in them. Present them to God, and do not take silence for an answer, because He is faithful that has promised. You are to pray for **material and temporal blessings** with the qualification, that these be granted to you if the giving of them is agreeable to God's will. The Lord may have other purposes with respect to you, and His wise and loving answer may be

a denial of your request, but with grace given to you to say "Good is the will of the Lord". To view your prayers in this way, and to distinguish between things for which there is a specific promise in the Bible and things for which there is no such promise, may help relieve many anxieties and doubts you have as to why you do not receive some things requested in prayer.

If prayer is to be successful in its petition, you must come **with purposes of holiness** in heart and life. You must lift up "holy hands" to God. Achan prevented the success of the armies of Israel while he was hiding his sin. The Psalmist acknowledged that God would not hear him if he gave place to sin in his heart. Prayer must be **with humility**. God knows the proud afar off. Self-abasement, contrition of heart, and confession of sin with grief and hatred must characterise your approaches to God. You must come in **absolute dependence** upon Him. You do not come to inform Him, nor do you come to enrich Him. You come, as one who has nothing, to the Giver of every good and perfect gift. You must come with **earnestness**. Jesus spoke about the man who went to a friend at midnight requesting three loaves because he had received a guest and had nothing to set before him. Jesus said — "because of his importunity he will rise and give as many as he needeth. And I say unto you, 'Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth'." As your needs will press upon you, let them press you to more urgency and earnestness in prayer. Samuel Rutherford said — "The pinching necessity of the saints is not tied to the law of modesty. Hunger cannot be ashamed". You must be **constant** in prayer. The words "continuing instant in prayer" express the idea of perseverance. It means to hold out with fortitude in a difficult position, until the object is attained. Force of circumstances should not render us inactive in prayer. Prosperity or adversity, apparent or real, call for prayer to God. When Martin Luther had his workload increased with more duties requiring his attention, he would say — "Now we must pray more".

Pray for pastors, for ministers of the Gospel. No part of ministerial work can be performed aright without help sought and obtained from above. The work of the minister becomes a formal, lifeless ritual, apart from the work of the Spirit of God in him. Thomas Houston, referring to ministerial duties, wrote "None of these can be performed acceptably to the Head of the Church but in the spirit and habit of prayer by the pastor himself, and through much prayer of the church on his behalf. The familiar remark, namely, of **a praying people makes a preaching**

minister, is full of important and general application." The abounding of the spirit of prayer for ministers in the church will often be the forerunner and sign of approaching blessing. The church in Jerusalem prayed for Peter, and he was set free. The Christians at Kirk of Shotts spent the night after a communion in earnest prayer, and on the following day the Spirit accompanied the gospel with convicting and converting power so that five hundred persons were converted to Christ. People who pray for their pastor that he be given messages from God to deliver, often find that the preaching is graciously adapted to suit their particular case of soul, bringing to them the benefits of salvation. Doubts have been resolved, fears have been removed, their souls have been strengthened in what is good, and they have been enabled to rejoice. "This poor man cried, God heard and saved him from all his distresses".

Pray for your children. Hannah prayed for Samuel before he was born. Many have had to trace the work of God in their lives to the influence of godly parents. Parents, pray much for your children, and set a good example before them in a holy consistent life. To the regular daily times of prayer, add special occasions at times for special prayer. Teach them prayers from the Bible. There you find recorded the work of the Spirit of God in the hearts of sinners. Teach your children to memorise and to use these prayers, and pray for them that God will give them the blessings of forgiveness, peace with God, and grace to live for Him. What greater joy could you have than to see your children with a saving interest in Jesus Christ? Do not allow your love to them to be limited to their bodies and to their prosperity in secular things. Love them with a love that cares for their souls, a love that sees their need of God and of His Christ. Desire heaven for them, and show them that prayer is a privilege by which they may draw near to Jesus Christ who said — "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not".

In New England there lived a godly mother who had six children, none of whom had an interest in Christ. At about the age of sixty, the mother suffered from a disease and was not able to attend the church services. This was a grief to her, but to those who visited her she spoke of a grief that was greater. She was grieved and weighed down in her spirits because none of her children were converted to Christ. For their conversion she prayed to God. Some time afterward there was a revival of religion in the district, and four of her children were among the first people savingly changed. Soon a fifth of the children was added to the number who believed, but the sixth child remained unmoved, unchanged. The mother and her converted children agreed to observe a

day of fasting and prayer for the unconverted sister, who did not know that this was being done. However, on the same day, as she was engaged in her house-work, her mind was solemnly arrested and she too was soon among those who believed in Jesus. The words of Jesus were fulfilled — “That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven”. There is no greater encouragement to prayer than the Bible. It is rich with exhortation, encouragement and example. It is the word of the God Who has said — “Before they call, I will answer; while they are yet speaking, I will hear”.

A Visit to Rhodesia

by Ds. F. Mallan

It is well known to our readers that my wife and I visited the Transvaal from 12th to 27th September. Some members of the Dutch Mbumba Mission Society urged me, if possible, to visit the Mission field in Rhodesia so that our Committee might be better informed as to the political and religious situation in that country and I promised to do so if I had some time at my disposal. I had to visit a number of Dutch families in the Transvaal who went out from our church in Holland. I had also to baptise, officiate at a wedding, ordain office-bearers etc. while out there. In our Church periodical “De Wachter Sions” (The Watchman of Sion) I hope to write about these matters. The Lord has helped us. I felt myself prompted to help these people.

When I had arrived there and was busy these words came with power to my mind: “Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth” (Eccles. 11:2). As I had some days to spare I dared not shirk the request of the members of the Committee to visit Rhodesia. I felt that I must give a portion to seven, and also to eight. The last words especially impressed me: “. . . for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.” After visiting Rhodesia I thought much upon these words.

To go to Rhodesia was not easy. The home in the Transvaal where I was a guest was far away from civilisation. It was not easy to reserve a seat in a plane as most of the airlines were booked up. I asked my host and his wife, Mr and Mrs Kersten to come with us which they did. So on my journey to this unknown part I was supported by their company. It

is good, too, that the staff of the Mission now knows them. One never knows in what way this may be useful for the members of the Mission staff later on.

The political situation in Rhodesia is not good. We noticed it as soon as we arrived. We saw soldiers hidden in the grass along the road with their rifles at the ready. It was very evident that we were in a theatre of war and it dawned on us that our journey was not without danger.

Mr and Mrs Ross, Bulawayo, gave us a very hearty welcome. The religious atmosphere in their house struck us very much. After our tea in the evening we had worship. We sang Psalm 54 as it is done in the churches in Scotland. After that we read Zechariah, chapter 8 and Mr Ross concluded in prayer. Before this prayer we went down on our knees. In the prayer Mr Ross committed us solemnly and tenderly to the Lord.

That evening we had an opportunity to speak to Mr Ross about many things and especially about the serious time in the country. We went to bed at 10 o'clock. In Mr Ross's home all goes on very orderly and correctly. He told us that we would have breakfast the next morning at seven o'clock but he expected us ten minutes earlier for worship. At worship next morning we sang Psalm 55 and read chapter 9 of Zechariah. After this we went down again on our knees for prayer. After worship we visited and were taken round the church at Bulawayo. We then had our coffee at Mr Ross's house and also had conversation with some nurses.

The Thursday of that week was the beginning of the Communion season when different services take place as a preparation for the Lord's Supper. This gave us an opportunity to attend a service at Ingwenya. By car it takes almost an hour from Bulawayo to Ingwenya. It is a wild area. The service was for the Africans.

After our arrival at Ingwenya we visited the John Tallach School. It has 200 pupils who are residents. This implies a great deal of organisation. We were surprised to see all this work. We have been told definitely that this could never be done without the financial support from Holland and they appreciate this help very much indeed. It is very sad that the Mbuma Hospital had to be closed. Mr Mzamo is still always busy in his congregation at Mbuma. As he was at Ingwenya in connection with the Communion season we had the opportunity to meet him and Mr Ndebele. Together we had lunch.

At Ingwenya the welcome was very, very hearty. It struck us that the ladies from Scotland and the others were dressed so simply, just the same as we are used to seeing in our Churches in Holland.

We were able to attend part of the service along with the African

people. The Church was overcrowded so that some African people had to be content with a seat outside the Church. The respect shown by those people moved us. The African women had their babies on their back and all the pupils were present. Mr Ross preached in English. An African translated all very skillfully from English into Sindebele. We had to leave before the end of the service as we had to be at the airport in due time for our flight. Mrs Ross took us to the airport. As we left we could see her waiting until the plane left although she could not see us. We sensed her feelings, staying behind in a country so threatened. No, we did not regret making this trip. Always the same words came to our mind: ". . . for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth".

Travelling back with us were two nurses who were returning home with the very same plane. They were Miss Jantien Van Saane and a Scottish nurse. For the time being their work in Mbumba has finished. The Lord may turn things for good so that they are able to go back. That is their fervent desire. It was very hard for the nurses to leave the people behind.

The friends in Rhodesia are very thankful for the gifts from Holland and also for the clothes which arrive regularly. Our visit was very useful. Now we are able to give information about the work there, and as we have seen the work at close quarters, we sympathise with it more than ever.

We pray that the Lord may remember them in all the difficulties which perhaps may come over them in the near future and that He may bless their labours for the salvation of immortal souls out of blind heathenism.

(This article by Rev. F. Mallan, who is a minister in "The Reformed Congregations in the Netherlands" and the vice-chairman of the Committee of the Dutch Society for the Mbumba Mission, was written for the Mbumba Mission Magazine.)

The body and soul too, of all divinity (as some observe) consists very much in rightly distinguishing between the two covenants — the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace; and between the two dispensations of the covenant of grace — that under the Old Testament, and that under the New.

The Barnoldswick Congregation

Among English counties Lancashire has a position of its own. "Nowhere in England" writes A. H. Drysdale, author of the 'History of the Presbyterians in England,' "have the religious struggles been more protracted than in Lancashire, and nowhere have they attained so much intensity and development. Papist, Prelatist and Puritan were sharply severed, and became strongly marked."

The Puritanism of Lancashire culminated for a short time in an established Presbyterian Church. Indeed Lancashire and the city of London were the only places in England where the polity of the Westminster Assembly and its Divines received expression in England.

Lancashire and Yorkshire were the counties that witnessed the labours of some of the brightest ornaments of English puritanism. Ministers such as Oliver Heywood, Charles Herle (the successor to Dr Twisse as prolocutor of the Westminster Assembly), and Isaac Ambrose exercised their ministerial labours in these favoured northern counties.

Barnoldswick, situated just eight miles from Skipton, is on the very border of the two counties and in many ways shares the traditions of both. It was only a few miles from Barnoldswick that in 1678 amidst great persecution Oliver Heywood and Richard Frankland conducted the first nonconformist ordination in Yorkshire according to the pattern of the Westminster Directory.

Though these puritan traditions extended to the following century in men like William Grimshaw and Henry Venn, this century has witnessed an almost total eclipse in adherence to the ancient faith. The main nonconformist denominations originating in the seventeenth century were almost entirely given over to theological liberalism and what remained of Bible believing profession was in the channel of Arminianism, the only exception being the Strict Baptists whose tendency in the north of England has been in a hyper-calvinistic direction.

It was in this situation in the early nineteen sixties, that a number of us who were within either Modernistic or Arminian churches, were brought by God's grace to a profession of Christianity, and, in the reading of books that were then being republished by the Banner of Truth Trust, we were brought to an adherence to the Reformed Faith, with a desire to see the old paths once again trodden, the old theology preached in our pulpits and along with it the fear of God among Christian people that has ever characterised the Church in her best days.

At first we sought to give expression to our new found desire for the

Christianity of a former day in Calvinistic interdenominational organisations such as the Sovereign Grace Union, but this was quite inadequate. The need was for a church, reformed not only in doctrine but also in worship and practice.

The Westminster Standards were by now the subordinate standard of our faith and it was here that we first came into contact with the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. The historic Standards, designed for the uniting of the religious profession in the three kingdoms, were then distributed by the late Mr J. Grant of Inverness, the publications treasurer of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. When one wrote to Mr Grant one could always be sure not only to receive the books requested, but also several church magazines and an encouraging letter. Hence it was through Mr Grant that we were introduced to the church and also some of our number introduced to Mr Ian Matheson, then of Fort William, now of Laide. It was in the home of Mr and Mrs Grant but more particularly of Mr Matheson, and by many visits to communion seasons, that our ties with the church were laid and strengthened.

Meanwhile from about 1965, services were begun in Barnoldswick. At first these were held only on Friday night, then a little later services were also begun on the Sabbath day, in the home of one of the brethren. To hold Sabbath services meant of course that we must sever our links with the churches of our up-bringing and this we did, convinced that we could no longer be connected with such bodies, and indeed that such connections were in themselves a compromise. The means we employed in those early days were either, one or other of the brethren preaching, or reading sermons, or occasionally tape recorded sermons.

Our practice as a church within a relatively short period of time had become identical to that of the Free Presbyterian Church and in the freedom that our new situation brought, wholesale reformation in our practice could readily be achieved, and all aspects of our church life brought to the touchstone of the Scriptures. Although around us there was not a psalm singing congregation, to our knowledge, outside of Scotland or London, we became thoroughly convinced regarding purity of worship and the unscripturalness of hymn singing and instrumental music, and accordingly the psalms alone unaccompanied were used in the praise of God.

The limitations of worshipping in a home prevented those from outside our own circle joining with us, and hence it was felt that public premises should be obtained. With Barnoldswick being a relatively small town, such premises seemed to some of us almost impossible to obtain. Yet

such is the goodness of the God of Israel that His provision did not lack, and most suitable premises were obtained and opened in 1975 by a Free Presbyterian minister. Our numbers in 1965 were merely three or four; however, now, twelve year later, in the Lord's goodness we are increased four-fold.

The anomalous situation in which we found ourselves as a congregation of presbyterians was now greatly exercising our minds. In the inscrutable providence of God we were an isolated and single presbyterian congregation, with no minister and with pro-tempore office-bearers who had not received regular ordination, and hence we were as a congregation unable to be obedient in remembering our Lord's death till he come, in the sacrament of the Lord's supper.

Our desire was to see Zion's walls in England repaired, and the desperate need of our country seemed in our view to be a Presbyterian Church that would be a sister church in England to the Free Presbyterian Church in Scotland and of identical testimony. In this goal there seemed much to encourage us as we heard of several similar incipient churches up and down England that seemed to be of like aspiration to ourselves. However, on further examination it became clear that the theological and practical commitment of these groups was not identical to our own, with respect to purity of worship, the establishment principle, the authorised version, sabbath observance, and even Presbyterian Government. In view of these wide differences we were driven, and even shut up, to the conclusion that Presbyterian ties in England would not be possible.

Our eyes were now turned in only one direction — northward, to the church that we had seen to be pure in doctrine, worship, and practice, and the church moreover whose ministers had by now conducted our marriages and baptized our children. Following a most useful visit to us in early 1976 by the Rev. R. R. Sinclair, Wick, then Clerk of Synod, who explained to us in detail the ecclesiastical course to be taken, we petitioned the Synod last year to be received as a congregation of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

God in his glory shall appear
When Sion he builds and repairs
He shall regard and lend his ear
Unto the needy's humble prayers
The afflicted's prayer he will not scorn
All times this shall be on record
And generations yet unborn
Shall praise and magnify the LORD.

R. M.

Obituary

The Late Dr Hugh Gillies, Elder, Stornoway

We are persuaded that Dr Hugh Gillies's memory will remain fresh, green and fragrant while there are found following after him on the highway to Sion such fellow-pilgrims as met with him on it and had the privilege of accompanying him a part of the way. Even those who did not share his Christian convictions highly respected him as a man of integrity and honour in the community and much lamented his death. For upwards of thirty years he practised as a physician in Lewis and was well-known in all parts of the island. Familiarly known as "Dr Hugh", the high esteem in which he was held was reflected in the huge concourse of people from all walks of life that assembled to pay their last respects to him on Thursday, 30th April, 1977. The previous Tuesday, at the age of 56, he had passed away in Raigmore Hospital, Inverness, after sustaining a heart attack.

Many who read this will remember with affection Dr Gillies's father, the Rev. Malcolm Gillies who, for twenty years, was minister at Stornoway. The inscription on the stone marking his grave tells us, among other things, that "his savoury preaching endeared him to the poor in Sion", and perhaps more than any other minister, his pithy and oftentimes humorous sayings are remembered and recounted. Something of this sense of humour came out in the son as also did the balanced, shrewd judgment, kindness and care for the things of God that Mr Gillies was so noted for — qualities shared with his like-minded wife who originally hailed from Strathy, a place famed for its spiritual giants in days gone by. Dr Gillies thus came of godly stock. But grace does not run in the blood, and godly lineage, however great a privilege it may be, will not, of itself, shield any from the wrath to come. "Except ye repent," said the Saviour to Abraham's children, "ye shall all likewise perish."

When Hugh Gillies "came to himself" and was turned as a repentant sinner to God the change was apparent to all. Being so well known, his conversion was a notable event in the life of the community. Sufficient for him now was the time that was past of his life "to have wrought the will of the Gentiles". If afterwards, in exhorting others to repentance he referred to the days of his ignorance and folly it was not in order to glory in his shame but rather like the "chief" of sinners to enhance the greatness of the mercy which he had also found and the exceeding

abundance of the "grace of our Lord . . . with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus". Those whom he was previously wont to keep at arm's length and in whose presence, as he afterwards confessed, he felt himself condemned, came to be as close to him now as they were distant before. The loving Christian attachment between himself and the late Dr Peter Aulay MacLeod was plain to all who knew them both, and often in their company reference was made to those days when that spiritual attachment was formed. Perhaps no-one knew as Dr MacLeod did the spiritual depths through which his younger colleague had passed, before coming to have the assured hope of a saving interest in Christ.

It would appear that he came to this assurance when laid aside through bodily affliction in an Inverness hospital. There, and at a time when he was in a very distraught state of mind, he received a visit from his minister, the late Rev. James Tallach. The outcome was that ever after there was a very close bond — as between father and son in the Lord — between Hugh and the Rev. James Tallach. Perhaps it was then that the words, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin", came to be particularly precious to him.

In August, 1957, he was cordially received as a member by the Stornoway Kirk Session. Soon after he found himself suddenly having to take the Sandwick prayer meeting. One of his hearers that evening is convinced that "those present on that occasion are not likely to forget the earnestness and power with which he spoke from the words — 'For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit which are God's' — a text truly descriptive of his own Christian life." During the years that followed, and particularly after his ordination to the eldership in 1963, he was continually being called upon to take services, not only in Stornoway in the absence of the minister but throughout the island of Lewis and even further afield. He willingly and cheerfully answered every call made upon him if it were humanly possible for him to do so. On his last Sabbath on earth though apparently suffering much discomfort and pain he took the three services in the Tain and Fearn congregation.

Looking back, it is with a sense of wonder that we recall his willingness to undertake the most menial as well as the most arduous duty if it was to the advancement of Christ's cause and kingdom. With Hugh Gillies that came first. His removal brought home to some of us just how much we had taken for granted. Quietly, unobtrusively, efficiently, he attended to matters connected with the congregation even to details which others less devoted might be inclined to neglect, or pass by as unimportant. At

the time of his death he was clerk both of the Kirk Session and Deacons' Court. Even after this lapse of time we are painfully conscious of the blank. We miss his friendship, fellowship, help and encouragement more than words can tell. As a devoted husband and father his loss is much felt by those whom he left behind and we would anew express the hope that his God would be their God and their guide even unto death.

What was mortal of Dr Hugh Gillies was lovingly deposited beside his parents in Sandwick to sleep in the dust with them until the trumpet sounds and they awake together to be satisfied with the likeness of their Redeemer and to be made "perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity".

J. McL.

Lucas X. 42 le Iain MacAonghais, Caolas-Sgalpaidh ann 11/4/68

Airson beagan mhionaidean seallaidh sinn ris a chuibhrionn luachmhor seo de fhocal Dhé — tha gu leòr anns a' chaibideil seo — nam biodh sinn air ar cuideachadh leis an Spiorad Naomh airson a thuigsinn.

Mar a thubhairt Philip ris a' chaillteanach bho Etiopia "Am bheil thu tuigseann an ni tha thu leughadh" — bha an caillteanach bochd a'tuigseann cho falamh 's a bha e ann fhéin, cho eucomasach air focal Dhé a thuigsinn as eugmhais an Spiorad.

Tha h-uile ni tha sinn a'deanamh, leughadh, teagaisg, ùrnuigh uile gu leir gun fheum sam bith mur 'eil e air a chompanachadh leis an Spiorad Naomh. Ged bhiodh gibhtean is tàlantann againn nach 'eil againn cha toir iad gu bràth dhuinn dealbh cheart air focal Dhé as éugmhais an Spiorad — 'se an Spiorad Naomh bheir dhuinn dearbh shoilleireachd mu pheachadh, mu fhìreantachd agus mu bhreitheanas.

Tha an cosmhalachd sea mu'n t-Samaritanach mhath a'toirt dhuinn dealbh bhreagha air ùghdar an t-soisgeil. Ghabh an sagart seachad, ghabh an Lebhiteach seachad ach bha truas anns an t-Samaritanach, dhòirt e ola agus fion anns na lotan aig a 'pheachach bhochd agus thug e do'n tigh osda e. O! mo chàirdean gu de mar bu chòr dhuinn a bhi moladh Dhé airson fhocail. Gu de am beannachd a th'ann, mar a thubhairt e fhéin, "Feuch tha na's motha na Solamh seo, tha na's motha na Samaritanach an sea. Gu de cha breagha agus a tha an cosmhalachd a' nochdadh a mach coibhneas agus tròcair an t-Slanuigheir bheannaichte.

Fuirich thusa gus an tig latha a bhreitheanais 'sann an uair sin a chi thu gu soilleir gràdh neo chrìochnaichte an t-Slànuighear bheannaichte.

Feuch nach bi thu ceangal streanganan ri gràdh Dhé. "Cha do ghràdhaich sinne Esan ach ghràdhaich Esan sinne". Cha robh ni a ghabhadh deanamh nach do rinneadh ann an seo airson a'pheacaich bhochd. Chaidh a h-uile ni a thoirt seachad a bhiodh feumail dha gus an tilleadh Esan a rithist.

Bha Marta agus Moire agus Lazarus gràdhach leis an Tighearna. Bhiodh e tric a' tadhal orra, bha e faotainn coibhneas aca agus saorsa spioraid. Bha iad uile gu leir na teaghlach breagha. Bha Marta aig an am seo air a cur mu'n cuairt le obair an tighe, bha i smaoineachadh nach robh a piuthar a 'deanamh a dleasdanas nach robh i dha cuideachadh, ach bha tart air Moire aig an am seo. Bha i ag iarraidh criomag airson a h-anama — mar a bha an salmadair "Tha miann is ciocras mòr air m'fhèol" etc. — Salm 84. Bha i, tha sinn ag creidsinn, 'n a suidhe aig casan an t-Slànuigheir ag òl a steach nam briathran gràsmhor bha tuiteam o bhilean — briathran na beatha.

'Nuair a dh'iarr Marta air Iosa iarraidh air a piuthar a cuideachadh 'sann a thug e achmhasan dhith agus thubhairt e "Tha aon ni feumail". O! mo chàirdean gu de cho sòlumaichte agus a tha an fhìrinn seo, bu chor dhuinn criothnachadh roimhe le eagal, bu chor dhuinn sinn fhein a cheasnachadh, feuch mus eil sinn air ar toirt suas ro mhòr leis an t-saoghal. Bhuineadh dhuinn nàire bhi oirnn airson an uine agus an neart a tha sinn ag caitheadh air na nithean a tha ullamh gu bàsachadh. Tha aon ni feumail agus rinn Moire roghainn de'n ni sin nach bi gu bràth air a thoirt bhuaipe. Cò as urrainn a ni seo a thuigsinn — O gu'n deanadh Dia glic sinn airson na siorruidheachd. Tha sinn a' smaoineachadh gu bheil sinn cho glic.

Tha sinn uile a thaobh nàduir anns an aon stait peacaidh agus truaighe. Gun teagamh bha cuid de dhaoine ann nach robh cho ciontach ri cuid eile anns a pheacadh — mar a bha am mac s'tròidheil agus a bhràthair — chaidh am Mac Stròidheil gu Tir an fadachd as agus an sin sheall e gu de seòrsa nadur a bha aige. Cha b'fhada gus an robh e coltach ris na h-Israelich 'nuair a mhiannaich iad na poitean feòla, bha an fheòil a' tighinn am mach air na cuinnleanan aca. Mar sin dh'fhàs sòlasan an t-saoghal seo gràineil leis-san. Ach 'se bha seo ach obair Dhé, cha tuit an gealbhan as eugmhais a fhreasdail. Mu dheireadh cha robh ni aige a dh'itheadh e agus cha d'thug aon neach ni sam bith dha. Mu dheireadh 'nuair a bha e air a shailleadh na phicle fhein thadhal Dia air agus chuimhnich e air tigh athar. Éiridh mi agus theid mi dh'ionnsaigh

m'athar. Chunnaic athair e 'nuair a bha e fhathast fada air falbh.

O mo chàirdean nach bu chòr seo toirt ormsa, an truaghan bochd tha mi ann, agus thu fhéin, an truaghan bochd tha thu ann, tionndadh gu Dia — ris an Dia ris am feum sinn coinneachadh glé aithghearr. Faodaidh sinn tilleadh ri Dia do bhrìgh na geallaidhean, do bhrìgh fìteantachd Chrìosd “Thigheabh am ionnsuidh, sibhse uile tha ri saothair agus fo throm uallach” etc., agus tha e gealltainn nach tilg e air chor sam bith am mach.

Rinn Moire roghainn do'n aon ni feumail. Chaneil ni sam bith as an t-saoghal as fhiach ni sam bith. Na faigheadh sinn beagan a chnuasnach a mach as a chuarrie (quarrie) òir a tha seo. Nach uamhasach mus ann anns an t-siorruidheachd a chi sinn a h-uile ni a thug Dia dhuinn. O gu'n toireadh an Ti beannaichte dhomh fhein sealladh beag air na fhuair mi anns an t-saoghal seo agus nach do rinn mi moran feum dheth. 'S dòcha gu'n robh anam bochd eile air barrachd feum a dheanamh de na sochairean a fhuair mise nan robh e air fhaotainn.

Fhuair mi slàinte bothaig agus inntinn, fhuair mi fradharc agus claisneachd. Chunnaic mi an saoghal a chruthaich Dia le uile ghlòir. Tha sinn an seo an tigh Dhe agus tha sith againn airson focal a leughadh agus ùrnuigh a dheanamh. Feumaidh mi fein aideachadh nach d'fhuair mi riamh uiread de shaorsa ag ùrnuigh anns an fhòlais agus a fhuair mi ag ùrnuigh anns an uaigneas.

Fhuair sinn gu cinnteach iomadh sochair, ach tha iomadh laigse oirnn. Tha sinn nàrach, socharach ach na biodh nàire oirnn airson Chrìosd agus aobhar. O mo chairdean toimhseadh sinn sinn fhein ann an toimhsean focal Dhe agus iarramaid air Dia danachd na cloinne. O gu ta! seall an latha anns am bheil sinn beo an diugh!

Tha na Papanach cho maith — Moderator Eaglais na h-Alba a' cadal comhla ri Papanach. O chairdean diadhachd 1968! Ach biodh truas agadsa 'na do chridhe ri do cho-pheacaibh agus bi coltach ri Moire a rinn roghainn de'n chuid mhath. Seo an ni a chòrd rium fhein gu h-araidh anns a chuibhrionn seo — nach bi gu brath air a thoirt uaipe.

Tha mi an dochas air leabaidh ar bais gu faigh sinn a' chuid mhaith seo. Tha mi'n dochas gu'm bi sinn sona air leabaidh ar bais ag gabhail beannachd gu brath leis an t-saoghal seo agus le pheacaidhean. Bithidh sinn a' cluinntinn mu thiomchioll Cape Horn gu bheil na tuinn ag eirigh suas ann fichead troigh. Gu de an rudha uamhasach a th'ann. Ach tha againne ri dhol seachad air rudha bhais agus gu de cho uamhasach agus a dh'fhaotas sin a bhith.

Tha Iain Bunyan ag ràdhgu'n deachaidh cuid seachad air an rudha

seo le side bhreagha chiuin ach gu'n deachaidh feadhainn eile seachad air ann an stoirmean agus droch shide a' gheamraidh agus ann an dorchadas.

Ach —

Tha Dia na chomhnaidh air an tuil
'S na shuidhe feasd 'na Rìgh
Bheir Dia d'a phobull neart; is bheir
Dhoibh beannachadh le sith.

Salm 29, 10.

Book Reviews

The New Testament, An Introduction to its Literature and History, by J. Gresham Machen. Banner of Truth Trust, pages 386. Price £2.75.

This is the work of one of America's leading N.T. Theologians and Scholars who was widely recognised as the successor of his old teacher and professor at Princeton Seminary, Dr B. B. Warfield, whose mantle was said to have fallen upon him. The aim of the book is stated in the Introduction: "The purpose of the present book is to ground Christian piety more firmly in historical knowledge" (p. 9). Machen held strongly that the events in the Bible are actual, historical events and that the principles of sacred history and the doctrines of God's Word can only be understood when placed in "a framework of fact." In carrying out this aim, Dr Machen brought to the task lucidity of thought and great powers of expression as well as wide, unobtrusive scholarship.

When on the staff of teachers at Princeton Seminary in his early years, Machen began to take part in the work of the Sabbath School of the First Church of Princeton, first as teacher and then as superintendent. He took a deep interest in the boys of his class and prepared for what others might regard as the humble work of teaching young people the truths of God's Word, with his usual thoroughness. Arising out of this service in the Sabbath School, Machen was asked to undertake the wider programme of preparing the senior course of Sabbath School lessons for a year for the Board of Christian Education. The course of N.T. studies appeared in weekly instalments in two publications of the Presbyterian Board of Publications and Sabbath School Work in 1916. It was a gruelling task to produce on time each week's contribution, but the book before us shows the success he achieved in this work. This material has now been gathered into a most attractive and well printed volume, the **New Testament, An Introduction to its Literature and History**.

The arrangement of the chapters has not been changed from the original form of graded studies, in 52 short chapters, covering the whole year. This may be called a rapid survey of N.T. times, but it is comprehensive and omits nothing nor does it deal superficially with any aspect of the Church and its work in the times of the N.T. The book is divided into six large sections which begin with the historical background of the N.T. and proceeds to the spread of the Church throughout the Gentile world, the Principles and Practice of the Gospel, the Defence of the Christian Faith, the Apostolic Church and the Church Today. Each chapter has at its head the study material, drawn from the N.T. Scriptures, and at the end are set questions on the chapter itself. There is no display of wide reading and references to works which have been consulted but everywhere is apparent deep and wide scholarship. The style is simple which makes the book pleasant to read.

Of the problem of the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews, Machen states his own view moderately that, while according full apostolic authority to the Epistle — "it was written, if not by one of the other apostles, at least by an 'apostolic man'" (p. 242) — he does not give full support to the Alexandrian view of its Pauline authorship. It is heartening to read Machen's forthright words on baptism — "The warrant for infant baptism is to be sought not so much in individual passages as in more general considerations of what the sacrament means. The family, according to the New Testament, is the unit of Christian life (Acts 16:31, 33); children have a share in the covenant relationship of their parents" (p. 315). The volume will be a source of authentic information for students, senior Sabbath School pupils and for ministers of the Gospel as well. Machen is already well known for the larger works, "The Origin of Paul's Religion," "The Virgin Birth of Christ," "Christianity and Liberalism," etc., and now the Banner of Truth Trust has earned the gratitude of all lovers of the Reformed Faith with this handsome volume which, it is confidently predicted, will become the most generally useful and influential of all his works. A. F. M.

The Child's Story Bible — Old Testament Vol. I by Catherine Vos. Banner of Truth Trust. Price £1.95.

This is a paperback edition in large type of the Genesis-Ruth section of Catherine Vos' Child's Story Bible. Almost half the book consists of Bible stories from Genesis; twenty pages are stories from Exodus; two or three chapters are devoted to Leviticus; about 30 pages are from

Numbers; 20 pages are from Joshua and Judges; while the last five pages are stories taken from the Book of Ruth. The illustrations are in the grotesque form of modern art. The Bible stories are put in simple form and consequently the book should prove a useful aid to parents in instructing younger children in the Bible. D. B. M.

Miracles of Jesus — This is a book for young children. It is printed in large type, and attractively produced and illustrated. The book is published by the Gospel Standard Trust at 85p, plus 25p postage. The text was written by Pastor B. A. Ramsbottom of Luton in a simple style and tells the story of eight of the miracles of Jesus. In view of the great need today of suitable books for young children we warmly recommend it.

D.B.M.

God Sent Revival by J. F. Thornbury. Evangelical Press Paperback. Price £2.60.

"God Sent Revival" tells the story of the Second Great Awakening on the American Continent which took place in the early 19th century, and particularly gives an account of Asahel Nettleton's part in it. Through the re-publication in 1975 by the Banner of Truth of Andrew Bonar's revision of Bennet Taylor's "Life and Labours of Asahel Nettleton" (reviewed in F.P. Magazine, Vol. 80, p. 314), readers will be familiar with Nettleton's name. The 1740 revivals under Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield had long passed away and dearth prevailed on the religious scene, when it pleased God towards the end of the 18th century, and well into the 19th century to send showers of blessing to Connecticut and other areas of America. In the 1820's the blessing came through the labours of Asahel Nettleton during which time many congregations in different parts of the Eastern States of the U.S.A. were revived. Nettleton, though essentially an evangelistic preacher without settled charge, worked in co-operation with the settled ministers and usually was invited by them to preach in their locality.

Thornbury's account of these revivals is most interesting and Nettleton's success is an encouragement to ministers of the gospel today. The Lord God of Elijah is the same God still! What He did in other days He is able to do today. The scripturalness of Nettleton's methods is clearly brought out, also his opposition to the methods of Finney and his followers. There was no question in Nettleton's case but that the converts

brought in under his preaching stood the test of time. The same could not be said of those of the Arminian Finney and his school.

We are glad to commend this paperback. It is a pity that it follows so soon after the Banner of Truth volume on Nettleton. We hope that this will not prevent it having a wide circulation.

D.B.M.

Notes and Comments

Church Union

In a letter to the *Stornoway Gazette* at the end of November, Rev. William MacLean, Ness, stated: "There can be no true church union unless the all important statement in the Westminster Confession of Faith, that the Holy Scriptures are 'immediately inspired by God and by His singular care and providence are kept pure in all ages' (Chapter 7, Section 8) is unequivocally accepted." Mr MacLean quoted extensively from "The King James Version Defended" by Dr E. F. Hills to show that the providential preservation of the Scriptures is a doctrine of Scripture and of Christ Himself, and that the text found in the vast majority of the extant manuscripts is the providentially preserved and approved text. He went on to show the powerful influence of the Westcott and Hort edition of the Greek New Testament — the text on which many modern translations are based — even on many conservative scholars.

He referred to a statement in the October issue of the Free Church Record calling in question the publication of Witherow's Apostolic Church (by our Publications Committee) seeing that it contained a commendatory reference to one of the manuscripts highly prized by the Westcott and Hort School. In reply to the Free Church editor, Mr MacLean stated that it was because the book set forth the Scriptural order of Church government and not to propagate Witherow's outmoded view on the manuscript that the book was republished. How unfair and unjust it would be, he added, to suggest that the publishing of Spurgeon's Sermons by the Banner of Truth was to uphold and propagate Spurgeon's view, which appears in the sermons, that infant baptism is "a lie and a heresy".

Mr MacLean concluded his letter by stating that he wholeheartedly agreed with what the late Rev. Neil Cameron said: "Were it possible for us, our desire is that neither the sad divisions nor the contentions among our fellow-countrymen would continue, and that not only the people of Scotland but all the people under the sun would be united on the

foundation of the Reformed Church of Scotland. We would open our heart to all the people of the world were they to come together on the basis of the Truth and in the name of Christ."

The King James Version Defended

The following quotation gives Spurgeon's view on tampering with the Scriptures:

"The approved method of the present carnival of unbelief is not to reject the Bible altogether but to raise doubts as to portions of it, and questions as to the uniform inspiration of it as a whole.

If the Book be not infallible, where shall we find infallibility? We have given up the Pope, for he has blundered often and terribly; but we shall not set up instead of him a horde of popelings fresh from college. Are these correctors of Scriptures infallible? Is it certain that our Bibles are not right, but that the critics must be so? Now, Farmer Smith, when you have read your Bible, and have enjoyed its precious promises, you will have tomorrow morning, to go down the street to ask the scholarly man at the parsonage whether this portion of the Scripture belongs to the inspired part of the Word or whether it is of dubious authority . . . We shall gradually be so bedoubted and be criticized that only a few of the most profound will know what is Bible and what is not, and they will dictate to the rest of us. I have no more faith in their mercy than in their accuracy . . . And we are fully assured that our **old English** version of the Scriptures is sufficient for plain men for all purposes of life, salvation, and goodness. We do not despise learning, but we will never say of culture or criticism, "These be thy gods, O Israel".

Strange that there should be men so vile as to use the penknife of Jehoiakim to cut out passages of the Word, because they are unpalatable. O ye who dislike certain portions of Holy Writ, rest assured that your taste is corrupt, and that God will not stay your little opinion.

The tendency to alter the Word of God is human.

The desire to alter the Word of God is dangerous.

The act of altering the Word of God is sinful.

The desire to alter the Word of God is weakness.

The ambition to alter the Word of God is Pharisaic.

The craving to alter the Word of God is accursed."

Television Violence

The B.B.C. has set up a special research unit to examine certain of its programmes which have come in for severe criticism because of the high

level of violence they contain. A survey has shown that young people exposed to these programmes show a greater tendency towards violence than others who have not been exposed to them. A *Daily Express* editorial at the beginning of December stated: "The crisp removal of half-a-dozen well-known and subtly corrupting series would be welcome."

It is regrettable that it has taken the B.B.C. so long to act in this matter as it was obvious to ordinary people for a long time that these programmes would inevitably have a bad effect on those who watched them. That such programmes have been broadcast is an evidence of how Satan has used this medium for his own ends. How different it will be when it is in better hands and will be used beneficially for the nation.

Pornography

Attention has been drawn recently to the use of children in pornographical material when the matter was raised in the House of Commons. Mr Rees, the Home Secretary, said, in reply to a call to protect minors in this loathsome trade, that he shared the revulsion of most people on this subject and was examining measures to counter the use of children in pornographic material. There is no doubt, from reports of the type of material that is presently on sale in some newsagents, that swift action needed in order to combat the corrupting influence of this trade.

Quebec

The province of Quebec in Canada has long been a thorn in the side of the rest of Canada. The reason for this is not merely that the French language has had equal rights with English there but, more especially, because the influence of the Roman Catholic Church has been stronger in that province than anywhere else in Canada. Though French-speaking Canadians have won many concessions from the Federal Government over the last number of years, still the cry in Quebec is for total separation from the rest of Canada. Along with the Roman Catholic Church, France has endeavoured to foster and exploit this movement for her own ends. Should the French-Canadians in Quebec succeed in their aim, there is no doubt but that Quebec will become an even greater thorn in Canada's side, just as Eire has been in the side of Britain.

Self-denial is the best touchstone of sincerity.

Thomas Watson.

Church Notes

North Uist Congregation Appeal

The Deacons' Court of the North Uist Congregation has decided to proceed with certain structural alterations and improvements to the Manse at Bayhead. The Manse was built in 1914 and this work is very necessary. As the congregation is comparatively weak numerically, the Court decided to address an appeal to friends far and near for financial help in carrying out this work. Donations should be sent to the congregational treasurer, Mr Malcolm J. MacDonald, Tigharry, Isle of North Uist.

Alexander Morrison, *Moderator*
Malcolm Macdougall, *Clerk*

This appeal was cordially endorsed by the Outer Isles Presbytery at its meeting on 15th November, 1977.

John MacLeod, *Clerk*

Kinlochbervie Manse Extension Appeal

The Deacons' Court of the Kinlochbervie and Scourie Congregation feel it is desirable that another room be added to the Manse at Kinlochbervie. It was decided to make this known, so that friends throughout the Church who might wish to help could do so by sending donations or interest-free loans. Any such help, which will be greatly appreciated, should be sent to Mr Edward Morrison, 129 Roadside, Kinlochbervie, Sutherland.

This Appeal has the support of the Northern Presbytery.

John Tallach, *Chairman of Deacons' Court*
Robert Ross, *Clerk*

Visit to Israel

Rev. H. R. Moshe Radcliff hopes to lead a party to Israel this year. The tour will be for 15 days beginning on 22nd July (D.V.). The price of the trip is £327. Anyone interested should contact Mr Radcliff at 15 Fotheringay Road, Glasgow G41 4NL, as soon as possible.

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Outer Isles: At Stornoway on 10th January 1978 at 11.30 a.m.

Northern: At Dingwall on 24th January 1978 at 2.30 p.m.

Skye: At Portree on 7th February 1978 at 11 a.m.

Southern: At Glasgow on 14th February 1978 at 6 p.m.

Acknowledgment of Donations

The General Treasurer, Mr Wm. D. Fraser, F.C.M.A., 20 Daleview Avenue, Glasgow G12 0HE, acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:

Sustentation Fund: "C" £4.

Home Mission Fund: "C" £5.

Jewish and Foreign Mission Fund: Collection at Lecture on Rhodesian Mission at Lionel School, Ness, £50; K.H., Glasgow, £5 for work of F.P. Church among Glasgow Jews, per Rev. H.M.R.; A Friend, Delhi, Ontario postmark, £11.10.

The Publications Treasurer acknowledges with sincere thanks:

Publication Fund: London Congregation, £10.

Free Distribution Fund: London Congregation, £10.

The Treasurers of the following congregations acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:

Barnoldswick: C.N., Portree, £3; Anon. for Communion Expenses, £100; I.M., Edinburgh, £5; D.B., Glasgow, £5.

Bracadale: Mr Hilbrands, Holland, £1 for Church Funds; A. and C. MacL., Garrymore, £20 for Church renovation, £15 for Sustentation Fund, and £5 for Minister's Car Expenses; Mr S., £10 for Communion Expenses; A Friend, £5 for property maintenance per M. MacD., Meadle; A Friend at Communion, £5 for repair of Portnalong Church, per D MacA.; Anon., £10 for repair of Portnalong Church, per C. MacA.; Broadford Congregation, £250, per D. J. Morrison, for repair of Portnalong Church; A Friend, £5 for Bracadale Church repair.

Dingwall: Anon., £2 for Church Funds, per Rev. D.B.M.

Dumbarton: Friend, Oban, £5; Friend, Glasgow, £2; Lewis Friend, £5; Friend, Edinburgh, £3, all per T. MacRae; J. & E., Dumbarton, £50, last five for Manse Purchase Fund; A. McD., Dumbarton, £1.40 for Magazine Fund.

Fort William: MacLeans, Tyndrum, £10 for Church Door Collection, per D.M.; Mrs N., Ballachulish, £10 for Church Door Collection, per Rev. J. A. MacD.

Halkirk: Friend, Harris, £5 for Church Door Collection, per Rev. D. A. MacLean.

North Harris: A Friend, Meavag, South Harris, £5 for Communion Expenses, per A. MacLeod; A Friend, Tarbert, £8.54, per Wm. D. Fraser, for Door Collections; Mr and Mrs B., Greenock, £10 (£5 for Car Fund, £5 for Door Collection), per Rod. MacCuish; A Friend, South Harris, £40 (£5 for Car Fund, £35 for Manse and Church property), per Rev. A. MacKay.

North Tolsta: Friends, Broadford, £20 for Hall Extension, per Rev. D. MacLean; Friend, Lochcarron, £10 for Minister's Car Expenses; In loving memory of a dear husband and father, £5 for Minister's Car Expenses and £5 for Hall Fund, per J. Murray.

Glasgow: Mrs McL., £5 for Congregational Fund; Anon., £5 for cushions; Anon., for Bus Fund, £5, £2, £3, 50p; Anon., £3; Anon., £5; both for Trinitarian Bible Society.

Glendale: For Church Funds, £5, 2 Colbost.

Oban: Anon., £10 for Oban Congregational Funds.

Portree: Anon., £10 for Manse Expenses; Mrs N., £1 for Property Maintenance Fund; Mr and Mrs M., Drumuie, £5 for Church Building Fund, all per F.M.; Anon., £5 for Church Bus (in Church plate); Portree Congregation, £182.93 for Trinitarian Bible Society.

Raasay: J.N., Harris, £2.50, per J. M. MacLeod; Lam. 5:18-21, £4, both for Sustentation Fund; Raasay Friend, £20 for Aged and Infirm Ministers; Inverness Friend, £1; Raasay Friend, £4, last three per Rev. D. Nicolson; Friend, Raasay, £3; Friend, £5, last four for Communion Expenses; Friend, Inverarish, £2.50; J.N., Harris, £2.50, both per J. M.

MacLeod; A Friend (envelope in plate), £3; Friend, Raasay, £1, last four for Congregational Fund.

Shieldaig: A Friend, Gairloch, £5 for Congregational Funds; 2 Young Friends, £3 for Car Fund; A Friend, Dingwall, £3 for Sustentation Fund; A Friend, Gairloch, £5; Another Friend, £10, both per D.M.C.; Anon., £20, last three for Manse Extension.

Staffin: M.N., £25, per M.M.; A Friend, £1.50, per M.M.I., both for Sustentation Fund; A Friend, 60p, per M.M.I., for Home Mission; Two Friends, Wester Ross, £5 for Congregational Purposes and £5 for Minister's personal expenses, per Rev. J.M.D.; Anon., £10 for Manse Extension, per Rev. J. MacD.

Stornoway: Friend, Dun Berisay, £17 for Church re-painting; Grateful Friend, £5 for Communion Expenses, both per Rev. J. MacLeod.

BINDING OF MAGAZINES

Persons wishing to have Church Magazines bound should forward them to Mr A. Alexander, c/o Free Presbyterian Church Bookroom, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow G3 6LE. Mr Alexander will also welcome copies of old Magazines which people may wish to dispose of.

OVERSEAS PLACES OF WORSHIP

AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND — 45 Church Street, Otahuhu. Sabbath 11am and 7pm; Wednesday 7.30pm — Rev. D.M. Macleod, 10 Brouder Place, Manurewa, Auckland. Tel. Manurewa 64163.

GISBORNE, NEW ZEALAND — 263a Childers Road. Sabbath 11am and 7pm; Wednesday 7pm and Saturday 7.30pm — Rev. J.A.T. van Dorp, 14 Thomson Street, Gisborne. Tel. Gisborne 85809.

GRAFTON, AUSTRALIA — 172 Fitzroy Street. Sabbath 11am and 7pm; Wednesday 7.30pm — Rev. E.A. Rayner, BA, 90 Victoria Street, Grafton 2460.

CHESLEY, ONTARIO, CANADA — Sabbath 11am and 7.30pm; Thursday 8pm — Enquire to: Mr G. Schult, R.R.3, Chesley, Ontario (Tel: 519-363-2502).

TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA — 2712 Victoria Park Avenue, Willowdale — Sabbath 11am and 7pm; Wednesday 8pm — Rev. M. MacInnes, MA, 458 Huntingwood Drive, Agincourt, Ontario, Canada (Tel: Manse 416-497-7497, Church 416-491-9778).

VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA — Fifteenth Avenue and Fraser Street. Sabbath 11am and 7pm; Wednesday 8pm — Rev. Douglas Beattie, 4010 St. Catherine Street, Vancouver B.C.

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA, CANADA — 514 Maryland Street, Winnipeg.