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The year 1893 is of great significance so far as the history of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland is concerned, as it was in that year that Rev. Donald MacFarlane was enabled by divine grace to witness a good confession on the side of Christ by holding fast to the truth in a day when most were forsaking it. He was honoured of God to preserve for the Church in Scotland the Word of God in its entirety.

The decline and fall of the Disruption Free Church is not easily accounted for, though doubtless many different factors were involved. She had arisen in a splendour of glory as a defender of the crown rights of the Lord Jesus Christ. Rather than allow civil encroachment on the spiritual jurisdiction of the Church of God, she preferred to sacrifice all the material benefits which went with establishment. At the same time she did not abandon the establishment principle, for she regarded it as the Scriptural duty of the State to support and defend the Church of Christ. Her beginnings were good, her prospects fair. Her colleges, too, at the first, were manned by men of outstanding ability and spirituality. How then her sudden demise?

The outstanding cause, no doubt, was the rise within her pale of men who no longer believed the doctrines of God's Word, and in particular the doctrine of the inspiration and infallibility of Scripture. As in Egypt another king arose that knew not Joseph, so men arose in the Disruption Free Church who knew not the Joseph of the New Testament. Why such men should have arisen within a church set for the defence of the Gospel is the question that is difficult to answer. This is the last place we would expect to find such men. The ultimate answer, of course, we have from the Saviour. His answer to the sowing of the tares was — "an enemy hath done this". Satan is ever active to destroy the Church of God and this is clearly seen in the history of the Disruption Free Church. He is not without his agents who do his work for him. How quickly did the leaven of higher critical theory spread and the Disruption Free Church decline under the influence of men such as Principal Rainy, Professors Robertson

Smith and A. B. Davidson and Drs Marcus Dods and A. B. Bruce. The influence of these men so changed the Church of the Disruption that a person who had known her in her youth would, if he returned later, find her scarcely recognisable.

It was in such an hour that the Lord graciously intervened and raised up a weak instrument to defend His Cause and Truth in Scotland. That man was Rev. Donald MacFarlane. He was found faithful to Christ in one of the darkest days of the history of the Church in Scotland. His memory is to be honoured for it, and will be by those who love the Truth. He took hold of the banner of the Reformed Church in Scotland when it was cast down to the ground and raised it aloft for all to see. Woe to Scotland the day when there will be none found to recognise the significance of what He did and when there will be none found to honour and love him for what he did for Christ and His Cause in Scotland in a dark day.

Having said all this we must go on and say — How unworthy we are of the testimony which he conserved and handed down to us. We have reason to marvel that the Lord has left these blessings with us still. Possessing the truth in our hands and having the doctrines of God's Word set before us, we have to confess how little use we have made of these privileges, how little fruit we have borne, how little advance in the knowledge of God. Were the Lord to remove His Word and His ordinances from us, what ground of complaint could we have? The storm clouds of God's wrath are over us as a nation. Danger threatens on every hand. We have no cause for complacency. Let us then plead with the Lord that there may be a turning to Him, not only within our own borders as a Church but in all the Churches of the land. Then — and only then — can we have hope of His Church being one and His people one.

Sermon

by Rev. William C. Burns, M.A.

"Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power." — Psalm 110:3

The will, my friends, is the ruling faculty in the soul of man, and a man's character is very much determined by the prevailing bent of this power within him. It is the office, you know, of the memory to recollect what is past; it is the office of the fancy to plan and devise what is new; it is the office of the understanding to deliberate, of the conscience to

pronounce the law of right and wrong, of the desires and affections to draw and impel, and above all these the will sits, as it were, supreme, pronouncing the final decision, and thus determining what is to be done. If you get a man's will, you have him on your side, and may reckon on his support; whereas, though you may convince his understanding and delight his fancy, and move his affections, yet if his will remains opposed to you, he takes part against you. And thus, my friends, the state of the will is always made a matter of the first importance in enquiring into the position in which the soul of a man stands with regard to God. It is the crowning part of man's depravity that his will is opposed to the will of God; that he does that which God forbids, and leaves undone that which God commands. Jehovah says, "Thou shalt," man impiously answers in his practice, if not in words, "I will not." Jehovah says, "Thou shalt not"; man again replies, "I will," thus seeking to be independent of Jehovah — to be as God, giving law to himself, and following his own will, instead of receiving the holy law of his Creator and making it the guide of all his resolutions. This is the state of the fallen soul by nature; and therefore, my friends, when God brings back in His infinite love the souls of His elect people to His service, He makes them willing. He has exalted, as you find from this psalm, the Lord Jesus Christ as Mediator to the right hand of universal power; and while He promises to Messiah that His enemies shall be made His footstool, He promises that those elect ones whom the Father gave Him to redeem, and whom He purchased to Himself with His own blood, shall be willing, inasmuch as when the will is once renewed, and brought into the service of Jesus, the way is prepared for every other faculty being restored to holiness, and every thought being brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

In this promise two things, you perceive, require explanation: I. The nature of this willingness which Jehovah promises Christ's people shall have; and II, the nature of that day of Jesus' power in which this is to be accomplished.

I In endeavouring to explain the former of these topics I remark —

1st **Christ's people are willing to be saved by His imputed righteousness.** This willingness appears to unconverted sinners as though it were not difficult to be attained; and many who are entirely unrenewed have the confidence that they possess it. They know that they are sinners, and being afraid, especially in times of distress and in the near prospect of death, of the wrath of a holy God, they most gladly cling to anything which affords them the prospect of safety, and thus, out of a mere desire for deliverance from hell, they would be very glad that the righteousness

of Christ were accounted theirs and that they should thus obtain forgiveness. This is in substance the kind of willingness for Christ's righteousness that ungodly sinners possess, and not as if it were a saving appropriation of Jesus. But, my friends, though the faith of most persons which profess to follow Christ is little better than what this universal desire for deliverance from pain produces, this is far different indeed from that willingness for Christ's imputed righteousness which His true people have. For observe, among other things, that in the willingness of the unconverted soul for Christ's righteousness there is no true and humbling conviction of personal unrighteousness. The sinner may see that God will accept nothing that he has done, and that He will charge him with the omission of thousands of duties, but then he does not feel nor acknowledge from the heart the propriety of God's doing so; he does not humbly pass sentence against himself according to the judgment of God, but proudly thinks, at least in his own breast, that there is no such heinousness in his sin as that it would be unworthy of God and a stain upon His holiness if he should be pardoned. And then again, though he may desire the benefit of Jesus' obedience, he has no esteem for that obedience itself, he sees no glory in it, nor any such sufficiency in it that at the command of God, he will venture his soul's eternity upon it, and it alone; and so you always find that though such sinners profess that Christ is all their hope, they are unwilling to be convinced of their being great and flagrant sinners, and plainly discover that their chief trust is founded, not upon what Christ has done, but upon what they are themselves. On the contrary, when there is a true willingness to be saved by the imputed righteousness of Christ, the soul is truly convinced of sin, and feels assured that it cannot be saved by any efforts of its own, and that it were glorifying to God's holiness and justice to cast it forever from His sight into the place of punishment; and then again, the soul while it sees itself all vile, has obtained some discoveries of the glorious perfection of the work of Jesus, its superlative excellence in the sight of God, and rejoices in the thought of being allowed to rest on this for salvation, not only because it is sufficient to procure its deliverance from wrath, but because it also gloriously satisfies the demands of God's justice and vindicates the honour of His holiness.

2nd Christ's people are willing to be brought into subjection to His kingly power. This is a still more clear and decisive mark of a true convert than the one which we have just been noticing. Those who desire Christ's righteousness merely from carnal motives, without any humbling knowledge of themselves, or any just esteem for its excellence, will always

be found to shun the yoke of Christ. The end of their religion is peace; and if peace could be got without true conversion to the love of God, they would never seek after an attainment which is much too holy for their taste. In every heart, however, which Christ makes willing, there is a supreme desire to be brought under dominion to Christ's love, a holy hatred to all sin, and a real longing that Christ would come and set free the heart from every lust and passion, and idol which oppose the law of God, and dispute the supreme place with Him in its affections. It is true, as all real converts know, and as the Lord has so fully taught us by Paul, that the power of sin in the soul, though broken, is not destroyed, that the flesh warreth against the Spirit, and that not infrequently the will which is but partly renewed, seems to consent to sin. But even in such cases the man sins with a divided will; there is a secret wrestling against that desire which is for the time superior, and after a time the holy, spiritual will shows its supremacy, and the soul is humbled in deeper self-loathing and contrition in proportion to the degree in which it has backslidden from God. The soul of the true believer, though it is not free from sin, would be free entirely and forever if a resolution of the will could give sin its death blow. However, it is not so. Though the will be renewed, sin still dwells in the members. The believer would do good and yet evil is present with him; he delights in the law of God after the inward man and being unwillingly detained in bondage, he cries out with the Apostle, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" and willingly adds, rejoicing in Christ's kingly power, to deliver him from sin, "I thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord."

3rd Christ's true people are willing to bear the cross in following Him. It is one of the marks, you know, which Christ gives of the stony ground hearers, that in times of persecution they fall away; but it is not so with Christ's true people. In giving themselves up to Him they make no reserve, and are well satisfied to have Him instead of all else that the world calls dear, and even at the expense of life itself. This last great sacrifice we are not at present called to make, but there are many others that still remain for God's people to try the reality of their attachment to Jesus, and the value which they set upon Him. They are often called to confess His name before His enemies, and those who are His professed but false-hearted friends; and many other trials they must endure, especially in the first days of their new life, when old companions observe the change in their character, and try every art by means of smiles and frowns, and bribes and reproaches, to draw them back into their former ways: but in all such cases the true convert is willing to bear the cross.

He finds it hard and painful, but easy in comparison to parting with Jesus. He naturally fears and shrinks from suffering, but by grace he still more fears and shrinks from sin; and if there is no alternative but either to deny His master or die for His name he is enabled to be faithful still, yea to rejoice that he is counted worthy to suffer shame for His holy and blessed name.

II. We proceed now, however, in the 2nd place, to remark regarding **the day of Jesus' power here spoken of — 1st, This day is the time of His exaltation to the mediatorial throne.** It is on this throne, you perceive, that in this psalm He is spoken of as sitting as a priest and as a king; it is on this throne at the right hand of His Majesty on high that He wields the sceptre of universal dominion, and that He rules in the midst of His enemies on earth; and it is from this that He sends forth that power which makes His people willing to obey Him. Jesus, you know, exercised His kingly power even before He came in the flesh and offered up that sacrifice on account of which the Father exalted Him, and thus the saints under the Old Testament were brought in subjection to His law. But it is most properly after Christ ascended up on high that He received all the power in heaven and on earth, and therefore the latter days, or the times which reached from His ascension to His second coming are more properly called the day of His power, and it is in these, accordingly, that the great multitude of His redeemed are gathered under His sceptre. In these times, my friends, blessed be God, we are privileged to live, and are therefore, called to look for the fulfilment of the glorious promises that relate to it and to it alone. **2nd, It is the day of Christ's power when the Gospel is fully and freely preached.** The Gospel of Christ is called the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek. And it receives this grand appellation because it reveals Christ crucified, who, though He be to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, is yet to them that believe, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. And thus, you see, my friends, that whenever the Lord intends to grant a day of His saving power to sinners He raises up and sends forth ministers who determine with Paul to know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. When God is frowning on a people He does not always remove the public ordinances from among them, but withdrawing the teaching of His Spirit from those who come forward to teach His word, the pulpits become filled with men who know little or nothing of the power of God in their own hearts, and thus, though the preacher may study with diligence, and discuss with all the power of argument, and learning, and

eloquence, that preaching of the cross which is to them that perish foolishness is wanting, the glories of Jesus' person and of Jesus' work, with all the rest of His unsearchable riches, are forgotten, or but slightly and seldom touched; and thus though the minister may preach and the people hear from day to day, the **power of God** is awanting, and souls perish, unconvinced and unconverted. When, however, the Lord in His mercy returns to a nation or a city to gather out of them a people for His name, He raises up ambassadors who know from personal experience the evil and the guilt of sin and have been led to the Spirit to rejoice in Jesus as all their salvation and as all their desire, the chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely, and then, my friends, the matchless glories of Emmanuel are displayed, His preciousness is opened up, His love to sinners, and His willingness to receive with the open arms of His infinite love all that feel their ruined condition and are anxious for deliverance, are proclaimed and magnified; and thus a day of grace from on high is introduced, sinners are awakened and are drawn to receive the Lord Jesus, being made "willing in the day of His power." **3rd, This leads me to notice in the last place that the day of Christ's power is the time of the out-pouring of His Spirit.** The doctrine of Christ crucified is called the power of God, because it is the instrument which God employs in pulling down the strongholds of sin and Satan. But yet, my friends, this doctrine is, after all, but an instrument which cannot be effectual unless when it is wielded by the almighty Spirit of God, by whose divine agency it is alone that sinners are loosed from the bondage of Satan, and brought into the glorious liberty of God's children. Often is this great truth demonstrated in the experience of every Christian, and especially of every Christian minister. The truth of the Gospel is often preached with clearness, fulness, earnestness, and affection, sinners are taught their ruined and perishing condition under the broken covenant of works, and Christ is freely held out to them and urgently pressed upon them and yet they remain despisers and rejectors of the Lord from heaven and the minister of Christ is often found in sadness to exclaim, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" The people hear, and are perhaps attentive, and begin to reform many of those sinful practices in which they formerly indulged, but yet their hearts remain unconvinced of sin, and unenlightened in the glorious knowledge of Christ, and unconverted to God, there is still little seeking of Christ in secret prayer, little alarm experienced on account of sin, and few serious efforts to receive the Lord Jesus as He is freely offered.

But O! how changed is the scene when the Spirit is outpoured. Then

the hearts of God's people become full to overflowing with love to Jesus, and are drawn forth in vehement desire after His glorious appearing to build up Zion. They are much in secret, and much in united prayer, and are cheered by the gladdening hope that the Lord is soon to listen to the groaning of the prisoner, and save those that are appointed unto death. The ministers of God also, are in general particularly enlivened and refreshed in their own souls. In private, they are deeply humbled in soul before God, and have an uncommon measure of the Spirit of supplication for sinners given them, with ardent love to Christ, melting compassion for perishing souls, and vehement desires for their salvation; and then, when they come to preach Jesus, they are evidently anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, they speak with holy unction, earnestness, and affection and sometimes hardly know how to leave off beseeching sinners to be reconciled to God. And then observe the frame of the hearers at such a time. Formerly no terrors could awaken them from their sleep of death, they still said, "Peace and safety," though sudden destruction was coming upon them; but now a few words are enough to pierce their inmost heart, and make them cry out often aloud, and against their will, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Formerly Jesus was held forth and was despised, but now every word that tells of His love is precious, His name is as ointment poured forth, and sinners are filled with an agony of desire for a saving union unto Him. Men, and women, and children retire from the house of God not to profane the evening of the Lord's Day in idle talk or idle strolling. They have much business to do with God. Their doors are shut, their Bibles are in their hands, or they are crying to God upon their knees or they are conversing with the godly, and obtaining the benefit of their counsel to guide them on the way to Jesus. These, my friends, are, you know, some of the marks of a day of the power of Jesus. When the Spirit is poured out from on high, and sinners' hearts are moved, the iron sinews of their necks are relaxed and their brows of brass are crowned with shame; they flock to take shelter under His wings like doves to their windows; they rejoice in His love as men that divide the spoil. Satan is discomfited, his captives are set free, and God is glorified. Such times of refreshing as these have been often experienced, and are destined to be still more gloriously displayed in coming times.

There is more evil in a drop of sin than in a sea of affliction — Thomas Watson.

Why we love the Lord's Day

I Because it is the Lord's Day — "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice, and be glad in it" (Ps. 118:24). "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day" (Rev. 1:10). It is His, by example. It is the day on which He rested from His amazing work of redemption. Just as God rested on the seventh day from all His works, wherefore God blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it; so the Lord Jesus rested on this day from all His agony, and pain, and humiliation. "There remaineth therefore the keeping of a Sabbath to the people of God" (Heb. 4:9). The Lord's Day is His property, just as the Lord's Supper is the supper belonging to Christ. It is His table. He is the bread. He is the wine. He invites the guests. He fills them with joy and with the Holy Ghost. So it is with the Lord's Day. All the days of the year are Christ's, but He hath marked out one in seven as peculiarly His own. "He hath made it" or marked it out. Just as He planted a garden in Eden, so He hath fenced about this day and made it His own.

This is the reason we love it, and would keep it entire: We love everything that is Christ's. We love His Word. It is better to us than thousands of gold and silver. "O how we love His law! it is our study all the day." We love His house. It is our trysting place with Christ, where He meets with us and communes with us from off the mercy seat. We love His table. It is His banqueting-house, where His banner over us is love — where He looses our bonds, and anoints our eyes, and makes our hearts burn with holy joy. We love his people, because they are His, members of His body, washed in His blood, filled with His Spirit, our brothers and sisters for eternity. And we love the Lord's Day, because it is His. Every hour of it is dear to us — sweeter than honey, more precious than gold. It is the day He rose for our justification. It reminds us of His love, and His finished work, and His rest. And we may boldly say that that man does not love the Lord Jesus Christ who does not love the entire Lord's Day.

Oh, Sabbath-breaker, whoever you are, you are a sacrilegious robber! When you steal the hours of the Lord's Day for business or for pleasure, you are robbing Christ of the precious hours which He claims as His own. Would you not be shocked if a plan were deliberately proposed for breaking through the fence of the Lord's Table, and turning it into a common meal, or a feast for the profligate and the drunkard? Would not your best feelings be harrowed to see the silver cup of communion made a cup of revelry in the hand of the drunkard? **"The Lord's Day" is as**

much His day as "the Lord's Table" is His table. Surely we may well say, in the words of Dr Love, the eminent servant of Christ, now gone to the Sabbath above, "Cursed is that gain, cursed is that recreation, cursed is that health, which is gained by criminal encroachments on this sacred day."

II Because it is a relic of paradise and type of heaven — The first Sabbath dawned on the bowers of a sinless paradise. When Adam was created in the image of his Maker, he was put into the garden to dress it and to keep it. No doubt this called forth all his energies. To train the luxuriant vine, to gather the fruit of the fig tree and palm, to conduct the water to the fruit trees and flowers, required all his time and all his skill. Man was never made to be idle. Still, when the Sabbath day came round, his rural implements were all laid aside: the garden no longer was his care. His calm, pure mind looked beyond things seen into the world of eternal realities. He walked with God in the garden, seeking deeper knowledge of Jehovah and His ways, his heart burning more and more with holy love, and his lips overflowing with seraphic praise. **Even in paradise man needed a Sabbath.** Without it Eden itself would have been incomplete. How little they know the joys of Eden, the delight of a close and holy walk with God, who would wrest from Scotland this relic of a sinless world!

It is also the type of heaven. When a believer lays aside his pen or loom, brushes aside his worldly cares, leaving them behind him with his weekday clothes, and comes up to the House of God, it is like the morning of the resurrection, the day when we shall come out of great tribulation into the presence of God and the Lamb. When he sits under the preached Word, and hears the voice of the shepherd leading and feeding his soul, it reminds him of the day when the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed him and lead him to living fountains of waters. When he joins in the psalm of praise it reminds him of the day when his hands shall strike the harp of God —

*"Where congregations ne'er break up,
And Sabbaths have no end."*

When he retires, and meets with God in secret in his closet, or, like Isaac, in some favourite spot near his dwelling, it reminds him of the day when "he shall be a pillar in the house of our God, and go no more out."

This is the reason we love the Lord's Day. This is the reason we "call the Sabbath a delight". A well-spent Sabbath we feel to be a day of heaven upon earth. For this reason we wish our Sabbaths to be wholly given to God. We love to spend the whole time in the public and private

exercises of God's worship, except so much as is taken up in the works of necessity and mercy. We love to rise early on that morning, and to sit up late, that we may have a long day with God.

How many may know from this that they will never be in heaven! A straw on the surface can tell which way the stream is flowing. Do you abhor a holy Sabbath? Is it a kind of hell to you to be with those who are strict in keeping the Lord's Day? The writer of these lines once felt as you do. You are restless and uneasy. You say, "Behold, what a weariness is it!" "When will the Sabbath be gone, that we may sell corn?" Ah! soon, very soon, and you will be in hell. Hell is the only place for you. Heaven is one long, never-ending, holy Sabbath day. There are no Sabbaths in hell.

III Because it is a day of blessings — When God instituted the Sabbath in paradise, it is said, "God blessed the Sabbath day, and sanctified it" (Gen. 2:3). He not only set it apart as a sacred day, but made it a day of blessing. Again, when the Lord Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week before dawn, He revealed Himself the same day to two disciples going to Emmaus, and made their hearts burn within them (Luke 24:13). The same evening He came and stood in the midst of the disciples, and said, "Peace be unto you"; and He breathed on them and said: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (John 20:19). Again, after eight days, that is, **the next Lord's Day**; Jesus came and stood in the midst, and revealed Himself with unspeakable grace to unbelieving Thomas (John 20:26). It was on the Lord's Day, also, that the Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost (Acts 2:1; cf. Lev. 23:15, 16). That beginning of all spiritual blessings, that first revival of the Christian Church, was on the Lord's Day. It was on the same day that the beloved John, an exile on the seagirt isle of Patmos, far away from the assembly of the saints, was filled with the Holy Spirit, and received his heavenly revelation.

So that in all ages, from the beginning of the world, and in every place where there is a believer, the Sabbath has been a day of double blessing. It is so still, and will be, though all God's enemies should gnash their teeth at it. True, God is a God of free grace, and confines His working to no time or place; but it is equally true, and all the scoffs of the infidel cannot alter it, that it pleases Him to bless His Word most on the Lord's Day. All God's faithful ministers in every land can bear witness that sinners are converted most frequently on the Lord's Day — that Jesus comes in and shows Himself through the lattice of ordinances oftenest on His own day. Saints, like John, are filled with the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and enjoy calm, deep views into eternity.

Unhappy men, who are striving to rob our beloved Scotland of this day of double blessing, "ye know not what you do." You would wrest from our dear countrymen the day when God opens the windows of heaven and pours down a blessing. You want to make the heavens over Scotland like brass, and the hearts of our people like iron. Is it the sound of the golden bells of our ever-living High Priest on the mountains of our land, and the breathing of His Holy Spirit over so many of our parishes, that has roused up your satanic exertions to drown the sweet sound of mercy by the deafening roar of railway carriages? Is it the returning vigor of the revived and chastened Church of Scotland that has opened the torrents of blasphemy which you pour forth against the Lord of the Sabbath? Have your own withered souls no need of a drop from heaven? May it not be the case that some of you are blaspheming the very day on which your own soul might have been saved? Is it not possible that some of you may remember, with tears of anguish in hell, the exertions which you are now making, against light and against warning, to bring down a withering blight on your own souls and on the religion of Scotland?

To those who are God's children in this land, I would now, in the name of our common Saviour, who is Lord of the Sabbath Day, address a word of exhortation.

I Prize the Lord's Day — The more that others despise and trample on it, love you it all the more. The louder the storm of blasphemy howls around you, sit the closer at the feet of Jesus. "He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet." Diligently improve all holy time. It should be the busiest day of the seven; but only in the business of eternity. Avoid sin on that holy day. God's children should avoid sin every day, but most of all on the Lord's Day. It is a day of double cursing, as well as of double blessing. The world will have to answer dreadfully for sins committed in holy time. Spend the Lord's Day in the Lord's presence. Spend it as a day in heaven. Spend much of it in praise and in works of mercy, as Jesus did.

II Defend the Lord's Day — Lift up a calm, undaunted testimony against all the profanations of the Lord's Day. Use all your influence, whether as a statesman, a magistrate, a master, a father, or a friend, both publicly and privately, to defend the entire Lord's Day. This duty is laid upon you in the Fourth Commandment. Never see the Sabbath broken without reproving the breaker of it. Even worldly men, with all their pride and contempt for us, cannot endure to be convicted of Sabbath breaking. Always remember God and the Bible are on your side,

and that you will soon see these men cursing their own sin and folly when too late.

Christian countrymen, awake! and, filled by the same spirit that delivered our country from the dark superstitions of Rome, let us beat back the incoming tide of infidelity and enmity to the Sabbath.

Guilty men who, under Satan, are leading on the deep, dark phalanx of Sabbath-breakers, yours is a solemn position. You are **robbers**. You rob God of His holy day. You are **murderers**. You murder the souls of your servants. God said, "Thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy servant"; but you compel your servants to break God's law, and to sell their souls for gain. You are **sinner against light**. Your Bible and your catechism, the words of godly parents, perhaps now in the Sabbath above, and the loud remonstrances of God-fearing men, are ringing in your ears, while you perpetrate this deed of shame, and glory in it. You are **traitors to your country**. The law of your country declares that you should "observe a holy rest all that day from your own words, works, and thoughts"; and yet you scout it as an antiquated superstition. Was it not Sabbath-breaking that made God cast away Israel? And yet you would bring the same curse on Scotland now. You are **moral suicides**, stabbing your own souls, proclaiming to the world that you are not the Lord's people, and hurrying on your souls to meet the Sabbath-breaker's doom.

In conclusion, I propose, for the calm consideration of all sober-minded men, the following serious questions.

1. Can you name one godly minister, of any denomination in all Scotland, who does not hold the duty of the entire sanctification of the Lord's Day?

2. Did you ever meet with a lively believer in any country under heaven — one who loved Christ, and lived a holy life — who did not delight in keeping holy to God the entire Lord's Day?

3. Is it wise to take the interpretation of God's will concerning the Lord's Day from "men of the world," from infidels, scoffers, men of unholy lives, men who are sand-blind in all divine things, men who are the enemies of all righteousness, who quote Scripture freely, as Satan did, to deceive and betray?

4. If, in opposition to the uniform testimony of God's wisest and holiest servants, against the plain warnings of God's Word, against the very words of your catechism, learned beside your mother's knee, and against the voice of your outraged conscience, you join the ranks of the Sabbath-breakers, will not this be a **sin against light**, will it not lie heavy

on your soul upon your deathbed, will it not meet you in the judgment day?

I am praying that these words of truth and soberness may be owned of God, and carried home to your hearts with divine power.

I remain, dear fellow countrymen, your soul's well-wisher.

Robert Murray McCheyne.

Dundee,

December 18, 1841.

Constitutional Leaders and the Declaratory Act

(Copy of Rev. J. S. Sinclair's letter to the "Northern Chronicle," June 20th, 1894)

Sir, — Many friends of truth throughout the Highlands and elsewhere must have read with somewhat painful interest the statements anent the Declaratory Act made by the Rev. M. Macaskill, Dingwall, and the Rev. M. Mackenzie, Inverness, to their respective congregations. The General Assembly is now past, and it is apparent to every intelligent observer that the position of the majority in the Free Church has received additional strength by its resolutions with regard to the above Act, and that the position of the minority has been considerably weakened. All the advantage desired in the meantime through the Act by the majority has been secured, whilst the efforts of the minority for its repeal have been completely frustrated. It is strange, therefore, to find leaders of the minority referring their congregations to declarations of the Assembly as confirming the position taken up by themselves. It appears from Mr Macaskill's statement that the General Assembly and he are entirely of one mind on the point, and your readers will take care to observe that it is on a point of vital importance, namely, that the Act is "now declared to be no part of the constitution of this Church, and hence not binding on any one in the Church." But does Mr Macaskill give a correct interpretation of the Assembly's resolution? I think not. The following is the part of the resolution at issue:—"They (the Assembly) enact and declare as follows:—Whereas the Declaratory Act, 1892, was passed to remove difficulties and scruples which had been felt by some in reference to the declaration of belief required from persons who receive licence or are admitted to office in this Church, the Assembly hereby declare that

the statements of doctrine contained in the said Act are not thereby imposed upon any of the Church's office-bearers as part of the standards of the Church, but that those who are licensed or ordained to office in this Church, in answering the questions and subscribing the Formula, are entitled to do so in view of the Declaratory Act." Now, let your readers clearly observe that what the above resolution sets forth is that it is the statements of doctrine contained in the said Act that are not imposed upon office-bearers as part of the standards of the Church, and not that the Act itself as an authoritative Act of the Church is not imposed upon office-bearers as one whose existence upon the statute books of the Church they are bound to recognise and cannot ignore. This is a most important distinction and if missed obscures the whole matter. The distinction is easily recognisable if we consider the end for which the Act was framed. It was not framed for relieving any difficulties or scruples felt by Mr Macaskill and his friends, but for relieving the difficulties and scruples of those who were not disposed to accept the doctrines of the Word of God as set forth in the Confession of Faith. Office-bearers that have no such difficulties will find no need for the provisions of the Act, and in that sense it may be a dead letter to them. But that it is a dead letter to some in that sense does not make void the validity of the Act as a standing law upon the statute books of the Church, nor does it prevent the Act having that very mode of operation in the Church which was intended by its framers and approvers, namely, to give relief to some who had difficulties about the Confession. It is evident, therefore, that there are some to whom the Act cannot in any sense be said to be a dead letter. It is also equally evident that the office-bearers who have no difficulties are not relieved thereby from the binding obligation to recognise the Act's relation to and provision for those who have difficulties. All office-bearers are not bound to accept the provision made in the Act, but all office-bearers are bound, in obedience to the Church to submit to the operation of the Act, in its giving relief to those who accept its provision. How, then, can Mr Macaskill say that the Assembly have now declared the Act to be no part of the Constitution, and hence not binding on anyone in the Church? The Act is binding in the only sense in which it was intended to be binding, and it is equally so binding upon every office-bearer within the Church. It is impossible for office-bearers, who dissented from the passing of the Act, to prevent it doing its deadly work. No member of Presbytery is at liberty to put questions to candidates for office as to whether he does or does not accept the doctrines of the Act, and therefore, it is vain for Mr Mackenzie

to say that "if anyone signified, before answering the questions and signing the Formula, that he availed himself of the relief given by the Declaratory Act, he (Mr Mackenzie) would refuse to take any part in the licensing or in the ordination of such an one. Mr Mackenzie knows as well as I do that candidates are not at liberty to make any statement whatever about the Act, and he also knows that no member of Presbytery is at liberty to ask the candidate any question about the Act. There is no danger, therefore, of his ever having occasion to refuse to act in conferring licensing or in the ordination of such an one. Mr Mackenzie knows as well other ministers may become parties to a system of dishonesty which will be appalling in its results. Candidates for office are still asked the same questions and sign the same formula as they used to do, but now they are entitled to believe in the doctrines of the Act at the same time as they solemnly vow to maintain the whole doctrine of the Confession of Faith.

Mr Macaskill and Mr Mackenzie seem to congratulate themselves and their friends that the Questions and Formula have not been touched, but matters are no better on that account. Surely it is vain to boast that progress in this direction has in the meantime stopped, when a system of downright dishonesty is being carried on, candidates for office by word of mouth solemnly swearing their faith in the whole doctrines of the Confession, and determination to uphold the same, whilst they inwardly do not accept the whole doctrine of the Confession, but avail themselves of the Act and its provisions. Mr Macaskill acknowledges that this liberty is "reprehensible," and he says, "In this aspect of it the Act is as detestable to me as ever, and in my opinion, capable only of doing injury to the cause of truth and sound doctrine in our Church." This, I say, is the aspect of it which is of prime importance, and it is Mr Macaskill's duty to see to it that he is no party to a system which will do fatal injury to the interests of truth and sound doctrine. Men of unsound views were in the Church before the Act was passed, but they held these views in defiance of their own solemn vows, and irrespective of any liberty given them by the Church, but now the same men get a liberty to hold their views by an authoritative Act of the Church. Although they still commit dishonesty inasmuch as their vows and their liberty are inconsistent, yet the inconsistency and dishonesty are sanctioned by the Church, and it is the same authority that provides the liberty as imposes the vows. This arrangement makes matters worse than they were before, as men of heretical views can now laugh at all who endeavour to interfere with them. Mr Macaskill, however, says it is a different thing to assert that he, or any other office-bearer, that "protested against the Act and is not

involved in the admission of it, is responsible for its being there and involved in the guilt of the evils it is capable of producing." There is no obligation laid upon him by the Word of God to remain in a Church, and take part in Church Courts, where such an Act is operative in spite of all protests, and where he may be party to taking men into office who hold dangerous views. The apostle exhorts Timothy to commit the word to "faithful men who shall be able to teach others also." There is no security or guarantee for faithfulness on the part of any office-bearer that enters this Church, because he may privately hold views contained in the Declaratory Act, and therefore there is no security or guarantee either in the constitution of the Church or in the vows imposed upon candidates that the pulpits of the Church will be filled by men who hold the whole doctrine of the Word of God as embodied in the Confession. No one can tell but the Rev. Messrs Macaskill and Mackenzie may have as successors men of unsound views. Are they in this respect obeying the command of the apostle to Timothy? Are they not rather showing their indifference as to what character for soundness in the faith those who follow them will have? And is not the same thing true of the whole Constitutional Party? It is very clear that if matters go on as they are doing at present, the whole Church may, in a shorter time than we imagine, be filled with office-bearers whose beliefs are not those of the Confession or the Word of God, and who will therefore be fitted to do incalculable injury to immortal souls and to the cause of truth and righteousness. To say that the minority are using all the lawful means at their disposal to prevent such results is to say what is not the case. The passing of this Act is no single erroneous step of any particular Assembly, but the combined result of the deliberations of the whole Church. This result affects the position of the whole Church as it at present exists, and will affect succeeding generations in the Church in the same direction, but more deeply and destructively even than it affects the present generation. If the Constitutionals pass away what will they leave behind them? Nothing but the glory in the hands of the proud enemy. I do not know how any conscientious minister that apprehends rightly the present position of affairs can contemplate such a result without trembling.

Yours, etc.,

JAMES. S. SINCLAIR.

Wick, June 16th, 1894.

Breaking Down the Carved Work

by Rev. John Colquhoun, Glendale Skye

(Continued from page 126)

When brought back from exile, Charles II made solemn promises and signed the Solemn League and Covenant with the ease of one who had no intention of keeping them. Once securely seated on the Throne he followed in the steps of his father and grandfather, aided by his minions in Church and State, in proceeding to break down the carved work of the Church of Scotland. There were in Scotland, however, men, both among the nobility and the peasantry, who dared to say, even to kings, "Our beloved Zion shall not be defiled, you shall not see your desire upon Zion." Shortly after he began to reign, the Earl of Middleton, as His Majesty's representative, opened the Scottish Parliament, and an oath was required of its members that they would acknowledge the King as supreme "in all causes," which implied both civil and religious matters. The next step of this Parliament was to pass the notorious Act Rescissory which with one broad sweep annulled all the Parliaments held since 1633, with all their proceedings, and thus totally abolished all the laws made in favour of the Presbyterian Church. This Parliament was known as "the drunken Parliament," and it is alleged that the afore-mentioned Act was passed after a drunken bout by its members. By this Act the whole government of the Church of Scotland was overthrown. Following on this the King, by a letter to the Council, abolished the Presbyterian Church government. One good effect of this was the ending, to a large extent, of the strife between the Resolutioners and the Protesters, which during the time it lasted weakened the whole Church, but, alas! too late, for the carved work had been broken down in a more effective manner than at any previous time. At the instigation of the Archbishop of Glasgow, Middleton's Parliament passed an Act, known as the Glasgow Act, banishing from their congregations all the ministers who had entered since 1649, if they did not before a fixed date procure presentations from the patrons, and present themselves to the prelates to receive collations and admission to their charges. On the Sabbath before that date, nearly four hundred ministers preached and bade farewell to their congregations, and their churches were abandoned by both pastors and congregations, amid many manifestations of deep sorrow.

The ministers were replaced by worthless curates who were notoriously immoral and ignorant to a reproach, whom the people would not listen

to, with the result that more violent persecutions were resorted to under Charles II, who was secretly a Papist, and his brother, James II, who was openly one. For twenty-eight years the flame of persecution burned continually. According to the inscription on the Martyrs Memorial in Greyfriars Churchyard, Edinburgh, from 27th May 1661 to 17th February 1688 "were one way or another murdered and destroyed for the same cause about eighteen thousand." This fearful holocaust was brought about in order to ensure the breaking down of the carved work of the Reformation in Scotland, and the fact that it did not succeed at the time can only be attributed to God's over-ruling power, manifesting that He had wise purposes in permitting it, and at the same time preserving a remnant whom He was pleased to try as by fire." The bush was burning, but not consumed." By the very intensity of their desire to break down the carved work of the Church of Scotland the Lord hurled the Stuart dynasty off the Throne of Britain, and left them ultimately without issue to occupy that Throne again. This period furnishes us with the names of such noble martyrs for the truth as James Guthrie, Donald Cargill, Richard Cameron, James Renwick, and a host of others too numerous to be mentioned, who had been despised in their own generation, and who are still despised by time-serving sycophants who know not the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Their character has been blackened in the world, and they have been treated as the off-scouring of all things, yet their record is on high, and when Christ shall again return to this land in the power of the Spirit, it will be these very principles for which these martyrs died that shall be accepted and openly confessed. True it is that they took up arms, but this was forced on them in the interests of self-defence, and in order to maintain the true religion as professed in this realm. Their sentiments are set forth in the manly language of men who realised that there is a higher authority than that of the petty princes of this world, and that it is better to serve the Lord than to make princes our confidence. This is clearly confirmed by the Sanquhar and Rutherglen Declarations. In these Declarations they say, "Shall the end of government be lost, through the weakness, wickedness, and tyranny of governors? Must the people, by an implicit submission and deplorable stupidity, destroy themselves, and betray their posterity, and become objects of reproach to the present generation, and pity and contempt to the future? Have they not in such an extremity, good ground to make use of that natural power they have, to shake off that yoke which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear?"

He who rules among the armies of Heaven and among the inhabitants

of the earth, in his own good time, put an end to this fearful persecution. The Prince of Orange landed at Torbay on 5th November 1688, and King James II fled to France and the safety of a Popish Court. The Bishops, who had been the King's chief instruments and instigators in persecuting the Presbyterians, found themselves suddenly left without power, and at the mercy of those whom they persecuted. They also found themselves treated with a leniency which they had no grounds to expect, although they did not appreciate it. They found that the men whom they persecuted, were men who had the high principles of the Christian religion deeply rooted in their being, influencing their conduct even towards their enemies. As one writer puts it; "As their constancy throughout the long period of fiery trial had been almost unparalleled, so their high-principled self-government was conspicuous in their hour of bloodless triumph. How gloriously different the conduct of the Scottish Presbyterians from that of their prelatic persecutors, rendering it manifest to the world, as if written with a sunbeam, which of these two forms of church government possessed most of the principles, and displayed most of the character, of the gospel of peace and good-will." The same writer, after referring to the persecutions endured by the Presbyterians in the various forms in which that took place, says, "Surely those who talk of the possibility of Prelacy ever becoming the religion of Scotland, must expect it to be preceded by such a revolution both in the constitution of the human mind and in the frame of nature, as shall completely sweep away all records of the past; for as long as our mountains, heaths, and glens are studded with the grey memorials of our martyred fathers, and so long as the free blood courses more warmly and the heart beats higher in one true Scottish bosom, at the narrative of their glorious sufferings and the savage cruelty of their merciless persecutors, so long must it be absolutely impossible for Prelacy to be regarded in Scotland with any other feelings than those of indignant reprobation, as alike hostile to the principles of civil liberty and contrary to the mild and gracious spirit of Christianity." (*Hetherington's History of the Church of Scotland*, 6th ed., p.174). The writer of the foregoing passage could not credit in his own day what is apparent to every one in our day, not only as far as prelacy is concerned, but even the persecutions and unscriptural dogmas of the Church of Rome are treated as if they should form no barrier between it and the Protestant Church.

The Presbyterian Church in Scotland, though persecuted and despised, played an important part in the affairs which led to the flight of King James and the accession of William of Orange to the British Throne. The

high principles of their religion allowed the Presbyterians of Scotland to recognise no other King in the Church but King Jesus. That principle was clearly emphasised in their Church by their Subordinate Standards, "That the Lord Jesus Christ is the sole Head and King of the Church, and hath therein appointed a government distinct from that of the civil magistrate." The Revolution Settlement, which is based on the Claim of Right, was brought into being as a result of the Accession of William III to the British Throne. It abolished "Prelacy, and all superiority of any office in the Church in this kingdom above Presbyters"; it also rescinded "those Acts of Parliament, passed in the reign of Charles II, by which Prelacy had been established," and, on 7th June 1690 an Act was passed, "ratifying the Confession of Faith, and settling Presbyterian Church government." Thus far the carved work of the Church of Scotland was set up again. The Revolution Settlement, however, was defective in various aspects of it, as is shown in the Act of the Free Church Assembly, entitled *Act and Declaration*, passed in 1851. Various things are stated in that Act which show that it was not in all respects satisfactory, such as that no mention is made of the attainments of the Second Reformation, the Act Rescissory had not been repealed, thus all that the Church had done, and all that the State had done for her in the interval between 1638 and the Restoration is stigmatised on the Statute Book of Britain as treasonable and rebellious.

As Scotland was a separate kingdom with a parliament of its own at the time it was necessary that its voice should be heard in the crisis occasioned by the flight of King James II, and the landing of the Prince of Orange. For this purpose the Scottish Convention of Estates met in Edinburgh on 14th March 1689 and declared its opinion respecting the state of the nation. This Declaration was embodied in the Claim of Right in which it was stated that "King James VII, being a professed Papist, did assume the regal power, and acted as king, without ever taking the oath required by law, whereby the king, at his accession to the government, is obliged to swear to maintain the Protestant religion, and to rule the people according to the laudable laws, and did, by the advice of wicked and evil counsellors, invade the fundamental constitution of this kingdom, and alter it from a legal limited monarchy to an arbitrary despotic power; and in a public proclamation asserted an absolute power to cass, annul, and disable all the laws, particularly the laws establishing the Protestant religion, and did exercise that power to the subversion of the Protestant religion, and to the violation of the laws and liberties of the kingdom . . . Therefore, the Estates of the Kingdom of Scotland find

and declare that King James VII, being a professed Papist did assume the regal power . . . Whereby he hath forfeited the right to the Crown, and the Throne is become vacant."

Reference has already been made to the defects of the Revolution Settlement, and these defects had very important effects on the after history of the Church of Scotland. King William required that as many of the Episcopal curates as would conform to Presbyterianism would be allowed to remain in their congregations. These were the fore-runners of the type of ministers known as *Moderates*, who proved to be the curse of the Church of Scotland for many a long year. Another defect was the Act which was passed on 19th July 1690, having as its aim the abolition of Patronage. The Act was carefully drawn up but it only succeeded in transferring the duty of electing ministers from the former patrons to heritors and elders, who now became the real patrons, though this was not the intention of the framers of the Act. However, the Patronage Act of the reign of Queen Anne was the real blow by which a great deal of the carved work, as it was set up at the Revolution Settlement, was broken down. In 1707 the Union between England and Scotland was consummated, and, by the Act of Security, which was embodied in the Treaty of Union, the Church of Scotland "obtained the clearest recognition of her own principles and the strongest ratification of her rights and privileges, which could be conveyed by legislative enactments and secured by the solemn pledge of national faith." This security, however, was but short-lived.

(To be continued)

Obituary

Mr Elisha Silosini Mnkandla was born, possibly in the late 1870s, at Emambanjeni. He was a twin, and he told me that his twin brother was not allowed to live as the custom was in those days. When trying to figure out the time of his birth, he made reference to some well known historical events like the death of Lotshe, who was closely related to King Lobengula but was put to death at the king's command because he had advised the king to allow the white people to settle in his country, as the efforts to fight them could not succeed. Mnkandla remembered the incident which he saw as a boy herding his father's cattle.

As a young man, Mnkandla worked as a kitchen boy in Bulawayo when the place was just a few iron huts. But when he grew up he advanced to the then important job of ox driver and worked for Mr

Fynn, whose farm bordered the Ntabazinduna Tribal Trust land. Later on he worked at Morvern Mine and then as an experienced ox driver for the Zeedenberg Transport organisation.

It was while transporting wood to Lonely Mine that Mnkandla first met with the Gospel. A London Missionary Society man, Hlabangana, read the Bible to Mnkandla and his fellow wagon drivers; it was then that a desire was generated in Mnkandla's heart to be able to read so that he could read the Bible for himself. Among the team of wagon drivers there was a man, Jonase, who came from South Africa with Zeedenberg, and he taught Mnkandla to read. At a later time when Mnkandla went home, his neighbour Ntongana Mnthamo persuaded him to buy himself a Bible, which he did, and they both went to church to hear the late Rev. John Tallach, of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland Mission at Ingwenya. The reading of the Word of God and the attendance to the preaching generated in his soul a love for the Word and for the Lord of the Word.

Later on when Mnkandla had settled down as a married man and a church man, he was asked to take services at Morvern where he preached for many years in the 1930s. In 1939 he was asked to move to one of the Ingwenya outstations called Vidze in a district where two older preaching stations had been established. Those were Nukwa and Mlizane and the three had Communion services, turn about. The missionaries from Ingwenya, Rev. John Tallach and Rev. Dr Macdonald, held these Communions twice a year. Elders Samuel Sithole and E. Sithole supervised the Nukwa Congregation while Philemon Ndebele supervised the Mlizane Congregation.

In 1945, the Government ordered the movement of Africans from European owned lands in which those three stations were situated to the Nkai African Tribal Trust land. The three congregations were scattered by the complete movement of Africans from the European lands, so that the Sitholes settled at Donsa; Ndebele settled at Zenka; and Mnkandla settled at Katasa where he built up a congregation of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland under the Zenka Kirk Session; as did the others in their respective places.

Makandla was one of the last 'old elders' who were known for their mighty prayers. At Kirk Sessions he had authority of an unusual stamp. When the call to Zenka for Rev. Dube was being organised, he was so lively that in spite of his great age he travelled by bus with the rest of the Zenka Congregation a distance of over seventy miles to Ingwenya for the Ordination and Induction of their young minister. On the day of the

Ordination he was remarkably bright, so that many people commented on his fresh attitude to life and the Lord's work.

On his return from Ingwenya, Mnkandla waited for further transport to take him to his home at Katasa; he waited at Zenka at the home of William Mpofu. But in the night following, on the 13th of October, 1978, he peacefully passed away from this world of sorrows, affliction and sin into the world of spirits we believe to be with the Lord, which is far better. May the Lord raise up young believers to take up the places of His servants whom He takes away from the spiritual battlefields to glory above.

A. B. NDEBELE (Rev.).

Book Reviews

George Whitefield's Journals. Banner of Truth Trust. 588 pp. Price £4.50.

We are glad to see these Journals once again reprinted by the Banner of Truth Trust. In our view they are quite outstanding. Through reading them one is able to go along with Whitefield as he goes forth with the good seed of the kingdom, scattering it now on this side of the Atlantic and then on the other side, and all the while seeing the seed taking root in the hearts of poor sinners and springing up bearing fruit to life eternal. We see Satan's kingdom assaulted and Christ's kingdom advanced. What encouragement ministers of the Gospel in this dark day of ours may find through the perusal of George Whitefield's Journals, so as to make them ready to cry out: "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear."

Whitefield's was a ministry of unparalleled usefulness in the Church of God. One is almost translated back to apostolic times when the Lord so signally owned the preaching of the Apostle Paul. There is no question but that the extent of Whitefield's usefulness will not be fully known until the day when all things will be revealed. His Journals, we trust, will continue to be a source of encouragement to the tried servants of God in these days and in the future as they have most surely been in the past. We know of no other volume to equal it in its particular field.

Thoughts on Religious Experience, by Archibald Alexander. Banner of Truth Trust. 338 pp. Price £3.00.

This volume by the noted Archibald Alexander of Princeton has a biographical introduction by W. J. Grier of Belfast. The book contains Alexander's thoughts on a subject which should be of the greatest interest

to Christians everywhere. The work of the Holy Spirit in the soul is altogether wonderful and from it flows the religious experience of the people of God. Alexander covers the whole range of religious experience from the first strivings of the Spirit on to the new birth and also the varied experiences of the children of God in this world. He deals, too, with piety in children, and also with cases of melancholy and of back-sliding. The Christian experience of many noted Christians is given, also many outstanding death-bed experiences. In Chapter 22 he attempts to describe the experience of the soul after death but very soon goes on to admit: "But methinks we are in danger of indulging our imaginations too far, and of transferring to a heavenly state too many of the feelings and associations of our earthly condition." The concluding part of the volume is taken up with pastoral letters addressed to the aged, the young, Christian mothers and bereaved persons.

We wish for the book a continued wide circulation.

D.B.M.

Proceedings of Sabbath Observance Committee

Proceedings of the Sabbath Observance Committee

'Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day? Did not your fathers thus and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon our city? Yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath' (Nehemiah 13. 17, 18).

What would Nehemiah think of our observance of the Lord's Day in the 1970s? For all the promises annexed to its proper observance, and for all the threats of divine judgment upon its profanation, our nation has progressively desecrated the Lord's Day until it has almost been obliterated from the British scene. Rev. Andrew Thomson, the prefacer of *Essays on The Sabbath* (1886), warns that 'much else is certain to pass away when our Sabbaths are lost. Only let us begin to give up our opportunities of public religious instruction and worship, and gradually, but surely, we shall part with religion itself. And when once the fountain of religion is dried up, how precarious and superficial is the morality that exists without it. And when our moral life is blighted, where are our national strength, our solidity, our order, our liberty, our elements of greatness and power? It will require no visible judgments from heaven to ensure such a nation's decline and fall. The secret of its ruin is within it. And already has the finger of God inscribed on it: "Ichabod, the glory is

departed". Living almost a century after these words were written, we are the sad witnesses of their foresight.

In its effort to witness for the Lord's Day, the above Committee has made numerous protests over the past year. The violation of the Fourth Commandment, however, is so extensive, and the unwillingness of men to submit to the authority of God and His law so downright, that there is little to encourage us, except the knowledge that we are in the line of duty.

The Edinburgh Festival of Arts got off to a start with a huge cavalcade of carnival floats through the streets of the city. Watched by more than 100,000, it was staged on 20th August — a Sabbath. A protest was sent to the District Council, the Lothian Highways Committee, and The Edinburgh Evening News who organised it. The Chairman of the Recreation Committee thanked us for our letter but added: 'I am afraid I do not altogether agree with the view which you have put forward as we consider that this cavalcade is a harmless form of entertainment which is enjoyed by grown-ups and children. I will never be convinced that a form of happiness on a Sunday is some kind of sin', etc.

Both Edinburgh and Glasgow District Councils were written about the Firework Displays held on the Lord's Day in November, respectively at Meadowbank, and at Glasgow Green. Both protests were acknowledged. The Edinburgh letter informs us that our 'representations have been noted', and that the Director of Administration intends to 'bring the matter to the attention of the appropriate committee in a report'.

A number of Scottish theatres and places of entertainment which open on the Lord's Day have been written. The manager of the Theatre Royal, Glasgow, responded courteously, but concluded: 'Whilst we sincerely respect the views which you hold and which you state in your letter, I have been asked by my directors to advise you that they do not think it appropriate to keep the theatre closed on the Sabbath so long as there is strong public demand for it to be open'. Apart from another reply, from the Citizens Theatre, Glasgow, there was no response to our appeal to close these places on the Lord's Day.

As was done last year to a lesser extent, our protestation again focused on winter sports, around which a huge trade has developed in Scotland. The National Ski Council, with which we were in touch last year, staged at least seventeen events on the Lord's Day in its 1978/79 programme. Most ski schools run courses at weekends. These entail the provision of equipment, accommodation, and entertainment specially laid on for sports people. Several letters have been written to various

bodies against these activities. A lengthy reply was received from the Secretary of the Scottish National Ski Council in defence of its policy and activities.

Another area of serious Sabbath profanation is the car trade. Anyone who turns to the back pages of his local Saturday newspaper may see the huge number of showrooms open on the Lord's Day for the viewing and sale of cars. We have written many letters to Scottish firms who are guilty of thus promoting their commercial interests on the Lord's Day.

Last year, during pre-'Christmas' days, some large stores were open seven days a week for the month of December. For instance, Arnotts of the House of Fraser did this. Managers of these shops in our principal cities were written. Apart from Arnotts of Aberdeen, who forwarded our letter to their head office there was no reply to our protests. We also wrote the head office of Tesco Stores, about their Paisley supermarket which opens on the Lord's Day on a regular basis. In reply, they informed us that they 'gave the matter very careful consideration, and decided that although there were some who would object to Sunday trading the majority in the community would appreciate the opportunity of shopping when they were free to do so'. They assure us that it is not their intention 'to open any other stores on Sunday'.

There are several other items that may be mentioned, but the above is a sample of our protests. The reader cannot fail to notice that the Scriptural arguments for the conservation of the Lord's Day are never met. We conclude with a reference to two items of interest. A protest has been sent to the National Consumer Council who are presently moving for the removal of all restrictions on Sabbath trading in England. A bill is at present before the House of Lords to effect this. We have also written the Prime Minister, expressing our concern for the moral decline of the nation, and deploring in particular the widespread violation of the Fourth Commandment. We remind him of his obligation, in his supreme magisterial office, to support and defend the religion of Jesus Christ, and appeal to him to consider and to implement such measures as would tend to lead our nation back to God and His law. We await his reply.

We would remind readers of the words of Isaiah 56, 2: 'Blessed is the man . . . that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil', and we would crave the prayers of those who love the Lord and His Day, that our nation would once again 'call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable' (Isaiah 58, 13).

I. R. TALLACH,

Clerk of The Sabbath Observance Committee.

Notes and Comments

The General Election

Once again the nation is called on to elect a new Parliament. How important will the outcome be in view of the present unstable state of the country. The result will doubtless affect the well-being of the country for many years to come.

As none of the parties adopt a specifically Christian approach to the issues affecting the life of the nation, voters will have to decide which, among the parties and candidates, will be most likely to resolve the difficulties now facing the nation, and which will be most likely to uphold moral principles.

It would be most desirable that men and women of high religious and moral principles would be elected to Parliament so that the nation might be governed by a body of men and women having the fear of God in their hearts. However, such candidates are few and far between. In some instances voters may find themselves in a dilemma in that none of the candidates who present themselves for election in their constituency may appear worthy of support. Where this is the case, it is sad that such are put forward for election. The danger to the nation in electing humanists and Roman Catholics to Parliament cannot be over-stressed.

It is our fervent hope and prayer that the new Parliament may be favoured with a greater percentage of Christian M.P.'s and a smaller percentage of Roman Catholics and humanists than the Parliament which was dissolved in April. We would remind our readers of our duty to pray "for kings, and for all in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."

Assassinations by I.R.A.

The assassination of the British Ambassador to Holland, and the more recent murder of Mr Airy Neave, M.P., Shadow Spokesman for Northern Ireland are further steps in the I.R.A. attack on Britain and its institutions. These wicked acts of evil men bring to the fore once again the sinister shadow of the Irish dimension in British politics. The plain fact of the matter is that the partition of Ireland, though effected only to protect the civil and religious rights of the Protestants of Ulster has never been accepted by the Roman Catholics of Eire. It is clear that they will never rest until the whole of Ireland is subject to their rule.

While we acknowledge that Roman Catholic politicians and Churchmen, north and south of the border, are ready to condemn such outrages as these recent murders, yet it cannot be overlooked that it is

the Roman Catholic Church which has fostered hatred to Britain in the hearts of the Roman Catholic Irish. The terrorism in Northern Ireland might long ago have been brought to an end were there not a sympathetic response to it in the hearts of many of the Irish. It will not be known till the Great Day of Judgment how much of the blood shed in Northern Ireland lies at the door of the Roman Catholic Church.

The duty of preserving the liberties of the Protestants of Northern Ireland has cost, and is costing our nation dearly in the life-blood of the soldiers killed there. Yet what other alternative is there apart from yielding up the Protestants of Ulster as a sacrifice to the most iniquitous system the world has ever seen — that is, to the power of the Church of Rome. May these troubles and calamities stir us up to more earnest pleading for the conversion of the Roman Catholics of Eire and Ulster. Only in this way will a settled peace descend on that troubled land, and true amity prevail in the hearts of all the people of that land.

Schism

The Editor of the Bulwark in an article on the Scottish Churches in the March/April issue of the Magazine stresses the similarity of the positions of the Free Church, the Free Presbyterian Church and the Reformed Presbyterian Church. He thinks an 'impartial' observer must be struck with the scandal of three churches so close in doctrine and practice standing apart from one another. He maintains that the New Testament would call this schism and asks — Who will be the first to acknowledge it?

The charge of schism has often been levelled at the Free Presbyterian Church and has been answered once and again. The fact that he introduces an 'impartial' observer in order to make the charge, and also his own interpretation of New Testament teaching on schism, gives no added weight to the charge. The Free Presbyterian Church has stated unequivocally the Scriptural grounds on which she is ready to unite with other Churches claiming to adhere to Reformation principles and practice. She has no intention of abandoning her distinctive position by entering a vague evangelical union of the smaller Presbyterian Churches. It is vain for the Editor of the Bulwark to think otherwise.

Merely beating the ecumenical drum will not do. If there is to be a union of Churches in Scotland on a Scriptural basis, then what is required is a *genuine* return to Scriptural apostolic and reformed belief and practice. Then there will be little difficulty joining Churches together for they will be of one heart and one mind.

Meeting of Synod

The Synod will meet (D.V.) in the Free Presbyterian Church, Inverness, on Tuesday, 22nd May at 6.30 p.m. when the retiring Moderator, Rev. Alex. Murray, Applecross is expected to preach.

On Furlough

Rev. Donald Ross, Bulawayo, and his wife and family arrived in this country early in April on leave. They expect to return to Rhodesia at the end of May (D.V.). We trust that they will benefit from their short stay in this country and return refreshed in body and mind.

Church Notes

Rev. Bekithemba B. Dube — Minister at Zenka

The Dube family settled at Zenka in the early 1950s, from the Inyathi District. Mrs Dube, Mangwenya, the widowed mother of seven boys and three girls was one of the outstanding Christian women in the Zenka Congregation, and indeed in the whole Mission. She was big in stature and big in faith, so that in most problems in the congregation she had such authority that through her influence the women folk were kept in their place in the Church. Her place in the Zenka Church has not been filled up since her death in April, 1977 at an age of over eighty years. She is missed by the Church militant and we believe the Church triumphant rejoices in her joining them in singing the Song of the Lamb.

Bekithemba, the sixth of the boys and the ninth of the family, was educated first at Zenka and then at Ingwenya Primary Schools. He went on to the Teacher Training School, then at Mbumba, and joined the second group of student teachers under the instruction of the late Rev. James Fraser.

At Mbumba quite a few young men followed the preaching of the Rev. James Fraser very closely, so that we believe they benefited not only materially by obtaining a Teachers' Course, but above all by receiving the blessing of the Word of God in their souls. Although Mr Fraser died at the early age of 45 years, we believe the Lord blessed his short ministry of ten years in that a good few of our professing younger men were brought into the Church in his time, and Rev. Dube is one of that number.

Rev. Dube completed his Teachers' Course in 1956 and then joined the Zenka teaching staff until he was called to the ministry. As a teacher Mr Dube continued to study to improve his academic education; and after

he applied to the Zenka Kirk Session to be considered for the Ministry. His application was dealt with by the various Church Courts in the normal way. He did his Divinity Course under the supervision of the Ministers of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland in Rhodesia, until finally he completed the prescribed Course. The Rhodesia Presbytery of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland then licensed Mr Dube to preach the Gospel, after they had examined him to their satisfaction.

The Zenka congregation, which had been vacant since the departure from the Mission of the Rev. D.M. Campbell, gave Mr Dube a call which he accepted. After the normal formalities, the Presbytery ordained and inducted Rev. B.B. Dube on 12th October, 1978 to the pastoral charge of the Zenka Congregation. May the Lord own and bless the ministry just begun!

Moreover Rev. Dube has started his ministry in these trying and most peculiar times in the history of Rhodesia. The political set up and the security situation are so uncertain that unless the Lord Himself would grant courage to His ambassadors, the preaching of the Gospel could be suspended in the meantime. However, Mr Dube has continued at Zenka, and we would appeal to the Lord's people to specially remember him at a throne of Grace, as well as those elders who have maintained the Cause in the various places of the NKA I district in face of danger. Among the Elders who have demonstrated their love to the Cause of Christ, I would mention just a few, like Mr David Ndlovu who goes in and out of Mbuma every week preaching the Word of God. Remember him at a Throne of Grace; Mr Tana Mpofu at Manomano; Mr Alfred Mpofu at Zenka, and many others in the Shangane Reserve.

"The effectual and fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."
James 5:16.

While the whole of Rhodesia is in a state of war, we are still able to go about our duties at Ingwenya and Bulawayo with little disturbance. May the Lord grant His Church in Rhodesia better days, so that our monthly Communions at various Mission Stations could be resumed.

A.B. Ndebele. (Rev.)

Acknowledgment of Donations

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

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Correction of acknowledgment in March Magazine, Staffin Congregation should read £100 not £48.20.

Ingwenya: Toronto Ladies, 35.00; 64.00; 70.00; 58.60; 66.64; 69.78; 64.25, all U.S. dollars. Vancouver Ladies, 280.00 Canadian dollars; Inverness Ladies, £250; Netherlands Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, 300.00; 200.00, U.S. dollars; Mbumba Zending, Holland, 33,692.55 Rh. dollars.

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