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The Inspired, Infallible and Inerrant Word of God

“All Scripture”, we read in 2 Timothy 3:16, “is given by inspiration of God.” Again in 2 Peter 1:11 it is declared that “the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” So that all Scripture is God-breathed. What is recorded in the Bible is what God intended should be left on record as His own Word. The holy men of God who were used to write the Bible did not record a vision out of their own hearts but spake as they were borne along by the Holy Spirit. What we have therefore in the Scriptures is the inspired Word of the living God. The exact nature of inspiration it is vain to enquire into. What we know is that it secured that what was recorded was indeed the very Word of God. Inspiration ceased for a time — 400 to 500 years — with the closing of the canon of the Old Testament Scriptures, but was given again in connection with the recording of the New Testament Scriptures. With the completion of the New Testament canon, inspiration ceased and is not to be revived again. We have now a completed revelation of the will of God in the Scriptures and therefore the Holy Spirit will not be given again as the Spirit of inspiration in this way. His work now is the awakening, regenerating and sanctifying of men by opening up to them and applying to their hearts the revelation of truth which He Himself inspired.

Inspiration secures that the Scriptures constitute an infallible record of the will of God. Roman Catholics believe in an infallible Pope or Church: Protestants believe in an infallible Bible. It is an absolutely true record of God’s mind and will for man. The truth of God is bound up with the Scriptures — they are the Scriptures of truth. This makes them utterly reliable. Had the Scriptures been merely the words of those who wrote

them, then, man being fallible, their words would be fallible too. But these are the words of the living and true God who cannot lie. Men, accordingly may rest the whole weight of their salvation upon the Word of God and upon Him who is the centre of that Word, the Lord Jesus Christ. What God has made known in His Word, He will be faithful to. The preciousness of that revelation to the Psalmist is well known, as Psalm 119 so eloquently declares. And so it is to all who have tasted of the sweetness of it. If doubt could be entertained about the truth of it, it could never afford the comfort and strength it does afford to the people of God. It is the infallible Word of the living and true God.

But the Bible is not only the inspired and infallible Word of God : it is also the inerrant Word of God. For inspiration not only secures its infallibility or absolute truthfulness but also its inerrancy. Through inspiration not only the thought but the very letters of Scripture are given from God. One jot or one tittle of the law is not to pass till all be fulfilled. There are instances referred to in the Bible showing that even the smallest letter must be regarded in the interpretation of Scripture. The Bible is the inerrant Word of God. It is true that men question the accuracy and reliability of the Bible, and attempt to show that in places it is self-contradictory, but we can be assured that the supposed error is not in the Scripture but in the eye of the beholder. The truth of God is unpalatable to fallen man and he must therefore question it. But what of the errors in the transmission of the text? Will these not affect the inerrancy of the Scriptures? We can be sure that God, who sent His Holy Spirit as the Spirit of inspiration to the prophets and apostles in writing the Scriptures, has exercised his providential care over His own Word in its transmission to succeeding generations. This the Westminster Confession declares in referring to the Old Testament in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek — these “being immediately inspired by God, and, by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic.” It is, therefore, the inspired, infallible and inerrant Word of God which we possess and which is able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

What thankfulness of heart we should have for such a revelation of God's will. So, too, what use we ought to make of it seeing that it “is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness : that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” Let us bewail our neglect of it. Let us turn to it again. Let us prize it, and seek to profit from it more and more. Only thus may we grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sermon

by Rev D. MacFarlane

"Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that Thou bearest unto Thy people." — Ps. 106:4.

Here we have one of the prayers of the Psalmist. It is a very large prayer; the largest which a mere man ever offered up to God for himself. Some may ask for some particular blessing, such as reconciliation with God, pardon of sin, or other such blessings. But the psalmist, taking a wide view of the favour, or love, of God, opens his mouth wide, to drink in of the infinite ocean of that love. The love of God is compared to a fire, that hath a most vehement flame (Song viii. 6). When you come home cold, how are you to get warm! By sitting near a big fire. The love of God is such a big fire that although you would be shivering and freezing with cold, if you get near it, you will soon get warm. It was when the psalmist drew near to the love of God that he prayed, "Remember me, Lord, with that love which Thou bearest to Thine own."

In speaking from these words, as the Lord may enable me, I shall call your attention to four things:—

- I. The love of God.
- II. The objects of His love.
- III. The fruits of His love, and
- IV. The prayer — Remember me with that love which Thou bearest to Thine own.

I. *The love of God.*

(1) We note that the love of God is everlasting, without a break from eternity to eternity. As it is infinite, we cannot get at the beginning of it, nor shall we see the end of it. It is like God Himself, from everlasting to everlasting. From the past eternity it runs on without a break through time and continues to all eternity. It cannot be broken. Did not the sin of man break it! If anything could break the love of God, sin would do it; but sin did not break it. God still loved His people, notwithstanding that they sinned; but, although sin did not break the love of God, it put a stop, for a short time, to its flowing forth to its objects. Before it could flow forth, a new way would require to be opened up, and that way was to be the way of blood — that is, the blood of Christ. The bloody sacrifice which Abel offered up was a type of the blood of Christ, and, as soon as this way by blood was opened, the love of God began to flow forth, and it continues to flow to its objects ever since, and shall continue to flow for ever and ever.

(2) The love of God is unchangeable. The love of His people to Him is, during their time in this world, changeable. It is like the sea that flows and ebbs, but the love of God is like Himself, Who says, "I am Jehovah, I change not." Did He love His people with unchangeable love, when they were unconverted? Yes. It was His love that surrounded them in their unconverted state, and protected them from death coming near them, till they were changed by His grace. There is such a thing in God as a love of complacency, and He did not then love His people with that kind of love; but He loved them with the love which is the source of salvation. The love which is the source of salvation sees nothing in sinners why God should love them. But, in the case of believers, there is something in them to draw forth a love of complacency, and that is His own image in them. With regard to this love of complacency, God loves some of His people more than others of them. Amongst men, parents love some of their children more than others of them, and although they love all their children, they love with a greater love those of them that are obedient to them, while they cannot love so much those that are disobedient.

(3) God loves freely. That is, you cannot buy or merit His love. Love is of such a nature that it cannot be bought. "If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned" (Song viii. 7). Did not Christ's death buy God's love? No. Christ's death was not the cause of God's love; but the effect of it, as Christ Himself told us: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son" (John iii. 16). If Christ did not buy God's love, how can we expect to buy it? Although Christ did not buy the Father's love, He as already stated, opened up a way for it to flow forth to its objects.

(4) God's love is sovereign. He loved some of the human race, and did not love the rest of them. This is a solemn thought, but it is a fact. He was not under any obligation to love any of the human race. He might have left them all to perish, as He left the angels that kept not their first estate. It depended upon His own sovereign will, and those whom He loved shall be under unspeakable obligations to Him for loving them, while He left others of their fellow creatures to perish in their sins.

II. The objects of His love.

These, before their conversion, are known to God alone. They are unknown to men, and to angels, until they are effectually called, and, when they are effectually called, they are known not only by God's people, but by the unconverted. "All that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed" (Isai. lxi. 9). In

a certain parish in the Highlands there was a godly man of the name, little Lauchlan. A minister met a boy from the district in which that man lived. The minister asked the boy, "Are there good people in your district?" The boy said, "There is one good man there." The minister asked, "Who is that man?" The boy answered, "Little Lauchlan." (He was little in stature, but great in grace). The minister asked the boy, "How do you know that little Lauchlan is a good man?" "The boy said, "I see him every morning, when he sends his cattle to the hill, kneeling down to pray beside a dyke, before he returns home." Then the minister asked him, "Are there good women in the district?" The boy said, "No." The minister asked how he knew. The boy said that almost every day he heard them quarrelling among themselves. That boy, though not converted himself, could make a distinction between good and bad people. By their fruits they shall be known.

Another mark by which they are known is that they love God, and their love to Him is the effect of His love to them, as they themselves declare: "We love Him because He first loved us"; and as God manifested His love to them in such a wonderful manner as to give His Son to be the propitiation for their sins, so they manifest their love to Him in keeping His commandments. These are called, justified, adopted, and sanctified in this world. They love God's word; His people, with brotherly love; and they love their fellow sinners, with compassionate love.

III. *The fruits of His love.*

(1) One great fruit of God's love is His eternal purpose of salvation. Although His purpose of salvation is as eternal as His love, we deem it proper to give the precedence to His love, because it is the great source from which salvation flows.

(2) Another great fruit of God's love is the revelation which He has given us of His purpose. We have that revelation in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Although God purposed to save sinners of the human race, we would be ignorant of it, if He had not revealed it.

(3) Another great fruit — the greatest — is His sending His only begotten Son to the world, in our nature, to execute the Father's purpose, and especially to work out everlasting redemption by His obedience unto death.

(4) The preaching of the Gospel, by means of which sinners are saved, is another precious fruit. The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, whether Jew or Gentile.

(5) The gift of the Holy Spirit to convince and convert sinners, is

another great fruit. The Gospel is a means, but the Spirit is an agent that works effectually by means of the word of the Gospel.

(6) Ministers of the Gospel are another fruit of God's love. They are spoken of as gifts from God. The psalmist, addressing Christ, regarding His ascension to heaven, says: "Thou hast ascended on high, Thou has led captivity captive : Thou has received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them" (Ps. lxxviii. 18). The Apostle Paul speaks of ministers as a gift from God. He gave some apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ : till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. iv. 11-13). Gospel ministers are a gift from God, and a fruit of His love, howsoever much they are despised and persecuted in an evil age. The greatest Preacher was despised and rejected of men, and He told the Apostles: "If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you" (John xv. 20). But they count the reproaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures of this world.

(7) Divine chastisements are another fruit of God's love. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth . . . But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons" (Heb. xii. 6-8).

(8) The means of grace are a fruit of His love. In New Testament times these means are few — the word, the two sacraments, and prayer, all which are made effectual unto salvation to the elect.

(9) The fellowship of saints on earth is a fruit of God's love, together with their fellowship and felicity throughout eternity.

IV. *The prayer*: "Remember me, O Lord, with the favour [or love] that Thou bearest unto Thy people."

The psalmist would be quite content if God remembered Him with the love which He bears to His people, for he was sure that that love would bring him to heaven. He would have nothing to do with the love of God, according to the Arminian view. According to that view some, yea many, whom God loved are lost in hell. Even Arminians admit this. According to their view the love of God is not everlasting, yet Scripture says it is. The psalmist was made a partaker of God's love before he uttered this prayer, but he felt his need of being remembered with that love again, for he was still imperfect, and poor and needy, as all the Lord's people are, during

their time on earth, and, as all spiritual blessings flowed from that great love, there was room for this prayer.

In conclusion. Some of you, who are the Lord's people, may be in doubt as to whether God loved you or not; but if you cannot say that God loved you, you may pray with the psalmist — "Remember me with the favour [or love] that Thou bearest to Thy people," and even the unconverted may pray the same prayer, and, if you are sincere in uttering this prayer, you will use the next petition, "O visit me with Thy salvation." The two petitions are intimately connected. God's love is the efficient cause of salvation, and salvation is the effect of God's love. As God is rich in mercy, so He is rich in love. The late Rev. Donald MacDonald, Shildaig, used to say, when speaking of God's love, "There are many tons of it in heaven." He experienced what he said, for the Lord poured down into his soul a large quantity of that love from heaven. He often fainted under its weight, but, now in glory, he is full of it, and there is no room or need for this prayer in the place of perfect felicity. Although many professing people, and even ministers, speak of God's love to the exclusion of His other attributes, they are as ignorant of it in their own experience as the moles which live under the earth. The Apostle John was so full of God's love that he exclaimed in admiration: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (1 John iii. 1). The love of God, shed abroad in the heart, is the motive power which actuates His people to obey Him, and to serve Him with their bodies and spirits, which are His (1 Cor. vi. 20). Amen.

Christ Always Present

(The following extract is taken from "Christ's Presence in the Gospel History" by Dr Hugh Martin)

I take up the biography of Jesus — so different from all other biographies, in that never any but He hath said to me "Lo! I am with you alway, even to the end of the world" and I turn, let us say, to the record of that woman who pleaded with Him so marvellously for her little daughter (Matt. xv. 22), or of that other woman who touched in faith the hem of His garment (Mark v. 25). Have I the same unquenchable desirousness with these my fellow sinners? Have I a case like theirs? Have I a longing heart like theirs? Have I a pleading cry to raise — a trembling experiment to try — like theirs? And would my Lord's word, and will and work to themward suit my case, and save me, as it so exactly suited theirs and so graciously saved them?

Ah! then, let me come and stand with them before Him. It is no illusion of the fancy when I try to do so. It is no ideal scene I conjure up, and no ideal part I essay to enact in it. It is no mere effort of imagination. It is not a mere accommodation of the passage. It is not a mere pious improvement of the incident. No. I have here the biography of Jesus and what He willed, and said, and did to them; and, lighting it all up with perpetual life and power, I have the promise, "Lo! I am with you alway, even to the end of the world". I may seem, therefore, to stand afar off from the company surrounding Jesus — adown the course of time, full eighteen hundred years and more. But that the word of Christ, which gave life and salvation, hope and healing, unto them — like a ray of light, springing forth as from a central source; yet, not like material light, decreasing by the distance — comes streaming onward in the might of the Eternal Spirit through all time, down even to me this day, unimpeded, undiminished, undecaying, in its passage. And, as that unchanging ray, in meeting anything where in all its course a medium similar to what it first struck upon, is reflected, or refracted, or gives forth its tints or imparts its efficacy, precisely as it did at first; so, let me only take up — as in a far-off circle, yet having the self-same centre, though with eighteen centuries between — an attitude of spirit as in the very line of sympathy of these broken-hearted suppliants, or, say, of that poor leper who cried, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean", and then, onward to me, over all that lapse of centuries, unaltered and undecaying, fresh, and gracious, and omnipotent and faithful, as when spoken first, there travels, till it reaches me, the majestic word of mercy, "I will, be thou clean".

For really, with the story of the leper's cure in my hands, and the sore consciousness of the leper's disease in my heart, with the leper's misery and feelings and attitude and prayer, my own: his Lord, also mine; up from the page of the biography I have only to look to Him of whom it testifies, and to hear him saying "Lo! I am with you also alway", and why should I not by faith take home the Lord's word as spoken, now also, and to me — immediately and presently to me "I will: be thou clean".

O thou stricken one, whom thy sins have stricken, and who canst not look the Lord in the face, yet fain wouldst be allowed to wash His feet with thy tears, behind His back, permitted but unseen. Come thou to the house of Simon the Pharisee. Jesus is there. Lo! Jesus is here as He was there; here now, as He was there then; Jesus, the same, the same considerate, loving, forgiving Saviour, considerate, tender even, towards thy feelings and thy shame. For, see how He shields thee, how He commends thee, how He forgives thee: "Woman, thy sins are

forgiven thee; thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace". Yes! go in peace, in love also. And prove thy great Defender true when He saith to all around thee: "Her sins which are many are forgiven" — evidently forgiven — "for she loveth much". (Luke vii. 36-50).

O thou hardened one, whom thy sins have hardened; living still without Christ; living still under all the Father's wrath; loving still thy divers lusts and pleasures! Come thou to the Mount of Olives. Jesus is there. Lo! Jesus is here also alway, as He was there then. Jesus, the same, the same yesterday, today and forever; the same weeping Saviour. Come, and see His tears flowing fast for thee. Come, and hear His sorrowing heart breaking open its griefs over thy perdition. And substitute, in silent terror, thine own lost name for the name of lost Jerusalem.: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold your house is left unto you desolate". (Matt. xxiii. 37, 38).

O thou anxious one, searching the Word in thy closet, calling on the Lord beneath thy fig-tree! Come forth, O Nathaniel, at Philip's call come forth, and meet the Master. For, behold already He speaketh of thee to those that are around His person, and commendeth thee to His followers' love as "an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." Askest thou, "Whence knowest thou me?" By token of thy broken hearted prayers He knoweth thee, and owneth thee as His own. For hark! "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee." He hath known thy soul in adversity, He hath considered thy trouble, and hath not shut thee up into the hand of the enemy. The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous. His ears are open to their cry. Dost thou not say to Him, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel." And shalt thou not see Heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man — heaven and earth knit together in peace and good-will, and glory in the highest, by His mediation? (John i, 45-51).

Art thou overmastered by some stong corruption — strong as a devil that will not resign his power over thee? Come thou to this excited group as they stand in wonder round the Lord and the twelve. Come, and say, if yet thou canst say nothing better, "Lord, if thou canst do anything, help me." For hear what Jesus says: "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." And under strong pressure on the right hand and on the left — pressed by anguish that corruption works for thee, and thy terror lest it finally undermine and make void thy salvation;

pressed, also, and quickened by the glorious proffer of deliverance and victory most full and sure, if only now in the day of visitation thou canst believe — wilt thou not cry out with tears, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief?" Oh! then, thou shalt never fall a prey to the power of thine adversary. Mighty and resistless is thy Lord's voice unto him: "I command thee that thou come out of him". And though the devil tear thee, and leave thee as it were dead, thy soul shall be saved in the day of the Lord; thou shalt enter into the kingdom, be it so as by fire.

Art thou quite at sea in thy many fears and sorrows? Art thou embarked on a troubled ocean of cares and trials? Hath the Master constrained thee to get into the ship and go to the other side, over against Bethsaida? And the evening being come down, and the ship in the midst of the sea, and the wind contrary, is the Master alone on the land? Art thou apt to grudge that He is landed in safety, peace, and glory; as if He had forgotten His appointment of a dangerous and stormy voyage for thee? Ah! He is looking on. He seeth thee toiling and rowing. And now, when thy fear is at its height, and thy danger imminent, about the fourth watch of the night He cometh unto thee, treading on the waves, and mastering all the tempest. Hark, his voice! For, lo! even thus also, as on Galilee's lake, He is with you alway. "Be of good cheer: it is I, be not afraid."

Art thou weeping bitterly thy miserable fall — thy base denial of thy Lord? Or art thou gone back in dull despondency to thy nets again? (John xxi. 13). Thy first love forsaken, thy steadfastness mournfully fallen from, scarcely dost thou dare to hope for liberty of heart to say again with truth, "I love the Lord?" Hast thou ceased to feel thy wonted interest in His cause and kingdom? Is thy heart relapsed to thy worldly cares and worldly interests, and centred chiefly now on them? Ah! and art thou toiling at thy tasks and finding nothing; spending money for what is not bread, and labour for that which satisfieth not? Yea; and having tasted truer joy, how canst thou ever again on Galilee's shores find happiness without the Lord and His love? Well; be it that, in the sad wreck that has occurred, no sign of love in thy heart to Jesus now remains; and conscious of the past and all its sins, thou art ashamed to whisper even to thyself, "I love the Lord". That miserable fall stifles even the question, "Do I love the Lord or no?"

Be it so. Questioning thine own heart may bring no response of grace. But the Lord Himself draweth near to ask. Behold He cometh after thee. He findeth thee at thy weary task. He takes thee as He finds thee — weary, toiling, restless, dissatisfied; making nothing of it; no candle of the

Lord shining on thy head; no joy of the Lord thy strength. Just as thou art He taketh thee in hand to deal with thee again. And he cometh the same as ever; the same gracious Lord unchanged, the same yesterday, today and forever. Behold! He calleth thee by name: "Simon, son of Jonas!"

Look up into His face, and read whether He hath come in wrath or love. That face! — burning tears ran down there for sinners such as thou art; for the very chief of sinners; for "Jerusalem sinners"; for men that hated Him, and spit on Him, and scourged Him, and slew Him, and sealed and watched His grave, that He might be buried out of sight and out of mind — that they might be troubled with Him, no more for ever. Great drops of blood, too, flowed down there, down to the ground, where He lay in weakness, with supplications, and strong crying, and tears, bearing the guilt of sinners whom He loved. The heart-melting look of grief, rebuke, astonishment, unquenchable affection, shone there, and melted the heart of him that denied Him. Look up into that face of Jesus, the same yesterday, today and for ever; the same to thee as to Simon Peter on the shore of Galilee's lake. He is returned from the cross of woe; He is returned from the cold embraces of the grave. He is the heir, too, of all things; He is the Lord of glory. From His grave He has come, and from His glory He is tarrying to seek and find thee; to say "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?"

By His very voice to Peter — a voice not yet dead; living and abiding for ever; living in the power of the Spirit; living on the page of the blessed biography; with you alway to the end of the world; thus truly, lovingly, with present power and love — seeking thy love, yearning for it, ready to be gratified by it, ready to rejoice in it, very gracious and ready to own thy sincerity, readier far than thou art thyself — thus does Jesus say unto thee, even now, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" Questioning thyself could bring out no clear response. But shall Jesus fare no better when He takes up the question? In the absence of thy loving Lord, it may be thou couldst not firmly, clearly, distinctly, with any consciousness of truth, assert, "I love the Lord". To thine own enquiry — to a fellow-creature's question — it may be thou art wisely silent. Doubts and hesitations strengthened greatly by thy fall, oppress thee. And for the very truth's sake thou mayest refuse to answer the question even as thou wouldst desire to do. But hark to the gracious words that proceed from His mouth. It is love's own question. And love itself, infinite and incarnate; a consuming fire, as of the God-head's glory, yet a gentle flame, as in a brother's bosom — is dealing with thee, anxious for thy love, wooing thy love. Shall it not win thy love? Ah! doth not that love of

His to thee, which His very question proves; which has anticipated and been beforehand with thy love; which says "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you": that love of which Paul hath said "The love of Christ constraineth us", and John hath said "We love Him because He first loved us", doth not such love of His to thee enable, decide, constrain thee to answer as between the omniscient Saviour and thine own moved and melted heart — thy heart broken open, won over, gained for ever: "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee?"

Letter

by Rev. Neil Cameron

(The following letter was sent to Mrs MacGillivray, Oban).

4 Shaftesbury Terrace,
Glasgow

26th February 1917

My dear Mrs MacGillivray,

Your minister sent me today ten shillings from you for Foreign Missions, for which I desire to thank you. He told me also that your son is at the front in France. No doubt this will cause you anxiety. You should look to the power and faithfulness of God as regards your boy. He took the three young men out of the fiery furnace, though heated seven times more than usually, without one hair of their head being singed. He is the same now, and not even a sparrow falls to the ground without His providence. A man is of much more value in His eyes than a sparrow. Cast your heavy burden upon the Lord Jesus; He is able to bear both your burden and yourself. Not one can fall there but as He wills. Let us place our hope and confidence in Him at all times. "None perish that Him trust."

It is only when we take our eye off the Lord Jesus and begin to look at the wind and waves that we begin to sink. Alas, alas, that we should listen to that child of the murderer — unbelief! Had we faith in God as we should, we could sing in the fires in the isles of the seas; for we have a faithful, merciful and pitiful God to look to and trust in. Look to Him therefore. Black clouds and wintry weather are just now on the face of our skies if we only take our senses as our guide, but if we look up to God's throne and see our Great High Priest advocating the cause of His poor ones tossed with tempest and not comforted in this world, we have solid cause of rejoicing should it be with trembling.

There is nothing in this world but troubles, and we need not expect to

find rest in it; because it is defiled with sin. So are we defiled from head to foot by the loathsome disease of sin. Therefore let us make up our mind, that one trouble must follow another while we are here, and let that cause us to seek a better country, that is an heavenly; where neither sorrow or sighing shall ever enter. Sin is our greatest enemy. Alas, that we fear it so little!

I hope you enjoy good health of body, and that there are signs of life in your soul. You will ask, What are these signs? (1) "Unto you therefore which believe, he is precious." (2) Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. (3) Do you love the Lord's people? "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." (4) Would you have all men and yourself obey God's commandments? "O, that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes." These are four marks. Have you got one of them? I am certain you must confess that you have all of them. What is that but grace in your heart?

I trust Capt. MacGillivray and your daughter are well, also your son. Remember me to your son.

With kindest regards to you all,

I am,

Yours very sympathetically,

Neil Cameron.

Boston's Fourfold State

by Rev. Angus Mackay, Tarbert

The State of Grace

The Fourfold State comes to show us our need of Regeneration and Boston expounds I Peter 1:23, 'Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.' He shows that the incorruptible seed is the word of God, and that regeneration is a supernatural real change on the whole man. He that is born again is born of the Spirit. He states what regeneration is not and how many are deluding themselves for eternity. He says that hypocrites may have the counterfeit of all the graces of the spirit and proves it from Scripture. Men may advance to a great deal of strictness in their own way of religion. The Pharisees had so much of it, that they looked upon Christ as little better than a mere **libertine**. Speaking of sharp convictions and pangs of conscience, we read in this book that some get awakening grace, but not converting grace, and that goes off by degrees, as the light of the declining day, till it issues in midnight darkness. They snatch at

consolation, not waiting till it be given them, and foolishly draw comfort from the law that wounded them, but they are never shaken out of themselves and their own righteousness, nor brought forward to Jesus Christ. But regeneration is a real, thorough change, whereby the man is made a new creature. The Lord God makes the creature a new creature, as the goldsmith melts down a vessel of dishonour and makes it a vessel of honour. It is not a change of the **substance** but of the **qualities** of the soul. Man lost none of the rational faculties of his soul by sin, he had an understanding still, but it was darkened, he had still a will, but it was contrary to the will of God. So in regeneration, there is not a new substance created, but new qualities are infused, light instead of darkness, righteousness instead of unrighteousness.

In regeneration the mind is savingly enlightened. Then the night is over, and morning light is come, which will shine more and more unto the perfect day. Now the man is illuminated (1) in the knowledge of God, (2) in the knowledge of sin, (3) in the knowledge of himself. Regenerating grace makes man full of eyes within, knowing every one the plague of his own heart. No open sepulchre so vile and loathsome, in his own eyes, as himself. (4) He is enlightened in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. It would be our wisdom to study, prayerfully, Boston on Regeneration and preach that doctrine in love and earnestness to precious immortal souls.

The truth is, unregenerate men, though capable of preaching Christ, have not properly speaking, the knowledge of Him, but only an opinion, a good opinion of Him, but saving illumination carries the soul beyond opinion, to the certain knowledge of Christ and his excellency. Hence the regenerate admire the glorious plan of salvation through Christ crucified, rest their whole dependence upon Him, and heartily acquiesce therein. Regenerating grace is powerful and efficacious, and gives the will a new turn. It does not indeed force it, but sweetly, yet powerfully draws it, so that His people are willing in the day of His power. Love makes a net for elect souls, which will infallibly catch them, and haul them to land. The will is cured of its utter inability to will what is good. There is wrought in the will a fixed aversion to evil. Boston is expert at illustrations throwing light on his doctrines.

The mind being savingly enlightened, and the will renewed, the sinner is thereby determined and enabled to answer the Gospel call. So the chief work in regeneration is done, the fort of the heart is taken, there is room made for the Lord Jesus Christ in the inmost parts of the soul, the inner door of the will being now opened to Him as well as the outer door of the understanding. In one word, Christ is **passively** received into the heart.

The believer's first **vital** act we may conceive to be an active receiving of Jesus Christ.

The conscience is renewed. As a new light is set up in the soul in regeneration, conscience is enlightened, instructed and informed. Regenerating grace makes not only good men and good women, but makes good subjects, good husbands, good wives, children, servants, and in a word good relatives in the church, commonwealth and family. 'Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.'

As the child is passive in generation, so is the child of God in regeneration. If you are thus honoured to be a child of God, no thanks to you, for 'who maketh thee to differ from another' and what hast thou that thou hast not received? As there is no birth without pain, both to the mother and to the child, so there is great pain in bringing forth the new creature. The children have more or less of these birth pains, whereby they are pricked in their hearts (Acts 2:37). The soul has sore pains when under convictions and humiliation — 'A wounded spirit who can bear?'

Then our friend Boston, goes on to give real marks of regeneration, and he puts the question, 'Does your offending a good God affect your heart with sorrow, and do you fear sin more than suffering.' Then for the comfort of believers and to encourage them in their faith, he gives eight cases, and O! what tender encouragement do we receive from the loving, tender lips of Thomas Boston.

'While you are not born again,' he writes, 'your best works are but glittering sins, for though the matter of them is good, they are quite marred in the performance.' To the unregenerate, he says, 'All you have done for God, and His Cause in the world, though it be followed with temporal rewards, yet it is lost as to divine acceptance.' An **unregenerate** state is **hell in the bud**. If you knew your case, you would cry out, O! darkness, darkness, darkness; making way for the blackness of darkness for ever! Remember whatever you are, you **must** be born again. Many in our day in all churches, without exception, will label Boston as a pessimist and his preaching as gloomy and dull. But he was no pessimist, he knew in his own soul the convincing, saving power of God's Word, and he warned in love poor souls happily living in a delusion of their own fancies on the broad way to hell.

In the following chapter he comes to write on the Mystical Union between Christ and Believers. The Fourfold State brings before us **twelve** strokes by God's Spirit and Word before a sinner is absolutely cut off from the old stock — the covenant of works, and then the sinner brought

into a saving union with Christ. At the 5th or 6th stroke it looks as if there is saving grace in the soul, but no. At the end of the paragraph regarding the 11th stroke, we read, 'He is as one mending the bank of a river, and while he is repairing breaches in it, and strengthening every part of it, a mighty flood comes down, and overturns his work, and drives all before it, that which was newly laid and that which was laid before. This is a stroke which goes to the heart, and by it, his hope of making himself more fit to come to Christ, is cut off. Then in the twelfth we read 'Now the time is come, when the man, between hope and despair, resolves to go to Christ as he is, and therefore like a dying man, stretching himself just before his breath goes out, he rallies the broken forces of his soul, and tries to believe, and in some sort lays hold on Jesus Christ. And now the branch hangs on the old stock by one single tack of a **natural** faith, produced by the natural vigour of one's own spirit under a most pressing necessity (Psalm 78:34-35). But the Lord, never failing to perfect his own work, fetches yet another stroke, whereby the branch falls quite off. The Spirit of God convincingly discovers to the sinner his utter inability to do anything that is good, and so he dies (Romans 7:9). Thus at length he sees that he can neither help himself by **working**, nor by **believing**, and having no more to hang by on the old stock, he therefore falls off.

While he is distressed thus seeing himself likely to be swept away with the flood of God's wrath, and yet unable so much as to stretch forth a hand to lay hold of a twig of the tree of life, growing on the bank of the river, he is taken up, and ingrafted in the true vine, the Lord Jesus Christ giving him the spirit of faith.

But alas, a dead sleep has fallen upon this generation, they will not be awakened, let us go ever so near the quick, therefore I fear that there is another sort of awakening abiding this sermon-proof generation, which shall make the ears of them that hear it tingle. If that was true in Boston's day, how true, how true in our day! When the sinner is united to Christ by faith, God the Father takes the pen, dips it in the Blood of His Son, crosses the sinner's accounts and blots them out of His debt book. Then we read of the believer's sanctification by virtue of his saving union with Christ. Although they cannot write one line of the law without blots, yet God, for Christ's sake, accepts of the performance, in point of sanctification, they being disciples of His own Son, and led by His own Spirit. Hence we see the shadow of true sanctification among some strict professors, who yet are not true Christians, are not regenerated by the Spirit of Christ, and is of the same kind with what has appeared in many **sober heathen**. We are told of the believer's need of the Fatherly

chastisement of God. It is kindly for believers to be healed by stripes, although they are usually so weak as to cry out for fear at the sight of the pruning hook, as if it were the destroying axe, and to think that the Lord is coming out to **kill** them, when he is indeed coming to **cure** them. Here believers are exhorted to obtain and keep up actual communion and fellowship with Jesus Christ, to break down our idols of jealousies, and to mortify our lusts.

(to be continued)

The Value of Creeds

by Rev. D. MacLean, Glasgow

II. The History of Doctrine and the Creeds

The Church being a witnessing body in the world, it incurs the enmity of the world, and its views are subject to attack from that quarter. The defence of the Church against these attacks devolves to the sphere of what is called **Polemics**. The Church is also attacked from within by heresy brought in by false brethren. The most solemn warnings were given by Christ and His apostles on this subject. In speaking of the latter times (by which he meant New Testament times), Paul says, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (I Timothy 4:1). Again, he says to the Corinthians, "For there must also be heresies among you," — for what purpose? — for a particular purpose — "For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." Among the works of the flesh in Gal. 5, heresies are included. The witness of Peter was that "There were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." One of the functions of a creed, therefore, is to discriminate the truth from false teaching. In order to do this, the creed makes, preserves, and designates the attainments made in the various branches of the Christian faith. The errors, therefore, which crept into the Christian Church, which were refuted by those who loved the truth, served to sharpen the Church's knowledge of divine revelation, and to lead to its clearer expression. The Church's understanding of the Scripture therefore gradually grew over the centuries, and the reflections of the Church grew deeper and fuller, giving expression to the various creeds which have become its precious possession.

The circumstances of the historical and theological context of the development of these creeds is a very wide subject, and would really require a paper of its own. I shall content myself with some observations.

The Apostles' Creed (sometimes called the Roman Creed) is of universal use, and is usually bound up with the Westminster Confession as forming a useful summary of Christian doctrine. Its growth and origin is obscure, but it is generally agreed that it cannot be traced beyond the 6th century. In joining it to the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments with the Catechisms, the Westminster Divines commented, "Not as though it were composed by the Apostles," — that is, although its name is the Apostles' Creed — "or ought to be esteemed canonical Scripture, but because it is a brief sum of the Christian faith, agreeable to the Word of God, and anciently received in the Churches of Christ." It is as follows: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, which was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried: He descended into hell; the third day He arose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic (not Roman Catholic) church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen." Now, you can see there a compendium of Christian doctrine.

The Nicene Creed in the fourth century was produced to refute the errors of the Arians and the semi-Arians. The Arians taught that the Son of God is the greatest of all creatures, of a different nature from the Father. The semi-Arians taught that although the Son was not a creature, He is not God in the same sense as the Father was. They held He was of a similar nature to the Father but not of the same nature. The Creed corrected these errors as well as giving the true doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Now, for a brief summary of this Creed, if you go to the Shorter Catechism — in answer to the question, "How many persons are there in the Godhead?" You are told "There are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost . . . the same in substance" — the same in substance — that is what the Nicene Creed said, not different in substance. By substance, of course, we mean the nature or essence, the divine essence. "The same in substance, equal in power and glory."

The Athanasian Creed, attributed by some to Athanasius the great enemy of Arius, but by others to the school of Augustine, sets out in still

greater detail the doctrine of the Trinity and it is an admirable exposition of this great and solemn mystery.

The Chalcedon Creed was introduced to refute the heresies which had arisen over the Person of Christ. The Nestorian heresy taught that there were two natures, the human and the divine (i.e. in the Person of Christ) and they were so distinctly separated that the unity of the Person was thrown into the shade. The Eutychian heresy went to the opposite extreme and so confounded the two natures that they became one. Now, a brief summary of this is also found in the Shorter Catechism. "Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?" "The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continueth to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, for ever."

By these Creeds the Church doctrine of the Trinity of the Persons in the one God, and the duality of the two natures in the one Christ, was fully developed and stated as the faith of the Church.

I would like to read to you another of these Creeds which sets out in a very beautiful way the teaching in regard to the Godhead. This Creed, which was a development of the Nicene Creed, was gradually adopted by the Church in the West. "I believe in one God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man; He was crucified, also for us, under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father. And He shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end. And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spake by the prophets. And I believe in one catholic and apostolic church, I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come." Now, you can see the advance made there over the Apostles' Creed. That advance came through these four centuries as the Church combatted the enemies of the Truth and came to clearer and clearer expressions of the truth as it is in Jesus with regard to the

Godhead, the Person of the Holy Spirit, and the Person of the divine Redeemer.

The controversy between Augustine and Pelagius covered, in particular, questions relating to the nature of man as a result of Adam's fall, the nature of grace, and predestination. The view of Augustine, was that man is dead — spiritually dead, spiritually incapable of saving himself. His view of predestination and grace was, that out of the lost and ruined race of mankind, God in His mere good pleasure chose a number that are to be saved. The view of Pelagius was that man was well, that man was capable of saving himself, and that if there was such a thing as predestination, it was because of good works foreseen by God. The views of Pelagius were condemned by various Councils, of which we may mention the Ecumenical Council held at Ephesus in A.D. 431. By means of this, clear views of these subjects were attained to by the Church, and progress had not only been made in Theology (that is the doctrine of God which we have been speaking about with regard to these other Creeds), but also in Anthropology, i.e. the doctrine of man. So the doctrine of God — the Trinity, the Person of Christ, the Person of the Holy Spirit — has been dealt with in the Creeds during these four centuries and then in the Augustinian-Pelagian discussion, anthropology, the doctrine of man, had also clearly been set out.

Leaving aside the Roman Catholic Council of Trent, we now come to the period of the Reformation. The Protestant Church was divided into two systems of theology — one was the Lutheran, the other was the Reformed (sometimes called Calvinism because John Calvin was the most outstanding theologian of the system.) The Lutheran Church developed its own Creeds and they need not detain us here. The principal Creeds or Confessions of the Reformed Church are the Gallic, Belgic, Second Helvetic and Scots Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, the Canons of the Synod of Dort, and the Westminster Confession with which we are most familiar.

In the early period of the Reformation, the great doctrines which were clarified and which were rescued from the errors of the Papacy, were those connected with salvation (the theological name for that is Soteriology). These are doctrines such as effectual calling, justification, adoption, sanctification, etc. These doctrines were clarified at the time of the Reformation. As time went on, the doctrine of the Church and the means of grace became clarified also. The result is that the Westminster Confession involved a bringing together of all the doctrines which had

been classified down through the centuries into one creed. This creed, therefore, is not only Scriptural, but also embodies the teachings to which the Church has attained through the guidance of the Holy Spirit down through the ages. Hence the doctrine of God and the Trinity embraces the teaching contained in the Creeds of the first four centuries. The doctrine of the Fall of Man and of Free Will reflects the days of Augustine. The doctrine of adoption, justification, etc. reflects the glory of the Reformation, while the doctrines of the Church and Sacraments are the result of the mature spiritual reflection of the later Reformation and Puritan times.

The notion of setting aside this noble Creed, so Scriptural, and the result of the meditations of profound Christian Scholars down through the centuries, to be replaced by some 'affirmation of faith' produced by the nebulous pseudo-theologians of the present day, is a real catastrophe, and should be resisted at all costs. In the position now of having the Westminster Confession of Faith, you need not go off to the Library and say to the girl behind the counter, "I want to look at the Nicene Creed." You don't have to do that — its substance is already in the Westminster Confession. You don't have to find out about the Chalcedon Creed. You don't need to find out about all these developments right down through the centuries, for they are all embodied in the Westminster Confession of Faith. This is the great value of it, the tremendous value of it — and that is what I would like to impress in speaking about the value of the Creeds — that all these Creeds down through the centuries have been summed up in the Westminster Confession. Certain theologians in the Church of Scotland want to set aside the Westminster Confession, and say, "We'll set it aside with the Nicene Creed, and we'll keep them as memorials of what the Church attained to in the past." Well, I'm afraid that one cannot have a very high opinion of these gentlemen. They know perfectly well that the substance of the Nicene Creed is in the Westminster Confession of Faith. What they really want is to make them theological museum pieces.

Obituary

The Late Rev. Malcolm Macsween, M.A.

On January 18th 1904, a son was born to William Macsween and his wife Agnes. The place of birth was Marches Cottage, Strond, Harris and the parents named their son, Malcolm, presumably after his grandfather, Malcolm Macsween, an elder in the Free Presbyterian Church, South

Harris. The young Malcolm was not left long in this native island as his parents decided to move to Portree, Skye, when their son was only two years old. It was that same year, 1906, that his sister Joan died and one can well understand the sadness of the bereaved parents as they began their new life in Skye.

The Macsweens lived in Portree until 1914, when the family flitted to Raasay, where the father pursued his trade as a stone mason. Eventually, he was appointed the Church's missionary there and in this capacity continued until his retirement in 1937, when the family once more moved: this time to Stein, Waternish, Skye, Mrs Macsween's native village.

In 1916 the Macsweens experienced another bereavement when their little daughter, Annie, died at the age of four years. Time passed and in 1932, Hannah, their last daughter died at the early age of twenty-one. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness: and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy." Proverbs 14:10.

Malcolm, when referring to this sad occasion, did not hide the depth of his own grief. It was a loss, which made a lasting impression on his mind and the experience proved helpful to him in future years, when as a minister of the gospel it was his lot to comfort others in trouble. All who knew Mr Macsween would agree that he was a compassionate man.

In 1919 Malcolm Macsween began his secondary education at Portree School and after successfully completing his course of studies there he proceeded to the West of Scotland Agricultural College, Glasgow, where in 1929 he gained a Diploma in Agriculture. That same year he was sent as an Estate Manager to British Central Africa, where his duties were not solely confined to supervising work on the farms but also included the maintenance of law and order in the community. In addition to all this, there always lurked the threat to life, from the wild animals, wandering in the bush and in this potentially dangerous situation Mr Macsween ascribed his preservation to God alone.

In 1932, the year his sister Hannah died, he returned home to Raasay and this sad event was partly used by the Holy Spirit in his conversion. The death of his sister deeply impressed on his mind the uncertainty of life here as well as the absolute necessity of preparation for death. This and the burden of his sins filled his soul with fear and sorrow, leaving him with no illusion about the awfulness of being lost. His sorrow, however, was turned into gladness, when he discerned the joy of God's salvation in his own soul. As he sought relief and rest he was led by the Holy Spirit to the Cross, where he saw Christ crucified for him. Like Christian, in "The

Pilgrims Progress", he was relieved of his burden and, like Christian also, he felt a desire to commend Christ to others.

The first step, in implementation of this desire, was taken in 1934, when he became a member in full communion with the Raasay Congregation of the Church. This was the beginning. In 1935 he was received as a student by the Western Presbytery and, in October of that year, he began his Arts Course at Glasgow University, where in July 1938 he graduated M.A. Later that year he began his divinity studies at Oban, under the tutorship of the late Rev. Donald Beaton a scholarly man of considerable repute. After completing the first year of his theological course, he moved to Dingwall to study under the tutorship of the late Rev. D. A. Macfarlane, M.A., a man of no ordinary intellectual prowess. For two years Mr Macsween studied under Mr Macfarlane with gratifying results. It was at that time, the writer, as his fellow student, had the privilege of knowing Mr Macsween most intimately. We lodged and studied together. It was a period of which we had only pleasant memories.

In 1941 Malcolm Macsween was licenced to preach the gospel. This important event in his life was two years after his mother's death but his father was spared to share with his son this token of the Lord's favour. The following year he was ordained and inducted to the pastoral charge of the Portnalong-Bracadale congregation of the Free Presbyterian Church. History was made that day. The congregation was the minister's first charge and the minister was the congregation's first pastor.

A very important event took place in our friend's life in October of that same year for it was then he was married to Miss Christina Macsween, Connel Ferry. This marked the beginning of a most happy era in their lives. With manifest dedication they addressed themselves to the Lord's work. Mr and Mrs Macsween had one son, who proved a source of joy and comfort to them both. They themselves gave of their best to their congregation, winning the loyalty and affection of the people. Mr Macsween's ministerial labours, we believe, were blessed to not a few, both in his own congregation and beyond. An able preacher, his services were much in demand, both during communion seasons and on other occasions. In expounding the word of God to the converted and unconverted, he delivered his message with striking clarity. His hearers blood will not be required at his hands.

Mr Macsween was Deputy to Canada for fourteen months during part of 1946, and part of 1947. Throughout that period, he conducted services in various parts of Canada and the U.S.A. but most of his time was spent

in Winnipeg, where he was remembered by his grateful hearers long after he left.

It was in 1949, his father passed away at the age of 77 years and needless to say his death was sorely felt by his son and daughter-in-law who tenderly nursed him during his last illness.

Mr Macsween's pastorate of Bracadale ended in 1956, when he became minister of the Oban congregation. As the Macsweens had many friends in both Portnalong and Bracadale, the translation to Oban was indeed a wrench but the Lord's time had come for this move to a new sphere of labour. It was with gratitude and joy the Oban people welcomed their new minister and his family. Mr Macsween, like his predecessor the Rev. John Tallach, was highly respected by the whole community and truly esteemed by his own flock.

In the general administration of the church he played an active part. As Tutor he rendered invaluable service and was loved and respected by his students. When Moderator of Synod in 1949, he projected an image of dignity, worthy of the supreme Court. During his Convenership of the Sabbath Observance Committee, he wielded his pen with crushing condemnation of every form of Sabbath desecration. His annual Reports were not only informative but reflected the dedication, with which he applied himself to his work. As Clerk of the Southern Presbytery he was most proficient.

Mr Macsween loved his church and its inherited testimony. He was well qualified to assess the importance of the Protest, lodged in 1893, at the Free Church General Assembly against the Declaratory Act, by the Rev. Donald Macfarlane and the Rev. Donald Macdonald. He cherished the memory of those godly men, who in the face of apparently overwhelming odds, saved our evangelical heritage from forces set on its destruction. Scotland owes much to the faithfulness and courage of those ministers. Having followed in their footsteps and in those of others, who now through faith and patience inherit the promises, he himself was called home on 29th March, 1978. The end came rather suddenly. Some hours earlier Mrs Macsween and he had paid visits, quite unaware of the imminence of their being parted by death. The close of an happy era had come and to the surviving partner the realisation of it was, in her own words, overwhelming but for the departed it was the beginning of everlasting joy.

"Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Matthew 25:21.

The large attendance of people, from far and near, including many from other denominations, at his funeral on 1st April, 1978, was a public and fitting tribute to the memory of this servant of Jesus Christ. His mortal remains were laid to rest in the Pennifuir Cemetery, Oban, where the dust of many of the Lord's redeemed must await the resurrection of the dead.

In recording our heartfelt sympathy with the bereaved, Mrs Macsween, the son Dr William Macsween, his wife and children, we would refer them to 1st Thessalonians, 4:13 —

"I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others, which have no hope."

May these words be a source of comfort to all the bereaved as they mourn the loss of one who was a devoted husband and father; a faithful minister and true friend.

D.C.

Notes and Comments

Queen to visit the Pope

Buckingham Palace has announced that the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh are to pay a state visit to Italy from October 14 to 17. The visit will include a call on the Pope at the Vatican. This will be the third visit by the Queen to the Pope, the first of these being while she was still Princess Elizabeth. While Roman Catholic Queens are dressed in white for an audience with the Pope, our Queen being Protestant will be required to dress in black penitential clothes.

These former visits by the Queen to the Pope of Rome, as well as the projected one if it takes place, are in violation of the solemn undertakings given by Her Majesty at her accession to the Throne and at her coronation and are resented by all loyal Protestants as being subversive of our Protestant Constitution. We pray that God may graciously intervene to prevent such a visit from taking place.

Alcoholism Among the Young

Alarming reports are coming out of the serious state of affairs among the young with regard to alcohol. The Scottish Council on Alcoholism suggests that school children from the age of nine or 10 should be taught the responsible use of alcohol. In some schools attention is already given to this matter in pointing out the dangers of drinking but not with any apparent success. It is evident that drinking begun at school-age is going

to have serious effects before long in the life of the individual. This is true also with regard to the nation at large. The nation is bound to suffer serious consequences from this state of affairs.

It is plain that only a return to the Word of God and to the gospel of His grace by the people of the land will effect a real change in the moral state of the country. For this we should pray.

Glasgow District Council and Blasphemous Film

The Glasgow District Council's Licensing Committee voted 9-4 in favour of screening a controversial film "The Life of Brian" regarded by many as an offensive parody on the life of Christ. It is regrettable that the Committee should have come to this decision which is completely at variance with the former noble motto of the city of Glasgow — "Let Glasgow flourish by the preaching of the Word." May the day speedily come when that motto will not only be restored but also honoured by Councillors and townspeople alike. At such a time the vile and obnoxious films presently being screened will have no place in the life of the city.

Church Notes

Divinity Students Received in Africa

It is gratifying to know that at meetings of Presbytery in October and December Mr Zororai Mozwabo and Mr Alfred Mpofu were received as divinity students. It is a token of the Lord's favour towards His Cause in that country in view of the difficult circumstances in which the Church is placed. We pray that the students may be upheld and kept. The Presbytery asks the people of the Church to remember both our black and white students that they may be helped and granted strength of soul and body and mind to tackle their studies with diligence and dedication in this wicked and evil generation.

Barnoldswick Congregation

Despite some illness in the congregation, the services at the Barnoldswick communion season were well attended. Some friends from Edinburgh and Glasgow were able to be present and to join in the fellowship of this small group of Free Presbyterians in Lancashire.

Presbyterianism has fallen on evil days in England. Those who professed at one time to hold this Scriptural form of Church Government have been absorbed into the United Reformed Church, which raises no vital testimony on behalf of Christ and His Truth. The other churches

professing Christianity, apart from the Anglicans, are of the Independent persuasion. It is, therefore, most encouraging to find this small group adhering to the word of God in doctrine, worship and government. It is also to be hoped that others may benefit from this witness so that other groups may be raised up, by the Divine blessing, to join in the reviving of Presbyterianism in England.

Work on the new Church building is expected to commence in February (DV). The purchase of such a suitable building in such a suitable place at the reasonable price of £10,000 is one of the many tokens of encouragement that the Lord has given them in Barnoldswick. Pews have now been purchased and transported to the new building. The congregation in Barnoldswick is small and in need of all the financial help which friends in the Church at large may feel led to give. Above all, they need the prayers of the people of God for that spiritual prosperity without which all else will be in vain.

D. McL., Glasgow.

The Congregational Treasurer to whom all donations should be sent is Mr C. Metcalf, 47 York Drive, Barnoldswick, Colne, Lancs.

Sabbath School Scheme and Teaching Aids

Ministers in the Church received information some time ago about the above, and were asked to communicate the information to Sabbath School teachers in their congregations. However the Working Party of the Welfare of Youth Committee thought it desirable that the information should be offered to those who might not be contacted in terms of this arrangement.

The Scheme of Work includes a suggested outline of areas to be covered in the course of a year's teaching in a Sabbath School. It is hoped that, by the summer of this year, this scheme will have been developed so as to cover three years. Another matter which we would like to mention here is, the list of Sabbath School materials which we have drawn up. These items are intended as an aid in the teaching of Scripture truths to young people.

We are not limiting this appeal to those already involved in teaching Sabbath Schools. We would like to reach those also who might have the opportunity to begin a Sabbath School, or parents whose children do not have access to a Sabbath School, and who would value help in the instruction of their children. Anyone interested in the Scheme of Work is welcome to send for it, and in special circumstances the list of teaching aids would also be made available to those not involved in a Sabbath

School but who would wish it sent to them. The funding of appropriate expenditure will be covered by a grant made available to the Welfare of Youth Committee from the Forsyth Bequest.

Anyone to whom the above might prove useful is asked to contact the secretary of the Working Party: Mr William MacKenzie, 'Deebank', 7 Crown Drive, Inverness (Tel: 31892).

John Tallach
Chairman, Working Party.

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Western: At Laide on 4th March at 11 a.m.

Skye: At Portree on 8th April at 11 a.m.

Southern: At Glasgow on 8th April at 6 p.m.

Northern: At Dingwall on 15th April at 2.30 p.m.

Committee Meetings (D.V.)

The following Committees will meet at Inverness Church:

Tuesday, 25th March

9 a.m.-10 a.m. — Church Extension.

10 a.m.-11.30 a.m. — Church Magazines.

11.30 a.m.-12.30 p.m. — Religion and Morals.

Sabbath Observance.

1.30 p.m.-2.30 p.m. — Training of Ministry.

2.30 p.m.-4.30 p.m. — Finance.

Publications.

4.30 p.m.-5.30 p.m. — Welfare of Youth.

7 p.m.-9 p.m. — Jewish and Foreign Missions.

Wednesday, 26th March

2.30 p.m.-4 p.m. — Dominions and Overseas.

Notice to Conveners/Clerks of Standing Committees

The Conveners/Clerks of all Standing Committees should note that all Committee Reports to the Synod must be in the hands of the Clerk of Synod by 31st March, 1980 (D.V.) for printing purposes.

(Rev.) Donald MacLean,
Clerk of Synod.

Notice re Synod Agenda

Clerks of Presbyteries, Conveners/Clerks of Committees, and all other interested parties should note that all items of business intended to be

placed on the Synod Agenda must be in the hands of the Clerk of Synod by Thursday, 10th April, 1980 (D.V.).

(Rev.) Donald MacLean,
Clerk of Synod.

Offer by L.D.O.S.

The Lord's Day Observance Society offers all the Ministers, Divinity Students, Elders and all interested parties of the Free Presbyterian Church the book "The Covenantal Sabbath" by Dr Francis Nigel Lee at the special offer of £1.00 which will include postage and packing. Orders should be sent to: The Lord's Day Observance Society Inc., 47 Parish Lane, Penge, London SE20 7LU.

Acknowledgment of Donations

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

Sustentation Fund: Mrs Ferguson, Carbost, £1 per D. MacL.

Jewish & Foreign Mission Fund: A. A. Berman, Holland, per W.C., £2.72; Portree Sabbath School, £120.62.

Dominions & Overseas Fund: Spanish Evangelical Mission, Holland, £1,128 for Mission work in Italy; Anon., £10 for Fede Viva; Winnipeg Friend, per Vancouver Treasurer, \$300.00 for Italian Mission.

Trinitarian Bible Society: Raasay Congregation, £105; North Tolsta Congregation, £40.20; Staffin Congregation, £113.

Home of Rest Fund: Anon., Inverness, per Rev. A.F.M., £10.

The Publications Treasurer, Mr R. W. M. MacKenzie, Hilton of Cadboll, Fearn, acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:

Free Distribution Fund: Anon., £8.60; M.M.C., South Harris, £5; Inverness Friends, £9.60; Mr Falconer, Larne, £4.50; London Congregation, £14.28.

Publications Fund: Uig Congregation, £20; Stornoway Congregation, £179; North Tolsta, £10; Stratherrick, Daviot and Tomatin Congregation, £33; London Congregation, £14.28; Inverness Congregation, £250.

Welfare of Youth Fund: Tain Congregation, £10; Fearn Congregation, £10; Ness Congregation, £5; Inverness Congregation, £150.

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

Applecross: M.G., Arrina, £10 (Coll. Plate); A Friend, £10 (Coll. Plate); Mrs M.G., Inverness, £5; A Friend, Applecross, £10; Anon., £100, Friend, Alness, £8; both per Rev. A. Murray, all for Sustentation Fund; A Friend, Applecross, £5, for Jewish & Foreign Mission, also £5 for Home Mission; M.G., Arrina, £10, per Rev. A. Murray; S.J.F., Evanton, £3; Mr D.F., Applecross, £40, per Rev. A. Murray; last three for Congregational Purposes; Anon., £30, for Cuaig Meeting House Electricity; Friends, Alness, £7, per Rev. A. Murray for Congregational Purposes.

Places	Ministers and Missionaries	Sustentation Fund	Home Mission Fund	Jewish and Foreign Mission Fund	Aged and Infirm Ministers, etc. Fund	College and Library Fund	Organisation Fund	General Building Fund	Dominions and Overseas Fund	TOTAL
NORTHERN PRESBYTERY										
Aberdeen	Rev. J. M. Tallach	£1116.58	£151.30	£121.15	£76.90	£43.05	£36.85	£50.95		£1596.78
Bonar Bridge }	Mr D. M. Campbell	700.50	70.00	80.00	32.00	25.00	15.00		£33.00	955.50
Lairg }		821.00	121.00	139.85	35.50	33.00	31.00	38.00	21.00	1240.35
Beauly }	Rev. D. B. MacLeod	1420.87	146.00	404.06	150.00	43.80	36.15	65.00	66.70	2332.58
Dingwall }		1840.53	234.00	302.50	155.00	75.40	90.00	68.65	103.00	2869.08
Dornoch }	Mr D. M. MacLennan	242.00	192.00	151.50	19.00	16.20	18.35	20.30	14.00	673.35
Rogart }		100.00	220.00	100.00	30.00	20.00	25.00	20.00	20.00	535.00
Fearn }	Rev. J. Ross	1500.00	160.00	160.00	120.00	60.00	80.00	70.00	120.00	2270.00
Tain }		1493.00	182.00	204.00	254.00	66.00	66.00	75.00	82.00	2422.00
Halkirk }	Rev. D. A. MacLean	968.33	63.00	87.00	36.00	22.00	16.00	18.00	15.00	1225.33
Helmsdale }										
Thurso }	Rev. A. F. MacKay	1024.56	73.00	68.00	41.00	20.00	12.00	37.00	10.00	1285.56
Inverness }		7100.00	1100.00	1700.00	500.00	400.00	500.00	400.00	400.00	12100.00
Kinlochbervie }	Rev. J. A. MacDonald	1223.95	206.00	286.50	40.35	35.00		40.50	42.50	1874.80
Scourie }		337.25	70.00	66.00	20.70	20.80		25.00	21.00	560.75
Daviot }	Rev. D. J. MacDonald	700.00	123.00	178.00	48.00	50.00	47.00	47.00	43.00	1236.00
Tomatin }		409.00	122.00	127.00	53.00	46.00	43.00	37.00	50.00	887.00
Stratherrick }	Mr Jas. MacLeod	700.00	85.85	133.55	55.35	41.75	48.90	40.80	47.00	1153.20
Strathlyon }		46.00	250.00	88.00	40.10	36.00	40.00	39.00	38.50	577.60
Wick }	Rev. R. R. Sinclair	2300.00	205.21	333.90	121.28	111.90	65.00	91.88	81.50	3310.67
		£24043.57	£3774.36	£4731.01	£1828.18	£1165.90	£1170.25	£1184.08	£1208.20	£39105.55
SOUTHERN PRESBYTERY										
Dumbarton	Rev. J. M. Brentnall	£1605.00	£126.00	£162.50	£55.00	£45.00	£38.50	£46.50	£45.00	£2123.50
Edinburgh	Rev. D. Campbell	2770.00	266.32	453.00	123.80	104.50	107.50	108.50	155.00	4088.62
Fort William	Rev. J. A. MacDonald	1822.00	182.70	210.00	91.50	83.00	95.50	91.50	111.00	2687.20
St Jude's, Glasgow	Rev. D. MacLean	7061.27	1038.15	1505.86	484.44	426.59	373.99	364.99	475.48	11730.77
Dunoon }	Rev. L. MacLeod	250.00	5.00	5.00	5.00		5.00	5.00	5.00	280.00
Greenock }		1132.01	113.60	130.53	52.70	52.00	50.00	40.30	50.90	1622.04
Kames }	Mr D. MacPherson	710.00	106.20	174.75	51.90	49.80	37.75	37.80	59.90	1228.10
London }		1702.35	172.65	450.77	89.53	49.46	55.00	68.00	65.46	2653.22
Oban }	Rev. Angus Morrison	520.00	84.00	119.15	36.75	54.52	45.35	43.05	53.70	956.52
Stirling }		158.00	78.00	93.00	6.00	17.00	5.00	8.00	11.00	376.00
Dundee }	Rev. D. J. MacDonald	50.00	16.00	30.00	10.00					106.00
Perth }		245.50	60.00	69.00	36.00	4.00	24.00	15.00	25.00	478.50
Barnoldswick		320.00	20.00	40.00	15.00		10.00	10.00	10.00	425.00
Vancouver, Canada	Rev. D. Beattie				77.82					77.82
Toronto, Canada	Rev. M. MacInnes			83.49		37.07			63.70	184.26
Chesley, Canada										
		£18346.13	£2268.62	£3527.05	£1135.44	£922.94	£847.59	£838.64	£1131.14	£29017.55
OUTER ISLES PRESBYTERY										
Achmore }	Rev. J. MacLeod	£287.00	£45.00	£45.00	£30.00	£30.00	£30.00	£30.00	£30.00	£527.00
Stornoway }		4200.40	459.90	760.55	234.50		238.30	196.60	232.10	6322.35

North Harris	Rev. A. MacKay	1882.32	318.37	401.55	177.55	156.75	159.50	1.00	153.50	3228.94
South Harris	Rev. D. MacLean	1659.00	471.50	140.00	164.30	93.80	85.50	78.90	87.00	2780.00
Ness, Lewis	Rev. W. MacLean	1952.24	101.70	120.70	48.00	41.00	45.00	34.00	44.00	2386.64
Uig, Lewis	Rev. D. A. MacLennan	1400.00	65.00	60.00	30.00	30.00	25.00	50.00	25.00	1685.00

£16283.75	£2256.07	£2345.90	£852.00	£522.00	£707.15	£586.80	£741.20	£24294.87
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WESTERN PRESBYTERY

Applecross	Rev. A. Murray	£815.50	£195.00	£202.00	£41.92	£33.96	£17.10	£23.15	£42.61	£1371.24
Gairloch	Rev. A. Macdonald	3215.61	387.15	147.52	111.75	118.78	96.37	106.45	117.30	4300.93
Laide		1396.52	262.91	526.52	43.50	50.00	40.75	44.55	41.50	2406.25
Kyle of Lochalsh } Plockton }	Mr J. D. Van Woerden	899.90 183.60	103.60 55.68	88.86 35.55	42.16 15.30	38.95 9.15	34.45 10.65	33.45 8.95	38.00 12.00	1279.37 330.88
Lochbroom	Rev. N. Ross	1800.00	320.00	400.00	96.00	78.00	74.00	92.00	73.00	2933.00
Lochcarron	Rev. J. W. Ross	1410.00	150.00	270.00	35.00	35.00	35.00	40.00	50.00	2025.00
Lochinver } Stoer & Drumbeg }	Rev. A. Macaskill	1104.51 1059.00	193.50 409.00	380.00 439.00	77.00 113.00	53.00 88.00	70.00 83.00	50.00 73.00	75.00 88.00	2003.01 2352.00
Shieldaig	Rev. D. M. Campbell	1489.65	141.25	165.40	44.00	29.00	36.00	37.20	36.00	1978.50

£13374.29	£2218.09	£2654.85	£619.63	£533.84	£497.32	£508.75	£573.41	£20980.18
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SKYE PRESBYTERY

Bracadale		£1695.00	£108.50	£69.20	£53.30	£50.00	£44.00	£45.00	£47.00	£2112.00
Strath	Rev. S. F. Tallach	1878.50	203.50	253.00	56.00	47.00	52.50	53.00	60.30	2603.80
Flashadder	Mr D. MacKay	220.00	146.00	40.00	20.00	10.00	13.90		18.10	468.00
Glendale } Vatten }	Rev. D. Nicolson	697.50 672.50	90.00 106.00	83.00 106.00	10.50 32.20	10.50 34.00	57.50 34.00	34.00 32.00	42.60 34.40	1025.60 1051.10
Watnish }		120.00	31.25	30.30	10.50	15.00	11.00	10.00	12.00	240.05
Portree	Rev. F. Macdonald	5116.74	1001.48	876.98	262.06	262.89	257.24	257.37	297.71	8332.47
Rassay		1433.40	274.70	229.40	104.20	71.70	91.30	75.00	98.60	2378.30
Staffin	Rev. J. Macdonald	1903.30	145.05	176.30	60.45	55.00	63.15	58.75	65.75	2527.75

£13736.94	£2106.48	£1864.18	£609.21	£556.09	£624.59	£565.12	£676.46	£20739.07
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AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND PRESBYTERY

Grafton, Australia	Rev. E. A. Rayner				£77.70					
Gisborne, New Zealand	Rev. J. Van Dorp		£159.00		115.58			£339.22		£416.92
Auckland, New Zealand			145.07		110.37			60.78		316.22

£304.07	£303.65	£536.00	£1143.72
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SUMMARY

Northern Presbytery	£24043.57	£3774.36	£4731.01	£1828.18	£1165.90	£1170.25	£1184.08	£1208.20	£39105.55
Southern Presbytery	18346.13	2268.62	3527.05	1135.44	922.94	847.59	838.64	1131.14	29017.55
Outer Isles Presbytery	16283.75	2256.07	2345.90	852.00	522.00	707.15	586.80	741.20	24294.87
Western Presbytery	13374.29	2218.09	2654.85	619.63	533.84	497.32	508.75	573.41	20980.18
Skye Presbytery	13736.94	2106.48	1864.18	609.21	556.09	624.59	565.12	676.46	20739.07
Australia and New Zealand Presb			304.07	303.65				536.00	1143.72

Barnoldswick: E.A.M., £5; Two Edinburgh Friends, £5; A Wellwisher, £10; all for Communion Expenses; Anon., £10, for Congregation; A Tolsta Friend, £10, for General Funds; Anon., £30, in Edinburgh Coll. Plate, per Murdoch Nicholson; Anon., England, £44; W.F., Dingwall, £20; Three Friends, per Ullapool Treasurer, £25; A Friend, per Rev. D. MacLean, £20; C. MacK., Gairloch, £10; last six for Church Building Fund.

Bracadale: Anon., £20; D. MacL., £5, per D.J.M.; The late Mrs Ross, £10, per Rev. D.J. MacD.; Mrs F., £2, per Rev. D.J. MacD.; English Friends, £20, per C.McC.; M.S., £10; J. MacLeod, £5; Mrs B., 1 Totarder, £25; last three for Communion Expenses, J.M.C., Glenfield, £150.

Inverness: In memory of our beloved brothers and sisters, £32, for Church Purposes, from M.A. Nichols, Achnahaird, Ullapool; Mrs M. MacC., Manish, Harris, £25, for Sustentation Fund, and £7 for Jewish & Foreign Missions Fund; all per Rev. A.F.M.

Kyle: Envelope in plate, £5; Envelope in plate, £10; A Friend, £100, all for Manse Building Fund.

Oban: Anon., £30, for property fund, per Rev. A.M.

Prestwick: Fearn Friend, £5; Glasgow Friend, £5; Friend, Lochcarron, £15, all per W.B., and all for Church Extension work in Prestwick.

Portree: Anon., £5, per F.M., for Church Bus; Anon., £5, for Congregational purposes (in Church Plate); Friend, £5, for Manse Expenses; North Tolsta Friend, £5, for Church Door Collection, both per F.M.

South Harris: J.M., Finsbay, £200, for Sustentation Fund, in memory of his beloved wife; Friend, Northton, £20, for Congregational purposes.

Staffin: Mrs M.A. MacK., £10, for Sustentation Fund, and £5 for Car Expenses; Friends, £25, for Telephone Account; Anon., £30, for Congregational purposes, all per J. McD.; D.N. (envelope in plate), £10, for Car Expenses; Mrs C.M., Harris, £5, per N. MacRaild; Friend, £5, per Mrs D. MacInnes, both for Church Repairs; Envelope in plate, £100, for Congregational purposes; R.M.D., Inverness, £10; Anon., £10, both per Rev. J. McD., and both for Congregational purposes.

Stornoway: North Tolsta Friend, £5, for Church Funds, per Rev. J. MacLeod.

Ullapool: A Friend, £5, per Rev. N.M.R.

Waternish: In loving memory of loved parents and sisters, £5, for Congregational purposes.