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The Risen Saviour

The Saviour had often warned His disciples that the time was coming when He would be put to death. He did this in such explicit terms that they had no ground of excuse for not laying it to heart. Yet when the awful events did take place, when He was delivered into the hands of His enemies to be crucified and slain by them, they were taken aback as though they had never heard from His lips that these things were to come to pass. They did not then understand that this was the way of divinely ordained deliverance for the whole Church of God, that is, through the rent veil of His flesh.

This slowness to comprehend the things of God is not confined to the disciples. The followers of the Saviour in every age of time have been very slow to learn and have often had need of being rebuked as the disciples were when the Saviour said to them after His resurrection: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?" His disciples had earlier said: "We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel." But their confidence had been shaken through the untoward events which had taken place. How ready are the followers of Christ in every age to misread providences and to come to despairing conclusions when they have no warrant to do so. Why should they be cast down, why should they be afraid to whom the Lord is saying in His own Word: "Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death?" He is their risen Lord. "But now," the apostle had to say, "is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept." What encouragement there is

for the tried Church of God in the world that the One in whom they have come to trust is the ever-living One who is now set down at God's right hand.

What benefits and blessings flow to the Church of God in the world in that Christ, as the Risen One, is alive and alive for evermore. They are partakers of the blessings of His death and resurrection. They, by virtue of their union with Him, have died in Him and risen again with Him. "He was delivered for their offences and was raised again for their justification." They are heirs of eternal life through Him. The foundation of their hope is in Him.

As the Risen Lord, He is the great Intercessor within the veil for them and presents there on their behalf the infinite merits of His atoning work. All their springs are in Him. No spiritual blessing can they receive and enjoy here in this world — no, nor any temporal blessing either, but what flows from the prevalent intercession of the great Intercessor within the veil. What proof there is in all these blessings so dearly bought and so freely bestowed, that Christ is the risen, glorified and exalted Redeemer and the ever-living One.

To His people He is their Risen Lord — the One who loved them and gave Himself for them. He is all and in all to them. Out of Him they have nothing but what will secure to them everlasting damnation. But in Him they have everything, life, salvation and all things. In Him they have far more than they realise. Sometimes it is said of a rich man in this world who goes about as though he had very little — 'he does not know how much wealth he has.' However that may be true of some in this world in temporal things, it is certainly true of the children of God that they do not grasp what they have in Christ, who of God is made unto them wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. The day is coming when He will show it unto them.

As the Risen Lord, Christ says to His people: "Because I live, ye shall live also." Often do they say like David: "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul." All the while the Lord is saying to them: "I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." The adversary is not to prevail over them. The Lord will give deliverance. "Because I live, ye shall live also." Their life is bound up in His. And because He is the Risen One who broke the bands of death asunder, they, too, shall arise out of the dust of the earth. "With my dead body shall they arise." On the morning of the resurrection the Risen One shall come and awake them out of their sleep. He shall say to them: "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust."

So, too, shall they hear Him say: "Put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem." and immediately shall they be changed into His likeness, their body like unto His glorified body." Then they shall see Him as He is, and be with Him, and be like Him.

Should these things not stir us up to say: "Oh, that I might be one of them," and to seek to be one of them. Only by the blessing of God's Spirit, making His Word spirit and life to us can we ever become one of that blessed number who shall see God's face in peace, and who shall go in to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Notes of Sermon

by Rev. Neil Cameron

"Jesus saith unto her, Woman why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?" John 20: 15.

We have in this Chapter an account of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave, and you find that His Disciples, although they were told repeatedly that He would arise, did not seem to realise this. They had no expectation that He would arise, and all their hope was gone for Christ was now in the grave. He was all their hope, and He is the life and hope of his own people still, and will be to the end of time.

We have also given us here an account of women who were at the sepulchre before the break of day, and in another Gospel we are told that they, on the evening before the (Jewish) Sabbath, went and bought spices that they might anoint the body of the Lord Jesus Christ, but they had so much respect for the Sabbath that they rested on that day, although it was His body they were going to anoint. They were up early on the first day of the week — the Sabbath morning as we have it now — the day of the resurrection, and were at the grave before break of day. There is a particular account given here of Mary Magdalene, although she was not the only one that was there, for she said when she came to Peter, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him," but you will find that seemingly the other women did not come back after that, and Peter and John came running to see what had taken place. But they, too, went away, and Mary was left alone at the grave, for she could not draw herself away from there — her all was lost.

We shall notice two or three things concerning Mary Magdalene and her condition. You find here that questions were asked her first by the

two Angels — “Woman why weepest thou?”, and immediately after she gave the answer, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him,” and again by a man whom she supposed to be a gardener, “Woman why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?”, and she told him if he had taken Him away to tell her where he had laid Him, and she would take Him away.

The first thing that we have to notice concerning Mary Magdalene is, as is true of every son and daughter of Adam by nature, all are sinners — all are in need of a Saviour, and will be convinced of that either in time or in an endless eternity. If in time, it will be well, but if in eternity, there is no hope for them there. We read concerning Mary Magdalene that she was possessed of seven devils. Another man had a legion of them, but there was seven in this woman, but the Lord had cast them out of her. She must have been a terrible character altogether — a person whom no man would wish to meet at all, for it was bad enough to have one devil, but to have seven, it was terrible. The Lord, we are told, cast them out, and delivered her from such an awful cause of grief to herself and others, and very likely this bound her to Him more than others. We read that the man out of whom the Lord had cast the legion of devils, that he begged to be allowed to follow Jesus wherever He went, and that was because he was so bound to Him, who had wrought such a deliverance for him, and it was the same here, for we are told that she followed Him all the time along with these women that went with Him to minister to Him of their substance. They had substance, and a good use they made of it, for they thought the best use they could make was to support the Lord Jesus in the world.

We read about her also that she enjoyed much of His favour and of His presence — heard much of His teaching — saw many of His miracles, and had the true faith of the Gospel, just as Martha (and her sister Mary too) — she was sure He was the Christ, the Son of God.

Surely this was a wonderful experience indeed in the history of time, and a thing that could only happen once, that is, that men should in the world be going in and out with a man, and they were sure that that man was God Himself manifest in the flesh. That was an extraordinary thing altogether. This was not a mere man at all, but the Son of God — the very Creator and Preserver of all things, and Mary Magdalene believed all this as sure as any of the Disciples.

It was not only that these women believed, and believed with a faith based upon the Scriptures of Truth, that this was none other than the promised Messiah, but they were also witnesses of His awful death —

that ignominious death on Calvary's cross. We are told that they were standing and looking on while He was dying on the Cross, and suffering there, and we often thought that the suffering that He was enduring there before their eyes, was (as the Holy Ghost told Mary by Simeon, when she brought Jesus up to the Temple when He was a child), the sword that would pierce through her own soul. The suffering that these women were seeing was piercing their very hearts. They were suffering along with Him, and they remained there until His body was taken away and carried by Joseph of Arimathea to His own burial ground — the new tomb which he had bought for himself. We are told that these women, and Mary Magdalene in particular, went and saw where the body was laid. That was on the evening preceding the Jewish Sabbath — our Friday evening now, and for a day and two nights the body lay in the grave; that is, it lay there that night and the whole of the Jewish Sabbath, and the night after the Sabbath, until they went early on the first day of the week, which is our Sabbath, and you may be sure that they thought on very little else all that time but the awful sufferings and death of the Son of God, however little we think of that now.

It was in a way of love they thought on Him — a way that was reaching their hearts, for they had heart love to the Lord Jesus Christ. Mary and her companions showed that it was not a formal thing at all, but a thing that put them early out of their beds that they might anoint His body. There was here a real sense of love, and also a real sense of loss.

See what a sense of loss it brings to God's people when one of them is taken to eternity — how they feel the world so empty when that takes place, and if that is true concerning a mere man (for it is a great loss among God's true people — they are so united to one another with a drawing love that can never be broken), what must it have been in the case of the Lord Jesus Christ? If there is a great sense of loss and emptiness in the world in the case of a mere man, with all the imperfections that follow the most godly of men, being taken away, how extraordinary it must have been in the case of the Lord Jesus, for these men and women had had His fellowship these last three and a half years. But you see it was worse than that. Although a man should be taken away, even the greatest of men, and we are told that the Children of Israel mourned for Moses thirty days, and well they might, for they had good cause to, but at the same time the hope of the Children of Israel was not lost — another was put in his place, for God has always a Joshua in the place of a Moses when He is going to take Him away, but it was different here — they had lost all their hope.

See the account that is given of the two going to Emmaus — they had given up all hope, and were saying, “We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel,” but now our hope is gone, and the same was true concerning Mary Magdalene and her companions — her all was buried in the grave, for they had no other hope that they could ever be saved but what was placed entirely upon this person, the Lord Jesus Christ. As David said long before then, “All my hope and confidence is placed on thee alone,” and if you ever saw an individual who had lost his hope, you would never forget it. But we don’t know what we are at all, we think we are very mighty, but ah friends! you better take care, for if God were to allow Satan to take away your hope, you would see then when it would mean, for we have seen some of the brightest of God’s people, and they became so low that they cared not whether they washed or even put their clothes on, and all that was wrong was that their hope was lost, and still the hope was there. Some have a hope and the sooner it will go the better, for unless it is based upon Christ and the infallible Word of God, it will not stand. We saw some that lost that hope too, and we were never sorry for that, but we are speaking of the hope of the Lord’s people just now.

These women came to the conclusion that the two Disciples going to Emmaus came to — “We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel,” but now He was dead and had been in the grave three days, and they did not believe at all that He was to rise or had risen. What was the cause of all this? It was not at all because the Scriptures were not clear enough — the Scriptures of the Old Testament were clear enough — He was to rise from the dead, should there be no portion but that in the 68th Psalm to convince them, “Thou hast ascended on high, thou has led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men —.” Surely that ought to convince men that He was to rise from the grave with the gifts received by His obedience and death for guilty men, but there they were and they were not believing the Scriptures, and that caused the darkness, and that is the cause of all our own darkness.

With regard to the unsaved sinner, nothing but the blood can save that sinner, but in the case of the sinner who has Christ by regeneration, one portion of God’s Word will deliver them when perhaps they are in awful darkness. We read of God’s people in great trials, and such a portion came to them and they were immediately delivered. That is the way here. It was on account of ignorance of the Scriptures that they were thus. They were not understanding at all why the Messiah would have to die, and were not understanding that He should die, as He told those going to

Emmaus, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken, ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?", and the word that is translated "ought" there, is one of the strongest terms in the Greek language in setting forth necessity. It was absolutely necessary that He should die and also that He should rise again. He was to die for their sins and to rise again for their justification. The sinner needs the two — to be atoned for, and to be justified in the sight of God.

There was ignorance then in the first place, and along with that there was unbelief and forgetfulness, for they remembered afterwards how He told them that He would rise after three days and go before them into Galilee. Forgetfulness and unbelief did a lot here. Some speak of unbelief as if it were a thing to be proud of, but no, this is one of the greatest sins that men can have, and at the same time, I don't believe that there is one child of God under the sun, but has had a sad experience of unbelief. Here it was causing a woman to sit and weep at the grave and looking in there for Him, who was raised from the dead to die no more. Unbelief always looks the wrong way — never the right way.

How now was she delivered from this condition? It was by one word, and that word her name, "Mary." When she told him, whom she supposed to be a gardener, that if he had taken her Lord away, to tell her where he had laid Him and that she would take Him away, she was forgetting her own weakness, for what could she do to carry a dead body? If she could carry it, what was she going to do with it afterwards?, but her love for Him was such that she would have Him if she could, and whenever He said to her "Mary," she knew Him at once. We are told that the sheep of Christ know His voice, and as you know the difference in the voice of a man (there is such a distinction in the voice of men, that although you heard a thousand, you would recognise the difference) there was this about the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ as a man, that she knew His voice immediately He said "Mary." It has a far deeper meaning than that too — it has the meaning that although men should be speaking to us all our days — even Angels, until we hear the voice of Christ, we shall never become alive, and never hear anything that will benefit us for eternity. It is His voice that quickens the dead, and those who are quickened know it when they hear it again. They know the difference between the preaching of the Word when man is speaking and when the Holy Ghost is speaking through His word, and they know and can say that they have heard the voice of God in that portion of Scripture.

So Mary immediately realised that all that she had passed through in

the way of trials and despair and unbelief, was all on account of her ignorance. She knew that this was the very Christ that she used to have — that Christ who was crucified and laid in the grave, but here He was alive and in the same body as He was before He died. This revived her faith. It is the Word of God that revives faith, and faith grows strong now, for she was sure now that this was the very Christ, and she was also sure that she was not deceived. She was sure that she had Him, and she worshipped Him immediately. We are not told before this that although sinners were coming to Him and acknowledging that He was the Christ, that they worshipped Him. It was now they began to worship Him as God. This woman held Him by the feet and worshipped Him as her God — not only her Saviour, but her God. She was sure that as the Father was God that this was God too.

We shall notice one other thing and that is, we are told in the Scriptures that those who sow in tears, that they shall reap in joy. Mary was sowing here in tears, and she had the first joy of all the rest on the morn of the resurrection. She received the glad news first — that extraordinary joyful news that the Lord had risen indeed, and was seen by herself before any of the others. We do not read of any of the others that they were sowing in tears early in the morning (although it may have been the case too), but here you find tears on account of an absent Christ — tears of true sorrow, and where you find that, you may depend upon it, that it will not be very long until it will end in joy; but we are so comforted with the world, and comforted when we have not Christ, and consequently we are not enjoying this joy at all.

I remember a servant of God making a remark about that Scripture, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you," and he said, "if you are comfortless when you have not got Christ, He will not leave you like that, He will come to you, but if you take comfort without Him, this does not belong to you at all." To those who are comfortless when He is absent, He is as good as His promise — He will not leave them in that condition.

The Days of the Fathers . . . Question Day Notes

These notes were taken down in Gaelic by Mr George Beaton, a native of Back, who was a schoolteacher in Ness Lewis. They were published originally in 1881, under the title, "Gleanings in the Fields," and more recently under the title, "Question Days in Lewis around 1880" in

Gaelic. Mr George Beaton ventured to a Question-Meeting in Lairg, and took notes from some of the men of Sutherland. They are included in the booklet.

If Mr George Beaton took notes of other men or ministers, he omitted them because he wished to keep his booklet brief, and the cost of printing low. One wonders who and what was left out! A broader representation of the men at these meetings, would have been interesting, but we can, from the notes, form some idea of the ministers and men, the views they had of doctrine, and of what the life of a believer should be, and we are persuaded that they practised what they believed. "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he."

The Question-Meeting was an exercise in self-examination, and was often useful, and edifying, to tried believers. It was with the hope that these notes would be useful, that they were at first published. The translation of them, rough and unpolished, is sent out with the same end in view. — D. C.

Question Day at the Spring Communion in the Parish of Stornoway in 1878.

The service having been begun in the customary way, a portion of the truth as a basis for the "Question" was asked for. The words given are in Ephesians, chapter 1, verse 19, "and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe according to the working of His mighty power." What was required of the brethren who were called to speak, was Scriptural marks on those who embraced Christ with (by) this power, distinguished from those who deceive themselves with other matters rather than with the power of Christ (or in other things in which the power of Christ is not).

The minister after briefly "opening" the question, called, to speak: JOHN MACLEAN, CATECHIST,* who said:

It is they only who are given by the Father to the Son, who experience this power. (Great honour is to be given to the Word of God here.) They imagined at first that they themselves had power, but as a mark on them — they are now dependent on the power of God. They thought (once) that they could go with the uprightness that they then had into the presence of God, but as a mark on them — they see the magnitude (weight) of their duties, when their lost state is brought home to them. In brief (for the Kingdom of Heaven is not in words only), others will be satisfied with themselves.

* Born in Ranish, Lochs.

However, the person whom the Lord teaches discovers that He will cast him to Hell if he remains in this state of sin. When he discovers that Christ is offered to Him, this soul is brought to such a point that Christ is seen to be a suitable Saviour for him. The Lord can put this power into ONE of His words to awaken these — and to convert them — the almightiness of God bound up in One word! People will not believe this until God draws near to them.

When the soul is in a state of reconciliation with God, it is no wonder that he is encompassed with fear. When Moses and his God were on the mount, Moses said, “I exceedingly fear and tremble.”

Surely great fear is due unto the Lord in the congregation of the saints. These now, like children, believe that it is through the kingdom of grace that they must go to the kingdom of glory. They learn that they have to be saved from themselves and sin. There are some who have joy — and sorrows. I may deceive myself with the one or the other of them. It is Christ that these need. The Christian would be holy if he could, said Mr Lachlan (MacKenzie).

ALEX MACIVER, LOCHS, who said:

For those who believe, this power begins when God speaks to them in their experience. His voice is then heard as He said to Adam, “Adam where art thou?” The soul was naked, they discovered, far off from God, but there was love in this voice. They were drawn. Some labour in their own strength to repair the breach between them and God, but “Christ and Him crucified” is revealed to these. God gave them ability to close in with Him. They were filled with the things of God — and as the Apostle said, “I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me.” They thought, on that particular day, that sin was destroyed in them. That was the day of their espousals. Sad days came after that, but they would not wish the marriage to be annulled! The devil and the world and the flesh came, and Oh! were it not that this power followed them . . . ! They are kept by the power of God through faith. “I will not fear though thousands ten, (said David), set round against me be.”

DONALD MACLEAY, BARVAS, who said:

These were beforehand, enemies to life from God, but they were within the bond of the Covenant. They were chosen to be adopted children. Under the power of darkness we all came into the world. Nothing less than the power of the Godhead could convince of that state, that we were dead in trespasses and sins, but when God spoke with power they were moved, like the dry bones that the Lord showed to the prophet,

Ezekiel. They were made partakers of the divine nature, a nature from on high, so that they in common, may say "Our Father which art in heaven." The nature they got through the Fall warred against God. God sent the Word of truth to them with power, as David says, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power." The provision (of God) as over their lost condition, is revealed to them. They saw Him in His offices as being very suitable in what they now experienced, for their state. There are others — in health, at ease as Moab was, but this people are emptied from vessel to vessel, from experience to experience. Some would manage well if they were only delivered from condemnation, like Balaam, "Let me die the death of the righteous etc." but these seek salvation **and** God glorified thereby. The love of God was shed abroad in their hearts. They love all things that pertain to the name of God. Their heart's desire is that sinners would be saved. The more you get of Him the more you will desire. A mark — "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you," and another, Blessed are those who are poor in spirit.

DONALD MORRISON, NESS, who said:

Praise God for the words we have here. Paul was well content, having been endued with this power. He knew nothing of it when he was under the power of darkness. Oh! "Good Thou art and good Thou doest." The Scriptures tell us about the people who are saved, and the people who are deluded. There are two kinds of faith and two kinds of love, but it is from Christ Himself that the graces of this folk are received. Paul says that in Him we have redemption, deliverance, and again in Him we have an inheritance. Oh what would these do if the power of God were not stronger than the power of the enemy. They are happy to be under His power. A mark of those who believe — they rejoice in God their strength. The love of God possessed Paul in great measure. He loved Him who did "the work" and his love was going out to others in whom the same work was accomplished. Before conversion he was persecuting them, but after that, he loved them, God's love having been poured into his own heart. He was like a mother who gives the breast to her child and at the same time gives relief to herself from fulness. These seek to walk without giving offence, like a woman with child walking in female company, lagging behind, crying, (to those in front) "Oh, walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise," "Oh that my steps were ordered etc." These people are not beyond pleading "Oh, keep me!" at morn, at noon and evening. We are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Good works follow after faith and do not go before it.

Oh that the world would know that they love one another and forgive one another, like the woman who threw behind her the worst things she saw in the Lord's people but "kept" the better things. When Luther was criticising Calvin — "Let Luther dislike me," said Calvin, "let him call me a devil a thousand times, yet I shall love him, and acknowledge him as a precious servant of the Lord." Like Gaius, kind not only to the brethren but to strangers. They who tasted of Him, desire that others would also.

MALCOLM MORRISON, GAELIC TEACHER,* who said:

It was revealed to these that they had sinned. They heard the voice of God saying they were astray. They were put to pray in secret as sinners, lost in the presence of God, although their knees, before them, would have been as stiff as the knees of the elephant. They had been bound by guilt, darkness, ignorance and inability. Their false peace was spoilt, conscience was awakened. They remembered their wrongs, they cried out, "What shall I do?" and like the publican praying "God have mercy on me a sinner." If you have not reached this lesson, you are yet but a bad scholar, you have yet to begin at the beginning. When they were going down to the pit, he remembered them. "Who remembered us in our low state, for His mercy endureth forever." There are some who are in the womb of trials for a time, but they die "like woman's birth untimely." These saw the glory of the Son." My beloved is white and ruddy. He is altogether lovely." He took me to His banqueting house, and His banner over me was love. If you did not get love you did not get faith, for love is greater. His people will sing eternally, "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood." they desire to live for His sake.

REV. JOHN MACLEAN, BACK, (Closing the Question), said:

The power that has wrought saving faith in the soul is very great. This power was exercised towards Christ the Head of the Church, and the members of the Church need this, for this power quickened them "together with Christ."

This power met with the power of death and the power of the Devil. When Christ was in the tomb with a stone at the door and with Pilate's seal, together with the watchmen, who but they (had power) they thought! But the power of the Godhead saw them as flies. Was it in the power of

* There were two of them. This one was born in Uig.

the Romans to keep Him in the grave? The earthquake came, Christ rose. This was (the exercise of) the power of God. Hell and earth were armed against God, but the armies of Hell were put to flight in the battle. God mocked them.

It would have been better for them all to have kept their mouths shut. He was declaring in the days of His flesh, on earth, that He was God, when He said "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it again." Not only the world did not believe in Him, but His own friends did not believe in Him at one time. Yes, Thomas would not believe the women, unless he saw the print of the nails etc! He was raised from the dead by the power of the Godhead, and was raised far above all principality and power etc.

Again the greatness of His power toward believers — Their souls were in the grave spiritually. It was sealed. Unbelief, the world the devil and corruption, kept them asleep. But the Spirit by His Power convinced their souls of the evil and guilt of sin, so that they felt like filthy maggots. He revealed to you that you were loathsome in His presence. Oh said the creature, "Is there cleansing for such a filthy slave as I am?" Pride gets a death blow. It is easy for Almighty Power to shake the person over Hell.

Christ is a Saviour from sin. The devil and men would accept salvation from Hell, but Christ saves from sin. Sin made men like the Devil, sin is like the marrow of their souls, it is not easy to separate. Some appear to be the enemies of sin, but they are in it up to their ears, but the power of God will keep it from reigning as it was before. Self is so unyielding, it is as if it had nine lives, (like the eels going this way and that way) against the ways of God. Self will assume any shape. It will make itself attractive so that Christ might see you beautiful, but God will cut the veins of self, so that the person will come to the foot of the cross — It is Christ that he now loves. He loves His fame (reputation). He loves the law of God after the inner man. It is holiness that he now pursues. He likes the Sabbath Day, and the ordinances, Christ to increase, and he himself to decrease.

When Dr Colquhoun asked from a godly man a mark of grace, the man stamped his walking-stick on the ground three times, and said in broad Scots, "doon, doon, doon," that is, growing in humility. They by grace give themselves up to Him for their cleansing. Other friends spoke to the Question on this day but we think it best to keep this booklet brief. (G. Beaton).

The Power of Unbelief

By Rev. John Colquhoun, Glendale

In the history of the human race unbelief showed itself very early and the first doubt which entered into the heart of Eve concerning God's command was the source of all the evil which has overtaken, or will overtake, the human race in this world, and all the lost, throughout eternity, will know the consequences of that first doubt. As a result of it, all mankind are by nature under the power of unbelief. When we speak of unbelief we have always before our mind that which is not believed, and in the highest sense it refers to a lack of belief in the revelation which God has given of Himself to sinners in this world.

God has revealed Himself to us in the works of creation and providence and thus we have a wonderful manifestation of power and glory for we read that "the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork." (Ps. 19: 1). Thus the heathen who have not the Bible have a revelation of God's power and glory which, if they do not make a right use of, will lay them open to the charge of unbelief. "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." (Rom. 1: 20). Their sin of idolatry is the direct outcome of their unbelief, "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." (Rom. 1: 21-23). Thus we see how much the heathen are under the power of unbelief.

It is not merely the heathen, however, who are under the power of unbelief. Those who have the greatest gospel privileges are under this fearful dominion, and the greater the privilege, if it is not blessed to one, the more the power of unbelief becomes evident. One would rightly judge that those who heard the Lord Jesus preach, while He tabernacled in this world, had the greatest possible privilege. It was not a fallible and erring preacher who ministered to them but One who spoke with authority showing the very stamp of heaven on His preaching yet we read that when He preached in His own country that "He did not many mighty works these because of their unbelief." Such was the power of unbelief that instead of accepting what the Scriptures and their own con-

sciences testified to be true they began to cavil and say, "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?"

None will deny but that the city of Jerusalem had great privileges. The worship of God had been set up there early, the fact that the Saviour of sinners trod its street, the walls of its temple echoed with the sound of His life-giving voice, its priests and scribes professed to be eagerly looking for the coming of the promised Messiah, in a word, it was the centre of religion, thought and worship, but when the Messiah did actually appear Jerusalem sinners would have none of Him for they could not believe that one who came in such a humble form could be the Anointed of God. The Jews professed to be the Lord's people but when their Lord came to their chief city and the earthly centre of their religion, it became true that "He came unto His own and His own received Him not." (John 1: 11). They refused to come unto Him that they might have life, and pretended that in rejecting Him they were all the more steadfastly adhering to the religion of their fathers. This pretence He exposes and shows that they were under the power of unbelief by saying, "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me: for he wrote of Me." (John 5: 46). Thus we find Him uttering the sorrowful complaint, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not." (Luke 13: 34).

As it was in the days of Christ's humiliation so it is in all ages. As in the parable of the great supper, all things are ready, and Christ, through His ambassadors, extends a welcome to sinners to come as they are to the gospel feast. He clearly reveals that there is nothing on His part to hinder them, and to show His earnestness He often repeats His invitations, but those invited are so much under the power of unbelief that they make light of His invitations and go their ways, one to his farm and another to his merchandise, and the remnant entreat His servants spitefully and slay them, if not with the sword, they do it with the tongue. In the preaching of the gospel Christ is raised up before sinners as God's only remedy to meet with the lost and ruined condition of man, but so well-nigh universal is the power of unbelief that those who preach the gospel have to say with the Prophet Isaiah, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?"

Not only are the careless and indifferent under the power of unbelief but the Lord's true people experience its fearful hold upon them. When

Christ began to speak to them through the Holy Spirit in the day of effectual calling, unbelief began to put forth its power. As that eminent servant of Christ, Rev. John MacRae (MacRath Mòr) puts it in his own quaint way, "The first knock that Christ gave at the door of the soul, Satan said to Unbelief, 'Rise up Unbelief, my first-born, put your back to the door and be strong, or Christ will put in the door in splinters'." This has been the experience of every awakened sinner, some in a greater degree than others, and after they come to the liberty of the gospel unbelief will say boldly, at times, that it was neither a real awakening nor a real liberty which they got. At times they feel the power of these bold assertions so much that they are brought almost to the borders of despair.

Unbelief often robs them of the comforts which flow from the revelation which God gives of Himself and of His purposes in the Scriptures. Their slowness to believe what was written in the Old Testament Scriptures concerning Christ robbed the disciples of much comfort in the near prospect of Christ leaving them and of the comfort which belonged to them in connection with His death and resurrection. Thus we find Him saying to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" (Luke 24: 25-26). If they had believed all that Moses and the prophets had written concerning the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow they would have other than sorrowful feelings on that journey when "Jesus himself grew near." Further the power of unbelief robs them of the comforts of God's promises. The promises, being yea and Amen in Christ Jesus, not one of them shall fail, and this fact is often declared in God's Word, yet unbelief has such power over the hearts and minds of the Lord's people, that many of them know very little of the joys of God's salvation going through this world. More often their experience is that of the Psalmist when he was saying, "As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God." (Ps. 42: 10).

Though unbelief is powerful yet it represents only one army, and that the weakest, that fights in the bosom of the child of God. There is another army and it is represented by faith and it will completely and finally overthrow unbelief at last, together with all the allies of unbelief, such as the world, the devil and the flesh. "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (1 John 5: 4).

Letter by Rev. John Newton, 1777

My dear Sir,

The complaints you make of what passes within encourage me under what I feel myself. Indeed if those whom I have reason to believe are more spiritual and humble than I am, did not give some testimony that they find their hearts made of the same material as mine is, I should be sometimes hard put to it, to believe that I have any part or lot in the matter, or any real knowledge of the life of faith. But this concurrent testimony of many witnesses confirms me in what I think the scriptures plainly teach, that the soil of human nature, though many spots are certainly better weeded, planted and manured than others, is everywhere the same universally bad; so bad that it cannot be worse, and of itself is only capable of producing noxious weeds, and nourishing venomous creatures.

We often see the effects of culture, skill and expense will make a garden where all was desert before. When Jesus, the good husbandman encloses a soil, and separates it from the waste of the world, to make it a residence for Himself, a change presently takes place; it is planted and watered from above, and visited with beams infinitely more cheering and fertilizing than those of the material sun. But the natural propensity to bring forth weeds still continues, and one half of His dispensations may be compared to a company of weeders, whom He sends forth into His garden to pluck up what He has not planted, and which if left to grow would quickly overpower and overtop the rest. But alas! the ground is so impregnated with evil seeds, and they shoot in such quick succession, that if this weeding work were not constantly repeated, all former labour would be lost. *Hinc illae lacrimae* — hence those tears. Hence arises the necessity of daily crosses and disappointments, daily changes of frame, and such multiplied convictions that we are nothing and can do nothing of ourselves; all are needful and barely sufficient to prevent our hearts from being over-run with pride, self-dependence and security.

Yours Etc.

Lovest Thou Me?

by Rev. J. W. Ross.

What condescension Christ shows, coming near to us to ask this question! We may ask a loved one, "Do you love me?" because we are insecure and want to be re-assured. But there was no insecurity behind Christ's question, nor was the question put because of ignorance.

True believers, and even true servants of Christ, may find this a difficult question. They may envy Peter that he was able to answer the question so clearly, "Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee."

There are many reasons why we may find this a difficult question. We show an alarming interest in sinful things. We spend time entertaining sinful thoughts. We show a cold spirit when the Redeemer approaches us. Perhaps even today He came near to us and said, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" — but we pushed Him away from us and continued to go on in a sinful way. Again, when the Redeemer reproaches us, we do not like it. Also, there arises sometimes a spirit of rebellion from our hearts, against what Christ as Lord appoints for us in providence. Our response seems one of hatred towards Him rather than one of love.

But we must remember that this question was put to Peter after his repentance. He, too, had shown an attitude which was the opposite of love. He had denied Christ, with swearing and cursing. He had denied the remotest connection with Him — far less admitting to one of intimacy and love. But he had been searched out in his denial by Christ's look of changeless love, and he had gone out to weep. He had wept bitterly over his sin. And it is when we repent, when we too shed tears over our sinful attitude, that we can face this question.

What a humbling matter for us to think of Him looking on us today, looking on us against the background of our sinfulness, our unfaithfulness and our turning back from him, our rebellion against Him, and asking us "Lovest thou me?". Is there the grace of repentance in us, as there was in the heart of Peter, by which we can say as he did "Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee?"

If there is love to Christ, there will be no desire on our part to cover over the past. We will be willing that Christ should know all, we will not seek to hide anything. We will rather wish to confess our sins, to confess our unfaithfulness to Him.

Christ's question is so personal: "Lovest thou me", and it is only on the basis of Who He is that we can reply, "Thou knowest that I love thee". It is only on the basis of His love for us that we can say, against the background of our appalling failures, "I love thee". Think of Him as the One who was crucified, and who rose again from the dead: think of Him as the One to whom John pointed and said, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world". Some people speak of loving Christ, but it is not this Christ whom they love. It is not the Christ

who said, "This is my body which is broken for you" whom they love. And if it is not such a Christ whom we love — a Christ who died for our salvation — then we are lost.

When Christ said "Feed my sheep" he was revealing to Peter another aspect of His loveliness. He was showing that His sheep were purchased by Him — He had given His life as a ransom for them. He was also seeking to channel Peter's love to Christ so that it would flow out in the direction of those for whom Christ had previously said in this connection, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring". Christ had gently nurtured Peter's love towards his Saviour, he had carefully guarded it like a smoking flax so that it was not quenched. Now he pointed Peter towards His flock. He sought to stir up his love, so that it would burn brightly in compassion and love towards those who needed his care — "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep".

May God so shed His love abroad in our hearts that, when Christ puts the question to us **Lovest thou me?** we may be able to reply, with all that this may mean for our calling and service, **Lord thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.**

Extracts from Thos. Brooks' Works

A GREAT MIRACLE. For Luther a poor friar to stand so stoutly against the pope was a great miracle; but that he should prevail against the pope as he did was greater; and that after all he should die in his bed, notwithstanding all the enemies he had, and the several designs they had to have destroyed him was the greatest of all. For all that the pope or the devil could do, Luther when he had finished his testimony died in his bed. Oh! why should any Christian be unwilling to die, seeing he shall not die till his work be done, till his testimony be finished?

EZEKIEL 1: 28. Augustine, asking the question what God is? gives this answer; Surely it is He, who when He is spoken of cannot be spoken of, who when considered cannot be considered, when He is compared to any thing cannot be compared, when He is defined, groweth greater by defining. It is observable that it was not the Lord the prophet Ezekiel saw, it was only a vision. In the vision it was not the glory of the Lord which he saw, but the likeness of it; nay it was not the likeness, but the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord, that made him to fall on his face, as not being able to behold it. Sin hath so weakened, dazzled and darkened the eye of our souls, that we cannot bear the sight of the glory of the Lord, nor the likeness of it, no! nor the appearance of the

likeness of it. SATAN is a lion, not a lamb; a roaring lion, not a sleeping lion, not a lion standing still, but a lion going up and down. As not being contented with the many millions of souls he hath 'he seeks whom he may sip up at a draught' as the word in 1 Peter 5: 8 imports; his greatest design is to fill Hell with souls; which should awaken every one to be active, and to do all that may be done to prevent his design, and to help forward the salvation of souls.

SILENCE UNDER TROUBLES. It was the saying of one that an excellent memory was needful for three sorts of men. First, for tradesmen; for they having much business to do, many reckonings to make up, many irons in the fire, had need of a good memory. Secondly, great talkers, for they being full of words, had need to have a good storehouse in their heads to feed their tongues. Thirdly, for liars telling many untruths, lest they be taken in their contradictions. I may add fourthly — those that are afflicted, that they may remember the great good, gained by former afflictions, and be silent under present troubles.

AFFLICTIONS When Tiribazus, a noble Persian was arrested, he drew out his sword and defended himself, but when they told him that they came to carry him to the king he willingly yielded. So though a saint may at first stand a little out, yet when he remembers that afflictions are to carry him nearer to God, he yields and kisses the rod. Afflictions are like the prick at the nightingale's breast that awakes her and puts her to her sweet and delightful singing.

Again afflictions serve to revive and recover decayed graces. They inflame the love that is cold and quicken the faith that is decaying, and put life into those hopes that are withering, and spirit into joys and comforts that are languishing. He that escapes reprehension may suspect his adoption. God had one Son without corruption but no son without correction.

HUMILITY will keep the soul free from many darts of Satan's casting, and snares of his spreading. As low trees and shrubs are free from many gusts and blasts of wind which shake and rend the taller trees, so humble souls are free from those gusts and blasts of error that rend and tear proud lofty souls. Satan and the world have less power to fasten errors upon humble souls. The God of light and truth delights to dwell with the humble. Certainly souls guided and taught by God are not easily drawn aside into error.

CHAFING OF DECAYED GRACES. I have read a story of a sexton that went into the church at night to rob a *woman who had been

* The woman was Mrs Henry Erskine.

buried the day before with a gold ring upon her finger. Now when he had opened the grave and coffin and loosed the sheet he fell a rubbing and chafing her finger to get off the ring, and with rubbing and chafing, she having been but in a swoon before, revived and lived many years after. Smart afflictions are but the rubbing and chafing of our own graces.

CONSTANTINE commanded that his effigies should be engraven, not as other emperors in their armour leaning, but as in a posture of prayer kneeling, to manifest to the world that he won more by secret prayer than by open battles.

Obituary

The late Murdo Smith, Elder, Valtos

The subject of this brief obituary was born in Valtos in 1898 and it was there that he was to finish his course in time over 80 years later in October 1978. It is a matter of regret that no obituary notice of him has appeared in our magazine until now.

It would appear that Murdo Smith was to benefit greatly from the fact that he was brought up under the supervision of God-fearing parents. His father was an elder in the Balnakille Church of Scotland congregation prior to his joining, with many others like-minded, the Free Presbyterian Church. His mother died tragically in 1938. In the course of a storm, still remembered in Uig on account of its ferocity, she ventured out of the house anxiously looking out for the boat in which Murdo and some companions had gone out fishing and while doing so she was suddenly struck down by lightning.

Called up at the age of 18 Murdo served King and country in the First World War. After the end of hostilities he took up a sea-faring life and it was while thus employed that an incident occurred which he was never afterwards to forget. During a storm a mass of sea came over the ship he was on and being on deck he was caught by it and had he not, in the wonderful providence of God, and at the very point of being swept overboard been enabled to lay hold on some spar or rail he would have been lost. So narrow was his escape from death that the seaman on watch at the time in fact cried out that a man had been lost overboard. These distressing events in providence no doubt had their own place in his spiritual experience but we are told, however, that it was the death of a younger brother at the age of 27 which first led him to have really serious thoughts in regard to his spiritual condition before God. We have no record of his spiritual experience in being brought to faith in Christ

except that the words, "The eternal God is thy refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms," had a particular and important place in it.

He first made a public profession in November 1953. In 1956 he was elected a Deacon and in 1962 an Elder in the Uig congregation. As an office bearer he was very diligent in the discharge of his duties and during times of pastoral vacancy or absence of the pastor he was frequently called upon to conduct the public worship in the church. We believe it is well with him now. His like-minded widow and his adopted son survive him. "Help, Lord: for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men."

J. McL.

Sweet Recollections of a Dear Sister

Many, many years have now passed since this God-fearing young girl passed from time to eternity into the house, "not made with hand, eternal in the heavens;" at the tender age of seventeen. Indeed, little time has expired since, without my having sweet recollections of her.

As a boy, I used to wonder at her continual reading of God's Word, and how she could quote spontaneously from it. With tears in her eyes she often uttered; "My beloved is mine and I am His; he feedeth among the lilies." After family worship she usually retired upstairs for further reading of God's Word and secret prayer.

With great delight she walked ten miles to Tarbert Church in all weathers, both on Sabbath and weekdays. Here her soul was fed with the "finest of wheat" under the ministry of the Rev. D. N. MacLeod, then our minister in Harris before his translation to Ullapool. On several occasions, Mr MacLeod told me:— 'One Sabbath, I spoke from the Song of Solomon, 1, 4 "Draw me, we will run after thee; the king hath brought me into his chambers: . . .". While preaching that Lord's Day, I felt as if my lips were touched as with a live coal from off the altar, as I took notice of the gracious and heavenly smile on Catherine's young countenance, as she drank in the gospel message, thus closing in with the Lord Jesus Christ in an everlasting betrothal.' The Great Day alone shall manifest how many souls were added to the visible church during Mr MacLeod's ministry in Harris.

Shortly afterwards Catherine took ill, with an illness from which she was not to recover. She knew that. "The bridegroom cometh and calleth for thee" — this she often quoted with great joy whenever she noticed

our keen concern for her, and how with many tears we longed for her full recovery.

One night I dreamt of her decease, and the funeral procession as it actually took place from our home. In the morning, I told my Mother, who, dismissed it as a mere dream; however, it seemed to have had a preparatory result by way of preparing my parents for the severe sorrow in store for them, in the providence of God. When we bemoaned her, my Mother always said, 'Remember, "the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord"'. Job 1: 21.

While memory lasts, I shall always remember that solemn early morning in September towards the break of dawn, when Catherine said farewell to us all, but assuring us she was going to that place of which it is written: "and the street of the city was pure gold, as if it were transparent glass" Rev. 21: 21.

The other members of the family in order to conceal their tears, together with their grief of heart, left the bedchamber, while I remained as if it were in hiding. Catherine then softly whispered to her Mother "Mother, dear, I am now entering the valley of the shadow of death, and let us sing together for the last time Psalm 118 from the nineteenth verse:—

"O set ye open unto me
the gates of righteousness;
Then will I enter into them
and I the Lord will bless."

She herself had a beautiful musical voice, and sang it audibly to the end of the verse; then closed her eyes in death, never to open them again until the heavens be no more. She entered in both to sing and to bless Him whom she loved from her infancy, we believe.

In Luskentyre cemetery lies her precious dust, with that of her Father and Mother, her two sisters, and brother, with that also of the writer's wife Margaret and our infant child. May we be among those, who, with David, shall rise on the Resurrection morning with His likeness: "And with His likeness, when I wake, I satisfied shall be" Psalm 17: 15.

(Rev.) J. A. Macdonald.

Notes and Comments

Embryonic Science

Some leading gynaecologists are calling for a halt to research into human embryos. When such men are speaking out in this way we have reason to conclude that the dangers are real if research in this field is not

proscribed. It may seem strange that a generation which, through abortion, prevents the birth of millions of children is so intent in bringing others into the world by whatever means it may. The matter would be strange were it not for this common denominator that "God is not in all their thoughts." Man left to himself is a beast — and worse than a beast. The rejection of Biblical standards is producing its own fruits, not only in the lives of individuals, but also in the lives of nations as well. What the final outcome will be the example of Sodom and Gomorrah foretell. Only repentance and the turning away from iniquity will prevent it.

The Miner's Strike

It may seem strange to us that in the year 1984 damaging strikes, such as the long-continued miner's strike, are still part of our national life. Surely, one would say, with all the advances in labour relations and technology that some way would be found of settling industrial disputes without resort to strikes and especially to the violence seen in the miner's dispute. The ostensible reason behind the strike — the preservation or provision of jobs — none would find fault with, though many might find fault with the way of doing it. The real cause of such industrial trouble is on one hand man's fallen nature — this is true on both sides of industry — and on the other hand is the presence within the country of an evil organisation that does all in its power both to foment and exploit industrial unrest for its own ends. This evil force is atheistic international communism which spreads its tentacles everywhere seeking to undermine democracy and all that is good. Like its author — for it is Satanic in origin — it works subtly and maliciously and with the utmost cruelty. Being anti-christian in nature — for it deifies man — it shall, like Romanism, its counterpart in the church, be destroyed with the brightness of Christ's coming. Let us pray for that day.

Religious Cults

Lord Denning has called for legislation to outlaw bogus religious cults. He suggests that the Attorney-General should seek a declaration that cults like the Church of Scientology and the Unification Church are not religious and do not qualify for charitable status. Another High Court Judge recently described Scientology as "corrupt, immoral, obnoxious, sinister and dangerous."

It is good to know that persons in high positions of trust as these Judges have been brought to see the evil of these system which are so opposed to the truth of Christianity. It would also be a blessing if it were

possible to prevent young impressionable people from being ensnared by these sects. Satan has many ways of deceiving men and the use of false sects is one of these ways. Young people joining these cults have caused untold grief to parents as well as harm to themselves.

Dean of Faculty of Divinity at Edinburgh University

A Roman Catholic priest, Rev. Professor James Mackay has been appointed Dean of the Faculty of Divinity at Edinburgh University. On Prof. Mackay's appointment to the Chair of Systematic Theology at New College, considerable opposition was aroused. Dr. Ross whom he succeeds as Dean justified his new appointment. He said: "We teach people from many denominations including people training to be priests, and this appointment is simply a reflection of that." However it cannot be dismissed so tritely. The appointment is one further evidence of the direction in which the Church of Scotland is moving, that is from a reformed to an unreformed stance.

Scientology

A High Court judge branded the Church of Scientology as immoral and socially obnoxious after a case in which he awarded care of two children to their mother who had left the sect. The Judge declared that the children would be at risk if they remained with their father who is a dedicated Scientologist. During recent times there has been a proliferation of sects of one kind or another and they have become very active in many countries of the world. The increase coincides with the decline in Christian belief. Men and women, as well as the young, have fallen a prey to these godless sects. Only a day of the Lord's power will rid our land and the nations of the world of them.

I.R.A. Bomb Attack on Government

During the Conservative Conference at Brighton, the I.R.A. mounted a cowardly and murderous attack on the Government by setting off a bomb in the hotel where the Conference delegates were staying. One M.P., Sir Anthony Berry died as a result of the blast along with three others while Government Minister Mr Norman Tebbit, his wife and many others were injured. It was in the good providence of the Lord that the Prime Minister and other Cabinet Ministers escaped with their lives. This attack is in keeping with the evil activities of the I.R.A. over many

years, yet it takes on an even more serious aspect in that it was an attempt to destroy the British Cabinet in one fell swoop.

The Prime Minister has made it clear since this tragic incident that there will be no surrender to men of violence and that democracy will prevail. These are brave words and we trust that they may be fulfilled, but the present low moral and religious state of the nation does not augur well for a bright future. The removal of the death penalty was a signal to murderers that the way was now open for them to act, and they have not been slow to take advantage of it. The removal of that penal sanction has bred a violent society, and the time has come to restore it. Instead of spending time in debating its deterrent value, let it be restored and the proof will be immediately at hand. The alternative is plain — the sacrificing of many more innocent lives in an increasingly violent society. The Brighton outrage is only one aspect of it.

Opening of Church in Wellington, New Zealand

Every good and every perfect gift cometh down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variableness neither shadow of turning. It has been pointed out that since the word "lights" is in the plural number it must signify "mercies." God is the Father of mercies. They are new every day. How manifold His mercies are when we enjoy the divinely appointed means of grace that are able to make us wise unto salvation.

A goodly number of people gathered in the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland in Wellington on 22nd August 1984 for the service to mark the opening of the newly acquired building. Initially it appeared that the communion season would have to be conducted in rented premises. In the beginning of July however, the attention of the office-bearers was directed to a building that was to be auctioned. It had been built for religious purposes in 1968 by the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Wellington. This however does in no way detract from the suitability of the building for a proper use of it. At a Deacons' Court meeting on 7th July, a resolution was passed to bid for the building at the auction on 14th July. In the Lord's good providence the building was acquired for our Wellington congregation for the price of \$60,000. It was an answer to the prayers that had been offered up for the procurement of a suitable

building and an evidence of the truth of the promise, "ask and ye shall receive." As the building was not disfigured with crosses, stained-glass windows or other popish embellishments, it was ready for immediate use.

Rev. E. A. Rayner suitably preached from Ps. 60: 4 "Thou has given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth. Selah." The attention of the attentive congregation was drawn to the banner as an assembling point, namely the gospel of which Christ is the centre where sinners find a refuge and strong tower. The law pursues us and death pursues us but in Christ is safety. A banner is also a rallying point for soldiers. If we are to fight the good fight of faith, we must follow the captain of the Lord's host who provides His people with the whole armour of God and gives them strength made perfect in weakness. Although enemies make every effort to destroy this banner, victory is guaranteed. The banner also represents the testimony of the whole counsel of God upheld by God's people. The Reformers introduced a careful mode of instruction which received much impetus from such documents as the Heidelberg Catechism, Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechism and the thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England.

Those that uphold the banner are those that fear the Lord. They have a reverence of God which is evident in their reverent approach to the Most High. There is also a fear of caution as they work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. They are conscious of their need to watch and pray in view of Satan's baits and the fleshly lusts that war against the soul.

They that fear the Lord display the banner. "Who is on the Lord's side?" "Come out from amongst them and be ye separate saith the Lord and touch not the unclean thing," i.e. of idolatry, of pandering to Rome and the ecumenical movement. We are to witness that we are separate from innovations and therefore we must be a praying people. The Church building in Wellington was procured in the exercise of prayer. We must wait on the Lord as clients wait on their advocate. "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." We must wait on Him as beggars to get a crumb from the Master's table and we must wait on Him as students to learn of Him. They continue to display the banner in the exercise of persevering grace, cleaving to the Lord.

After the edifying sermon, the Interim Moderator briefly addressed the congregation. Mr Rayner then conveyed the greetings and good wishes from the Grafton congregation. Some friends were present from Gisborne and Auckland. Mr Jim Macpherson took the opportunity to speak on behalf of the Gisborne congregation. The portion of truth that had exercised his mind regarding the development in Wellington was EBENEZER, "hitherto hath the Lord helped us," he said.

With the visitors present from Auckland and Gisborne, there were well attended services during the communion season which followed. The usual preparatory services and prayer-meetings were conducted as well as the Fellowship meeting on Friday evening and the Thanks-giving service on Monday morning. Time allowed ten of the fourteen communicants present to speak to the question. The portion of truth given out was 2 Cor. 5: 14 and 15 — "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again." After the fellowship meeting, when greeting Ted Christensen from Auckland, I asked him what he thought of the new church. He said "it is like a city set on a hill." The building does indeed command a prominent and conspicuous situation. We pray that the witness emanating from the gospel message will prove it worthy of that description. Following the service on the Saturday, the Kirk Session admitted a young woman to full membership. She was enabled to profess her faith publicly on the Sabbath in accordance with the Saviour's dying command: "Do this in remembrance of me." An attentive congregation were present for public worship when the death of Christ was remembered for the first time in our church in Wellington. The action sermon was from Proverbs 18: 24 "There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." What a need we have of this Friend in our varied needs. "Though He was rich He became poor that we through His poverty might be made rich." "What a need also there is of labourers to proclaim the riches of this Friend. "Go ye therefore and teach all nations." When we see new places of worship provided by the Lord for the needs of His people, how conscious we are also of the need of labourers to be raised up. The Saviour gave us a warrant to come to the throne of grace to plead for labourers when He said: "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest." (Matt. 9: 37 and 38). Although there are so few labourers in our generation, we are

thankful that the modern means of travel have enabled a goodly number of our ministers to come to Australia and New Zealand as deputies. When the Boeing 747 lifted us off the tarmac on Tuesday 28th August, there lay before us another communion season across the Tasman. We did not then realise that Mr Rayner would be faced with all the duties of his communion season without the help of an assisting minister, due to my sudden heart attack in Sydney. It just highlights that the labourers are few. If the banner is to be conspicuously raised on the side of the truth, then with the places of worship there is need of the labourers. "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest." In Geneva there is a monument to the Reformers with the inscription "Post Tenebras Lux," i.e. "after the darkness light." The Reformation indeed brought light when the banner was raised to display the truth. "When Sion travailed she brought forth children;" both witnesses on the side of the truth and labourers. May the opening of a suitable place of worship in Wellington prove a source of much light. May it be like the light Hosea writes of: "his going forth is prepared as the morning" (Hos. 6: 3). The morning light is increasing light. Then indeed there will be much blessing flowing forth from the banner raised and a little one shall become a thousand. "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth labourers into his harvest." "The harvest truly is plenteous but the labourers are few." (Matt. 9: 37 and 38).

(Rev.) J. A. T. Van Dorp.

Church Notes

Day of Humiliation and Prayer

The Synod appointed a Day of Humiliation and Prayer throughout the Church on Wednesday, the 12th day of December, 1984. That the Lord's people confess their own sins, and the open and widespread ungodliness among all classes throughout the nation; and the growing indifference of the young to the Christian religion, the gospel of Christ and the house of God. That prayer be made — that God in mercy and for the sake of His Son Jesus Christ, would pour upon churches, the unbelieving world and the civil authorities, His Holy Spirit;

Letter from the Moderator

11 Auldcastle Road,
Inverness,
Scotland, IV2 3PZ.
13th October, 1984.

Mrs Margaret Thatcher,
Prime Minister,
No. 10 Downing Street,
London.

Dear Madam,

As Moderator of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland I wish, on behalf of our church and people, to express our abhorrence at the bombing outrage which occurred this week at the Grand Hotel in Brighton and which was evidently directed against your own person as Prime Minister and Members of Government who were resident in the hotel at the time.

I wish to assure you of our profound relief at the failure of this murderous attack in its main purpose although regrettably resulting in loss of life and acknowledge with deep gratitude the divine mercy exercised over yourself and members of Government in this deplorable and despicable business.

May our gracious Creator cast over yourself and each member of Government the shield of His protection and encourage you in the discharge of government and state duties to trust yourselves entirely to His mercy who is the "Preserver of men" and the "Saviour of all men, especially of those who believe."

On behalf of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland

I am

Yours faithfully,

A. F. MacKay

(Rev. A. F. MacKay)

Moderator.

That believers would be revived and strengthened to witness for the truth of God's Word and against unscriptural and dangerous teaching from whatever source this emanates;

That many sinners would be awakened and converted and also among the young — and that civil authorities would have regard to the spiritual and moral well being of the Nation as well as the temporal prosperity thereof — that we, as a people, acknowledge our unworthiness of the least of God's mercies.

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Northern: At Dingwall on 13th November, at 2 p.m.

Outer Isles: At Stornoway on 11th December, at 12 noon.

Western: At Shildaig on 8th January, 1985, at 11 a.m.

Australia and New Zealand: At Auckland on Friday, 25th January, at 2.30 p.m.

Theological Conference

The annual Theological Conference will be held in Inverness Church on Tuesday, December 4th and Wednesday, December 5th (D.V.).

The Conference will begin on Tuesday afternoon at 2.30 p.m. The following papers will be read:—

Tuesday Afternoon — John Wycliffe by Rev. D. J. MacDonald, Perth.

Tuesday Evening — The Minister in his Pastoral Role by Rev. A. F. MacKay, Inverness.

Wednesday Morning — Medical Missions by Rev. Dr. J. Tallach, Raasay.

Wednesday Afternoon — Christian Problems in Contemporary Education by Mr. J. MacAskill, Stornoway.

Wednesday Evening — Trends in American Evangelicalism by Rev. D. MacLean, Glasgow.

As usual the Conference will be open to ministers, office-bearers and male adherents of the Church and the Committee trust that many will avail themselves of the opportunity of attending. Wednesday evening session will be open to the public.

D. J. MacDonald, Convener.

Acknowledgment of Donations

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

Foreign Mission Fund: Anon., Canada, \$100.00 (twice) for hunger relief in Zimbabwe.

Sydney Church Building Fund: Two Friends, North Tolsta £50 Would "Wellwisher" Stornoway postmark, 6/9/84 kindly inform General Treasurer as to destination of £60 received.

The Publications Treasurer, Mr R. W. M. MacKenzie, acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donation:—

Free Distribution Fund: Dumbarton Friends £12.

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

Applecross: In memory of Anne (Dolly) Dixon and the Rev. Dr. R. MacDonald from Mr L. B. Dixon £50 for Congr. Purposes per Rev. A. Murray; In memory of our mother Dolly Dixon from Joan and Eleanor £20 for Congr. Purposes per Rev. A. Murray; Anon (Envelope in plate) £5 for Sust. Fund; Friend, Kirkhill £10 for Sust. Fund; from Executors of late Mr Malcolm MacLean, 3 Milltown, Applecross £200 for Applecross F.P. Church per T. S. H. Burns & Son, Solicitors, Dingwall.

Flashadder: Envelope in plate £20 for Sust. Fund; Envelope in plate £15 for For. Missions; D. C. £45 for Comm. Exps. per Rev. D. Nicolson; Mr and Mrs D. MacF. £30 for Church Funds.

Fort William: Mr and Mrs MacC., Onich £10; Misses MacD. £5, both per Rev. J. A. MacDonald.

Glasgow: Mrs MacK. (3 donations) £15; Anon £5; Mrs C. £10, all for Congr. Fund; Anon £20; D. J. M. (3 donations) £15; Anon £4; Anon £1, all for Sust. Fund; Mrs M. (Ullapool) £50; J. A. M. £5; Matth. 6: 3 (2 donations) £20, all for Bus. Fund.

Lochcarron: Friend, Carnoustie £10 (in plate); Friend, Glasgow £5 per J. W. R., both for Sust. Fund; Mrs A. MacL. £3 for Minister's Car per J. W. R.; Anon £5 for Famine Relief in Zimbabwe (in plate); Anon £10 for Sust. Fund (in plate).

Portree: In memory of the late Miss P. M., Coolin Drive £100 for Foreign Mission per F. M. Raasay: MacL's, Suisnich £10; late Bella Gillies £20; Friend, Glasgow £10, all for Sust. Fund and all per J. M. MacLeod; Friend, Raasay £13 for Sust. Fund; £10 for Home Mission and £10 for Aged and Infirm Ministers etc. Fund.

Shieldaig: Anon £20; A. McP. £10; Mr and Mrs N. McC. £5 for Sust. Fund per D. McCuish.

Stornoway: Anon £20; Anon £10; Tolsa Friend £5, all for Communion Expenses; Anonymous Friends £20 for Congr. Funds per Rev. J. MacLeod.

Strath, Skye: A Friend £5 for Sust. Fund per J. MacLean.