

THE
Free Presbyterian Magazine
and Monthly Record

Vol. 90

MARCH 1985

No. 3

Perilous Times

The Apostle Paul in writing under divine inspiration to Timothy warned Timothy that in the last days perilous times would come. He also indicated to him how men would act in those days and the spirit that would possess them. It would be a spirit far removed from a gospel spirit. Before men could act in such a way and from such a spirit it is evident that they must cast off the true fear of God though still having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof. The mere outward profession of religion without spiritual life can never take the place of true religion and true vital godliness. Men ought not to be satisfied with the mere appearance of religion or even of godliness. If it is the mere appearance it is fraudulent and is more deceptive and dangerous than where there is no profession of religion at all.

Because of the danger of self-deception the gracious soul desires to be searched lest what he or she possesses would be found to be a mere appearance of religion rather than the reality at the appearing of Jesus Christ. The Psalmist was saying:

Search me, O God, and know my heart,
try me, my thoughts unfold;
And see if any wicked way
there be at all in me;
And in thine everlasting way
to me a leader be.

While the deceived soul refuses to come to the light of God's Word to be searched by it, the gracious soul comes to the light "that his deeds may be manifest, that they are wrought in God."

What an awful description the Apostle gives of men when those

perilous times would come. Men, he says, shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. And, as we have already indicated, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. How far men must go in casting off the true fear of God before being actuated by such a godless spirit and engaging in such practices! Yet, when we examine such a description and consider how it relates to the situation in our own day, we find it has a most close application to it. Each of these godless manifestations is to be seen in the lives of men and women in our own day and generation. For example, covetousness, disobedience to parents and love of pleasure are marked features of the present day — and so are the other manifestations cited.

May we not say then that perilous times have come and that we must therefore be in the last days. The increase in knowledge is another evidence that we are in the last days, as well as the world-wide gross apostasy from the faith once delivered to the saints. In these perilous times the great matter for the saints of God is to be kept. The influences of the forces of evil are very pervasive and the believer, ere ever he is aware of it, may be led aside. It is to the Lord that they must look for this keeping for none other can sustain them in these perilous times. Beyond the perilous times days of blessing are promised and the believer is to look forward with anticipation to times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. Yet even in the perilous times the Lord will not altogether hide His face from His people but will give them tokens of encouragement so that they may continue on their way looking for the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Sermon

by Rev. D. Campbell, M. A., Edinburgh

"And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the Chosen of God." (Luke 23: 35)

In this chapter we have brought before us the death and burial of the Lord Jesus Christ: our attention is drawn to this solemn matter. We are so accustomed to these solemn truths that we are not as deeply impressed as we ought to be. We are warned against 'counting the blood of the covenant, wherewith we are sanctified, an unholy thing,' and we would do well to take the warning to heart, lest we also be guilty of treating

God's record of His Son with contempt and indifference. Rather ought we to be deeply moved and wonder at God's loving-kindness.

We are here today to commemorate what we have in this chapter. It is not enough for the people of God to read the testimony of His Word. There are some duties which cannot be performed by reading and hearing only, and the duty before us today is one of these. We think it appropriate to direct your attention, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to the subject as it is brought before us in the text and context.

The text contains a solemn and serious implication, especially for those who made it. The implication is that Jesus of Nazareth was an impostor. This was a challenge to the Church of God then as it is now. It is also a challenge to each individual member of the Church. It is the Church's duty to defend her Lord's glory, and she is not left without material to establish His claim and to refute the false charges of the Enemy. When she is confronted with this implication she is expected to answer it.

Let us consider the text under the following heads:

- 1 The people whose words we have recorded here,
- 2 What they called in question,
- 3 Their confession and request:
 - (a) 'He saved others,'
 - (b) 'Let him save himself.'

1. *The people whose words are recorded in the text.* The people, as such, included the common people who had come from different parts of the Empire to be present at the feast in Jerusalem, and the rulers. These comprised both the rulers of the people and the synagogue. Also, notice what the people were beholding: they were eye-witnesses of the Crucifixion of Christ. We know at a glance that they were His enemies, actuated by prejudice and enmity. The witness of such tends to be unreliable and should always be received with reservation. The people consisted of the common people and the rulers; the rulers were men to whom was committed the government in both the civil and ecclesiastical spheres. Normally one would be ready to accept their testimony and statements, but we must reckon with the fact that they were enemies, and were influenced by others who were the enemies of Christ. These enemies were not the uncircumcised Gentiles but the people who came to celebrate the feast of the passover in Jerusalem. We are duty bound to answer the challenge of these men, and in doing so we should be persuaded in our own minds that Jesus was no impostor: this is still more necessary now inasmuch as many even now are prepared to receive the lie

rather than the truth about Jesus our Lord. This leads us to the second part of our subject.

2. *This people's objection, or what they called in question.* They questioned the right of Jesus of Nazareth to claim that He was the Christ, the Chosen of God. If men could prove that He was not the Christ, the foundation of the Church would be destroyed, and 'If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?' The Christian's faith is in vain.

'If he be Christ . . .' There is a strong suggestion that He was not. That was why such words were spoken. They believed and would have others believe that He was not the Christ, the Chosen of God. The question therefore confronts the Church — How are we to convince men that the rulers were wrong and we are right? To convince the world of this the Church is wholly dependent on the testimony of God's Holy Word and the Holy Spirit. The Church needs the Holy Spirit of Truth to lead her into all truth, to convince the world of sin, and to prove that Jesus is the Christ, the Chosen of God, and no impostor. These two are absolutely necessary if the Church in our age and generation is to fulfill her mission of commending Christ to sinners.

We are told in the Old Testament what would be true of the Messiah. Isaiah said, 'Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him.' We know that others were anointed with oil and baptised with the Holy Ghost, in a sense, and that was necessary if they were to perform aright their duties and offices in God's House. But we also know that no man was to be anointed as Christ was, as prophesied by Isaiah. The name 'Christ' means 'The Anointed,' and was not this anointing fulfilled in the case of Christ? 'And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in whom I am well pleased.'

Further, no Jew would question Isaiah, and no Christian should question the integrity of John the Baptist. He saw the Spirit descending on this very One in a visible manner, in a bodily form — like a dove — and resting upon Him. He heard a voice saying, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,' my Son anointed with the Holy Ghost above measure. Men ought to accept this testimony because it is infinitely more convincing than the testimony of the enemies of Christ.

Then let us consider what these people were witnessing. The prophets foretold, 'And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced;' 'He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities;' 'They pierced my hands and my feet.' And while He suffered He showed

a spirit which no impostor could entertain towards his foes, as is evident from the wonderful words He spoke to the Father, 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.' Follow Jesus from Jordan where He was baptised to Calvary where He was crucified, and are you not convinced that Jesus is indeed the Messiah, the Chosen of God? He was crucified, and others were crucified with Him, but there is a real difference between their histories. It was established by the Law that the two malefactors were guilty of death, but it was not so with Jesus of Nazareth. He was to be guilty of no crime: Pilate said of Him, 'I find no fault in him,' and yet this is the One Who is led to the slaughter in response to the demands made by the High Priests. These High Priests were the representatives of the Ceremonial Law, the very essence of which was that the innocent should suffer and the guilty be set free. Barabbas, the thief and murderer, was set free, but the innocent Jesus was condemned to death. By this also we feel convinced in our minds that He was and is the Messiah, the Chosen of God.

Then there is the superscription written over Him in three languages — Greek, Latin and Hebrew — and it was written by the supreme judge, Pilate, who would on no account change it. The chief priests said to him, 'Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews.' But Pilate would not accept that and said, 'What I have written. I have written.' A testimony for all time to Him whose star had appeared in the east.

Then we have further proof, namely the evidence of one of the thieves. There was a man who blasphemed, who was an enemy to himself, to his fellows and to God. Yet we see him so filled with a sense of his own need of salvation and of the Mediatorial glory of Jesus that he says, even in the very midst of his sufferings, 'Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.' Then, what of the answer? 'Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.'

Moreover, there is the evidence of nature. When the laws of nature record their testimony and bear witness to His Glory, we would do well to pay attention to them. We are told there was a darkness over all the earth from the sixth until the ninth hour, which was about mid-day. Now it is established that the earth revolves round the sun, and that one second's delay would have catastrophic results. But we read in God's Word, 'The earth was still with fear,' as though it refused to move because of what was being done. Yet the universe was not destroyed, though there was a terrifying rending of the rocks, an earthquake, and the veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom. This awe-inspiring

phenomenon was the earth testifying to God's Glory that Jesus was the One Who was anointed by God, because He was His Chosen.

We have also the evidence of His Own life. He is the one Whose words are worth listening to, although for three hours He was more or less silent. Who can understand what He suffered in that time? The earth was in darkness, the whole universe stood in awe of what God was about to do for the benefit of the whole Church. Then, Christ is to speak; what does He say? 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Yet these words, because they were an expression of the suffering of One giving His soul a ransom for many, instead of weakening the evidence only strengthen it. At that time there was the fulfilment of these words, 'Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow.'

We have also what He said in these words, 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit,' Who could do that in such agony and such pain if His soul were not filled with strong consolation and an assurance that He was in truth the Son of God?

Then there is evidence from the temple. The High Priest did not enter into the Most Holy Place until the sacrifice was offered and God opened the way for him. Then he entered into the Most Holy Place with the blood of the sacrifice. But here we have the hand of God opening the veil from top to bottom, exposing the Most Holy Place to all by reason of the accepted sacrifice, the Lord Jesus Christ.

If this people had consulted the Word of God, would they not be afraid to suggest that He was not the Christ, the Chosen of God?

There is also the testimony of the centurion, 'Certainly this was a righteous man.' He based his conviction on what and how Christ cried while on the Cross. When he heard him cry with a strong crying to His God, with such a voice that the rocks rent, he was convinced. This man with such strong cries was in the throes of death. If He were an ordinary man, He would be too weak to cry, but Christ was coming, yea, had come to the moment when the Devil was being put under His feet, when the head of the serpent was being bruised under His heel, when the new and living way was being opened for His people to Heaven when their days and years are ended.

We ought to consider His titles. If we have proved that Jesus is the Messiah, then He is God manifest in the flesh. When you consider what is written about the Messiah, about Christ, consider also the promises which have been made to Him:

‘Ask of me, and for heritage
the heathen I’ll make thine;
And, for possession, I to thee
will give earth’s utmost line.’

and

‘The LORD did say unto my Lord,
Sit thou at my right hand,
Until I make thy foes a stool,
whereon thy feet may stand.’

‘For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.’ Was not all the universe promised to the Messiah? This is the One Who is mighty to save. ‘The pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand,’ and He shall declare God’s glory to both Jews and Gentiles. He was the Messiah, not a mere man. He did not come to restore David’s throne in its original form, but He was ‘the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.’ ‘The Lord . . . shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant.’

Now, are we satisfied that what we have considered was fulfilled in the person, life, death, resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus, that He was the Christ, the Chosen of God? I am: I search the Scriptures, and the more I study them, the more I am convinced that here I have the Messiah Who was promised through Isaiah. ‘He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.’ He was promised as the great substitute, the Messenger of the Covenant, the King of Sion. Consider what Paul says in the Epistle to the Hebrews, ‘God, who in sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things.’ And again, ‘To which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?’ He gave this only to Christ, to His own Chosen One. Christ had this promise given to Him and the Father fulfilled it to Him. We dare not question Christ’s right to these titles.

Read the Revelation of John. Who was spoken of in these words? ‘. . . one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

‘His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;

‘And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

'And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.'

Who was He but Jesus? No angel or prophet, but Jesus Who said, '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.'

Christ is chosen as Saviour in the very Trinity of the Divine Persons. The Holy Ghost was to apply and the Father was to give, but only the Son was chosen for the great work of redeeming His people with His own blood. 'I have made a covenant with my chosen.' This people were drawing attention to the Chosen of God to refute His claim, but it is our privilege to refute the implied charge that He was an impostor.

3. *This people's confession, 'He saved others.'* Although the words were not intended by them to be true, they were true. Verily, these are true words, 'He saved others.' They could not refrain from saying that. '... if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.' He was treated by His enemies as the offscouring of all things, treated with contempt, was hated by men possessed by Satan, was crucified, and yet in the very midst of it all, you hear from the lips of His enemies the confession, 'He saved others.' You would agree with them and perhaps thank them for what they had said. There were none of His own present — His disciples had fled, Peter had denied Him and fled, but here these people, who were quite secured and settled in their sins said, 'He saved others.' The stones spoke.

These words direct the attention of the Church down through the ages to Galilee, to Nazareth, to Jerusalem, to the land of the Gadarenes, where this same Jesus saved others from illness and disease, but more, He also saved others from their sins. The 'others' spoken of will include the whole Church of God in Heaven and in earth, for 'there is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.'

'He saved others.' This also directs the attention of the Church to the life of our Lord, and to the glorious doctrine, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.' All the saints are and will be in Heaven in virtue of His having gone as the fore-runner and being now the Intercessor within the veil. Abraham waited for this day and saw it and was glad. The saints, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, should they hear the words, 'He saved others,' would say, 'How true.' They would wish to say, 'He saved others.' God compelled Christ's enemies to make this good confession at Calvary, for His disciples had fled. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob would say, 'How true, He saved others,' and, my friend, do

you not venture to say it yourself as you are about to commemorate His death, 'How true, He saved me.'?

There is also their request, '*Let him save himself.*' We are told elsewhere that they said more than that — 'He cannot save himself.' That was true, but our reason for agreeing is altogether different from their reason for saying it. They thought that He could not save Himself because He was an impostor, because He was suffering in weakness, because He was forsaken by His God. We know that He could not save Himself because of a Covenant obligation.

If that challenge had been to His Church, she could have reminded Satan, 'This is the day of the Lord GOD of Hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries.'

But He did not save Himself. Why? Because He was bound by a Covenant obligation. He was not free to give a demonstration and proof of His power by coming down from the Cross. No, the terms of the Covenant were that He should suffer, 'the just in the room of the unjust,' and that He should be made 'to be sin for us, who knew no sin.' Therefore the Son of God was nailed to the Cross, bearing the sins of His people.

Ah, He dare not save Himself. He was in the very act of saving you, in the very act of saving me, for we could not save ourselves.

The terms of the Covenant were such that He must pour out His soul unto death and be numbered with the transgressors.

Notice also, His body was left, nailed on the Cross, without the soul in it. Friend, He did not save Himself, He did not spare Himself. Why? In order that we may live and inherit eternal life. This verily is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth.

Life that shall never End

by Rev. D. Beaton

Life is one of God's most wonderful gifts. Without its possession the wonders of God's creation cannot be realised. It is a gift which God alone can give. No creature, however high in the scale of being, has ever been able to give life. A creature can destroy that which it could never give, and which it can never restore; but it is God's great prerogative to give that which had not been and to restore that which had been taken away. Man in his journey through time is brought face to face with two tremendous facts in human experience — life and death. We are so familiar with the terms that we have deluded ourselves with the belief that we understand fully what they mean. Scripture throws a flood of

light on the dark mystery of death; but how little after all do we understand what it means. It is clear from the teachings of Scripture that it is not cessation of being, for once we have come into being we shall exist as long as God Himself exists. Neither does death mean a cessation of activities, for we shall be active in the world to come, either doing the will of God perfectly in Heaven, or serving the devil in hell. Death may be said to be the transference from one sphere to another, as in natural death, from this world to the world to come. But in this transference, while there is activity in the new sphere, all activity in the former sphere has ceased. Hence death is recognised as the end of man's work in this world. Now this is what took place when man died spiritually. He passed out of the kingdom of God into Satan's kingdom, his activity in God's kingdom ceased, and ceased for ever, as far as his own power was concerned; but there was no cessation of activity in the new sphere, for though dead in trespasses and sins, yet men "*walked* according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Ephes. 2: 2). And as no power in heaven or earth has ever been able to bring back the dead to this world but God alone, so no power but God's can bring back the spiritually dead from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of God. We catch a glimpse of the awful mystery of death in its power to keep that which it obtained. And were it not that there is a stronger than death, "life that shall never end" could never have been. But that is only part of death's power — if we have ever experienced the grief and sorrow that is caused through breaking up the tenderest and most intimate relationships of life, we have a ray of light shed on its awful power to separate. It separates husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters, soul and body. Now this is a separation that man cannot bring to an end. But when we turn away from natural death to view it spiritually, this aspect of death has an added solemnity, and ought to fill us with feelings of the deepest apprehension, when we remember that as the wages of sin it separated us for ever, as far as our own power was concerned, from Him with whom is the fountain of life. And were it not for the bright and cheering hope that is held out to the followers of the Lamb, of a life that shall never end, and which is brought to light in the Gospel, the whole human race might fold its hands in despair as it faced the future enveloped in this dark mystery. The Lord of glory came into the world to destroy the works of the Devil, who had the power of death, and herein is the wonderful wisdom of God in the Cross revealed that it was through death, the death of God's Son, that the gift of life which

shall never end came to the Church of the living God. That death was something more to the Saviour than it is to the great bulk of mankind, is made plain in many passages of the Gospels, and also in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where we read: "Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared" (Hebs. v.7). Among the priceless blessings He came to bestow, He mentions everlasting life. He came to give life, and to give it more abundantly. This life was to be obtained not by any good that was in the sinner, but by the infinite merits of the sacrifice of the Great High Priest who brought His people nigh to Him, with whom is the fountain of life. Out of this infinite fulness of the life that was in their Redeemer have they all received. The Lord made no promise to save His people from the experience of natural death, nor from its power to separate soul and body; but He has made it very clear that the separation between God and all those who believe in His name is for ever at an end — they have passed from death to life, and the glorious hope is held out to all His ransomed that the separation between soul and body is not final and complete, but only temporary: for His work was not simply to redeem a part of man, but man as God created him, soul and body. Now this wonderful life which is brought to light in the Gospel is much more than never-ending existence; death may reign supreme and yet there may be no cessation of being, as we have seen; the wicked shall exist for ever, but they shall not enjoy everlasting life. For the realisation of this blessing there must be union to Him, who is the Resurrection and the Life, and this union is effected by His Spirit. The hope of eternal life, which is a good hope through grace, is set before us in the Gospel. This hope is no mere sentimental fancy with no other foundation than this, that somehow or other we will find ourselves in Heaven at last, but it is a hope resting on the finished work of Him who could say after death had done its worst — "Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am alive for ever more, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Rev. 1: 18). With such a hope and such a promise, when the final parting with time comes, God's people may well lift up their heads as they approach the swellings of Jordan with the calm assurance that all is well. It is with no feelings of dismay that they need survey the future and the meeting at the judgement seat if so be that they have passed from death to life.

The Scripture speaks of the path of life that leads into the presence of God, where there is fulness of joy, and to His right hand, where there are

pleasures for evermore. Such is the hope that is set before God's people, and if Moses could say — "We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you; come thou with us and we will do thee good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel (Num. 10: 29), with how much a fuller meaning may the believer say the same? But between them and the full realisation of that hope there flows the river of death. Bunyan tells what feelings of dismay overcame Christian as he was passing through the river. He did not feel the ground so quickly beneath his feet as he had anticipated, for the waters were very deep, but Hopeful encouraged him:— "Be of good cheer, brother; I feel the bottom, and it is good." But Christian could only reply — "Ah, my friend, the sorrow of death hath compassed me about; I shall not see the land that flows with milk and honey." But after being in a muse a while, he cried out — "Oh! I see Him again, and He tells me, When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee" (Is. 43: 2). After this he found ground to stand on, and "the rest of the river was shallow; thus they got over."

But though the river must be crossed and its waters may be deeper and chillier than ever we dreamt of, yet the future for God's people is bright with a promise that all the darkness of death cannot dim. In his wonderful message to the Corinthian believers, the Apostle, speaking of the final triumph of their Lord over all His enemies, says:— "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Then he tells them when this is to take place, viz. — "When this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality; then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory" (I. Cor. 15: 54). On the morning of the Resurrection what a fulness of meaning will be in the words — "O Death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?" when they will be uttered by a countless number, for whom the separation and bitterness and sorrow of death are for ever past. And with a sweeter music than ever Israel sang its sweet song, and on another hill with more refreshing dews than ever fell on Hermon's hill, they shall sing:—

For there the blessing God commands
Life that shall never end.

Cleaving to Christ. — All I want is a frame of mind best suited to Thy glory. And what is that? Truly that when I have nothing, feel nothing, can do nothing, am worse than nothing, that then, even then, I may be

rich in Thee amidst all my own bankruptcy? This, dear Lord, is what I covet, and if Thou withholdest all frames which might melt or warm or rejoice my own feelings, yet if my soul still hangs on Thee not withstanding all, as the vessel upon the nail, my God and Jesus will be my Rock that feels nothing of the ebbings and flowings of the sea around, whatever be the tide of my fluctuating affections. — *Dr Hawker.*

Arminianism

What then is Arminianism? As Arminius himself first puts it in 1604, it sounds very innocent. "God, being a righteous judge and kind father," he says, "had from the beginning, made a distinction between the individuals of a fallen race, according to which He would remit the sins of those who should give them up, and put their trust in Christ, and would bestow on them eternal life; also that it is agreeable to God, that all men be converted, and, having come to the knowledge of the truth, remain therein, but He compels no one."

This sounds plausible and innocent until you put beside it the clear statement of fact. God, from eternity, from a fallen, lost race, hath chosen some to salvation. From this it comes about that these are drawn to faith and piety, and by God's grace preserved. The remainder of the human race are left in their original and natural condition of depravity — go on to sin and die in condemnation.

Take the Arminian statement and pull it to pieces. It is based on Free Will and no Fall. Man can determine himself either way as he likes. God foreseeing this, decrees that those who choose holiness shall be saved, and that those who do not shall be lost. In other words, God has nothing to do with salvation, except to register human decisions as they occur. He does not know who, or not, will be saved, but waits on the after event for information, and to gather up whatever control of the creature He may.

Calvinism denies this statement at its every point. Man is fallen. A sunken creature, he is still sinking by his own weight. His tendency is down. He is a stone which has dropped from a steeple, and cannot lift itself up. He is water running down hill, which cannot flow back.

He cannot therefore, determine himself in the upward direction toward God, but is dead to holiness and dead in sin. God, therefore, must come in to quicken. "You hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." How many God will quicken, awaken and draw to Himself, God must determine. The choice is His. He must choose. Yea, He has chosen already, and from eternity foreknows His people whom He has ordained.

Arminianism is the doctrine of Satan and makes man a god. Calvinism is the doctrine of Christ, and makes man the poor and needy, helpless, undeserving debtor of unmerited Free Grace.

Calvinism, in experience, is based on new birth. This is an argument which does not weigh with the Arminian, because he has no new birth.

If you try to describe a sapodillo to one who never tasted, never saw the fruit, you leave no impression. By and by some one else comes along and denies that sapodillos are sweet, or that there is such a fruit. Your man does not know. He does not care. He cannot. He has no interest. But here is another. He comes from the West Indies. He has eaten sapodillos all his life — has seen them grow. You mention sapodillos, and this Cuban cries, "I know that fruit. It is sweet like honey and round and breaks into three segments — a black seed in each segment. Oh I have eaten them 10,000 times." If any one denies these things he will contend it.

Our arguments from the new birth seem light and empty to a natural man. He runs right back to choices. "I choose," or "did not choose." "I," "I," his religion is "I." But here is another who has had another experience. He chose and chose, and still remained what he was. He resolved and resolved and broke down. He turned over a new leaf, and lo! it was the old leaf blotted. Then God came in and touched on his life. Something moved him, and he hardly knew what, and infused a new spirit within him. And now, this second man cries, "God!" "God!" His religion is interposition. God came in and God made me willing. God chose: "Salvation is of the Lord." This thing is to the Jew a stumbling block — to the Greek foolishness. It must be. These men — the Jew, the ritualist, the Greek, the intellectual thinker — never experienced it. They never got beyond opinions, a sentiment, endeavours, ceremonies of the church — a few resolutions and tears.

What do they know of a mystery — an inward revelation of Christ — a true revolution of nature? How can they ascribe all the glory to God. It is absurd even to think it.

The Arminian denies that God might justly pass by our guilty lost race, as He did pass by angels. He denies that in fact, God passes by any. He holds that the same chance is given to all — the same appliances — the same gracious assistance and the same power. If not, he cries "Unfair!" Whoever wills then, originates, over and above these things common to all, his own act. He distinguishes himself, and makes himself to differ. He saves his own self and owes to God nothing which God did not owe him before.

“God, if He let the race fall, was bound,” says the Arminian, to “provide a Saviour for the fallen. He was also bound to give an equal grace to all, that all may get hold of that Saviour. If all have an equal grace, then those who use it, make themselves to differ.” That flatly contradicts St Paul,* reverses the whole Bible, and to His face withstands Almighty God. The other system, the system which opposes Arminius, holds that God — regarding a fallen, guilty, lost, sinful race — a race deserving to die, hath mercy on whom He Himself will have mercy. All are hell deserving, but He rescues a multitude whom no man can number by the distinguishing grace of the Holy Spirit and by the blood of His beloved Son.

For this Gospel system there are these things to say: 1st. It bows to God and submits to His sovereignty. “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” 2nd. While not free from difficulties to our carnal, finite reason, it covers the facts of the case, as the other does not. We feel that we are fallen. We feel we are helpless. We feel we cannot save ourselves nor help to do it, and that we need to be saved. 3rd. The Bible system turns on faith, not choices, efforts which are works. It hinges salvation on faith. “I, Martin Luther an unworthy preacher of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, thus profess and believe that this article: That faith alone without works can justify before God shall never be overthrown, neither by the Emperor, nor by the Turk, nor by the Tartar, nor by the Persian nor by the Pope with all his cardinals, bishops, sacrificers, monks, nuns, kings, princes, powers of this world, nor yet by all the devils in hell. This article shall stand fast whether they will or no. This is the true Gospel. Jesus Christ redeemed us from our sins and He only. This most firm and certain truth is the voice of Scripture, though the world and all the devils rage and roar. If Christ alone takes away our sins, we cannot do it by our works; and as it is impossible to embrace Christ but by faith, so He cannot be embraced by works. Faith, then, must embrace Christ, before works can follow, and it must embrace Him and hold Him alone, without any consideration whatever of works. This, this only is the Gospel. In it will I abide. Amen and Amen!” 4th. If faith and faith alone embrace Christ, then this faith, going out into the invisible, to embrace One whom I have never seen with my eyes, and to cast on Him my whole destiny is a God-given faith — a special distinguishing faith, not common to all — not possible to all. “The faith of God’s

* I. Cor. 4: 7 — “For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?”

elect." 5th. Every man who has this kind of faith knows where it comes from and recognises it as something immortal — part of his new nature which cannot be lost.

To recapitulate. If I am an Arminian I must deny Predestination and I must hold: 1st. That our race possesses a free will to do that which is good. 2nd. That justification comes by a meritorious faith — i.e., by a faith of my own, and which merits. 3rd. That if the faith is my own and from me, I may lose it, and there is no certain assurance.

If I am a Calvinist I assert, on the other hand, Predestination — then: 1st. Man fallen has no free will to do what is pleasing to God. 2nd. Justification is by faith, which is "the gift of God." 3rd. "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance" on God's part — or my part. Once a believer always a believer. "My sheep shall never perish."

The battle, then, is seen to range around the first point. "Down with predestination!" is the cry of all the enemies of Evangelical truth. "Get that doctrine out and we will agree." "Yes," is our answer, "Get that out and you get all out." But why contend it? Because we are set of God to contend it. . . . Because the battle of truth is the battle of life. Better die than lie, or run from a lie because we fear to face it.

"We ought to set ourselves," says Calvin in his sermon on Hymenaeus and Philetus, "We ought to set ourselves against perversions of the truth and to rebuke them sharply. For if we wink at them and let them pass, we give them our support. And then we may boast as we please about being Christians, but there are more devils among us than Christians if we countenance falsehood." "Therefore," goes on the Reformer, "therefore, let us look well to the doctrine entrusted to us, and if we see wicked persons trying to infect the Church of God, to darken the doctrine or to destroy it, let us endeavour to bring their works to light that every one may behold them, and thereby be enabled to shun them. If we attend not to these things we are traitors to God and have no zeal for His honour, nor for the salvation of His Church. We must be the out-and-out enemies of wickedness, if we will serve God. It is not enough for us to refrain ourselves from wrong and sin, but we must condemn these as much as possible that they may not gain influence or get the upper hand."

These trumpet tones of Calvin tell us how men spoke and felt to whom God's truth was dear, in times that tried men's souls. My brother, do men, of this day, class thee along with the Puritans? Then

"Bear the honour well, right noble is
Thine ancestry; and if thro' following Him,

Who bore thy sin, the world should frown,
 Lift up thy head — fear not,
 For He who made thee His,
 Will give thee courage, honour, influence,
 And that true victory which ever crowns
 His free-born sons.”

— From F.P. Mag Vol 31.

The New Jerusalem

(Said to be composed by David Dickson)

I.

O Mother dear, Jerusalem,
 When shall I come to thee?
 When shall my sorrow have an end,
 Thy joys when shall I see?
 O happy harbour of God's saints!
 O sweet and pleasant soil!
 In thee no sorrow may be found,
 No grief, no care, no toil!

Gal. 4: 26

Ps. 27: 4

Is. 30: 19

II.

In thee no sickness is at all,
 No hurt, nor any sore;
 There is no death, nor ugly sight,
 But life for evermore.
 No dimmish clouds o'er shadow thee,
 No dull nor darksome night;
 But every soul shines as the sun,
 For God Himself gives light.

Is. 32: 24

Luke 18: 30

Is. 60: 19,20

III.

There lust nor lucre cannot dwell,
 There envy bears no sway;
 There is no hunger, thirst, nor heat
 But pleasure every way.
 Jerusalem!, Jerusalem!
 Would God I were in thee!
 O that my sorrows had an end,
 Thy joys that I might see!

Rev. 7: 16

Ps. 25: 17

IV.

No pains, no pangs, no grieving grief, Is. 65: 19
 No woeful night is there;
 No sigh, no sob, no cry is heard, Is. 35: 10
 No well-away, no fear.
 Jerusalem the city is
 Of God our King alone;
 The Lamb of God, the light thereof, Rev. 21: 23
 Sits there upon His throne;

V.

Ah, God, that I Jerusalem
 With speed may go behold Phil. 1: 23
 For why? the pleasures there abound,
 With tongue cannot be told.
 Thy turrets and thy pinnacles
 With carbuncles do shine;
 With jasper, pearl, and chrysolite,
 Surpassing pure and fine; Rev. 21: 19,20

VI.

Thy houses are of ivory,
 Thy windows crystal clear,
 Thy streets are laid with beaten gold,
 Where angels do appear; Rev. 21: 18
 Thy walls are made of precious stones, Rev. 21: 16
 Thy bulwarks diamonds square,
 Thy gates are made of orient pearl, Rev. 21: 21
 O God! if I were there.

VII.

Within thy gates no thing can come Rev. 21: 27
 That is not passing clean;
 No spider's web, no dirt, no dust,
 No filth may there be seen.
 Jehovah, Lord, now come away, Rev. 22: 20
 And end my grief and plaints;
 Take me to thy Jerusalem,
 And place me with thy saints; Matt. 25: 33,34

VIII.

Who there are crowned with glory great,
And see God face to face, 1 Cor. 13: 12
They triumph still, and aye rejoice,
Most happy is their case. Matt. 5: 8
But we that are in banishment,
Continually do moan;
We sigh, we mourn, we sob, we weep,
Perpetually we groan. 2 Cor. 5: 4

IX.

Our sweetness mixed is with gall, Rom. 7: 23
Our pleasure is but pain,
Our joys not worth the looking on,
Our sorrows aye remain.
But there they live in such delight, John 16: 24
Such pleasure and such play;
That unto them a thousand years
Seem but as yesterday.

X.

O my sweet home, Jerusalem!
Thy joys when shall I see;
Thy King sitting upon His throne, Is. 33: 17
And thy felicity.
Thy vineyards and thy orchards, S. of S. 5: 1
So wonderful and fair;
And furnished with trees and fruit,
Most beautiful and rare. Rev. 22: 14

XI.

Thy gardens and thy goodly walks S. of S. 4: 15
Continually are green;
There grow such sweet and pleasant flowers
As nowhere else are seen;
There cinnamon and sugar grows,
There nard and balm abound;
No tongue can tell, no heart can think,
The pleasures there abound.

XII.

There nectar and ambrosie spring,
There musk and civet sweet;
There many a fine and dainty drug
Are trod down under feet.

Rev. 2: 17

Quite thro' the streets with pleasant sound
The flood of life doth flow;
Upon whose banks on every side,
The trees of life do grow.

Ps. 46: 4

Rev. 22: 1,2

XIII.

There trees each month do yield their fruit,
For evermore they spring;
And all the nations of the world
To thee their honours bring.
Jerusalem, God's dwelling-place,
Full sore long I to see;
O that my sorrows had an end,
That I might dwell in thee!

Rev. 22: 24

Rev. 21: 24

Ps. 4: 6

XIV.

There David stands with harp in hand,
As Master of the Quier;
A thousand times that man were blest
That might his music hear.
There Mary sings Magnificant,
With tunes surpassing sweet;
And all the Virgins bear their part,
Singing about her feet.

Ps. 57: 8

Luke 1: 40

XV.

"TE DEUM" doth Saint Ambrose sing,
Saint Austin doth the like;
Old Simeon and Zacharie,
Have not their songs to seek.
There Magdalene hath left her moan,
And cheerfully doth sing
With all blest saints; whose harmony
Thro' every street doth ring.

Luke 1: 68

Luke 2: 29

Rev. 14: 2

XVI.

Jerusalem!, Jerusalem!

Thy joys fain would I see;
Come quickly Lord, and end my grief,
And take me home to thee.

O print thy name in my forehead,

Rev. 22: 4

And take me hence away,
That I may dwell with thee in bliss,
And sing thy praises aye.

Ps. 145: 2

Instrumental Music in Public Worship

by Rev. Dr. John Kennedy, Dingwall

(Continued from page 54)

II. What says the New Testament Scripture on the subject of instrumental music? 1. Is there anything there which seems to be in favour of it? 2. Or is there any principle there laid down with which it would be utterly inconsistent, or according to which it may be regarded as legitimate? 3. And what instruction may be derived from all these which is relevant to the subject?

There have been a few adventurous enough to affirm that there are some things in the New Testament Scripture that seem to favour the introduction of instrumental music. And the two somethings are:— (1.) That there is a word used to describe the exercise of praise which means to play on a musical instrument! The word referred to occurs in Eph. 5: 19, and is rendered "making melody," and that this is a legitimate translation is evident, for if the literal rendering were adopted, we would have to read the passage thus — playing on an instrument "in your heart to the Lord." That sane men should use an argument of this kind is sufficient proof of the desperateness of the cause which they advocate — if the men are sane who have recourse to a thing like this, that must be more than can be said of what they desire to establish (2) The second something is, that, in the Apocalypse, some of the inhabitants of heaven are described as "harpers harping with their harps." If I had not indubitable proof of the fact, I could not believe that any minister of any Church in Christendom could use this as an argument for the use of instrumental music in the Church on earth. But so it is; and what more can be needed to show that there can be nothing found in the New Testament to justify the insane clamour for organs.

The truth is that these passages teach this, and only this — that in the New Testament Church on earth, there should be a service of praise, hav-

ing in it the spiritual import of the symbolical service of the temple, and that this spirituality of praise shall be perfectly realized in heaven.

2. Is there any principle there laid down with which the use of instrumental music would be utterly inconsistent, or according to which it may be regarded as legitimate? It is to me utterly inconceivable how any one can pretend to find any general principle enunciated, or implied, in New Testament Scripture, which admits of the introduction of instrumental music. Some one, in trying to find an argument in favour of this innovation, after resolving to do what he could to secure its adoption, laid down the principle as one that could admit of no dispute regarding its validity, that as the Lord should be served in the best possible way, the use of aught that tended to make the musical performance in the service of praise more perfect, was perfectly legitimate. But this principle was found among the cobwebs of his own brain, and not in the record of the New Testament. If the service of praise were an altogether heartless and graceless thing, if it consisted entirely in what reached the ears of men, one could quite understand that there was an approach to common sense in the statement and application of such a principle. But if the service of praise be rendered to God, and rendered from grace in the heart, then it is manifest that all that tends to distract attention from the state of the heart, and to interfere with the aim of pleasing God, is a hindrance rather than a help. Will any one say that it is to perfect or increase his ability to render service that would be acceptable to God, he seeks the help of an organ, or that he can accept "The kist of whistles" as an answer to his cry for help to praise the Lord? And yet this is the one general principle which can be stated as bearing favourably on the use of organs. But where is there one syllable in New Testament Scripture of direction to take help from whistles and bellows in the worship of God, or any principle stated according to which this would be legitimate.

But there is a principle, laid down in the New Testament Scripture, with which the use of instrumental music in the worship of God is altogether inconsistent — the spirituality of the New Testament dispensation. The whole Old Testament ritual is declared to consist of "*carnal* ordinances imposed on them" of old, "until the time of reformation." In its spirituality the New Testament form of worship must present a contrast. Indeed, it is in the mode of worship the great revolution was to be effected. All that merely constituted shadow was to pass away, because He who was the "truth and the life" had come, and had finished the work given Him to do. But all was shadow that was symbolic or typical in the former mode of worship, and was therefore utterly done away in

Christ. Nothing but the spiritual import of the temple service was to remain; the whole form or mode of it passed utterly away. Can it be disputed that this was the result of the death of Christ, and can there, without reproach being cast on Him, and exception being taken to the work which He finished, be a retention or restoration of aught of what it was His design to displace, by His glorious self, and by the ministration of the Spirit, and by worship "in spirit and in truth?"

3. What instruction may be derived from all that is relevant to the subject in the New Testament Scripture?

Of course it is in New Testament Scripture we must find the directory for New Testament worship. The worship regarding which minute instructions were given in Old Testament Scripture, was that of the temple, which was throughout symbolic or typical, and which was therefore entirely displaced. For the new worship, with its spiritual simplicity, we must therefore have a new directory. This can only be given us in the inspired record. It is there, and only there, that there is any authoritative guidance in worship. The Lord is not less careful now than of old, as to how his service is to be performed. True, we may not expect the same prominence, and extent, and minuteness of instruction regarding the mode of conducting service as of old. In those days the teaching was done by the service, and was addressed to the eye rather than to the ear. The typical character of the worship involved this, and therefore there must be the most minute directions given as to how it is to be conducted. Hence the large portion of the Old Testament Scripture covered with the rules of the service, as well as with the specification of the structure in which the service was to be performed. All this was the preaching of the gospel to the men of old, and contained a symbolic representation of the spiritual attainments and exercise of the saints. They were taught through the eye how alone a sinner can be justified, and shown how the justified must be the saints of God. A ritual with so ample and gracious a design, must be most minutely indicated. It represented the God of Israel and His Lamb; it told how he could be the God of salvation, it instructed His people as to how they could be justified, and it directed them how, as saints, they should walk in the fear of the Lord. Let us not, therefore, approach to think that there is too much in the Old Testament regarding the way in which tabernacle or temple service was to be conducted. Under the New Testament dispensation there is to be no preaching in the mode of conducting worship. The teaching is all done *by the word*. Epistles after gospels, one gospel after another, and one epistle after another, we have for the instruction of the Church, but in these we have,

amidst much spiritual doctrine, sufficient direction as to the simple worship of New Testament times.

As to the service of praise, we are taught with sufficient distinctness, and in repeated declarations, that it was to be *singing*. Again and again this is plainly indicated. This is the simple form of expressing praise in the New Testament Church, according to New Testament Scripture. Regarding this there need be no dubiety — “he may run that readeth” this. What words can be more explicit than these — “By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise continually, *that is*, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name?” If any man asks the question, What is the sacrifice of praise in New Testament times? the plain answer of inspired Scripture is, “the fruit of our lips.” And this really settles the whole question. The Lord hath spoken, and how distinctly, and this should be enough to every Christian man and to every Christian Church.

This plain directory is in exact accordance with the example of the Lord, who, by His Spirit, gave it to His Church. We know that He by His presence countenanced, and by His voice took part in a service of praise. Though His fellowship in the song is matter of inference, His presence, while His disciples sung, is directly stated. Such is the example of our Lord, confirming His instruction, and, putting both together, surely we have in these enough to assure us that the practice of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland for three centuries, in conducting the service of praise, was well founded, and cannot be abandoned without our turning aside from both the precept and example of Him whom we profess to be our King.

With the example of their Master accorded the practice of the Apostles. This no one can deny. If they were sent “two and two,” one of them was not appointed to be a musical performer. They had, in the word of God, the gift of speech, the grace of God in their hearts, and their Master’s gracious presence, and water, bread, and wine — all that was required in any place, and at any time, for performing the whole work of the ministry to which they were appointed.

And with the example of Christ and with the practice of His apostles accorded the mode in which the service of praise was conducted in the early Christian Church. There were among the Jewish converts some who wished to continue the rite of circumcision and to “observe days, and months, and times, and years,” but no one among them, so far as we know, proposed either the continuance of sacrifice or of instrumental music. Both these had been so connected, and had been carried on so exclusively by the officials of the Jewish Church, that the idea of continu-

ing either, or of resuscitating the one without the other, seems never to have been entertained.

It required a course of decline extending over centuries to produce the corruption out of which the desire for instrumental music could spring up in the Church. It arose like a fungus, which is propagated out of decay. It was the influence of the social festival, and of the concert, and of the theatre, introduced through unfaithful discipline into the Church, and allowed to spread its blighting chill throughout it, which procured the decay that furnished the soil out of which this carnality in worship sprung. The practice thus introduced, continued till another "time of reformation" came — the reformation from popery. No thoroughly reformed Church adopted the use of instrumental music. Some so-called reformed Churches which retained some of the doctrine and government and ritual of the Roman Church, retained the use of organs, but they did so only because they were but half reformed. Thus was it with the Church of England. How could she, with her bishops and archbishops, and baptismal regeneration and saints' days, and surplices and altars, be without her organs? This was a natural appendage to all that carnal stuff which she carried into her new position. The instruments and the altars must go together, as they did of old.

But no sound of an organ was heard for three centuries in the Reformed Church of Scotland, nor in any other Church in Christendom that deserved that name, till a process of decline had commenced. What would, in the best days of the Church of Scotland, have been thought of the proposal to introduce organs into her places of worship? What would Knox, Henderson, Melville, Guthrie, Rutherford, Gillespie, Dickson, John Love, Andrew Thomson, Thomas Chalmers, William Cunningham, James Buchanan, John Duncan, Robert Candlish, have done, if such a proposal had been mooted in their days? Grant liberty to congregations to have organs, if they so inclined. As soon, said the last of these, and he spoke for all the others, allow the slaying and offering of sacrifices in our Churches. No, it required a very different class of men to make and to countenance such a proposal — men to make it, who desire the aesthetic rather than the spiritual, and men to countenance it who are guided by policy rather than the word of God, who are ambitious of pleasing men that they may lead them, rather than anxious to please God that they may not cease to walk in the light of His face.

I am, &c.,

John Kennedy.

Dingwall, March 31st, 1883.

Obituary

Mrs Lena Graham, Dumbarton

The last request Lena Graham made to me, a few days before she died, was to remember to pray that her desire to be taken to Heaven soon, would be granted. The last audible words she uttered, as far as could be made out, were: "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." For these reasons, it is difficult to mourn over her death, as we would normally mourn over many another, because her desire and longing to go to the "better country" was granted without further discomfort and inconvenience.

Lena was born to Godly parents on the last day of 1935, and was carefully brought up in the fear of the Lord. All her days she led an exemplary life and was loved by everyone whether neighbour, relation, or church acquaintance. Nevertheless, the great change of a "new heart" was still needed. When she appeared before the Kirk-Session in 1981 she acknowledged this necessity and freely confessed that she was prepared to openly acknowledge what the Lord had done for her.

From the time she knew of her terminal disease, Lena had only one wish and that was to be taken to Heaven quickly. She felt greatly the anxiety and concern of her family as she lived the last few months of her life and it was for their sakes, as well as for her own, that she wished for a speedy removal to Glory, if she was not to get better.

One of the remarkable things about her seven months on a death-bed, was the wonderful way in which her assurance was upheld. It has often been the case that many of God's children have lost their assurance for a period of time before their death, but this was not the case with Lena Graham. She did have her moments, all the same, and when asked, she sometimes replied that when lying on her bed Satan would present the most awful thoughts to her mind, and, although she knew that the "Truth" was the only way to attack Satan, she mourned over her poor memory of Scripture. On a death-bed, Satan's chief means of harassment is through the mind, and, when unable to read, a good memory of Scriptural truths can prove invaluable. I must emphasise, however, that Lena never complained of these attacks from Satan, but only mentioned them when asked about them. Indeed, she never complained about anything and it was only when pressed that she opened out about it and one began to realize that she did have her moments of temptation. However, her confidence in Christ was never shaken and whenever the subject of conversation turned to her Lord you heard no more about Satan. She was full of the place she was going to and her eyes would light up when

speaking about Heaven and a smile would come on her face. She looked forward with longing for Heaven.

Visiting Lena was not a burden for anyone. One came out of her room strengthened rather than saddened; encouraged rather than discouraged; and more established in the faith rather than weakened in the Christian race. She refused to be drawn into talking about any discomfort she might be suffering, which mercifully was kept to a minimum, replying that she had everything to be thankful for. When she began to get easily tired, she would ensure that when I called, the first thing attended to was to have worship, so that, if she suddenly weakened in company, it was earthly conversation and worldly business that would be omitted. Sometimes, when visiting with others, she would beckon me to stay behind for a few minutes, when her only enquiry would be about the "Heavenly Jerusalem". With regard to earthly matters her chief concern was the temporal and spiritual provision of her family, and everything that could be arranged in that connection was done and the rest was committed to prayer.

The end came relatively quickly. She had really not been very well all that day but she was her usual bright self and actually sang part of Psalm 116 on her own. Around 5 o'clock she seemed to suddenly weaken and on noticing one of the family becoming upset, she said: "Now, remember, there is to be no mourning over me" and this seemed to strengthen everyone. By 5.30 she went into a coma and could be heard saying "Come Lord Jesus, come quickly" and she never regained consciousness. Several gathered around her bed and although Psalm 23 was sung; two or three prayers offered; and her being told that the Heavenly Bridegroom was coming, it is doubtful if she was aware of anything by then. At first, it was not thought that she would be alive by 8 p.m. but she seemed to rally for a few hours until during the first few minutes of Wednesday, 19 December, 1984 she breathed for the last time.

We cannot but extend our condolences to her aged parents who are still spared in the Lord to reach almost twice her age; to her three sisters of whom she was the youngest; and to assure her husband and two daughters of our continued prayer and sympathy. We would appeal to all who read this obituary that her God can be your God; her people can be your people; and her death can be your death *through Jesus Christ the Lord*.

"Another lily gathered" (Songs of Solomon 6: 2)

G.I.M.

Book Review

Christmas Evans by B. A. Ramsbottom.

This paperback by Pastor B. A. Ramsbottom, editor of the Gospel Standard, tells the story of one of the noted preachers of Wales, Christmas Evans. His labours were evidently abundantly blessed of the Lord, many being converted under his preaching in the different parts of Wales in which he laboured. Specimens are given of the allegorical type of preaching which he sometimes employed and this reveals why he was given the name of the Bunyan of Wales. The extracts from his preaching form a very attractive feature of the paperback and will be appreciated by many who read them. For a short time Christmas Evans became affected with Sandemanianism but, becoming aware that he had lost to a great degree the spirit of prayer and of preaching, he was delivered from it and his life resumed its former usefulness. The Lord was pleased in other days to raise up eminent and useful preachers of the Gospel in Wales and elsewhere. May He be pleased to do so again.

D. B. M.

Notes and Comments

Patient Enduring of Persecution

In many parts of the world those who profess Christianity have to endure much suffering for their faith. This is particularly true in Communist Russia where Christianity has been strongly opposed and those who profess Christ's Name have been fiercely persecuted. It cannot but be of interest to Christians in other countries how believers in Russia have reacted to such persecution and what attitude they have taken up towards their persecutors. The following extract from a letter by Vladimir Khailo, who has been in the special psychiatric institution in Dnepropetroosk since the end of 1980, sent to his children in January 1984 may give the answer to these questions:—

"I have committed you into Christ's hands, my children. He invites us to come to Him to learn meekness and humility from Him, and to find peace, not only for the body, but above all for the soul. The body is passing, but the soul is eternal.

Therefore, dear children, I do not ask you if you have enough to eat and wear. I know that Christ cares for you day and night. If in His mercy

He feeds the birds, will He then forsake you? Can He forsake His declaration that He is the Father of the orphans?

. . . . Let us therefore be filled with love and compassion for our persecutors. Revenge and cursing should flee from us. Instead we should want to pray for them. They would not hold me here for another day longer, if there were no orders from above.

For me, this means that the Lord allows it.

Dear children, be obedient to your mother, and ease her burdens. She has done so much for you — make her happy by your obedience. Be patient and be at peace with one another, and also be at peace in your hearts.”

(The above letter was sent in by a reader of the Magazine).

Proposed Visit to Italy

The Press recently reported that H.R.H. the Prince of Wales and H.R.H. the Princess of Wales are to visit Italy on the invitation of the Italian Government in April (D.V.). Last October they were to visit the Vatican, with perhaps Prince William, but Providence intervened and the visit was cancelled.

We are deeply concerned that the proposed visit to Italy may include a visit to the Woman that sits on the seven hills of Rome, “that rules over the kings of the earth.” Rev. 17: 18. Our Protestant Constitution forbids all communion with the See of Rome.

The “Reformer” said recently that there was a move to unite the Church of England with the Church of Rome. The suggestion has also been made that the Queen should abdicate and that the Coronation Oath and Act of Succession should be abolished. The Lord says: “Them that honour Me, I will honour, but they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed.” When Great Britain honoured God, He caused her to ride on the high places of the earth. Is. 58: 14.

(Rev.) D. J. MacAskill.

Sabbath Horse Racing

In England at present an attempt is under way to try to introduce horse racing on Sabbath. As this is a sport which is very dependent upon gambling for its support the Betting and Gaming Act which prohibits gambling on Sabbath, stands in the way of any change being made. It is to be hoped that any attempt to change this Act will be resisted.

In Scotland matters are no better. Even in the North plans are afoot to

have dog racing on Sabbath. Though opposed by the Churches this took place last year. It is again being opposed this year but with what measure of success does not yet appear.

Church Notes

Minister's Illness

We are sorry to intimate that some of our ministers are indisposed but we are glad to report that Rev. Fraser Tallach who underwent a heart operation some months ago has been able to resume his duties in his charge. Rev. John MacDonald, North Tolsta has lately been in hospital and at present is not able to undertake his ministerial duties. Also, Rev. Angus Mackay, Tarbert, who was able to resume taking services for a period, has had to relinquish these duties at present. We trust that the Lord may be pleased to restore these ministers to a measure of health and strength, if that is His holy will. We would also wish this for Rev. William MacLean, Ness, who, though carrying on his duties as he is able, does not enjoy good health.

Post of Doctor at Mbuma Mission Hospital

The Committee feel concerned that no applications have been received for this important work on the Mission field, and with nursing staff at the hospital since May the work is being considerably curtailed in the absence of a doctor. The whole of the Nkai District with a population of 100,000 is presently without the services of any medical practitioner. In Mbuma itself there are some 22,000 persons so deprived.

Post of Teacher of Bible Knowledge at John Tallach Secondary School

A need continues for a teacher qualified at least to university level in some other subject to take up these important duties at Ingwenya. Enquiries to Rev. A. Murray, F.P. Manse, Lairg, Sutherland, IV27 4EH. Tel: Lairg (0549) 2176.

Youth Conference (1985)

This Conference will be held (D.V) in Edinburgh University Halls of Residence from 12 noon on Tuesday, 9th April, to 2 p.m. on Thursday, 11th April. Applications for places should be made by letter to Rev. N. M. Ross, F.P. Manse, Ullapool, Ross-shire. (For fuller notice, see February Issue of Magazine).

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Skye: At Portree on 9th April at 11 a.m.

Northern: At Dingwall on 23rd April at 2 p.m.

Committee Meetings (D.V.)

The following Committees will meet at Inverness Church:

Tuesday 26th March

10.15 a.m. — 11.00 a.m.	Training of Ministry
11.00 a.m. — 12 noon	Church Magazines
12 noon — 1.00 p.m.	Publications
2.00 p.m. — 3.00 p.m.	Welfare of Youth
2.00 p.m. — 4.30 p.m.	Finance
3.00 p.m. — 4.00 p.m.	Sabbath Observance
4.30 p.m. — 5.30 p.m.	Dominions and Overseas Religion and Morals
7.00 p.m. — 9.00 p.m.	Jewish and Foreign Missions

Material for the Magazine

The editor would be grateful for papers delivered at Church Conferences for insertion in the Magazine and also for other suitable material such as sermons and other articles.

Notice to Conveners/Clerks of Standing Committees

The Conveners/Clerks of all Standing Committees should note that all Committee Reports must be in the hands of the Clerk of Synod by 31st March, 1985 for printing purposes (D.V.). These reports should contain information of the Work of the Committees during the year. Recommendations and proposals should be sent up as separate items for the Synod Agenda.

(Rev.) Donald MacLean,
Clerk of Synod.

Notice Re Synod Agenda

Clerk 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 4th April 1985 (D.V.).

(Rev.) Donald MacLean,
Clerk of Synod.

Acknowledgment of Donations

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

Sustentation Fund: Alex. MacLeod, Unapool, £15.

Jewish and Foreign Mission Fund: Friend, Stornoway, £25 for famine relief in Zimbabwe; R. Annand and Family, \$150; Netherlands Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan, \$50; D. G. Moore, East Sussex, £12; Alex. MacLeod, Unapool, £5.

Dominions and Overseas Fund: Winnipeg Friend, \$300 for Italian Mission.

Home of Rest Fund: Anon., £65.

Trinitarian Bible Society: Bracadale Cong., £70; Ness Cong., £214.80; Staffin Congregation, £91.80.

Wellington Church Building Fund: Anon., Wick, £40; Anon., Edinburgh, £5; Anon., Isle of Lewis, £10; Anon., Stornoway postmark, £60; Anon., Broadford plate, £20; C. MacKenzie, £20.

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

Dornoch/Rogart: From a Friend, £10 for Car Expenses, per Rev. A. M.

Dingwall: A little to help the Cause, £10, Inverness postmark.

Dumbarton: Anon., £20 (in plate); Anon., £15, both for Congr. Funds.

Flashadder: Envelope in plate (2 donations), £40; Friend of the Cause, £20, per D. McKay, both for Sust. Fund; Envelope in plate, £15, for Home Mission Fund; Mrs MacD., Lochinver, £20, for door collections.

Fort William: Envelope in plate, £2; Envelope in plate, £8; Mrs S., £5, per M.I.M.; A. MacG., £10; Friend, Caol, £10; Wellwisher, Dingwall, £6, last three per Rev. J. A. MacDonald and all for Sust. Fund.

Greenock: A Friend, Skye, £40, where most needed, per Rev. L. MacLeod; Anon., £100, in church door coll.; Anon., £17, for Sust. Fund, per Mrs. L. MacLeod.

Lairg: Anon., £20 for Church Funds, per D. M.

Lochbroom: Envelope in Coll. plate, £5; In appreciation of Hearing Aid System, £10; From a Friend, £10, per Rev. N. M. R.

London: Miss K. A. MacD., £50, in loving memory of the late Rev. J. P. MacQueen, for the London Congr.; Mrs C. H., £10, for Sust. Fund and £10, for Dominions and Overseas Fund, per Rev. A. MacPherson.

Oban: A Friend, Glasgow, £10; Two Friends, Northern Ireland, £25; A Friend, £20, all for Congr. Fund; Envelope in plate for Church decoration, £4; A Friend, Perth, £100; A. MacD., Blane, £30, both for Congr. Fund, per A. M. P.

Portree: Tunbridge Wells Friend, £10, for Congr. Purposes, per F. M.; Anon., £10 (Envelope in plate); Tolsta Friend, £5, for Ministers petrol; J. N. Budhmoor, £1, for Sust. Fund, both per F. M.; Where most needed, £40 (Envelope in plate).

Raasay: Friends, Suisnish, £15; In memory of loved ones, £5, both per J. M. MacLeod; Friend, Portree, £10; In memory, £20 (envelope in plate), all for Sust. Fund.

Shieldaig: Anon., £5; Anon., £20, where most needed.

South Harris: Friend of the Cause, £5; Friend, Lingerbay, £20, per D. MacKenzie; J. MacK., Herts., £20, all for Congr. Fund; J. MacK., Geocrab, £50, for Sust. Fund, last two per Rev. D. MacLean.

Stirling: Mrs R. T., £10, for Stirling Congr., per Rev. D. J. MacD.