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Sorrow and Sighing shall flee away

The prospect of the wicked in the eternal world is one which is indescribably solemn and awful. The terms in which it is set forth in Scripture are fitted to fill the minds of sinners with dread if only they laid these things to heart. The eternity of the lost is one of weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. Their sorrow and sighing shall never cease. The sorrow of hell is unmitigated sorrow and the atmosphere of the place of woe is one of unrelieved gloom. The eternity of hell makes it that place where hope dies forever and it is a place of unutterable despair. It is not only that the soul is lost with all that that lostness means, but that the soul is lost forever. As the soul of the damned cries out in its agony — “Lost” — the echo that reverberates in the depths of the bottomless pit is “forever” — “Lost forever” — that is the description of the impenitent sinner’s plight when cast off from God. May it never be the plight of any who read these words.

In contrast to the prospect of the wicked is the prospect of the righteous in the eternal world. As the one was so indescribably awful, the other is indescribably glorious. Sorrow and sighing, we are told, shall flee away, and these are the words of Him who cannot lie. God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. As hell is a place of unrelieved gloom, heaven is a place of perpetual happiness and delight. The prospect for the righteous is altogether glorious. “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him.” This is what the Word of God holds out to sinners in the Gospel of God’s grace — eternal life. This will mean for all who receive and rest upon Jesus Christ in the Gospel, the possession ultimately of eternal blessedness. Christ prayed for His people — “Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given be with Me where I

am, that they may behold my glory." Heaven is a place where sorrow and sighing shall never enter. The reason for this is that sin shall never enter there. Wherever sin is it brings sorrow and sighing in its wake but nothing that defileth shall ever enter heaven. Heaven is a place of holiness, perfect holiness; therefore it is a place of perfect happiness. No tear, no anguish; no, not even a frown is seen there. "There the wicked cease from troubling, there the weary are at rest." There the soul experiences holy and heavenly delight in God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. "The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." If there were to be any swooning in heaven it could only be from too great draughts of the love of God but even this shall God prevent by strengthening and tempering the vessel to contain the measure of the love of God poured out. The language of their soul shall be — "My cup runneth over." As the soul of the redeemed in glory cries out — "saved," the echo that reverberates in the heights of heaven will be "forever." Saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation, that will be the portion of the redeemed. Were it possible that for a fleeting moment a doubt could enter their mind as to the eternity of the blessedness of heaven, that thought would mar the happiness of heaven to them, and a tear would drop from their eye. But that can never be for the joy of heaven knows no intermission.

Heaven could never be a place of rest for the wicked, even were it possible for them to enter there. It is a place of holiness and in holiness the wicked have no delight. A godless Balaam could say: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!" yet he had no heart to serve God, either in this life or in that which is to come. A heaven of idleness would be a heaven to the godless but the heaven of God is not a heaven of inactivity though it is a heaven of rest. There in His temple shall God's people serve Him day and night. As the Holy angels now serve God and as the bright shining seraphin do with unwearied diligence, willingness and delight so shall His people serve Him in His holy temple. There shall be no night there — they shall serve Him day and night in His temple. Their service here in this world is varied and we may expect that it will be so also in the world to come. What will make it so delightful to His people in heaven is that in their serving of Him the Lord will be glorified. Here in this world they ever came short in the glorifying of God but there they will not but will ever attain the end which they seek. As they serve God so haltingly here below let them encourage themselves with the thought that it shall not be so when they

reach the haven of rest. There are no Mephibosheth's there, lame on both feet. Rather will they have to say "He maketh my feet like hinds' feet, and setteth me upon my high places."

Who are they of whom these things are true? Certainly not of many of the great men of this world for "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty." It is the poor and the despised of this world that are to inherit glory. "Hearken, my beloved brethren," says the Apostle James in his epistle, "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him?" Seeing these things are so must this question not arise in our hearts as to whether God shall ever wipe away all tears from our eyes. Shall we indeed see the King in His glory and the land which is very far off? These are questions of great moment and the exercised soul would desire a true answer to them. The assurance of men or of their own heart that all is well with them will not suffice for them. What they will desire is to have a word from the Lord Himself sealing upon their hearts that they are His. The Lord is not a wilderness to His people and will not ever keep them in doubt of their salvation if they do sincerely seek it from His hand. One thing is certain — and that is that when the Lord gives His people in this world an assured hope of their interest in Him its effect will not be pride, but unfeigned and profound humility, joined to soul meltings of heart.

May everyone who reads these words be brought by divine power to the footstool of free and sovereign grace to seek the mercy of God in Christ. May each one who is still in his or her sins be brought to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ as their own personal Saviour and Redeemer. Only then may we entertain the hope that we shall yet have fulfilled in our experience what John recorded in the Revelation when he said — "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

Sermon

by the Rev. D. A. MacFarlane

(Preached at Meeting of Synod, 19th May, 1925)

"O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good: for His mercy endureth for ever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so." — (Psalm 107: 1, 2).

The Psalmist here calls upon the Church of God to praise Him for His goodness, and in particular for His goodness as seen in His mercy,

whereby everlasting blessings flow forth to the Church. The Lord is good in creation. He looked upon His works in creation, and, behold, they were good. All was perfectly fitted for the great end of His creation. But the exceeding greatness of His goodness is not seen either in creation or in providence. His infinite goodness is seen in redemption, in His mercy — saving sinners from the hand of the enemy, and bringing them to the city of God. This is the crowning mercy of the Church, that she so enjoys and experiences the goodness of the Lord. This supreme revelation of His goodness is therefore the song of the redeemed. "His mercy endureth for ever." In directing your attention to this portion of His Word, in dependence upon His Spirit, we observe the following points:—

- I. The enemy from which they are freed;
- II. Their Redeemer — they are the redeemed of the Lord;
- III. Their experiences as here recorded of them;
- IV. Their final abode — "A city of habitation";
- V. The call to praise the Lord for His mercy in all this.

I. Their Redeemer finds them in the hands of the enemy. This enemy is sin. Sin is the first and great enemy. Death is the last. "The last enemy which shall be destroyed is death." We see from the Word of God the agency of sin in three leading aspects — 1. There is first of all the manifestation of sin as seen in Satan. The adversary of souls, the accuser of the brethren, is himself under the power of sin. He is the prince of fallen spirits, and the prince of this world, the spirit who now worketh in the children of disobedience. What a cruel and powerful foe this enemy is! He ever increases his own guilt and torment in warring against the Lamb of His Church, yet he ever does his utmost against the Kingdom of Christ. He is compared to a serpent, to a lion, and can transform himself, particularly in matters of religion and the faith, into the appearance of an angel of light. But greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. The Lord delivers His people from every evil thing, and preserves them unto His heavenly Kingdom.

2. The power and the effects of sin are also seen in the world. "The whole world lieth in wickedness." In thinking of the world, we naturally have in view the walk and conversation of worldly men. What does the life and walk of the natural man manifest but aversion to God and godliness? There is evidently a desire for religion, but it ever takes the form of self-righteousness, self-effort, to please or placate the Being whom the natural man visualises as God. And what sin is seen in the world of men in the form of seeking an earthly portion, earthly honour and glory! "All seek their own, and not the things which are Jesus

Christ's." This is our natural disposition. "They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable, there is none that doeth good, no, not one. And the way of peace have they not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes." There is obviously only one remedy for the nations — for such men. That remedy bestows continuous cleansing as long as there is need of such — continuous fruit, which all are welcome to pluck and eat of — and continuous health to cure and preserve in soundness. "And He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare 12 manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."

3. But sin is above all to be viewed as seen in the heart, ruining the soul. Here it is seen minutely. "Sin is any want of conformity unto or transgression of the law of God." "The strength of sin is the law." Without law there would be no sin. Or, as one puts it, "If you take away law, men may act unreasonably, or in a way injurious to themselves and others, but they cannot sin." Also, if there were no law, there would be no condemnation. "The law not only reveals and condemns sin, but it exasperates and excites it, and thus gives it strength." Sin then reigns in the heart. Sin entices, fascinates, entangles, and finally torments. Body and soul are the helpless victims of this pitiless and befouling enemy. Never is there the remotest hope of escape from its presence — its guilt, misery, power, love, and very being — by any effort of mere man. We should particularly seek to realise that we take the guilt of sin and the disease of it with us into the world of spirits, if we go hence without pardon and sanctification. The Redeemer of Israel is waiting to embrace the contrite in heart, and to say, "Thy sins are forgiven thee: go in peace." "He is ever nigh to those that be of broken spirit." He is able and willing to give liberty in order that the trusting soul may enjoy holiness and love, and may purify himself even as He is pure.

II. From such a foe, then, the Lord redeems His people. He is their Redeemer. What they cannot do, He can, and did in large part already. What the law cannot do, He did (Rom. 8: 3, 4). The obedience unto death of the Lord of Glory is the price of the liberty of the Church. "Ye are bought with a price." The Paschal Lamb, with its sprinkled blood, was one of the chief types of the sacrificial Blood of the Saviour, under the Old Testament dispensation. "Without shedding of blood is no remission," and "When I see the blood I will pass over you," are two of the pillar-truths of the faith which the Israel of God are taught in every

age. What a suitable Saviour, then, He is! The Goël was suitable in his own place. So also Melchisedec, and Aaron. Sacrifices and offerings were good. The law was good. Tears — smiting upon the thigh — coming with weeping and supplications — are all good as evidencing the state of mind and heart of His Ephraim. But none of these can wash away sin. The only remedy is the infinitely meritorious sacrificial blood of the Divine Saviour. He is suitable for the trembling, contrite soul, is ever nigh to those that be of broken spirit. And as for one, so for all truly seeking His face. The innumerable multitude which shall assemble on Mount Sion with the Lamb shall have the one testimony as to His priestly dignity and His Atonement, "Unto Him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood." How different His suitability and sufficiency is to that of the pool of Bethesda! It was only for some troubles and for the first who entered at the appointed time, but the Lord Jesus is able and willing to save to the uttermost. "Now is the accepted time" — "the acceptable year of the Lord."

While eternal redemption was obtained by His dying for the Church, and entering into the Holiest with His own blood, it is also needful to keep in view that He applies His redemption to all whom the Father gave Him, by the power of His Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes as the Spirit of the Head of the Church, His Blessed Agent, to make sinners willing to receive the truth and kiss the Son of God in a day of grace. "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." He has an arm that is full of power; His hand is great in might. He changes a Paul, a Philemon, an Onesimus, and they are all one in Christ Jesus. Each learns more deeply the truth, "By grace ye are saved." And where the self-same spirit is which these three had — and many more in their day — there, as Jacob said, is the house of God, and there is the gate of heaven. The Head of the church, then, by His Word and Spirit, applies to them for their justification, sanctification, and perfect blessedness at last, the redemption purchased by Himself. "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praise of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light."

III. Thirdly, we have before us the experiences of the redeemed as part of the reason for their praising the Lord. They praise the Lord for the Unspeakable Gift of His Son to be their Redeemer, and have increasing reason to praise Him for what He does in them, and for His presence, protecting care, and provision for them by the way. This is implied in the application of the work of redemption, but we may briefly look at this

part further as we have it in the context. It is said of them that they wander in the wilderness in a solitary way. To say so usually means that they back-slide, or are prone to lapse. This, sad to say, may be true. Their love is apt to wax cold, they may be left to slumber, and there is within an old nature as well as the new — an evil heart of unbelief ever ready to depart from the living God. Dr Duncan points out that God sees some of His own children walking more closely with Him than others, and rewards them accordingly. Others of His family are less obedient and require chastening for their profit that they may be partakers of His holiness. He does them good in this way, and they shall praise Him for His mercy. "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts and they shall not depart from me."

Their wandering is, however, to be taken in the simple sense of sojourning and travelling. The Lord led them all the way, going before them to seek out a place of rest, and He brought them duly to the border of the sanctuary. It is noteworthy that Israel alone, of all the families of the earth, travelled by a pre-arranged way from the house of bondage to the land of promise. It was a solitary way as regarded them or the other nations. Egypt was left behind. Amalek crossed their path. They met with other foes also. But they alone as a nation had the experiences and blessings and hopes and revelations in their great journey, of which we read in His Word. So with the Church. She travels in a way which the world knows not of, and has blessings in possession, and infallibly in prospect which are bestowed upon her members only. They have here no city to dwell in. Yet is it true that by faith they are come to the city of the living God, the New Jerusalem. But the fulness of that blessing is reserved for the Kingdom of Heaven — the city where the inhabitant shall not say, "I am sick; and the people who dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity."

As regards their experience by the way, we see further that the redeemed are often hungry and thirsty on the journey. As the Lord provided for the bodily and spiritual needs of Israel in the wilderness, so He provides for the necessities of the Church. He gave manna. He gave water. Their clothes waxed not old. Their feet swelled not. He prevented them with blessings. So we are dependent upon, and indebted to, the Lord for all His goodness in Providence, and for all the blessings of mercy, of grace, and of glory. "What shall I render to the Lord for all His gifts to me?" His revelations concerning Himself — the truths as to the Trinity — the Person and Mediatorial Office of the Saviour, the

whole counsel of God for the believer and for the Church are all, by the blessing of God the Spirit, the meat and drink of the new nature. "Her food I'll greatly bless, her poor with bread will satisfy." It is part of the joy set before the Saviour — part of His reward — to bless them with spiritual desires after Himself and by his Word and Spirit to bestow out of His fulness upon them what sustains and satisfies the longing soul. "Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved."

IV. We have, fourthly, the city to which they all come. Every one of them in Zion appeareth before God. Without remarking upon this part at length, let us observe the contrast between the land which they left — and even their condition by the way — and the city which they arrive at, their eternal home. They had formerly no true rest, no true refuge. But not so now. What is said of the year of Jubilee is applicable to the Kingdom of God in its consummation. "The land shall yield her fruit, and ye shall eat your fill, and dwell therein in safety." In that kingdom which the saints of the Most High shall possess, shall not the land yield her fruit? Shall they not eat their fill? Shall they not dwell in safety? "In Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." "Walk about Zion. Tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces that ye may tell it to the generation following." How glorious His Jerusalem upon earth is! How the brethren and companions love it! When you touch their heart-strings, how they melt with love toward the house of the Lord, and to the Lord of the house — to the ordinances of God. His cause, house, Zion, is their chief joy now. With all their lack of love, they love it, and with all their felt lack of love, they love Him. Jehovah-Shammah! "Blessed are they that do His commandments that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

V. Such praise Him. "O praise the Lord; let the redeemed of the Lord say so." They sing of mercy righteously bestowed. The fruits of mercy are songs of praise, their love to the Three-One God. Their praise is spiritual, holy, heavenly. Praise comes from a renewed heart and sanctified lips. It is accepted through their Head and all-prevailing Intercessor, the Angel who hath much incense. They know not the "numbers" of His justice and salvation. In the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem: Praise ye the Lord. "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of might thunderings, saying, Alleluia, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth" (Rev. 19: 6).

In preaching the Gospel of the grace of God out of the abundance of

your hearts, you are well aware, Fathers and Brethren, that the messengers sent by the Head of the Church have to do with two classes. There are, first, those who are still out of the way. They are on the broad way. They as yet know not Him who is the Way in Justification, and also the Way in Sanctification. It is for you — in the spirit of the Great High Priest who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, and had at the same time compassion on the ignorant and on them who were out of the way — to declare to them their need of Christ and Him crucified. It is for you to show them the right way, that, by God's blessing, they may receive the gift of faith, and, therefore, the end of faith, even the salvation of their souls. They shall thus rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

It is also a special duty and privilege to seek to know the needs of the household of faith, and administer consolation or needful counsel accordingly. The Lord of the Church had the tongue of the learned, and knew how to speak a word in season to him that is weary. And as with the Master, so with the disciple. Those sent forth by Him seek that believers may grow in grace — that they themselves and the many sons whom the Father is bringing to glory may daily press on toward the mark — continue in the grace of God, abide in Christ by receiving out of His fulness, and so when He shall appear, they may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. May we be engaged in heart, by the gracious power of the Holy Spirit, to serve Him daily, so shall He be our Shield and our exceeding great Reward! May the answer to the prayer of Moses be granted to us also — “My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.” “O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good: for His mercy endureth for ever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so!”

(Goël — redeemer or near kinsman. See page 246.)

Mbuma Zending Meeting — April 1985

In Holland, each year, the thirtieth day of April marks the Queen's birthday and is observed as a public holiday throughout the nation. It is thus all the more remarkable that about 7300 people — men, women and children — should choose to spend the most part of it within the Irenehal at Utrecht. This was a memorable sight and a wonderful gesture of support for our Zimbabwean Mission work. They were present from all parts of Holland, some from Staphorst in their own distinctive garb and headwear, others clothed in what is presumably regarded as the more conventional Dutch national dress, the broad, white linen hats being a

distinctive feature. Before the end of the day Mr Reijers, the Treasurer, had a further £53,000 to look after.

The meeting began at 10.30 am with the Vice-Chairman Ds. F. Mallan in charge of proceedings and between then and 4 pm, apart from a break of one and a half hours for lunch, the thousands present listened quietly and attentively to short addresses delivered in turn by six ministers and one layman. An old friend of our Mission and someone well known to many of our church people in Scotland, Ds. C. Smits, the Chairman of the Committee, brought the proceedings to a close. Ds. Smits, we were happy to learn, had just been honoured by the Queen having been included in her Birthday Honours list. Apart from some few remarks made by Ds. Smits and the short address given by the writer the proceedings were entirely in Dutch. Mr van Vliet, sitting beside me, gave me from time to time some inkling of what was being said. As to praise, the Dutch Psalter was the manual employed and the memory of over 7000 voices singing in unison, and without the aid of instrumental music, is one that lingers. Dr. Alison Dunbar, Miss Peta v.d. Ridder and Miss Jessie Coote were present in the audience and were not forgotten by Ds. Smits. Mr and Mrs Martin Schouten of our Inverness congregation were also present.

In Utrecht I was, over two nights, hospitably entertained in the home of Mr and Mrs van Haaften and I spent a further two nights in the equally hospitable home of Mr and Mrs van Vliet at Lekkerkerk. Mr van Haaften is a teacher of English at a Christian school in Gouda and it was arranged that I would give an address to a gathering of senior pupils who were studying that language and thus able to understand me. This was duly done and I found my visit to the school and the meeting with the pupils as arranged to be a very pleasant experience. Mr van Vliet kindly took me to The Hague to see Mr van Waveren who was a frequent visitor to Scotland in days gone by and also long a friend of our African mission. In the Hague we were also kindly entertained by Mr and Mrs Freeke.

It was a wonderful privilege to be present at the Meeting and I am grateful to the Committee for inviting me. I would like to express my gratitude to those who entertained me in their homes and to all who helped to make my visit to Holland so pleasant and memorable. May that Cause, the supporting of which has brought so many in Holland, Scotland and Zimbabwe to be "labourers together," prosper, and the whole earth soon come to be filled with His glory.

ADDRESS

Ds. Mallan, Members of the Mbumba-Zending and Dutch Friends — I

regard it a great honour that I should be asked to address you briefly to-day and it gives me great pleasure indeed to be present here with you. We, in Scotland, deeply appreciate the great help which we continue to receive from you, year by year, in connection with our missionary work in Zimbabwe. In our view, it is an altogether wonderful provision and made by the Lord in His holy, inscrutable Providence. On your part, we believe, it is a "work of faith, and labour of love."

Our great aim in our missionary work is the conversion of souls. Everything else, whether it be educational or medical, is ancillary to that. In the Word of God we have this information conveyed to all labouring in that work and in whatever capacity: "Let him know that he converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." (The Epistle of James, Chapter 5, Verse 20). That salvation is of the Lord and all of grace from beginning to end is a foundation doctrine of our Faith. Any success that shall attend the work of converting sinners in Zimbabwe or elsewhere must ultimately be traced back to Himself and all the glory is to be His alone. He has, in His infinite wisdom, ordained that the office and work of declaring the Word of Truth, the Gospel of salvation, should belong to men and it is thus required of the Church that it should spend and be spent in the work of bringing lost, erring sinners back to the Truth. From the Truth they have erred; to the Truth they must return if their multitudinous sins are to be hidden. The Gospel must needs be brought to them or they must needs be brought to the Gospel. A sinner regenerated and enlightened by the Spirit of Truth is one whose soul has been saved from spiritual death in this world and from eternal death in the world to come. We have no doubt that there are such to be found in Zimbabwe and we believe that they are not unmindful of what they owe, under the hand of God, to those who had a care for their souls in the past and continue to show an interest in them in the present.

There are, no doubt, fishermen or seamen present here and who will know something of what it means to be delivered from perishing in the deep. If such are here I am sure they will not be forgetful of the circumstances in which they were rescued nor, especially, of the persons or person to whom, humanly speaking, they owe their lives. The island town where I live has a very fine harbour but at its mouth there are many dangerous rocks. In January, 1919, on a dark, stormy, wintry night over two hundred men were drowned when the ship taking them home after war service was wrecked at the very mouth of the harbour. One brave man swam ashore with a rope and his action resulted in over twenty men

being saved from drowning. That man's name is of course held in honoured remembrance and when men speak of that tragic event their minds dwell on what he did. By providing the means, he, in the good providence of God, saved a number of his fellow men from temporal death. How much greater the honour and how much greater the achievement if, as a result of our endeavours, and by the grace of God, we are instrumental in saving souls from eternal death. In Zimbabwe we publish abroad that "this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (First Timothy Chapter 1, Verse 15) and we hope and pray with expectation that multitudes will yet come to be converted from the error of their way and in returning will be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation. While we have the opportunity and with your help we shall continue, in His strength, to bring the minds of young and old into contact with the Truth. Your prayerful support and material help is much appreciated in Scotland and Zimbabwe and we are persuaded that "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love."

"All ends of the earth remember shall
and turn the Lord unto;
All kindreds of the nations
to Him shall homage do."

J. McL.

The Woman of Great Faith

(Continued from page 187)

HER GREAT FAITH

Mr Sage, in *Memorabilia Domestica*, relates a conversation he had with her. Speaking of the name by which she had become popularly known, "The Woman of Great Faith," she said that was a character she did not wish to take from others, nor even to realise for herself. He observed that a great God was justly entitled to great faith on our part on account of the greatness of His own truth and of His promises. "True," said she, "but my desire is only to be enabled to exercise a little faith in a great God." "How so?" he asked. "Because I need to behold that greatness, not in my faith, but in Himself.

Her faith in God was the simple trust of a child in a father. He was always near her. He spoke to her in the scenes of nature and in the events of providence. Heaven was her Father's throne; earth was His footstool.

The sun, moon, and stars were standing witnesses of His ever acting power and of His ever watchful presence. The stream that babbled past her door had for her a constant message. It repeated the word — Eternity, Eternity, Eternity. The thunder was her Father's voice. In an extraordinary thunderstorm someone remarked that she showed no sense of fear. "Why should I be afraid to hear my Father's voice calling from the third loft?" was her trustful reply.

That spirit of childlike trust in her Father's loving will to bless was revealed in her prayers. Prayer was not for her a formal occasional exercise, but a constant, loving, and believing attitude and exercise of soul in her Father's fellowship. Her prayers expressed thanksgiving and praise for mercies enjoyed. They abounded in intercession for others. She seldom asked anything for herself. To someone who made a remark to her on that point she said: "I am only a messenger pleading for others in the Saviour's name, and I remember that when I used to do messages for my father he sometimes gave me a halfpenny for myself though I did not ask for it."

There is a large gray stone in Sheiggira called Clach Pheggie, because she was in the habit of resorting to its side for meditation and prayer.

From the day of her redemption she never seemed to have any doubt as to the saving and keeping power of God. Her faith in Him was absolute as the God of Providence. Whatever she asked of Him in her need she unquestioningly believed she would receive. Her Father in heaven would supply all her needs, both spiritual and temporal. She used to hold up her open empty purse and say, "Jehovah-Jireh," and meet every reference to her personal needs by saying, "The children ought not to provide for the fathers, but the fathers for the children, and it is not the Heavenly Father that will fail to do so." No sooner, however, was her purse well filled than she emptied it again. She always met worthy people more needy than herself. The gifts of God to her were not for her own exclusive use. She was but the steward of His manifold riches. She gave as she received, freely. On her way to Edinburgh she was the guest of Mr Kennedy at the Manse of Killearnan; and "hearing that the Sacrament of the Supper was to be dispensed at Kirkhill on the following week, she resolved to attend it, and to postpone her visit to the south till after it was over. She went, and on Monday a gentleman made up to her, after the close of the service, who handed to her a sum of money, at the request of a lady who had been moved to offer her the gift. Mrs MacKay gratefully accepted it, but being accompanied on her way back to Killearnan by a group of worthies, all of whom she knew to be poor, she divided

all the money among them, assured that it was for them she received it, and that provision for her journey would be made by some other hand. Her expectation was realised, and a sum fully sufficient was given to her, and she started on her journey to the south."

On one of her many journeys she stayed for a night at an inn, where she was not known. It is said to be the case that many people arrived at an inn at night, with money in their pockets, who woke up next morning to find that they had none. Peggy found herself in that plight, and when her bill was presented she could not pay it. She looked at the maid and said, "The Lord will provide," The maid, not understanding Peggy's meaning, said: "Just wait here a minute till I go and see." There happened to be a certain lord occupying a suite of rooms upstairs, to whom the maid thought Peggy referred. She went straight to him and presented Peggy's bill, with explanations. His lordship came down to see this person that presumed to take such liberties with him. He was not long in her company when the bill was paid and her empty purse replenished, though she asked for nothing.

At that time there was a change of drivers at each (coach) stage, and at every halt "Remember the coachman" was called out at the window. Mrs MacKay invariably gave a silver coin and a good advice to each of the drivers. Her companions, not liking to be outdone by their strange fellow-passenger, and liking still less to part so freely with their money, at last remonstrated. "We cannot afford to give silver always," one of them said, "and we cannot keep pace with your liberality." "The King's daughter must travel as becomes her rank," she said, as she again handed the silver coin and spoke the golden advice to the driver.

She regarded nothing that was given her, or that she possessed, as her own. It was hers only to be used for the good of those who had need. This habit often caused misunderstandings, and sometimes gave pain to her best friends. When her daughter was on the eve of getting married, the two set out to make some purchases for the interesting event. They had but the sum of seven pounds to spend. By the way they fell in with a man who was threatened with eviction for arrears of rent. He told Peggy his distressing story. Five pounds would tide him over his difficulties and stay proceedings. Much against her daughter's wishes, as may well be imagined, she gave that sum to the man, but before arriving where the shopping was to be done gifts amounting to ten pounds were handed to her.

In those days people were in the habit of killing a cow or bullock at the beginning of the winter season. The flesh was pickled and preserved for

family use. On one occasion, when the cow was killed, Peggy has so many friends to whom she wished to send a bit of meat that very soon the whole carcase was disposed of. There was only one piece left, and she had marked it out for someone. Some member of her household was in the act of protesting that if she gave that away there would be nothing left for themselves, when one of the lads came in announcing that their best bullock had fallen and had broken his neck. Peggy lifted her heart in thanksgiving, saying: "Praise to Thee, Thou rich Provider, Thou hast selected this from the herd that would miss it least," and sent her messenger on her errand with the last remaining piece of beef.

On being presented with a small bag of apples she was told not to take the string off till she reached home. She promised she would not. By the way, however, she met someone to whom the apples would be a greater treat than to herself, and remembering her promise not to take the string off the bag, she cut the bottom out of it and gave the apples away.

The strength of her faith was especially revealed when passing through trial and under the shadows of death. She then showed entire acquiescence in the will of God, and however sore her mother heart must have been she was not known to murmur at the events of His holy providence. When one of her sons was drowned near her home, the sorrow of her heart was great, but the words, "He that spared not His own Son but gave Him up for us all," checked any feelings of bitterness that may have mingled with her sorrow, and she never uttered a word of complaint. A friend who went to express sympathy was met by a smiling face and a most cheerful spirit. The friend expressed the surprise she felt, remarking: "I am surprised you can look so cheerful in your sad circumstances." "You know," was the beautiful reply, "we ought always to return a loan with a smile."

She frequented the house of sorrow to express her sympathy and to minister comfort, as few could so wisely and so lovingly do, and to take advantage of the opportunity, while hearts were tender, to win them for the Saviour's love. At such times her knowledge of the Scriptures and her wisdom in applying them brought a word in season to many. She travelled many a mile to visit the sick. She felt that if she could speak a word of comfort to any trembling soul she was doing a Christ-like service. There was a gentleness, a kindliness, and a fortitude of spirit shown by her that communicated a comforting feeling to the patients. At the bedside of the dying she was always bright and cheerful. There was no sign of grief or gloom as she pointed the dying to the living Redeemer.

She was a true and eager soul winner. The late Donald Gow, of

Melness, used to tell that when he was in spiritual darkness and soul distress till he could endure it no longer, he went to interview her. She persuaded him to stay overnight. In the morning the sun rose on Donald. His darkness passed away, and, henceforth, he was known as a man who walked in the light of the Lord.

She accompanied him back to Skinnet, where there was a tinker's encampment, to which she went on some errand. She probably made the errand an excuse to get into touch with the wandering people. On reaching the tent they found them beginning breakfast, and the head of the family invited her to drink a cup of tea with them. "I will do that," she said, "if you will ask a blessing," which he reverently did, and Peggy drank the tea to Donald's lasting amazement.

Through the night she was in travail over the new birth of a soul into the kingdom of God, and in the morning she was along with her convert in the highways and hedges seeking the outcast and the lost.

During the later years of her life she suffered from a painful disease, which was eventually the cause of her death. She went to Strathpeffer almost every summer. Its waters helped her greatly. While there she visited Ferintosh and Redcastle at the time of their great communion gatherings, where she was the honoured guest of Dr Macdonald and of Mr Kennedy, and where she was the centre of a group of worthies. She had even conceived the idea of going to reside in the parish of Killearnan that she might be under "the latter rain" of Mr Kennedy's ministry, and be also within easy reach of the healing waters of Strathpeffer Spa. Her purpose, however, was not realised.

Mr Kennedy died on the 10th of January, 1841. Mrs Mackay was then confined to bed in her last illness. When the news came, her husband resolved to withhold it from her. "With this resolution he entered the room, and sat down gloomily by the fire. 'I know what ails you,' his wife said to him, after he was seated. 'You have heard of Mr Kennedy's death; I knew it before.' 'He died,' she added, 'on Sabbath evening, and,' mentioning a certain day, 'before then I will join him in the Father's house,' and so it was."

When it became generally known that she was seriously ill, and that her end was approaching, many of her friends came from great distances to watch with and comfort her. One of them reported: "Perhaps the solemn scene was so truly grand that our age could not produce another instance wherein Christian fortitude and bravery shone so brilliant and conspicuous in and around a death bed." No sound of complaint or murmuring was heard from her during the whole course of her suffer-

ings, which were often very acute. She longed, not so much for ease and rest from pain as for fitness for the life to which she was fast hastening. She longed for holiness of soul and spirit. "Patience, patience: Holiness, holiness: Purify me and take me away" were her ejaculations and prayers while passing through the shadow of death. She died as she lived by the faith of the Son of God who loved her.

Her friends asked her many questions, hoping that her replies would be a means of comfort to themselves and to others. These she answered with a clearness which proved that her mind remained unclouded to the end, and with a wisdom which showed how well taught she had been and how valuable were her views.

The prolonged struggle between Church and State which ended in the Disruption was raging at the time. "The Witness" kept her in constant touch with progress of events. On being asked what she thought the issue would be, she replied: " 'I will refine her but not with silver.' I do not think that the Lord will deliver the Church by means of money, or by great talents or great speeches made on her behalf. He has His own way of deliverance." That was two years before the Disruption took place.

When asked if Satan tempted her, now that she was so weak, she answered: "The Lord redeemed my soul by the blood of the everlasting covenant when I was young. That shut the door with a bang in his face, and all he can do now is to stand outside the back door, whispering in my ears, 'How great noise, but how little good you have done by your loud profession of religion all through your earthly life,' but is it not written, 'They overcame him through the blood of the Lamb?' "

As the time of her departure drew near, her spirit was consumed by an intense longing to depart and to be with Christ. That longing found expression in the language of Scripture. She was heard to say repeatedly, "Why is His chariot so long in coming? Why tarry the wheels of His chariots?" There was no impatience, however, only a holy desire to be with her Lord.

The night before she passed away she called her husband and such of the family as were with them to her bedside, and, after bidding them an affectionate and an affecting farewell, she asked him to kneel with them in prayer before the Lord. When that touching act of dedication was over she said, and these were her last words. "There is only one Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. I travelled many a step through the wilderness seeking and following Him, which I do not regret. I kept an open breast to many, many who professed the Saviour, and who, I knew, were entire strangers to Him. I did so upon this ground that I knew He could and would do

much more abundantly in saving sinners than I could think of or comprehend."

"Shortly afterwards," sang Mr Findlater "the angels raised thee up on high, and the King received thee into His palaces, wearing a crown of excessive brilliance."

That was on the 15th of April, 1841, in the 73rd year of age. With solemn and affectionate reverence, she was buried in the Melness Cemetery, where her dust rests till the resurrection. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."

The Righteous shall be in Everlasting Remembrance.

The General Assemblies

The Church of Scotland

At the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland Rev. Dr. David Smith was appointed Moderator while Lord MacLean represented the Queen as Lord High Commissioner.

As usual the Assembly dealt with a great variety of topics during its week long deliberations. An attempt to have the membership of the Assembly halved was not adopted. The Principal Clerk designate, Rev. James Weatherhead said the proposal would have serious implications for the Presbyterian system of Church government as ministers would only be able to attend the Assembly once every eight years instead of every four years. On finance it was revealed that only half of the Church of Scotland congregations responded so far to the Christian Giving Plan launched two years ago. The Plan suggested that Church members should start thinking of offering five per cent of net income. The Convener of the Board of Stewardship said that if every presbytery and congregation had taken action on the plan then the necessary income required for the Church's work would have been acquired. Carberry Towers, the Church's Conference Centre which has been a drain on funds for years was to be maintained for five more years and the Assembly Council was asked to find ways for keeping it in use. While showing sympathy for the teachers in their present dispute with the government over pay yet the Assembly deplored the teacher's strike action, especially in its selective aspect. On the issue of abortion the Assembly took a strong line and by 420 votes to 380 called for Abortion Act of 1967 to be tightened up so that abortion would only be allowed in cases where the mother's life was at risk. This action has provoked strong opposition in some quarters. The report "Church Unity Now is the Time," a statement of guidelines

according to which the six Churches engaged in the Multilateral Conversation might move towards organic unity was welcomed by the Assembly and was referred to Presbyteries for study. The Churches engaged in these Conversations along with Church of Scotland were, the Congregational, Methodist, United Free, United Reformed and Scottish Episcopalian Churches. Rev. George Balls, chairman of the Conversation admitted that the Church might have to accept longer-term Moderators of Presbytery but the changes to the Church's constitution would be minimal, he averred. Rev. James Salmond, who along with Rev. Dr. Andrew Herron had proposed no action, said that the report spelled the end of democratic Church government, of ministerial parity and of the unique position of the eldership and that to accept it would be denominational suicide. The recommendation that a W.C.C. ecumenical document "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" be recommended for further discussion by Presbyteries raised some opposition. Mr Sam Campbell, Dalkeith saw a recommendation to consider structures of ministry as a sly way of introducing episcopacy or similar systems into the Church and undermining the eldership, while Rev. Prof. James Whyte, of St. Andrews stated that he was concerned that the innocuous seeming language of the document and the Board's report could be used as an argument for bishops and at a higher level an argument for bishops became an argument for a pope.

The Assembly declared the apartheid doctrine of South Africa to be a heresy. Rev. Andrew Doig said that apartheid had been built on the theological misrepresentations of the Dutch Reformed Church. A minister of the Presbyterian Church in South Africa, Rev. Blessing Finca appealed for help in persuading white South Africans to treat black South Africans as normal people. The Church of Scotland no doubt expressed their strongest abhorrence of apartheid in labelling it as heresy, as few if any deviations in doctrine are so labelled within the State Church. Would that the Church of Scotland would take the same strong line over the multiplicity of heresies rampant within her borders!

Human embryo experimentation and surrogacy were denounced by the Assembly as contrary to the Christian belief in the sanctity of human life and incompatible with the Christian idea of marriage. Rev. Prof. Thomas Torrence described playing around with the genetic structure of a human being as something indescribably horrendous and far more dangerous than the whole nuclear horror.

The Assembly agreed to protest to the broadcasting authorities about the use of "God" and "Jesus Christ" as oaths on programmes by these

authorities, Rev. Alex. Gunn, Glasgow said that the use of "Jesus Christ" as an oath, or in a trivial way, was offensive to many people and that this hurtful practice should be eliminated from radio and television. It is good to see the Assembly taking action in this matter and also in blaming television for contributing to increasing levels of violence in society and the break-up of families. May the broadcasting authorities take due notice of it.

A minister Rev. Alex. Buchan, who refused to marry in church people who were living together had his appeal against dismissal from his charge refused by the Assembly. The congregation over which he was pastor had been divided before he was inducted over an elder living in adultery. In submission the Presbytery stated that the subsequent unsatisfactory state of the congregation was due substantially to defects and errors personal to the minister. Rev. John Cairns moving the dismissal of the appeal said the Church of Scotland was not trying anyone but was trying to resolve a pastoral situation. Rev. George Fiddles, in moving that the appeal be sustained, objected to blame falling only on Mr Buchan and that he is the one held to be culpable.

The Church and Nation Committee was asked to undertake a full review of the Christian use of "Sunday" — last done in 1964 — in view of growing concern about Sabbath trading. Rev. Maxwell Craig said that people were worried by the increase in trading in Scotland. The reason he gave for there being no legislation in Scotland against it was that it was thought inconceivable there would be this erosion of the Lord's Day. While expression is given to these sentiments yet we feel that the Church of Scotland is far astray on its attitude to Sabbath observance and its attitude to this matter has contributed in no small degree to the present state of things.

The Moderator in closing the Assembly stated: "The task of the Church is reconciliation. This was what Christ came to do — to reconcile men to God and man to man. So we must bring Christ, the Reconciler, into the 20th century and translate his teaching into practical terms." If this is indeed the task which the Church of Scotland sets itself then it must restore to the pulpit a full-orbed gospel, it must cast out all forms of worship which are in conflict with Scripture teaching and exercise discipline in a way consistent with the requirements of God's own word. Even at this late date may the Church of Scotland indeed do it and before long a change would be seen on the face of Scotland.

The Free Church Assembly

At the Free Church Assembly Rev. Prof. Arch. Boyd was appointed Moderator. In his opening address he said that the Free Church did not claim to have a monopoly of a faithful witness to the Gospel in Scotland today but did claim to be of the Body of Christ. He reminded the assembly how the Free Church had made provision for the needs of the fishing fleet in earlier days but that today their problems were different with widespread unemployment. The Church needed to respond to it in an imaginative and Biblical way. When asked about the cost of any such scheme he said that perhaps there were others like-minded with whom the Church could co-operate. Later Prof. Boyd said that what he had in mind was co-operation at local level, possibly with ministers of other denominations, in particular the Church of Scotland, and with secular organisations providing social services.

On finance the convener, Mr John O. Sutherland reported that though average annual givings had increased yet a debt of about £15,000 had been incurred and warned that early returns for this year showed that a larger deficit would be likely at the end of the year. He urged those whose Christian liberality was below expectation to consider their duty. He reminded them that the cost of a daily newspaper came to £73 a year yet many were giving far less than that to the work of the Church. A lot of us, he said, have lost our sense of values. He also reminded the Assembly that ten extra ministers had been inducted last year each of whom would receive the revised stipend of £6,500. The Special Committee on Eventide Homes reported purchase of property in Scotstoun to be converted into sheltered housing for the elderly.

When Rev. Hector Cameron gave in the report on public questions and religion and morals he indicated his support for what the Moderator of the Church of Scotland had said in his address to the General Assembly. Dr. Smith had spoken of a concerted attack being conducted against the Christian values within the nation's culture. Dr. Smith's allegations were indeed timely though they were not well received in some quarters. Mr Cameron said that there was an attack on Christian values coming from the extreme left. An addendum was moved calling on the Government to do all in their power to conserve the interests of the Christian "Sunday" as lying at the heart, and vital to the life of our national Christian religion. While paying tribute to TV for informative programmes, he said that there was a seamier side to TV. "I believe it to be," he said, "at many points, a most carefully organised onslaught on our Christian values and heritage." The Assembly decided to send an ap-

peal to the organisers of the 1986 Commonwealth Games against their decision to make Thursday and not Sabbath a rest day for the athletics. Rev. Hugh Ferrier referred to recent figures which gave the impression of signs of a Free Church revival. He warned that the Church had to be realistic as it was still in decline, alarmingly so. The figures given earlier in connection with the financial report stated the number of contributors to be about 9,250 of whom more than 5,500 were full communicant members. Rev. Donald MacLeod, Grant Street Free Church, Glasgow said that the Government was sadly lacking in compassion over unemployment and that he believed that the time had come for the Church to complain.

On the Thursday of the Assembly the Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Lord MacLean of Duart and Morven visited the Free Church Assembly and addressed it.

On the final day of the Free Church Assembly the first hour was devoted to prayer as an indication of their deep-seated concern for the plight of the Christian Church in Britain today. The Moderator said that it was important for all to confess their sins at this time and to pray for a revival of Christian faith throughout the land. He stated that ultimately, however, the remedy could only come through divine grace. In connection with the report on the training of the ministry, stress was laid on the need for ruling elders of calibre. Rev. Hugh Ferrier also gave advice to young ministers coming out of college that they should endeavour to communicate the Gospel intelligently to their congregations. The Word of God, he said should be meaningful to both young and old.

Obituaries

Mrs Jessie MacRae, Dumbarton.

"Mark the perfect man and behold the upright for the end of that man is peace" is not simply a piece of information from God, but a command given to us so that we may benefit and profit from considering the death of the righteous. The blessedness of the righteous is not fully appreciated until their end comes — and **then** we can "discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not," so that even the ungodly may say "Let me die the death of the righteous and let my last end be like his!" (Num. 23: 10). If any could be said to be among the righteous, it was our friend.

Mrs Jessie MacRae was born in the parish of Applecross in April, 1893, and married Thomas MacRae, on 26th February, 1925, when they

set up their home in Glasgow. Although she was years under the preaching of her first minister, the late Rev. Neil Cameron, it was the preaching of the late Rev. D. J. Matheson, Glasgow, that was used in convincing her of her sinnership. Ever a virtuous and honest person, she discovered that man needs a new heart, however good he may be, before he can please God, and that the very best that man can offer with regard to law-keeping comes nowhere near the standard required by God. She found out that the guilt of sin was great and that she needed her sins to be covered by God Himself. She was brought to see that only Christ's righteousness was sufficient for a sinner to enter glory and so she began to seek Christ above everything else, not only to obtain His righteousness but also for His blood to cover her sins.

While under conviction of sin and seeking Christ, her husband had a dream. In his dream he was in a dark, dark valley when he heard footsteps and a voice calling out and he realised it was the Lord. Telling the dream to his wife in the morning, she said to him "I am in that valley" to which her husband replied "Well, Christ is in that valley."

Not long afterwards, she found relief in the words "I am thy salvation" (Ps. 35: 3) and she could not stop singing for joy in Ps. 116 "I love the Lord because my voice and prayers he did hear." So great was her joy in finding Christ that she could not sleep for three nights afterwards. This state of happiness continued for some time until her husband noticed that she was not so bright as she had been formally. Realising that the Communion season was coming near, he asked her if going to the Lord's Table was troubling her and replying that it was, she asked him if he thought she should go to the Table. The reply was an unequivocal "yes." From that time onwards she never looked back as far as her spiritual condition was concerned. When her husband's work for the church necessitated his frequent absence from home, her response was "You put your back to the Cause and I will manage the children." Manage the children she did, and put his back to the Cause did her husband. Despite tragically losing a daughter shortly after birth, and a son in his youth, four daughters were brought up in "the fear and admonition of the Lord." These daughters were to care for her during her last days in an extra-ordinary way and with love and care second-to-none. They nursed their mother for two and a half years. This was really only a return of the great kindness she herself extended to others (particularly the servants of the Lord) while she had her health.

Mrs MacRae was seriously ill for a long time, but it was a matter of great rejoicing that she was spared to see her 60th Wedding Anniversary

and receive a Telegram of Congratulations from Her Majesty the Queen, although her health was so low by this time she was unable to appreciate the occasion.

There were three Christian graces, in particular, that were outstanding in Mrs MacRae's life, and indeed, which manifested themselves even when she was lying semi-conscious on her death-bed. The first was: **Gentleness** (Gal. 5: 22). This grace could be detected in every reaction and response she made right up to the end. The second grace was **Kindness** (Col. 3: 12). No kinder home could be found than her's and her anxiety to show hospitality to every caller was apparent even when she was unable to communicate clearly. Her third outstanding grace was Christian charity — **Love** (2 Pet. 1: 7). Her affection for God's people, particularly His Servants, could not be hid. Even latterly, when only semi-conscious, her love for God's children could be discerned through her reaction to their names being mentioned. These three graces exhibited the character of Mrs Jessie MacRae up to the very end.

We cannot say that the end came suddenly or unexpectedly, but we can say, that for her, it was blessed and glorious, because she died as she lived — "in the Lord." To all who are left mourning we extend our heartfelt sympathy.

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord" (Rev. 14: 13).

G. I. M.

Mrs J. Macleod, Helensburgh.

The small congregation of Dumbarton lost its third Christian in six months when Mrs J. Macleod from Helensburgh died on 8th June, 1985.

Mrs Macleod was born in Swainbost, Ness, Lewis, in July 1904 and married Mr John Macleod, also from Ness in Lewis, and set up home in Clydebank. Having lost a child in infancy they nurtured two sons and a daughter whom she now leaves to mourn her passing.

While in Clydebank, their home was bombed during the Clydebank Blitz in 1941. She and her family had to move to Ness until her husband looked for another home for them, and, although she was never heard to complain about the bombing, they were apparently unable to save even a spoon.

Little is known about her conversion except that it was 12 years later before she professed it by sitting at the Lord's Table. The text which gave her liberty was "I will betroth thee unto me for ever" (Hos. 2: 19) preached on the Saturday of Ness Communion when she received

strength to go forward. From then on she continued to maintain a consistent witness to her Saviour.

There were two prominent characteristics of her Christianity that were immediately noticeable. The first was firmness in the Truth. The teaching of Scripture on any matter was absolutely final with Mrs Macleod, and she always remained unshakeable and resolute with regard to anything spoken of in the Word. The other Christian characteristic Mrs Macleod was renowned for was resignation to God's will. She was greatly taken up with the sovereignty of God not only with regard to Providence but also regarding grace. Her resignation to God's will with reference to Providence can be seen in her attitude when bombed out of house and possessions during the war. She was, however, exactly the same with regard to God's work in grace. Reflecting on the low state of Christ's Cause today, she knew that the only answer was to wait upon the Lord and that the blessing could not be commanded by us. She would often say to me when discussing this matter — "Keep on sowing the seed, and leave the harvest to the Lord."

There is one incident which highlights these two distinctives of Mrs Macleod's Christianity. Her burden for a long while was the vacant charge in Dumbarton and she felt led to a certain portion of Scripture which promised help. No sooner did she receive this as the Truth of God, when she was tempted that such a Truth was never to be interpreted in such a way in and that no-one ever heard of such a text being used in the way she understood it. It was a great source of comfort to her to hear her new minister on his first Sabbath in his new charge speak from the very words of Scripture which gave her encouragement and interpret it exactly as she had done.

It transpired that Mrs Macleod had been seriously ill for some time but had not told anyone. Her attendance at Church, right up to the week before she died, both Sabbath and week-day was a testimony of her faithfulness to the appointed means of grace. She enjoyed her last Communion Season on earth so much that she would not go to the houses after the services to wait fellowship, but wanted to go home and go over in her mind what she had heard from God's servants. In my last conversation with her, the day before she died, she repeated part of the Lord's prayer "Thy will be done on earth" and spoke of how precious the Lord Jesus Christ was for salvation to all who depended upon Him.

We cannot but hope and pray that her prayers on earth will yet be answered; that her place will be taken by others; and that the Lord will

raise up the children instead of the parents. We extend our deepest sympathy to her elder sister, her daughter and two sons and seven grandchildren.

“A mother in Israel” (2 Sam. 20: 19)

G. I. M.

Book Reviews

The Works of Stephen Charnock Vol. IV. The Knowledge of God. Banner of Truth Trust. 598pp. £7.95.

The publishers claim that this volume is one of the finest examples of Puritan preaching. This is a high claim, but whether or not it be so, there is no doubt that the exercised believer will find much of value in this volume for his or her spiritual profit.

The book starts on a high note with discourses on the knowledge of God and on the knowledge of God in Christ from the text “And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou has sent.” John 17: 3. This takes up almost one third of the book. Four discourses on conviction of sin, the sin of unbelief (showing it to be the greatest sin), the misery of unbelievers, and who are unbelievers comprise the second third of the book. The final third is formed of a number of discourses relating to the Lord’s Supper, several discourses on the sufferings and death of Christ, and a final most appropriate discourse on obedience from the words “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.” John 15: 14.

All the discourses, as one would expect from one of the Puritans, deal thoroughly and minutely with the particular subject in hand, and open up and apply Scripture in a most convincing and edifying way. The discourses are very searching, some of them being particularly directed to establishing who are indeed the true people of God. A short extract from the discourse, “Unbelief — the greatest sin” may be included in a later issue of the Magazine as a small sample of what is in store for those who purchase and read this volume.

The Puritan writers need little commendation from us. Their praise is in all the Reformed Churches of Christ.

D. B. M.

The Milk of the Word by Peter Barnes. Banner of Truth Trust. 80pp. £1.50.

The author is a minister of the Presbyterian Church of Australia. His aim is to set out biblical truths in a solid and simple way. There are five chapters dealing with God, Christ, and The Holy Spirit. While the work

at first sight appears to be adequate, there are serious blemishes which prevent us recommending it to those for whom it is intended, i.e. "... all who have a heart hunger for the knowledge of God."

Firstly he raises the question of the authenticity of the last ten verses of the Gospel of Mark. He leaves the question unanswered. He should have come down firmly on the side of their authenticity. Again when giving advice which may help in Bible study (page 22) he writes "A good translation will help you here." Why does the author not strongly recommend the Authorised Version? It is fatal to direct those who have a "heart hunger for the knowledge of God" to other translations of the Bible. Further his approving quotation from J. H. Newman without reference to this man's defection to the Church of Rome is serious. (Page 40).

Again on page 51 when writing on the creation of man, he says "... He created him good." It would have been more Scriptural to refer to the definition in the Shorter Catechism Q10. Lastly his references for further reading could certainly have been amended to include Smeaton on "The Holy Spirit," Hugh Martin on "The Atonement," etc. R. M.

Sermons by Robert Murray McCheyne. Banner of Truth Paperback. 187pp. £2.25.

This is the third reprint of a selection of 26 of McCheyne's sermons which were published first by the Banner of Truth Trust in 1961. They are taken mainly from "Additional Remains of R. M. McCheyne" and from "A Basket of Fragments." They are gathered in this way in a convenient form.

The writings of McCheyne are well known, no doubt through the excellent biography written of him by his friend Rev. Andrew Bonar. Though McCheyne's preaching life was short — he died at the age of 29 — yet he preached as a dying man to dying men. The simplicity and plainness of McCheyne's style and diction make these sermons suitable for persons of all kinds and ages. They are convicting and arresting and manifest the savour of the love of Christ which so evidently characterised all his ministrations. The three concluding discourses on (1) future punishment eternal, (2) God's rectitude in future punishment, and (3) vessels of wrath fitted to destruction are solemn indeed.

It is gratifying to know that another reprint of this small volume is called for and we would desire that the sermons in it may be blessed to many. In this way the Scripture may be fulfilled — "He being dead, yet speaketh."

D. B. M.

Notes and Comments

"The Lord is with us"

It is rarely that the press give headlines to such an expression as "The Lord is with us," but this took place during the recent hijacking of the American T.W.A. airliner. The Captain of the plane, Captain Testrake warned against any attempt to rescue the passengers and crew by force and then sent the following message through the newspaper men to his family:— "I'd like my wife, family and friends back in Missouri to know that the Lord has taken very good care of us. He's seen us through some very trying times and He'll see us through to the end." These were certainly words of encouragement to his family at a time when he was held captive at gun point. In the event they did not prove vain words as the Lord was pleased to give deliverance from out of the hand of their enemies. It would be good to hear others speak in this way when in such circumstances.

The Middle East at present is a hot-bed of violence and strife, and it appears beyond the power of Western or other Governments to prevent such incidents of hijacking. The hijackers are men of violence and the Governments concerned will no doubt do all in their power to prevent such incidents. Only when the Gospel prevails in the earth will the world become a safe place for men to travel in.

Separate Schools

At a meeting of the Educational Institute for Scotland early in June, the retiring president, Mr Kenneth MacLauchlan, attacked religious segregation in schools and urged that it be consigned to the dustbin of history. He commended to all his colleagues, and most especially his (Roman) Catholic colleague's and friends, the urgent necessity of hastening E.I.S. policy on this matter. The conference also rejected moves to postpone a policy of multi-cultural education and agreed to set up a special committee with a strong role for anti-racist organisations.

While wholly sympathetic with the E.I.S. in its wish to get rid of the R.C. separate school system, yet it is not so clear where education is heading in relation to Christianity. We fear that what is in view from many quarters even within the present educational set-up is to consign Christianity also to the dustbin of history.

Our Mission in Zimbabwe

By the time these notes are read, there will be a few changes among the European staff on the Mission.

We trust that, D.V., Mr and Mrs Neil Murray will have arrived in Scotland, to the pleasure of many relatives and friends. Miss Jessie Coote will have returned to Zimbabwe, carrying letters from home, and many good wishes to all. It is providential that Miss Coote is free to help at the hospital so soon after Mr and Mrs Murray's departure, and her long experience of the work will be an asset.

Mr van Woerden will also be in Zimbabwe, D.V. It will be a moving experience for him to visit the Mbuma Hospital, which he did so much to establish, following upon the work done by the late Rev. and Mrs James Fraser, many nurses from overseas, and African assistants.

It is expected that the Rev. A. B. Ndebele and Mr van Woerden will proceed to Malawi. This visit will entail much careful negotiation, and consideration, as it is with a view to beginning work there. The prayers of the Lord's people will be very much valued.

Miss Etta MacLennan expects to join the Ingwenya Secondary School staff, as a teacher of Religious Knowledge and other subjects. Miss MacLennan spent three useful years at Ingwenya, some time ago.

It will be difficult for those who have never visited the mission to visualise the arrival and reception of visitors and staff from overseas. It is always an occasion of much pleasure for the Mission folk.

After a warm welcome at the airport from African and European members of staff, who have been able to get there, the party proceed to Mr William Campbell's hospitable home in Bulawayo, a pleasant bungalow, formerly the Manse where the Rev. and Mrs D. A. Ross lived. This is where Mr Campbell works as administrator and treasurer, and is in constant touch with the four main Mission Stations.

After refreshments the party usually proceeds to Ingwenya Mission, a distance of 28 miles, 22 miles of which consist of the main Harare highway, and then six miles across country, passing through African villages, on a rough road, pot-holed and criss-crossed by ditches and river beds, exceedingly hard on vehicles and drivers. There are also the hazards of children, chickens and pursuing dogs as we pass through the villages.

If travelling after dark, it is a pleasant sight from a hill-top, near the Mission, to see the array of lights in houses, and boys' and girls dormitories, and to know that one has arrived. To arrive in the day-time,

one feels one has reached a small oasis. The car passes through the Mission gates, with a friendly salute from the watch-man on duty. The large indigenous trees, the colourful shrubs and small gardens in front of each home, make a pleasing picture.

No one would imagine that behind the scenes, during school hours, there are over 600 pupils in the Primary and Secondary School engaged in the classrooms in various activities, with 16-20 teachers in attendance, and 20 to 30 workmen building or repairing existing buildings.

The fine church, in the centre of the Mission, and the long lines of school buildings can be seen in the background.

There is a great deal of hard work done in every department, but nothing will be of lasting value unless supported by earnest prayer there, and overseas.

“Pray that Jerusalem may have peace and felicity.”

J. N.

Church Notes

Deputy to Canada, Australia and New Zealand

The Editor expects to leave early in August (D.V.) for a three month visit as Church Deputy to Canada, Australia and New Zealand. He would crave the prayers of the Lord's people in connection with this tour of duty — that he may be preserved in the good providence of the Lord during his extensive travels and that the Lord may bless His own Word to the good of many souls.

We are glad to intimate that Rev. Lloyd Roberts, his wife and son arrived safely in Auckland, New Zealand at the end of June and he is engaged at present in supplying the congregation there.

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Outer Isles: At Stornoway on 27th August at 12 noon.

Skye: At Portree on 27th August at 11 a.m.

Western: At Laide on 17th September, at 11 a.m.

Northern: At Dingwall on 24th September at 2 p.m.

Southern: At Glasgow on 24th September at 6 p.m.

Australia and New Zealand: At Auckland on 24th January, 1986 at 2.30 p.m.

Post of Doctor at Mbumba 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 Mbumba itself there are some 22,000 persons so deprived.

Mission Posts etc.

Although the need for a doctor at Mbumba still remains, and that is an important item for the successful working of the Mission in Zimbabwe, I am happy to report to the readers that two former experienced members of staff are returning to the work in the persons of Miss Jessie A. Coote and Miss Etta MacLennan to take up the posts of Nurse/Midwife and Teacher of Bible Knowledge respectively. The Committee are deeply grateful to these ladies for their willingness to return to the work in Zimbabwe. Also, readers will be pleased to know that Miss Jean Nicolson whose knowledge of the Mission is so extensive has agreed to send to the Magazine from time to time items of interest from these parts. Mr J. van Woerden who again spent many years on the mission field is returning there as Church Deputy during July and August of this year and I take this opportunity of wishing him every success. All these things deserve a place in our prayers.

Alex. Murray, Clerk to the Committee.

Notice to Congregational Treasurers

It is hoped to place an order for Collection Envelopes with the printers later this year (D.V.). Will any congregation requiring a supply please advise Mr Kenneth Gillies of their requirements not later than 30th September 1985. Orders should be in "sets" — one set per contributor per year. Each set consist of 12 Sustentation and 10 Special Cölection envelopes and it would be reasonable to cover requirements for a 4/5 year period. The address is 137 Woodlands Road, Glasgow G3 6LE.

Absence of Editor — Notice to Correspondents

During the Editor's absence from this country, all correspondence for the Magazine from the beginning of August to the middle of November (D.V.) should be sent to Rev. John MacLeod, Free Presbyterian Manse, 16 Matheson Road, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis, PA87 2LH who has been appointed to act as Editor for this period. We are grateful to Mr MacLeod for undertaking this task. Congregational Treasurers should also send their acknowledgments to Rev. John MacLeod, Stornoway before the end of each month.

Reprinting of Books for Children

At present there is a scarcity of good religious books for children. If any reader has in their possession children's books on religious topics suitable for publication they should forward them to Rev. A. MacPherson, 5 Kempshott Road, Streatham, London, SW16 5LG, for consideration by the Publications or Welfare of Youth Committee.

Acknowledgment of Donations

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

Wellington Church Building Fund: Anon., "remembering the ministry of Rev. Wm. MacLean," £50.

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

Daviot: £10 per Rev. D. M. Boyd, for Manse Debt Fund; Envelope in plate "In memory of 1893," £10; Anon., for Manse Fund, £100.

Dingwall: S. C. Invergordon, £10 for Church Funds, per Rev. D. B. M.

Dumbarton: Anon., £10 in plate; Anon., Edinburgh, £5; Anon., "Car Fund," £10 in plate; Anon., "For Petrol," £10 per Mrs G. M., All for Congr. Fund; Anon., Stornoway, £15 for Sust. Fund per Rev. G. I. M.

Perth: Mrs. R. T., Stirling, £10 for Car Expenses; Mrs G. M., Stornoway, £5 for Sust. Fund, both per Rev. D. J. MacDonald.

Portree: C. A. M., £5 for Sust. Fund; M. A. M., £5 "where most needed;" both per F. M., Anon., £40 for Organisation Fund, envelope in plate.

Shieldaig: A friend, Inverness, £20 for Property, per D. Mc., Anon., £40 for Church Roof Repair; Anon., "In grateful memory of a dear husband and father from the estate of the late Mrs Catherine MacCuish, Kenmore," £200 for Cong. Expenses, per D. Mc.; Anon., £10 for Communion Expenses; Anon., £20 for Car Fund, per M. MacL.

Stornoway: C. B. Mackay, 3 Jamieson Drive (in memory of Willie), £5 for Congr. Funds; Anon., £10 for Home Mission; Anon., £10 for Sust. Fund, all per Treasurer.

Wellington: Rev. J. A. T. van Dorp acknowledges with sincere thanks \$1000 (Canadian) from John Mackay, Vancouver for Wellington Church Building Fund.