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The End of the Year

Silently but surely we are being carried forward on our journey from time to eternity and at the close of another year we approach another milestone on the way. Reflecting on the past, most of us will readily agree that the days and weeks and months have very rapidly passed by. "The spending of our years," says Matthew Henry, "is like the telling of a tale. A year when it is past is like a tale when it is told. Some of our years are as a pleasant story, others as a tragical one; most mixed, but all short and transient." Whether, in general, our recollection of 1985, if we are to see its end, be predominantly sorrowful or joyful, when the last day of the month ends it will have gone, with its account, before us. The mystery of Divine providence is such that we, in our personal circumstances cannot always trace the hand of Him who is "wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working," but His hand is in it nevertheless. Here, our view of events and our knowledge of the relationship between them, can at best be only partial and imperfect so that it is little wonder if we are often perplexed especially when in adversity. But we shall know hereafter. "When the records of eternity shall be exposed to view, all the counsels and results of that profound wisdom looked into; how will it transport when it shall be discerned: Lo, thus were the designs laid: here were the apt junctures and admirable dependencies of things, which, when acted upon the stage of time, seemed so perplexed and intricate." (Howe) Even death, that unwearied visitant, enters our homes only according to His appointment.

At such a time we believe those who have a concern for the Cause of Christ and who seek its good will be taking stock. "Who hath believed our report?" was the mournful complaint of the prophet Isaiah, himself pre-eminently one who was commissioned to speak for God, and did so

with no ordinary measure of eloquence and fervour. It is clear that he was not speaking on behalf of himself alone but for a particular class — “them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things.” Other reports receive credence without much difficulty but experience teaches us that this Report, the most momentous of all — “A faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” — is carelessly disregarded by most hearers. Over another year the Gospel has been preached from our pulpits, often in weakness, often with a feeling of discouragement, we believe, yet at the same time with the sincere desire that sinners be saved; but how many have believed the Report? The Gospel reveals Christ as being so worthy of our love and devotion that He ought to be received without hesitation or delay on the part of sinners. After all that the Holy Spirit has testified of Him in Isaiah, and in all the Scriptures so wonderfully placed in our hands, and after so long a period of the Spirit’s striving with us, the solemnity and significance of Paul’s declaration ought to be apparent, “If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.”

At the end of the year it is proper and comely that we should acknowledge the Lord’s kindness and sparing mercy. In this connection we have, among others, the God-honouring example of David, “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits,” and of Jeremiah, “It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed; because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is Thy faithfulness.” The “mercies” we receive so freely, so abundantly and so constantly, were dearly bought by the blood of the Son of God in our nature and the bearing of that in mind will surely have a humbling effect upon us. How precious is Christ Himself and how desireable that we should be found with a humble and contrite spirit exclaiming, “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!”

“Lord, Teach us to Pray”

By the Rev. William Jay (1769 - 1853)

This was the language of one of his disciples, as soon as he had heard *him* pray “in a certain place.” He did not interrupt our Lord in the exercise; but when he had ceased, he said, wishing to resemble him, “Lord, teach us to pray.”

It was well in him, not only to attach importance to prayer, and to

feel his own ignorance and insufficiency in the performance, but to address One who is always able and willing to hear and help us. None teaches like him. Four ways he teaches to pray.

First, By his Word. A form or model — why not both? — was immediately given these disciples — "He said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil." The Scripture at large has many instructions how we are to pray. In one place we are told to pray without ceasing, — in another, to come boldly to the throne of grace, — in another, to let our words be few, — in another, to ask in faith, not wavering, — in another, to ask in the name of Jesus — "If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it."

Secondly, By his example. Whoever lives without prayer, *he* did not. His example has the force of a law; and he "that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk even as he walked." As to place — he prayed in the wilderness, and he prayed in the garden. As to time — we read of his rising up early in the morning to pray; and praying in the evening; and continuing all night in prayer. As to observation — he prayed privately, alone, and with his disciples, and in public. As to cases — he prayed when he was baptized: and has taught us to sanctify all ordinances and duties by prayer. When going to send forth his apostles, he prayed, to teach us to engage in no enterprise relying on our own wisdom and strength. When he was transfigured, he prayed, to teach us how to escape the snares of glory and greatness. With strong crying and tears he made supplication, when he was sore amazed, and very heavy, to teach us, if afflicted, to pray. To teach us to love our enemies, when they pierced his hands and his feet, he prayed — "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." And to teach us how to finish our course, he dies praying — "Into thy hands I commend my spirit."

Thirdly, By his providence. Ah! Christians, this may explain many a dispensation that has made you tremble and grieve. "I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face; in their affliction they will seek me early," — that is, I will teach them to pray. What did Absalom when he wished for an interview with Joab, who, when sent for, refused to obey? Go, said he to his servant, and set his corn on fire, and then he will soon come. And so it fell out. And speedily and eagerly approaching him, Why hast thou done this? says Joab. Absalom replies — Not because I designed to injure thee; but I

wanted to converse with thee; and my messengers were rejected. So, when you are lifeless in prayer, and backward in the exercise, and disregard the invitation, "Seek ye my face," some fiery trial consumes or threatens some of your possessions or comforts; and, alarmed and perplexed, then you anxiously say unto God, "Do not condemn me; show me wherefore thou contendest with me." You then also want succour and consolation; and therefore pray, "Let thy loving-kindness be for my comfort, according to thy word unto thy servant." How many of the prayers of God's people in the Scripture were, both in their reality and excellency too, the offspring of those measures by which the Lord, in chastening, taught them!

Fourthly, By his Spirit. What means "praying in the Holy Ghost," but praying by his influence? Why is he called "the Spirit of grace and of supplications?" Is it not because he brings us upon our knees, and keeps us instant in prayer? If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his: and this Spirit awakens the conscience, and makes us sensible of our needy and perishing condition; and shows us the importance and glory of divine blessings; and causes us to hunger and thirst after righteousness; and leads us into all the truth connected with our relief; and, through the blood of the cross inspiring hope and confidence, enables us to cry, Abba, Father.

Nor is it only in the beginning of a devotional life that this assistance is required; "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities," says the apostle: "for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." And where is the Christian who would not often have given over the exercise, under a sense of his imperfections and weaknesses, but for the hope of the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ; and the promise, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" This has revived him again; and, out of weakness, he has been made strong; and delighted himself in the Almighty.

Happy they who, by the great Teacher, are thus taught to pray. You may be ignorant of many things; but you know your way to the throne of grace. You may have little learning; but you can speak the language of Canaan. You may be unnoticed of your fellow-creatures; but your fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And a life of prayer will soon be followed by an eternity of praise.

But how awful the condition of those who never express this desire — "Lord, teach us to pray!" Can the love or the fear of the Lord dwell in

you? Can you dispense with the blessings of salvation? Or do you think that God, who has said, "For all these things will I be inquired of," will deny himself? Well: *another* instructor will soon teach you to pray — a dying hour — a judgement-day. But you will pray in vain! "Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer: they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me."

Regeneration

The following is a further extract (slightly edited) from "The Economy of the Covenants" by Herman Witsius (1637 - 1708)

By that same word, whereby the Elect are called to communion with God and his Christ, they are also regenerated to a far more excellent life. For thus James saith, "of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures." It is therefore proper, we proceed from the subject of *effectual calling*, to that of *regeneration*.

But here all things are deep, and wrapt up in mystery. Who can unfold to us the secrets of his own corporal birth? Who can distinctly declare, in what manner he was poured out like milk, and curdled like cheese within the bowels of his mother? The Prophet himself, as if he was seized with a holy amazement, cried out, "I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance yet being unperfect." But if these things, which regard the origin of our body, and the beginnings of this animal life, are involved in such darkness as to frustrate the enquiries of the most sagacious; how much more involved are the things that constitute our spiritual regeneration, which none can doubt to be mystery all over?

But yet this is so necessary, that our Saviour declares, that without it there is no entering into the kingdom of heaven. It therefore deserves to be enquired into, that if we have perhaps attained to it, we may celebrate with becoming praises the glorious perfections of God our Father which shine so conspicuous in this illustrious work, and properly valuing our happiness, we may frame the whole tenour of our lives in a manner suitable to it.

We give this definition of it: "*regeneration* is that supernatural act of God, whereby a new and divine life is infused into the elect person

spiritually dead, and that from the incorruptible seed of the word of God made fruitful by the infinite power of the Spirit.”

We are *all dead in Adam*, 1 Cor. 15: 22, through the poison of the tempting serpent. *This murderer from the beginning*, had such success attending his endeavours, that all men who now exist are by nature *dead in trespasses and sins*. That is, first, They are separated at the greatest distance from God and his Spirit, who is the soul of their soul; and life of their life; or in the language of Paul, *alienated from the life of God*. Secondly, They are spiritually insensible of all spiritual things, and destitute of all true feeling: they don't rightly consider the load of their sins, because they are in them as in their element: nor have a right knowledge of their misery, *being past feeling*, nor any relish for divine grace, because it has not yet been conferred upon them; nor any longing after heavenly things, being ignorant of their worth. Thirdly, They are wholly incapable of every act of true life; “not sufficient of ourselves to thing any thing as of ourselves.”

The understanding is overspread with dismal darkness, “hath not set God before it,” “receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can it know them.” The will has no tendency to things unknown; and thus all the things of God are despised by it as mean. And if, at times, it seem to perform any things that have some appearance of vital actions; this proceeds not from a principle of life, but resembles those automatical or artificial motions by which statues, ingeniously framed, counterfeit living animals.

(To be continued)

Gleanings from Samuel Rutherford (4)

THE GLORY TO BE REVEALED

If we saw our Father's house and that great and fair city the new Jerusalem, which is above sun and moon, we should cry to be over the water, and to be carried in Christ's arms out of this borrowed prison.

The supper must be great cheer that is up in the great hall with the Royal King of glory, when the four-hours — the standing-drink in this dreary wilderness — is so sweet. When he comforteth afar off his poor heart-broken mourners in Zion, and sendeth me but his hearty commendations till we meet, I am confounded with wonder to think what it shall be when the fairest among the sons of men shall lay a king's sweet, soft cheek to the sinful checks of poor sinners. O Time, go swiftly, and

hasten that day! sweet Lord Jesus post, come flying, like a young hart or a roe upon the mountain of separation.

Christ shall then appear a new Christ. As water at the fountain, apples in the orchard and beside the tree, have more of their native sweetness, taste, and beauty, than when transported to us some hundred miles — I mean not that Christ can lose any of his sweetness in the carrying, or that he in his Godhead and loveliness of presence can be changed for the worse betwixt the little spot of earth you are in, and the right hand of the Father, far above all heavens — but the change will be in you, when you shall have new senses, and the soul shall be a more deep and capacious vessel to take in more of Christ. You may be willing to go to heaven; it is not lost time but gained eternity to enjoy the full Godhead. He is not there in his week-days' apparel as he is here with us, but in his marriage-robe of glory, richer, more costly, more precious than a million of worlds.

O how sweet is it that the company of the first-born should be divided in two great bodies of an army, and some in their country and some in the way to their country: if it were no more but to see once the face of the Prince of this good land, and to be feasted for eternity with the fatness, sweetness, dainties of the rays and beams of matchless glory and incomparable fountain-love. It were a well-spent journey to creep hands and feet through seven deaths and seven hells, to enjoy him up at the well-head. Only, let us not weary; it is a foul way, but a fair *home*.

The land of Emmanuel is an excellent soil. Oh, but his heaven lies well, and warmly, and heartsomely, nigh to the sun, the Sun of righteousness: the fruit of the land is excellent: glory grows on the very out-fields of it. O what dewings of pure and unmixed joys lie for eternity on these eternally springing mountains and gardens of spices. And what do we here? why do we toil ourselves in gathering sticks to our nest, when tomorrow we shall be gone out of this?

The sinners on earth and glorified in heaven are of one blood: they had once as foul faces and as guilty souls on earth as you and I have, but now they are made fair and stand before the throne, washed and without spot. Grace and glory have put them out of your kenning, but they are your born brethren: all the seas and fountains on earth cannot wash asunder your blood and theirs.

I know no obligation the saints have to this world, seeing we fare but upon the smoke of it: and if there be any smoke in the house, it bloweth upon our eyes. All our part of the table is scarce worth a drink of water. I am sure this is the best fruit of the cross, when we, from the hard fare of

the world, cry the more that God would send a fair wind to land us, hungered and oppressed strangers, at the door of our Father's house, which now is made in Christ our kindly heritage.

It is no uncertain glory we look for; our hope is not hung upon such an untwisted thread as "I imagine," or "It is likely;" but the cable, the strong tow of our fastened anchor is the oath and promise of Him who is eternal verity.

Christ possessed by faith here, is young heaven and glory in the bud.

Stoop, stoop, it is a low entry to go in at heaven's gates.

Christ cannot miscount one of the poorest of his lambs. No lad, no girl, no poor one, shall be amissing.

We do not take it ill if our children outrun us in the life of grace; why, then, are we sad if they outstrip us in the attainment of the life of glory?

Your daughter is not sent away, but only sent before — like unto a star which, going out of our sight doth not die and vanish, but shineth in another hemisphere — you can see her not, yet she doth shine in another country. If her glass was but a short hour, what she wanteth of time, that she hath gotten of eternity.

She enjoyeth him now without messages and in his own immediate presence, from whom she heard by letters and messengers before.

O happy and blessed death, that golden bridge laid over by Christ, my Lord, betwixt time's clay banks and heaven's shore.

Be content to wade through the waters betwixt you and glory with Christ, holding his hand fast, for he knoweth all the fords, you may sink under: you cannot drown being in his company.

Keep your taste, your love and hope in heaven: it is not good your love and your Lord should be in two sundry countries. Your sun is well turned and low; be nigh your lodging against night.

STRONG CONSOLATION

There be many Christians most like unto young sailors, who think the shore and the whole land doth move, when the ship and they themselves are moved. Just so not a few do imagine that God moveth, and saileth, and changeth places, because their giddy souls are under sail, and subject to alteration — to ebbing and flowing: but "the foundation of the Lord abideth sure."

You may yourself ebb and flow, rise and fall, wax and wane; but your Lord is this day as he was yesterday; and it is your comfort that your salvation is not rolled upon wheels of your own making.

God loved you before he laid the corner-stone of the world, and therefore he cannot change his mind because he is God.

They cannot but believe, and so be saved, who love Christ, and to whom he is precious — for the love of Christ hath chosen Christ as a lover — and it were not like God if you should choose him as your liking, and he did not choose you again, — nay, he hath prevented you in that, for you have not chosen him, but he hath chosen you.

Since the world began, hell and the wicked have been pulling at the church; but, God be thanked, they only break their arms by pulling.

VARIOUS

Hold fast the truth, for the world sell not one drachm-weight of God's truth, especially now, when most men measure truth by time, like young seamen setting their compass by a cloud.

If ye were not strangers here, the dogs of the world would not bark at you.

It is not our sins which the world persecutes in us, but God's grace and loyalty to King Jesus.

It is the apple of Christ's eye, his honour and glory, as the Head of the church, that I suffer for now, and that I will go to eternity with.

I dare venture into eternity and before my Judge, that I now suffer for the truth, because that I cannot endure that my Master, who is a freeborn King, should pay tribute to any of the shields or potsherds of the earth.

The bearing of a public cross so long, for the now converted privileges of the crown and sceptre of free King Jesus, the Prince of the kings of the earth, is glory booked in heaven.

Except you enjoy and possess Christ, you will be a cold friend to his spouse; for it is love to the husband that causeth kindness to the wife.

When Christ and the gospel are out of Scotland, dream not that your houses shall thrive, and that it shall go well with the nobles of the land.

I rejoice to see your son set his face in the right airth, now when the nobles love the sunny side of the gospel best.

I am for the present hanging by hope, waiting what my Lord will do with me; and if it will please my sweet Master to send me amongst you again, and keep out a hireling from my poor people and flock: it were my heaven till I come home, even to spend this life in gathering in some to Christ.

Providence hath a thousand keys to open a thousand doors for the deliverance of his own, when it is even come to the greatest extremity.

I know he now praiseth the grace that he was to preach.

LAST WORDS

Some days before his death he said, "I shall shine — I shall see Christ

as he is — I shall see him reign and all his fair company with him; and I shall have my large share.” He often repeated Jer. 15: 16, “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.” He said, “My eyes shall see my Redeemer. I know he shall stand at the last day upon the earth, and I shall be caught up in the clouds to meet him in the air, and I shall be ever with him — and what would you have more? — there is an end.” A little after he said, “I have been *a wretched sinful man*, but I stand at the best pass that ever a man did — *Christ is mine and I am his*,” and spake much of the white stone and the new name. Mr Blair, who loved to hear Christ commended with all his heart, said to him again, “What think you now of Christ?” To which he replied, “I shall live and adore him. Glory, glory, to my Creator, and to my Redeemer for ever! Glory shines in Emmanuel’s land!” In the afternoon of that day he said, “Oh! that all my brethren may know what a Master I have served, and what peace I have this day. I shall sleep in Christ, and when I awake I shall be satisfied with his likeness.” And he said, “This night shall close the door, and put my anchor within the vail, and I shall go away in a sleep by five o’clock in the morning,” which exactly fell out according as he had told that night. Though he was very weak, he had often this expression, “O for arms to embrace Him! O for a well-tuned harp!”

Obituaries

The late Rev. William MacLean M.A., Ness

William MacLean was born in Lochcarron in 1907, where his father was a respected elder in the Free Church Congregation. His mother, too, was a pious woman, and he was brought up to have a place and regard for the Gospel. He was religiously inclined from his young days, and was not much given to the frivolities of youth. He often attended Communion services with his father, and had a particular delight in hearing sermons, being especially interested in preachers with their difference ways of presenting the gospel.

He pursued his studies at Dingwall Academy and Glasgow University, where he graduated M.A. During these days his religious interest continued, together with his interest in preachers. During the time he was in Glasgow he stayed with Mr Thomas MacRae, our aged and worthy elder now resident in Dumbarton. He often attended St. Jude’s Free Presbyterian Church with the MacRae family, and came to have a very

high regard for Rev. Neil Cameron, the minister of that congregation. He was particularly impressed by the solemnity of Mr Cameron's preaching, and the convincing way he set forth the doctrines of the Word of God.



He was eventually appointed to a post in Lionel Public School, in Ness, in the Island of Lewis, in 1929, where he began his teaching career. When there, his interest in young people was shown by his forming a boys' club, in which his religious disposition was also shown by giving as one of his items to this club a lecture on the Sabbath. But he was destined to learn that this religious interest, his delight in ministers and sermons, and his high regard for a minister like Rev. Neil Cameron, were of no value for eternity, for, as the Saviour says "Marvel not that I say unto you, ye must be born again." He often paid visits to Glasgow, and on one occasion, on the April Communion Sabbath in 1932, he was at the evening

service in St. Jude's Church. Rev. Neil Cameron had passed away to his eternal rest the previous March. The preacher on this particular occasion was Rev. Donald Beaton, Oban, whose text was Luke 18: 27. Mr MacLean's experience is better told by himself in a letter he wrote to a godly pastor in England. It is as follows:— "God's heritage has often been refreshed and edified by relating to one another what the Lord has done for their souls. Come, said the Psalmist, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul. 'God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform.' Some He gently draws into His blessed fold like Lydia, others in a startling and sudden manner like Paul and the Philippian jailor — brands plucked as it were in a moment from the burning. So it was in my own case if I am truly one of the little flock.

Religious after a manner, from my youth up, I was, on Monday morning, April 25th, 1932, cut down, stripped of all the fig leaves of a general profession, and brought in guilty before the Judge of all. On the previous evening I had heard a dear servant of Christ preach from the words, 'The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.' (Luke 18: 27). At the time neither the words nor the sermon made

much of an impression on me. Often before I had trembled under the preaching of the Word, but not so that Sabbath evening. It was on the Monday forenoon that the words were applied with power, and the doctrines faithfully opened up in the sermon, of man's fall and his absolute inability to save himself, became awful realities to me. In the presence of the Holy One of Israel, in the light of His august majesty and the spirituality of His law, a strong conviction was wrought in my soul that by the works of the law no flesh can be justified. The door of escape by the covenant of works I saw to be closed and barred. I then looked to the election of grace, and hoped that I might be of the number given to the Son before the foundation of the world, but here again no door of hope was given. Instead, a subduing view of God's sovereignty silenced all rebellious thoughts, calmly drawing all the faculties of the soul into a willing acquiescence of His justice. I believed myself to be a deserving and rightful heir of wrath, and thought that there and then I was to enter a lost eternity. But in my low state He thought upon me, because His mercy endureth for ever, and was pleased to reveal His Son in me. He spoke peace to my soul, and for a time I saw no man save Jesus only."

This event took place on that Monday morning in a railway carriage in which he was seated alone, travelling between Glasgow and Mallaig on his way back to recommence teaching. He then continued to write as follows:-

"A time of darkness soon followed. The fountains of corruption within appeared to have broken up, and the cry of the Psalmist in the 51st Psalm was mine. Tossed thus with doubts and fears on the ocean of natural depravity, I was often concluding with the prophet that my strength and hope were perished from the Lord, and questioning why, if my experience was genuine, was it that I was now experiencing such vehement surgings of inward carnality and sin. I avoided the Lord's people, believing they regarded me as a hypocrite, and I was often harassed by the thought that I was a reprobate. At times I would get encouragement from portions of the Word of God. I also found the Memoirs of James Fraser of Brae, helpful. In one place he speaks of conviction of sin after conversion and quoted, and Oh! with what comfort to my distressed soul — 'But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions. Hebrews 10: 32.'

Shortly after this, the question of professing Christ publicly began to exercise me. I trembled at the thought of eating and drinking unworthily, and thereby eating and drinking damnation to myself. After a time the way was made clear. Some days before the time came I awoke one

morning quoting these words: 'Take eat, this is My body, which is broken for you.' On the sabbath night after the Sacrament the enemy pursued my soul, smote my life down to the ground, and before his fiery assaults I felt myself helpless. On the Monday I was comforted and sweetly melted down by the words 'Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon thee'."

A year from the date of his conversion he got up early one morning and began to pray that the experience he had passed through at that time would be renewed. When he had prayed for some time, and given up all hope of obtaining his desire, the following words were applied to his soul. "We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, till the day dawn and the day-star arise in your heart. 2 Peter 1: 19." He was thus taught that the Word of God was to be his staff and his stay.

After his conversion, Mr MacLean became very exercised as to whether or not he should leave the Free Church and join the Free Presbyterian Church. Prior to his conversion he had been an ardent Free Churchman, and he and the present writer had many a lively though friendly debate on the respective positions of the two Churches. At that time neither of us was in a state of grace, but after his conversion it became a matter of great concern to him, and he was very much exercised in prayer over the matter. He also had to struggle with the ties of flesh and blood, for he had a very high regard for his father, and a deep affection for his mother. He knew also that his brother and sisters would feel such a step, should he feel led to take it. After some time he came to the firm conclusion that the step should be taken. On the first occasion of his being in Lochcarron after he came to this mind, he had to pass the Free Church on his way to the Free Presbyterian Church. He felt the situation to be very trying, as his father was holding the service in the Free Church that particular Sabbath morning. Having come to this mind, however, as a result of much exercise of soul, he did not waver. He became a communicant in the Ness Congregation of the Free Presbyterian Church in 1935 as related above. Having become a Free Presbyterian in these circumstances, through much soul exercise, leading to a spiritual conviction as to the course of duty for him, he was loyally and affectionately attached to the testimony of our Church. This was very evident in his walk, life and witness. In this respect he was vastly different from many, whose luke-warmness with respect to the testimony for Divine Truth in the Free Presbyterian Church is an eloquent demonstration of the fact that they are entire strangers to the spiritual experiences of Mr MacLean.

In the providence of God he was not called up to the armed services during the second world war. About this time he became much exercised about another matter. Andrew Finlayson, the Missionary in Ness, had died, and Donald Thompson, the godly elder, was becoming old. Mr MacLean became exercised over his duty with respect to his beginning to take services in Ness. Eventually he felt led to do so, and having resigned his position as teacher in the Ness School, he became a Missionary in that Congregation in 1941.

Some were of the opinion that he had enough light at this time to enter the Ministry of the Church, but Mr MacLean did not at all share this opinion. He held very clear and definite views on the Call to the Ministry, and as he had fears, when he became a communicant, lest he should eat and drink damnation to himself, so he feared, above all things, to be one who would run without being sent, as a Minister, in which event he would be a disaster to the Church, and make shipwreck of his profession. The solemn views he obtained, when brought to the knowledge of Christ, of man's fall, his inability to save himself, together with the sovereignty, holiness and glory of God, impressed upon him the solemn standing of professing to be an ambassador of Christ, dealing with the doctrines of God's word, and the eternal interests of souls. He therefore waited upon the Lord to call him, if that would be His holy will. He was much exercised over this, as he was in all spiritual matters. While praying earnestly over his case he was at a certain Communion. The Table at which he sat was served by the late Rev. Donald Campbell, Edinburgh. Mr Campbell addressed the communicants from the words, "My sheep hear My voice, . . . and they follow Me." He spoke of how the sheep of Christ heard the voice of the Lord in the law and then in the Gospel. Mr MacLean felt he could follow the experiences of the sheep so far. Mr Campbell then went on rather unexpectedly to speak of Peter, and how he heard the voice of the Shepherd saying to him, "Feed my sheep and feed my lambs." Mr MacLean felt that as he had so closely followed the former part of the address, he could also respond to this call to be an under-shepherd to feed the flock of God. He applied to the Outer Isles Presbytery to be received as a student studying for the ministry of the church, and was so received by that Court on 30th April 1946. He completed his Divinity Course under the church Tutors, who at that time were the late Rev. Donald Beaton, and the late Rev. D. A. MacFarlane. On completion of his course he was licensed by the Outer Isles Presbytery in June 1948. A Call being addressed to him by the Ness Congregation, he accepted this,

and was subsequently ordained and inducted to this Congregation on 18th August of that year.

One of the attractive features of Mr MacLean's character was his affectionate disposition. On occasions this very trait may have led him to give a place to some who afterwards proved unworthy of it, but the fault was theirs and not his. Engaged in his ministry in the parish of Ness, in the exercise of a true and strong love to the souls of that congregation, the Lord was pleased to bless his labours to the ingathering of souls to Christ. On one occasion he wrote to a friend describing his experience the previous Sabbath evening in the little church at Skigersta. He had enjoyed remarkable liberty, and wrote that as he walked home he was convinced that "every step I took was a step to eternal glory, and I felt such love to Ness that I could have kissed the ground."

It therefore occasioned great surprise to his many friends, when, in 1962, he decided to accept a Call to the Congregation in Gisborne, New Zealand. Previous to this, he had been sent out by the Church as a Deputy to visit New Zealand and Australia. He had no idea then that his field of labour was to be changed. When the Call came, however, he felt the Lord guiding him to leave the Ness he loved so much, and begin a ministry in Gisborne, on the other side of the world. The proof that he had the mind of the Lord in going was confirmed by the many seals to his ministry in these distant parts. His naturally ardent temperament, moulded by grace, made him ideal for the work of building up, not only the congregation in Gisborne, but also in Auckland. In both places he had the pleasure of seeing churches built and sizeable congregations formed, in which the doctrine, worship and government of the Reformed Church were established. While minister in Gisborne, he often visited Australia, preaching in Sydney as well as in our congregation in Grafton. In all these places he was held in the highest regard, as a faithful preacher, a faithful and zealous minister of Christ, whose chief desire was the glory of God in the salvation of their souls.

At a later stage, he was translated from Gisborne to Grafton, in Australia, and in 1976 returned home on being called to the Ness Congregation, where he was re-inducted on 10th February of that year.

As a preacher he was serious and solemn in his presentation of the Truth of God. Due to a tendency to speak rather quickly, he may not have been easy to follow on being heard for the first time, but this disadvantage would soon be overcome as his hearers became used to his manner of speaking. His doctrine was sound and scriptural as he set forth these great God-glorifying truths which he had so deeply learned in the

experience of his own soul. His was not a formal ministry. He thirsted after the presence of God as he preached, and sought earnestly after the gracious liberty of the Holy Spirit, without which all is dark and barren. When this liberty was denied him he became very cast down and mourned over his sad condition. On the other hand, as previously stated, when granted spiritual liberty, he greatly rejoiced, and thus truly experienced the meaning of the words of his Master "take my yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." He was a clear preacher of law and gospel, and having many spiritual experiences himself he was able to meet the Lord's people in their various experiences with a word of comfort and instruction. He was particularly helpful to them in handling their temptations, and showing the way in which the Lord was opening a door of escape from them. He was a true "son of consolation". His preaching carried a strong note of witnessing, as he raised his voice against the moral and religious evils which abound in this evil and adulterous generation. This spirit of witness was also demonstrated in the many pamphlets which he wrote on such subjects as Arminianism, Mormonism, etc. These pamphlets were published by the Westminster Standard Publications, which was commenced by some of the young men in the Gisborne Congregation who received spiritual benefit from his ministry. He wrote them under the pen-name of Ergatees.

As a man and a Christian he was of a bright disposition, and an excellent companion to the spiritually minded. The eminently pious Miss Charlotte MacKay of Thurso used to say "I enjoy getting William MacLean's letters, they always seem to have good news." Although no stranger to being cast down by reason of many temptations, he was a happy Christian. His mind dwelt very much on the Millenium, the beginnings of which he had hoped to see. He was consequently much in prayer for the conversion of the Jews, and spoke often of this on his death-bed.

It may not be out of place for the writer of this notice to remark that he and William MacLean were the closest of friends for over 50 years. On the last occasion that I assisted him at the Ness Communion, when we came into the Manse after the Sabbath morning service he asked me "When did we last sit together at the Lord's Table?" I replied that I could not remember. "I do not think I shall sit at the Table again," he said, "for I felt so much of the presence of the Lord in the sermon and the Table address." It was indeed the last time we sat together at the Lord's Table, though he himself did sit again the following March.

On 1st June, 1985, he passed away to his everlasting rest, in his

nephew's house in Stornoway. In his death the Lord's people have lost one who loved them and delighted in their company, as well as seeking their spiritual growth. Sinners have lost a faithful ambassador of Christ who prayed for them and sought the salvation of their souls. The Free Presbyterian Church has lost a gifted and zealous preacher of the everlasting gospel, who discerned the value of our testimony, and appreciated and loved our stand for the Word of God in its entirety. His many friends at home and abroad feel that a prince in Israel has indeed fallen. Their consolation is that they are assured that he is now among those of whom the Scripture says, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them." Rev 14: 13. "Help, Lord, for the Godly man ceaseth, for the faithful fail from among the children of men." Ps. 12: 1.

To his sisters and other relatives we extend our sincere sympathy.

— D. McL., Glasgow.

Mr John Cumming, Elder, Glasgow

John Cumming was born in Torran, Isle of Raasay, on 25th February, 1893, the youngest member of a family of nine. His mother, who was generally known as a God-fearing woman, died when he was only six weeks old. His father died a few years later, leaving him an orphan. He vividly remembered his father's remains being conveyed in an open boat to the south end of the island for burial, and he never forgot his deep sense of loss of both father and mother. He was brought up by his grandmother until, at the age of 14, his sister took him to her own home in Glasgow, where he began to work in his brother-in-law's grocery shop. When he reached 16 years of age, he joined the grocery chain known as Andrew Cochrane, whom he faithfully served for 49 years, until he retired in 1958. During this time he was offered a post of Manager in a large new shop, which would, in the eyes of his employers, be a very attractive position, and showed their high regard for him. The adoption of this position would mean, however, that he would not be able to walk the long distance to St Jude's Church on the Sabbath Day. He would not, of course, think of taking public transport on that holy day. He therefore declined the appointment, and gave his reason. The impression this decision made on his superiors was considerable, as he put his love for the means of grace before advancement in his career. He made it a matter of prayer that a shop would become available which would suit his requirements. Shortly afterwards he was offered a new shop in Byres

Road, and secured the vacancy of a flat only a few minutes walk from it. He was now also within walking distance of St Jude's. He believed that this was an answer to prayer, and was very much encouraged by the fact that the Most High, as the Hearer and Answerer of prayer, intervened in this remarkable way. To quote his own words "I received more than what I asked for."

We understand the ministry of Rev. Neil Cameron was blessed to him, in bringing home to him a sense of his sin and misery. He was granted the liberty of the gospel through a portion of Scripture being blessed to him while lying in bed at night. We have not been able to discover what this particular passage was. On one occasion he made up his mind to go to the Kirk Session, with a view to going to the Lord's Table for the first time, but when he reached Pitt Street where the church was, unbelief and the temptations of Satan got the better of him, and he turned back. It was thus some years before he eventually came, being on this occasion encouraged by a portion of the Word of God, "This is our God, we have waited for Him and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him: we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation. Is. 25: 9." This took place in 1946. In March 1949 he was ordained to the eldership. He was deeply attached to the Free Presbyterian Church, and its distinctive stand on the side of Christ and His Truth, and sought in his life and conversation, as well as in the Courts of the Church to uphold this testimony as enabled by grace. His hospitable home was open to the Lord's people at Communion Seasons, in which he took a particular delight. As related above, he was a man who took his concerns to the throne of grace, and knew the rejoicing of those whose prayers are answered. With the psalmist he could say "But verily God heard me: He attended to the voice of my prayer: Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor His mercy from me. Psalm 66: 19, 20."

His last illness was a long one, as he was confined to hospital for over a year. He bore this with Christian fortitude, being submissive to the will of God. One of the nursing sisters remarked on more than one occasion how much she admired his faith. The end came peacefully in his 92nd year, in the early hours of Sabbath 13th January, 1985. This was, we firmly believe, the beginning of an eternal Sabbath for him, with the Saviour who loved him and gave himself for him. For him to die was gain.

To his sorrowing widow and family we extend our sincere sympathy. May their father's God be their God.

— D. McL., Glasgow.

Book Reviews

The Object and Acts of Justifying Faith by Thomas Goodwin. Banner of Truth Trust — Price £7.95.

This volume is a reprint of the eighth volume of Goodwin's original works. It is a masterly treatise on saving faith by Goodwin who was one of the most eminent of the Puritans. He writes extensively on many aspects of justifying faith in this volume which extends to nearly 600 pages.

It is divided into three main sections, each section consisting of many chapters and divisions. He deals in the first part with the object of faith, in the second with the acts of faith and, finally, with the properties of justifying faith.

In part one, where Goodwin explains the object of faith, which is the mercy of God, he expounds many scriptures but he concentrates mainly on Exodus 34: 4, 7: "The Lord God merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth," etc.

He begins with the merciful nature of God Himself and proposes this as one of the pillars of faith. Then there follows the proclamation of mercy which includes in it Christ Himself, who was promised from the beginning, and also all the promises, goodness and grace which God was to bestow upon sinners and upon His Church. Goodwin observes that both names of God, namely Jehovah and God, and the mercy of God are found together, because He would have His mercies to His children to bear the resemblance of His very being. The name Jehovah means the eternity of God or the One who is from everlasting to everlasting, while the name God sets forth His power. He says that according to the Hebrew doctors the name Jehovah signifies as follows: the letter J, He will be; HO, He is; HAVAH, He was, and that we have proof of this in Revelation 1: 4. The use of all this is the encouragement, support and object of our faith that we may trust in Him at all times and seasons.

In the second section, Goodwin deals with the acts of faith or, as he calls it, the offices of faith. It is the office of faith to justify, sanctify and to enable us to live in communion with the Father and with the Son, but he singles out the act of justifying and this is explained in the chapters that follow. There is the absolute necessity of the Holy Spirit to enlighten the sinner in the knowledge of Christ as neither rational nor notional knowledge can do it.

In the final part of this volume, the properties and excellence of faith are set forth. Faith excludes all boasting and gives all the glory to God

and to Christ and nothing to itself. Goodwin insists: "All the works in the world cannot unite you to Christ and justification by Him; this is faith's work alone."

There can be little doubt but that when the Lord revives His work, interest also will revive in the works and writings of the Puritans. The Banner of Truth Trust have done good service to the cause of truth and the Reformed Faith in reprinting this volume.

D. N.

Daily Readings from J. C. Ryle — Volume 2 (John). Compiled by Robert Strachan. Evangelical Press. 384pp. £4.95.

We feel sure that most readers of this Magazine need no introduction to J. C. Ryle. In his day he was a fearless, forceful defender of the Reformed Faith and his many books and tracts have been widely distributed throughout the world. In this large, sturdily-bound paperback we have a compilation of extracts from his Expository Thoughts on John's Gospel, an extract for each day of the year. Of his original work Ryle wrote: "It has cost me a large amount of time and thought and labour. But if the Holy Ghost shall make it useful to the Church of Christ, I shall feel abundantly repaid." This being so, surely time devoted daily to the reading and studying of what we have in this book would be time well spent.

J. McL.

Notes and Comments

The AIDS Epidemic.

With headlines in virtually every newspaper, readers are well aware of the rapidly increasing and spreading scourge of AIDS, or Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, and of the alarm it has created. Its origins in the sin of Sodom, and its spread by promiscuity are known, although seldom are these practices condemned outright. Its further spreading by the infected needles used by drug addicts is also common knowledge. The infection of the innocent by blood transfusion has also claimed victims while, although rarely mentioned, some innocent marriage partners and even casual users of others' tooth brushes are also potential victims.

The extremely rapid spread of the disease gives more than ample cause for alarm. For instance, of over 12,000 victims in the United States, roughly 8,000 were diagnosed in the past year. In Britain, where the first case was diagnosed only four years ago, there have already been 206 cases

and 114 deaths. In the States the number of new cases is reported as doubling in less than a year. A health official in New York recently stated that AIDS was already the leading cause of death among men in their 20's and 30's, and likely, by 1986 to be the leading cause of death of males between 15 and 64.

Nor are the forecasts of medical arrestment of infection or successful treatment promising. Despite assiduous and "promising" research, a vaccine, to confer immunity is still several years away, while, owing to the very nature of the illness, there is no guarantee of success in discovering an effective medication for treating AIDS.

Inevitably there has been urgent official reaction. The Minister of Health has allocated a second sum of a million pounds to health authorities, mainly for testing all blood donations for AIDS traces, and to provide a public education programme to improve understanding of the disease, not only by those most at risk, but by the public at large. The World Health Organisation have issued a new and "gloomy" report, and have already called a conference in Geneva and planned another in the "Third World".

Published Comments.

There is little or no reference to immorality in any of the press reports. For instance, while admitting that "personal curbs of promiscuity could make a major contribution to the fight to stop the spread of the incurable disease," Mr Barney Hayhoe, Health Minister, also insisted that "changes had to take place as a result of education and persuasion. There could be no question of coercion and compulsion." (Imagine similar laxity with the known source of any other infectious disease!) It was also reported in the press that British homosexuals were to be commended for agreeing to refrain from offering blood donations.

The June bulletin of the American Christian Anti-Communism Crusade provides a refreshing contrast, as the following extracts show:

"For centuries, homosexual conduct was regarded as a disease by the medical profession, as immoral by religious institutions, and as illegal by government. In the past two decades, this has changed dramatically. The medical profession removed the stigma of disease from such conduct, legislatures removed the stigma of crime, and some religious bodies removed the stigma of sin The results are now evident."

"Legislatures, churches and physicians must combine to protect the community health by stripping the camouflage of legality and morality from this disease-generating life-style." (We would add that, in terms of

AIDS and other similarly transmitted diseases, the last phrase applies to all forms of promiscuity.)

Mary Whitehouse, too, is quoted in the Scotsman for 30th September, from a letter to church leaders:

"The roots of the calamities which are now befalling us; from AIDS to child abuse, all have their origins in the destruction of personal and national character and the undermining of the Christian values which have characterised British society, during recent decades."

General Comment.

Considering the almost inevitable consequences of AIDS, in terms of mortality rate, increasing rate of occurrence, and possible or even likely further modes of infection including for example parental transmission to children via heredity or even shared toiletry, Government officials and others are playing down the emergency of a disease already referred to as an emerging "epidemic" and a "plague". Vital measures, such as legislating to stop the spread of infection, are surely called for. This would, however, mean both cancelling recent permissive laws, and urgently discouraging "the new morality", "the permissive society", all forms of promiscuity and uncleanness, as well as admitting that all the experts and legislators were wrong! They may yet be brought to this admission, if and when, as is quite possible in a few years, hundreds of thousands are dying of AIDS annually.

Christians everywhere acknowledge that God's judgements are abroad in the world. Consider the sin of Sodom and its consequences (Genesis, Chapters 18 and 19), and the sin of Baal-peor, where 24,000 died in the plague. (Numbers, Chapter 25 and Psalm 106, verses 28 — 31). Apart from Phinehas' action, many, many more were liable to perish. Considering all we have mentioned, and all one reads and sees of modern society, the sin is already here, on an international scale. Is not the plague also already broken out, as surely as in Shittim. (Numbers, Chapter 25, verse 1). "Be not deceived. God is not mocked. For whatsoever a man soweth, that also shall he reap." (Galations, Chapter 6, verse 7). The same is true of nations.

An urgent reform of national laws, back to a Biblical basis, is required. Moral, clean-living practices may yet have to be enforced by law, with severe penalties for breaking them, before the AIDS plague is stayed. Above all, we need and should all pray for repentance and a turning to God and his commandments, nationally and internationally.

— L. McL.

Married Priests Campaign Against the Pope.

According to a recent Daily Express report, from Vivienne Heston in Rome, "a show of defiance is (i.e. in the Summer) being staged by 150 married priests a few miles from Pope John Paul II's lakeside summer retreat at Castelgandolfo."

They had evidently opened a congress to persuade "The highly conservative Pope" to moderate his inflexible opposition to every suggestion that priests should marry. The main overt basis of their complaint is the forecast of a critical shortage of priests, based on statistics such as the following:

There are already 70,000 married priests worldwide.

In the past 20 years, 100,000 priests have quit Holy Orders (sic) to marry.

There are evidently 8,000 requests for "dispensation", i.e. permission to quit the priesthood and marry in the Church, i.e. the R.C. Church, lodged at the Vatican.

It is interesting to note the "seriousness" of the projected shortage of priests. It is expected that the present number of 30,000 priests in the U.S.A. will be halved by the year 2,000, with a similar percentage drop forecast for Britain. It seems that Cardinal Basil Hume is urging that married men be recruited to the priesthood, if a critical shortage is to be avoided. The anomaly of married priests in a church with a core policy of a celibate priesthood, based on their misinterpretation or misapplication of Christ's state on earth applied to priests, is no new phenomenon, but organised opposition, as it were on the Pope's doorstep, is a fresh development.

Our readers are well aware of the fact that the doctrine and practice of celibacy is thoroughly unscriptural, and can be seen in true perspective in 1st Timothy, Chapter 4:

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.

"Speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron.

"Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."

Nor, although even a projected shortage of priests is encouraging, need we expect too much wisdom from the married priests. There is no sign of mass exodus from Roman Catholicism to Protestantism, and no

expressed repentance either for having taken or for having broken their marriage vows. It is also strange that 70,000 seem to remain within or around the Roman Catholic church, when the Pope is so conservative. It is predictable that the Roman Catholic church will, as usual, change and accommodate even further if necessary to secure more priests, while still claiming Papal conservatism, infallibility, and to remain the historic apostolic church under the supposed "vicar of Christ", in reality the Man of Sin.

— L. McL.

Papal Comfort!

When we hear of thousands of our fellow sinners being suddenly, unexpectedly removed from time to eternity, as was the case in September when the Mexican earthquake occurred, it surely becomes us to humble ourselves, marvel at His longsuffering toward us, and watch and pray lest the Son of Man summon us also at an hour that we think not. We would be hard-hearted indeed if the spectacle of men, women and children, suffering and sorrowing, failed to move us, whatever creed they embrace, but our concern would find expression, we hope, in a way far different from the manner of the one who claims spiritual oversight of the vast majority of the Mexican people. Not so long ago he was in that part of the world making good that claim.

According to the Rome correspondent of the "Daily Telegraph" the Pope sent the earthquake-stricken people a message in which, among other things, he declared that he was praying for "those who died." The unscripturalness of that is so obvious that no comment is necessary. But what of the living? "I entrust," he said, "to the Madonna of the sanctuary of Guadeloupe to whom all Mexicans are devoted — as I myself saw — all those who are suffering. She will bring them comfort and above all the strength to rebuild with faith all that has been destroyed." Poor benighted sinners indeed who are deluded into thinking that a dumb idol will help them in their distress and comfort them in their sorrow! The forementioned sanctuary or basilica of Guadeloupe where this graven image is housed seems to be truly a synagogue of Satan. In a recent publication written by a Roman Catholic we find the following description of part of a "Black Mass" which was celebrated in it and not so long ago: "A truly sinister scene was enacted at the basilica of St. Maria de Guadeloupe in Mexico City, where a goat was sacrificed in front of the high altar. Now it is not only the fact of an animal being killed, and in church, that excites comment. It seems to have called for none from the people there present who gaped, were astonished, and

then walked away no doubt concluding that it was all part of the new order within the Church. And so it was. But Archbishop Gomez, who had charge of the basilica, knew more than that, as did the strange crowd of people to whom he actually rented it for the occasion . . .” (**The Broken Cross** by Piers Compton. p124) For sinners in trouble there is but one sanctuary to go to. “And in the day of trouble great see that thou call on me; I will deliver thee, and thou my name shalt glorify.”

How old is the earth?

Those who are opposed to the literal interpretation of the account of creation recorded under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, attack the plain Biblical account from two directions, using theories which were invented to accommodate the views of unbelieving scientists. Their first line of attack is the “gap theory” which proposes a period of thousands (or perhaps millions) of years between Genesis 1: 1 and 1: 2. The second line of attack is more subtle and insinuates that the days mentioned in Genesis Chapter 1 lasted longer than 24 hours, the so-called “day-age” theory. Like the “gap theory,” this theory suggests each “day” could have lasted thousands or millions of years, making the whole of Genesis Chapter 1 cover a period of several thousand million years. The Hebrew word “yom” is translated throughout the Old Testament by the English word “day”. The context always shows how “day” is to be understood. For example, in Genesis 1: 5, 14, 16, 18, “day” means the hours of daylight as distinct from night. A numerical adjective (first, second, etc.) invariably limits the sense of the word “day” to a 24-hour period in all the historical narratives and so it is in the narrative of creation. It should be noted that acceptance of the “gap” and “day-age” theories makes a nonsense of the remainder of Scriptural chronology. For example, Adam lived 930 years (Genesis 5: 5). If the sixth day lasted thousands of years, when did Adam die?

Whitcomb and Morris (the authors of “The Genesis Flood” and other books) have certainly done much to demonstrate the folly of popular “scientific” theories of creation and evolution. Moreover, they have demonstrated how scientific discoveries and observations may be interpreted in a way entirely consistent with what is recorded in Scripture. In regard to the age of the earth, a recent publication, “The Velocity of Light and the Age of the Universe,” by an Australian scientist, Barry Setterfield, has produced evidence related to alterations in the speed of light which gives an age which agrees with the much-maligned traditional chronology of Scripture, namely that the earth was created approxi-

mately 4000 years B.C. Unlike the "Monthly Record", we do not believe that chronology is separable from the doctrine of creation. The first chapter of Genesis links the two matters inseparably and, therefore, to cast doubt on chronology is, in our view, to cast doubt on creation itself. To cast doubts on the supernatural events of Genesis Chapter 1 is to cast doubts on the entire Word of God.

R. J. D.

Additional Note

Robert L. Dabney reckoned by his biographer to be entitled to "the first place among the theological thinkers and writers of his century" had this to say to his students in regard to the foregoing. "I would beg you to notice how distinctly either of the current theories contradicts the standards of our Church. See Confession of Faith, Ch. 4: 81, Larger Catechism, questions, 15, 120. Our confession is not inspired; and if untrue, it should be refuted. But if your minds are made up to adopt either of these theories, then it seems to me that common honesty requires of you two things; to advertise your Presbyteries, when you apply for license and ordination, of your disbelief of these articles; that they may judge whether they are essential to our system of doctrine; and second; to use your legitimate influences as soon as you become Church rulers, to have these articles expunged from our standards as false."

It would be interesting to know how many ministers and office-bearers in the Free Church adhere to the views expressed in "The Monthly Record," the official organ of their Church.

Christmas

The observance of Christmas as a religious festival has (1) no warrant from Scripture. (2) There is no warrant for the 25th December being the birthday of the Redeemer. (3) Its observance was not known until the Fourth Century. (4) It replaced a heathen festival and retains in many of its customs its connection with the day following the Roman "Saturnalia." (F.P. Mag. Vol. 32).

Church Notes

Zimbabwe Mission — Post of Administrator/Treasurer

An immediate vacancy has arisen for this important post. The work covers our Mission's financial operations along with the general administration of the activities in Zimbabwe and calls for a considerable degree-

of skill and dedication on the part of the successful applicant. Enquiries and applications for the post to Rev. A. Murray, Clerk to the Missions' Committee, F.P. Manse, Lairg, Sutherland, IV27 4EH. (Tel:0549-2176).

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Outer Isles: At Stornoway on 3rd December at 12 noon.

Skye: At Portree on 25th February at 11 a.m.

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

Northern: At Dingwall on 22nd January at 2 p.m.

Southern: At Dundee on 26th November at 7 p.m.

List of Communions

The list of Communions has been corrected for 1986. The Editor would be grateful for any further corrections that are required.

Post of Graduate Teacher of English/History at Ingwenya

Applications are invited from suitably qualified persons for this important post at the John Tallach Secondary School, Ingwenya, Zimbabwe. Employment will begin (DV) at the beginning of the next school session in January 1986. Enquiries etc., to Rev. A. Murray, F.P. Manse, Lairg, Sutherland, IV27 4EH. (Tel: 0549-2176).

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 1984 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.

Day of Humiliation and Prayer

The following resolution was passed by the Synod at its meeting in May 1985:-

“That the Synod appoint Wednesday, 18th December, 1985, as a Day of Prayer throughout the Church for our nation. Bearing in mind; that the people in general have no regard for God's Word — That they have forsaken the House of God and the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ — And that desecration of the Lord's Day is manifest — That transgression of the Law as to immorality and violence increases — To pray that God would in wrath remember mercy toward our Nation —

By pouring His Holy Spirit upon his believing people, and enable them to hold fast to the Word of God, His Law and the Gospel of Christ in heart and conduct; by influencing many living without God, by His government in providence, to attend the House of God and the faithful preaching of the Gospel, and by His Spirit's power bring many to Repentance toward God over their sins, and to faith in His Son unto their salvation; and to godly living — That God would for the sake of His Son Jesus Christ, so favour our Nation in His Sovereign mercy."

Acknowledgments of Donations

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

Sustentation Fund: £50 from Anon.

Foreign Mission Fund: £30 from Anon.

Dominions and Overseas Fund: £20 from Anon.

Trinitarian Bible Society: £10 from Tolsta Friend.

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

Breasclete: "Anonymous", £670, for Congregational Funds; Dumbarton: I.C., £10, Congregational Fund; Banacharaid Glaschu, £10 for Congregational Fund; Anon., Cardross, £5 for Communion Expenses, per treasurer.

Dundee: Psalm 155: 12, £40, where most needed, per Mrs Bain.

Fort William: Mrs S., £30, envelope in plate; C. C., Glasgow, £20, Psalm 55: 22, per D. MacN.; Friend, £10, Psalm 22: 31, per D. MacN.; Psalm 115: 12, £25, Minibus Fund, per D. MacN.; Anon., £17, envelope in plate; Miss M. M. MacL., £10, per F. R. MacN.; Friend, Syke, £10 for Communion Expenses, per Rev. J. A. MacD.; Friend, Caol, £10 for Sustentation Fund, per Rev. J. A. MacD.

Greenock: A Friend, Isle of Mull, £10 for Church Door Collection, envelope in collection plate; A Friend, Easter Ross, £10 for Congregational Purposes, per Rev. L. MacLeod; Mr D. R. M., Glasgow, £20 for Congregational Purposes, per Rev. L. MacLeod.

Inverness: In memory of late husband, Mr A. McCuish, from Mrs M. MacCuish and family, £25 for African Famine Relief, per Rev. A. F. M.

North Uist: Malcolm Macdougall, £50 for Church Repair; Miss Macdonald, Clarkston, £50 for Church Repair; Wellwishers, £500 for Church Repair; Friend, £10 for Communion Expenses; Friend, Harris, £10 for Communion Expenses, per Rev. A. Morrison; Alastair and Flora Macdonald, Glebe, £20 for Congregational Purposes, per Rev. A. Morrison; Friend, £40 for Congregational Purposes, per Rev. A. Morrison.

Staffin: Correction in April issue of magazine, the following donation should have read, Anon., £15 where most needed, per D. M. I.

Stirling: Mr and Mrs Townsley, £100 for Stirling Congregation Property Fund, per Rev. D. J. MacD.

St. Jude, Glasgow: Mrs McK. (two donations), £10 for Congregational Fund; Anon., £20 for Congregational Fund; Mr A. M., £5 for Bus Fund; Anon., £10 for Bus Fund; Matt. 6: 3 (three donations), £30 for Bus Fund; Anon., £10 for Bus Fund, per Rev. D. M.; A Friend, £10 for Bus Fund, per Rev. D. M.; P. W., £5 for Sustentation Fund; Anon., £40 for Sustentation Fund; Anon., £12, T.B.S.

Stornoway: Miss K. A. Macleod, Callanish, £20 for Car Expenses, per Rev. J. Macleod; A Friend, £7 for Sustentation Fund, per Rev. J. Macleod; Tolsta Friend, £10 where most needed, per treasurer.