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The Lord shall guide thee continually

The promises of the Lord are sure to all His people for they are yea and amen in Christ Jesus. However tried His people may be — and they are often tried and tempest-tossed, yet all the promises of God's Word are theirs in Christ Jesus. These precious promises belong to the weak as well as the strong. They are intended for their help and encouragement in their wilderness course in this world and when, in the strength of divine grace, they are enabled to lay hold upon them, they are strengthened and encouraged by them. What is more fitted to bring comfort to their soul than being enabled to embrace the promise, of whatever nature it may be, and to rejoice in it and in Him who is the sum and substance of all the promises of God?

The true child of God is painfully aware of his proneness to wander out of the right way. Of one thing he is fully persuaded, and it is this — that he cannot keep himself. He finds in himself an evil of heart of unbelief which departs from the living God. Therefore if left to himself he must wander in a wilderness wherein there is no way. Consequently he is acutely conscious of his need of direction and guidance in the way in which he should go. In this he differs radically from the worldling who needs no such guidance or direction, being fully persuaded that he is well able to mark out his own course. The worldling in his worldly wisdom is a law to himself and woe betide the person who would find fault with him in the way that he takes. He will never be persuaded that he knows not how to direct his path until either the Lord shows him his folly and madness in a day of His power or he perishes forever in a lost eternity.

What comfort there is, then, in the promise of the Lord to His people that He will guide them continually. All the promises of God are suited to some particular need of His people and this one relates to their need of

guidance and of the provision which the Lord has made for it. He is promising to be their Guide and where could they find a better. Has He not wisdom to direct their path? The way that He has mapped out for them is the right way that leads to a city of habitation. There is no circumstance through which they shall pass that is unknown to Him, therefore He is able to guide them in such a way that they will find that all things are working together for their good. At times it may be difficult for them to see this, far less acknowledge it, yet it is so. Sometimes they may be discouraged because of the way, particularly when it leads down into some valley which they little thought that they would ever have to tread. They are not to be despondent, however, as though the Lord did not know what He was doing in leading them and guiding them in such a path. Let them never lose sight of the fact that what the Lord promises His people is not only to guide them but to guide them continually. This means that His eye is ever upon them. Job could say: He knows the way that I take — and that is how it is with all the people of God. The Lord is leading and guiding them in every step of the way according to His promise:

I will instruct thee and thee teach
the way that thou shalt go
And with mine eye upon thee set
I will direction show.

The true children of God in this world desire a willingness of mind to follow the leading and guidance of the Lord in His Word. They know that only thus will they honour the Lord and that only thus will they receive comfort in their soul. It was when His people ceased from their own ways and honoured and served Him, that the Lord promised to guide them continually. A rebellious spirit is not in keeping with what God requires of His people, but rather a meek and submissive spirit and a willing embracing of His yoke. The Lord may show His people from time to time into what confusion following the dictates of their own heart must bring them. To be left even for a short season to go our own way cannot but bring us sorrow and pain, and will cause us anew to ask the Lord to be our guide.

The Psalmist was in no doubt where the Lord was leading him. He could say:

Thou, with Thy counsel, while I live,
wilt me conduct and guide;
And to Thy glory afterward
receive me to abide.

This is where the Lord is leading all His people. The direction they receive points them onward to the haven of rest — for “there remaineth a rest to the people of God.” How blessed it shall be for every one of those who are under the continual guidance of the great Shepherd of the sheep in their wilderness journey here. Step by step the Lord is leading them onward to the desired haven. He will never leave them nor forsake them. Their sins He has put away for ever; they are cast into the ocean of His deep forgetfulness. He will receive them to Himself, that where He is there they may be also. They shall see Him as He is.

What need there is in the light of this revelation of God’s mercy and love to seek an interest in it for our own souls. This is something that we will never have regret over — that we sought and found the Lord and the salvation that is in Him. May we each one be found amongst those whom the Lord is guiding continually through His Word and by His Spirit.

Sermon

By the Rev. D. Macfarlane

Preached in Dingwall Free Presbyterian Church on Sabbath Evening,
8th September, 1907.

(Continued from page 252)

“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” — Phil. 2: 9-11.

We have already spoken something on the first head, viz., the exaltation of Christ, and we now proceed to consider

II. — The purpose or end for which God hath highly exalted Him. The purpose is mentioned here: “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” This purpose shall be fully realised in due time, for God is not like man. Man may purpose and may not be able to accomplish; but when God purposes there is nothing to hinder His bringing to pass that purpose, and His purpose here is that every knee — all creatures, men and angels — should bow the knee to Christ, or render obedience to Him.

By “things” here we are to understand reasonable creatures, for so God speaks of us under the name of a thing or things; as when Christ

said, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost," that *thing* which was lost. We know that He came to seek and to save sinners of the human race, so "that which was lost" means sinners of the human race — men who have sinned against God. It is in this sense we are to understand "things" here. There are three classes of reasonable creatures spoken of, and the first class is the holy angels. These are spoken of as "things in heaven." There were, no doubt, men in heaven at the time. There were two there with their bodies as well as with their souls, and there were many of the spirits of just men made perfect there, but these are not meant by "things in heaven," because they were born in this world and died in this world; they belonged to the earth — they belonged to time.

By "things in heaven," then, we are to understand the holy angels, whose place is heaven; angels who kept their first estate in which God created them. Now, it may be said that the holy angels obeyed the Lord Jesus before. Yes, they rendered perfect obedience to Him as their *Creator*, but in connection with the scheme of redemption there was a new relationship formed between holy angels and the church of redeemed men and their Head, Christ; so that the angels were now to render to Jesus Christ a *new* obedience. When Adam and all his posterity fell, angels did not know that any of the human race would be saved. Angels are creatures; they are not omniscient, though some people are so foolish as to ascribe to them attributes which belong to God only. The purpose of saving sinners of the human race was from all eternity hid in the bosom of God Himself till it pleased Him to reveal it in time. When He revealed to the holy angels that He purposed to save sinners of the human race, while He passed by the fallen angels, He also made known to them that they were brought into a new relationship to the Church on earth, and that they, in common with the Church on earth, were to have Christ as their Head. He is Head of the Church, as we read in the Epistle to the Colossians (1: 18). He is the Head of the angels — Head of elect men and Head of "elect angels." There are elect angels — those that kept their first estate — and they were under the Headship of Christ in the purpose of God from eternity; but this was hid from creatures. Afterwards, we believe, it was made known to the holy angels that they were indebted to Christ for standing and not falling away, like others. That is a very solemn thing!

"Who made thee to differ?" the apostle asks. What hast thou that thou hast not received? and if thou receivedst it, why dost thou boast? Who made thee to differ? Who hath made thee, who are taken out of a state of

nature, to differ from thy neighbour, who is still in a state of sin and misery? If God's people thought of this, there would be no room for boasting. Boasting would be cast out, not by the law of works, but by the law of faith. "He that glories, let him glory in the Lord." If angels stood, let them glory in God; if some sinners are saved, while others perish, let them glory in the Lord. Ah! if we thought of this, my friends, we would be far from being high-minded; we would lie low in the dust at the footstool of God's sovereignty. We would be thankful to be allowed to cry, like another, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Ah: if poor sinners thought of this, they would not think so much of their own goodness and good works. They would seek, like Paul, "to be found in Christ, not having their own righteousness, which is of the law" (though Paul did more good works than any in our day). We believe that all who are savingly taught of God are of this mind; that they will flee from their own righteousness, from their own good works, to Christ and to His good work which He finished upon the Cross. That is the only good work that will stand us.

Because of the new relationship formed between the holy angels and the church of redeemed men, God appointed the holy angels to be ministering spirits to the Church on earth, and when the purpose to save sinners of the human race was made known to them, they began with eager eyes and earnest minds to look into the mystery of this great thing, and they desired with vehement desire to look into the scheme of redemption. And although they do not need it themselves they put us to shame, who are in such need of salvation. Many of us never desired to look into this mystery. Ah! it may not be too late, poor sinner, for you to begin now while mercy can be had; you are where God opens the eyes of the blind. Begin even now — this Sabbath evening — to look into the mystery of redemption. Join the holy angels in this becoming work.

The angels were sent into this world by God the Son. He had work for them in connection with His Church. He made them ministering spirits to them that are heirs of salvation, and they were very willing to undertake that work. If you will read the Old Testament, you will find very early in its history Christ sending angels to the patriarchs. He sent an angel again and again to Abraham, and to others, to reveal unto them the mind of God. And in New Testament times also we believe that Christ still continues to use the holy angels as ministering spirits to His Church on earth, although they cannot be seen with the bodily eye. There is not a Sabbath passing, or a time when the Gospel is preached, but the holy angels are present to carry back the news to heaven whatever it may

be, and so we read that there is joy in heaven among the angels when one sinner is brought to repentance. Now, if this be so — as we believe it is — holy angels are present in our Church from time to time. What news have they to carry back this evening? Have they to take the sad news back to creatures in heaven:— “We have seen this person and that person for years hearing the Gospel, and they have not yet given their hearts to Christ?” Sometimes they carry different news:— “There is a sinner there brought to repentance — brought to Jesus. Let us begin to sing praises to God for it!”

The second class mentioned is “things in earth.” What are the creatures on earth that are to bow the knee at the name of Jesus and to confess with the tongue that He is Lord? They are creatures of the human race. Christ was exalted that the human race, all of them, without exception, should bow the knee to Him, or obey Him, willingly or unwillingly, and to confess, whether they would or not, that He is Lord. Now, there are two kinds of men in this class: there are the good men and the bad. All are by nature evil — “there is none righteous, no, not one.” When sin entered into this world, none escaped its ruin, but grace made a difference. By nature there is none good. There is in man, no doubt, as a reasonable creature what we call moral goodness, which God bestows upon us as a check on our evil nature: were it not for this restraining grace we would be like the very devils. Any civility, any kindness, that is to be found in the natural man is a gift from God, which shall be taken from him at death, unless he is born again and made a new creation in Christ. At the time of the crucifixion of Christ, God withdrew this preventive grace and gave full liberty to men to do their utmost to show forth their enmity to Christ, and the consequence was that they behaved like wild beasts, as they are called in Scripture, “bulls” and “dogs.” “Many bulls have compassed me:” “For dogs have compassed me; the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.” — Ps. 22: 12 and 16. They were as if they were mad, and let loose from hell. Those nearest the Lord Jesus smote Him on the face with their hands, and others spat upon the Lord of Glory, while those again on the outskirts, who could not get near enough to smite or spit upon Him, cried aloud, “Away with Him: away with Him: crucify Him: crucify Him.” That was what happened when God withdrew His restraining grace. But there is a difference between *restraining* grace and *saving* grace. Of the two classes of people who must bow the knee to Christ, His own people do it willingly, and those who are not of His people must do it whether they will or not. The first time when His own people begin to

bow the knee to Him is when He comes to call them effectually by the Holy Spirit, and to make them willing in the day of His power, as we have been reading and singing, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power."

Have you begun to bow the knee at the name of Jesus? His people in every age have begun to bow the knee at His name: they received Him not only as their Saviour, but also as their Lord; yea, they received Him as the Lord Jesus Christ, just as He is revealed in His Word, as the jailor at Philippi was directed by the Apostle when he asked "What must I do to be saved?" "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." If you are saved you will (I need not say, you must) willingly receive Christ as your Saviour, and also as your Lord to rule over you. You remember in the days of His flesh, there were those who at first seemed to receive Him as their Lord, and then they repented (and their repentance was a very bad repentance), for they sent a messenger after him, "We will not have this man to reign over us." But His own people receive Him, not only as their Saviour, but also as their King, to rule over them.

The other class on earth who are to bow the knee at His name are those who, in every generation of the human race, persist in impenitence and in unbelief, and who continue to reject Christ as He is freely offered in the Gospel. Are those not to answer the end for which God exalted Christ? Ah! yes, they are. However disobedient they may now be, there is a time coming when they shall be seen to submit to the authority of Jesus Christ. There are many now who say, like Pharaoh of old, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?" There are many infidels and atheists in this age. This is an evil age. There are many giving open defiance to God and to His Son, Jesus Christ: they mock at His great name. Wait you till the day of judgment comes, when He sends forth the summons to cite all the human race to appear before His throne. Will there be any disobedient then? Ah! no. You cannot then distinguish the atheist from any other person in an unconverted state. They all respond, however much against their will, to the call of Christ, for there is a "*must*" here. "We *must* all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." There is no escape. No one can be disobedient that day, and, seeing that such will be the case, we may here say that the end for which Christ has been exalted by the Father shall be realised, not only by those who willingly submit to Him in time, but also by His very enemies on earth, who must bow the knee at His name, and confess with the tongue that He is Lord.

The third class that shall bow the knee to Christ are "things under the earth." Interpreters of Scripture differ on some points, and on this point some are of the opinion that what is meant by things under the earth, are the bodies of men that are buried in the grave, and that they shall bow the knee to Christ when they obey His voice on the day of the resurrection: but I do not think that that is the meaning, because the bodies in the graves belong to the second class, and though now *under* the earth, they were once *on* the earth; and while it is quite true that the dead shall hear his voice, and obey it, still I think that by "things under the earth" we are to understand the evil spirits — Satan with his innumerable hosts of fallen angels. These are spoken of as being "under the earth."

Think, then, for a moment, of the three classes spoken of. The holy angels in heaven, men on earth, and the evil spirits in hell — the human race being, as it were, in a middle state, the only middle state in existence; you are not yet in heaven, and not yet in hell. While you are on earth there is hope for you; you are in the middle state from which Christ saves sinners. In heaven are the redeemed, in hell are the lost, where there is no hope. You are yet on earth, in the land of the living, but if you die refusing Christ, remember you must go to the third place — to the place below — "under the earth," that is hell.

The things under the earth, then, Satan, the prince of Darkness, and all his innumerable hosts of fallen angels that apostatized with him from God, are the great enemies of Christ; they oppose Him in every possible way, but it is said here that Christ was exalted that those under the earth might bow the knee at His name, and confess with the tongue that He is Lord. When will that be? They will continue in their enmity and rebellion against Jesus Christ as long as they can. They have no doubt but that they must obey his voice, as you can see in the case of the poor man possessed of a legion of devils. When Christ commanded them to come forth, they obeyed at once, and had to ask His permission to enter the swine, although some people in this age cast doubts upon and deny this portion of Scripture. But it is at the day of judgment that the devils shall be seen to answer the end for which Christ was exalted. For fallen angels have a kind of liberty (if liberty it may be called) till the Church of Christ is gathered out of every nation and every tongue under heaven, until the end of time. There are some condemned prisoners to whom a kind of liberty is granted till a certain time, and so we find that Satan and the other fallen angels are not yet shut up in the prison of hell, as they shall yet be — first, during the millennium; second, at the last day. Satan himself is said to be going about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he

may devour: and you remember when, in the days of Job, God asked Satan, "Whence comest thou?" he answered, "From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it." — Job 1: 7. As holy angels are ministering spirits to the Church of God, so these evil spirits are busy every day and night in this world helping men to ruin themselves eternally: and we may say that although there is enough evil in the heart of man to make him sin, it is true that Satan tempts the sinner to commit sin. As in the first sin, he still tempts sinners to do evil. He works in the children of disobedience. You ask the help of the devil before you commit sin, and whether you ask it or not, he will incite you to it, he will tempt you, he will urge you on: so that every sin committed in this world is committed not by evil men alone, but by evil men and the devil combined. But there is a day coming when the evil spirits must bow the knee to Christ, when He calls them to judgment and assigns to them their eternal state in the place of torment. And as such of the human race who die without Christ shall be punished, not only on account of their sinfulness by nature, but also because they were by actual transgression heaping up wrath against the day of wrath; so also the fallen angels, although they were condemned after their first apostasy, must be brought to account again for every evil they have done since then. The first evil they committed after their apostasy was their tempting the human race to forsake God, and besides many other evils, you see what wickedness the prince of darkness did in connection with the sufferings of Christ — how he tempted Him in the wilderness, and again at the time of His crucifixion, how the hosts of hell were set in array to terrify the human nature of Christ, and to make Him tremble before the awful cup of wrath which the Father set before Him. Christ took upon Him our infirmities, and it is very likely that the fallen angels surrounded Him to frighten Him, as they try to frighten you and me when we have difficulties before us: so that Christ in His human nature trembled and said "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" but He was not to shrink from the undertaking; His human nature was strengthened; His Godhead supported Him, and He said "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done." On this account, and for all their persecution of the Church of Christ, the evil spirits shall be brought before the judgment seat, when they, with the prince of darkness at their head, shall bow the knee before Him.

Who shall be before the judgment-seat of Christ? All the human race shall be there; the good on the right, the bad on the left; and then all the holy angels will, we believe, be at the right hand with God's people, while

on the left will be all the unconverted who died without Christ, together with all the evil spirits. There shall be but two classes at the day of judgment. All reasonable creatures will be present there, and it will be — it *must* be — a very solemn gathering. We shall be there too, and we ought to seek preparation for it.

Now, when Jesus says to those on His left hand — unconverted men and evil spirits — “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels,” is there any that does not bow the knee to Him? None. They must all obey, they must all depart at His command. It is then that Satan and his innumerable hosts of fallen angels, and all men that they have deceived, shall be cast into the bottomless pit; and it is then that Christ shall take the key and lock the door, and it shall never be opened. They shall never come out of that place of woe. Now is the time to consider these things. The day of judgment will be too late. Even the day of death may be too late. “Prepare to meet thy God.”

III. — The third thing we are to consider is that the exaltation of Christ shall be to the glory of God the Father. The first Adam by sin (and his sin is our sin) robbed God of the glory due to Him from the human race. Common robbery is a sin, but robbing God is an awful sin; and robbing Him of His precious crown — His glory — is such a fearful sin that it is a wonder there should be forgiveness for it. But all sins shall be forgiven to those that believe in Christ. “We all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” We all have robbed God of the glory He had in view when He created man. “What is the chief end of man? The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever.” It is remarkable that in the New Catechism which has recently been published this question is entirely omitted. Its compilers go wrong at the very outset of their endeavour to make a new Catechism. Little children may now be taught that man was created in order to please himself, or for any purpose but God’s glory, and it would appear that the framers of the New Catechism intentionally ignored this important question. “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever.”

You may learn from the history of creation that man was the crown of creation. Man alone of all creatures was created with a reasonable soul, whose end was to glorify God, and all other parts of God’s creation were to glorify God through man. Consider then, that when man fell, he dragged down with him all other parts of creation, and they also ceased to answer the end for which they were created. We could give you many instances of this. Take the heavenly bodies — the sun, moon, and stars — all created for the glory of God, but man — fallen man — makes them

cease to answer the end of their creation by commencing to worship them instead of the Creator. Take the brute creation — the horse and the cow; how frequently do men use them to dishonour God. Take, again, food and drink; how man, instead of giving glory to God by eating and drinking, simply uses these to rob God of His glory. But by the humiliation and exaltation of Jesus Christ, the Second Adam, the glory taken from God was to be restored. God is not to lose the least of the glory due to Him from reasonable creatures, for the exaltation of Christ, the apostle tells us, is to be “to the glory of God the Father.”

How, then, is the exaltation of Christ to bring about the glory of God the Father? Well, He will have the glory of His grace in connection with the redeemed, and in connection with each individual of them, and that because of the way in which Christ magnified the law and made it honourable by finishing the work He gave Him to do. He said, “I have glorified thee upon earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.” There is encouragement here for you, poor sinner, if you are grieved for the dishonour done to God by your sins. You may say, “If I have robbed God of His glory, Christ, my surety, has rendered glory to God with full interest. Ah! that is what meets my case as a sinner that dishonoured God. Christ has not only paid the debt in full, but He has paid it with great interest, and this is the only balm I find for my own conscience and for that of my fellow-sinners.” There is your remedy. It is but a delusion to seek comfort in anything else. You may say, “I will try to do better.” Ah! my friend, you cannot do it perfectly. You cannot rest on that. Flee, then, to Him that glorified God. He is spoken of as “an hiding-place from the wind and a covert from the tempest,” and He is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour. Not only will He have the glory of His grace from the redeemed, through Christ who glorified Him, but He shall also have the glory without break throughout eternity from themselves personally, when they are made perfect in holiness and shall immediately pass into glory. There is now nothing against them. Christ made up the breach, and they will continue, like the holy angels, to render glory to God not only as their Creator but also as their Redeemer. We believe that although the joy of the holy angels is perfect, and that their vessel cannot contain any more, yet the vessel of redeemed men shall be larger; and so it would require to be, in order to express their thankfulness — their unspeakable thankfulness — to Him who redeemed them with His own blood.

We now come to the glory of His justice. He shall have this from “things on earth,” that is, from men who die in an unconverted state. You

may lose your soul, but God will not lose the glory that is His in connection with you as a reasonable creature whom He created. Your punishment shall be to the glory of God's justice. There are some who deny the doctrine of eternal punishment. From whom did they learn this? Who was the first to advance the heresy of no future punishment? It was Satan. Satan came to the woman and said, "Surely ye shall not die." Read for yourself in the third chapter of Genesis how the father of lies first brought forward this lie, and it is in the school of Satan that this doctrine is learned. Ask any who hold this belief who their professor was, and, if they answer truthfully, they must say it was the devil. He has many students in every age, and in our generation many so-called ministers of the gospel and professors in colleges have had their education in the school of Satan. And if the devil began first to teach, when man was in a state of innocency, and prevailed in making man believe this lie, how much more easily can he teach it to man in a state of sin and misery, and beguile his posterity to believe it?

Christ's exaltation succeeded His humiliation, and in like manner, His church in the world shall have her humiliation also, but not for the same end. Christ's humiliation was to make atonement for sin, to lay the foundation of salvation for His Church, but their humiliation is to prepare them for "the inheritance of the saints in light." The apostle says "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." God's people are living stones, but the stones must be dressed and polished before they are put into the building above. You know that hewers of stones use sharp instruments, and sometimes I am inclined to think that Satan is one of the hewers, and his instruments are very sharp, but he brings about not what he himself intends but what God purposes, viz, the dressing and polishing and preparing of the spiritual stones for the building above.

Think then of Christ, for His people remember that the Head is highly exalted. Let sinners remember that He is exalted to the end that they shall, whether they will or not, bow the knee to Him, and confess that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Now, carry with you God's Word, and pray over it. I also will endeavour to carry it with me, and to pray over it, and to ask of God that it may be blessed to my own soul and to your souls, for the glory of His grace, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Christian's Great Interest

by Rev. Wm. Guthrie

The whole treatise resumed in a few questions and answers

Question 1: What is the great business a man hath to do in this world?

Answer: To make sure a saving interest in Christ Jesus, and to walk suitably thereto.

Question 2: Have not all the members of the visible church a saving interest in Christ?

Answer: No, verily; yea, but a very few of them have it.

Question 3: How shall I know if I have a saving interest in Him?

Answer: Ordinarily the Lord prepareth His own way in the soul by a work of humiliation, and discovereth a man's sin and misery to him, and exerciseth him so therewith, that he longs for the physician Christ Jesus.

Question 4: How shall I know if I have got a competent discovery of my sin and misery?

Answer: A competent sight of it makes a man take salvation to heart above anything in this world: it maketh him disclaim all relief in himself, even in his best things: it maketh Christ who is the Redeemer, very precious to the soul: it makes a man stand in awe to sin afterwards, and makes him content to be saved upon any terms God pleases.

Question 5: By what other ways may I discern a saving interest in Him?

Answer: By the going out of the heart seriously and affectionately towards Him, as He is held out in the gospel; and this is faith or believing.

Question 6: How shall I know if my heart goes out after Him aright, and that my faith is true saving faith?

Answer: Where the heart goes out aright after Him in true and saving faith, the soul is pleased with Christ alone above all things, and is pleased with Him in all His three offices, to rule and instruct as well as to save; and is content to cleave unto Him, whatsoever inconveniences may follow.

Question 7: What other mark of a saving interest in Christ can you give me?

Answer: He that is in Christ savingly, is a new creature; He is graciously changed and renewed in some measure, in the whole man, and in all his ways pointing towards all the known commands of God.

Question 8: What if I find sin now and then prevailing over me?

Answer: Although every sin deserves everlasting vengeance, yet, if you be afflicted for your failings, confess them with shame of face unto God, resolving to strive against them honestly henceforth, and flee unto Christ for pardon, you shall obtain mercy, and your interest stands sure.

Question 9: What shall the man do who cannot lay claim to Christ Jesus nor any of those marks spoken of?

Answer: Let him not take rest until he make sure unto himself a saving interest in Christ.

Question 10: What way can a man make sure an interest in Christ, who never had a saving interest in Him hitherto?

Answer: He must take his sins to heart, and his great hazard thereby, and he must take to heart God's offer of pardon and peace through Christ Jesus, and heartily close with God's offer by betaking himself unto Christ, the blessed refuge.

Question 11: What if my sins be singularly heinous, and great beyond ordinary?

Answer: Whatsoever thy sins be, if thou wilt close with Christ Jesus by faith, thou shalt never enter into condemnation.

Question 12: Is faith in Christ only required of men?

Answer: Faith is the only condition upon which God doth offer peace and pardon unto men; but be assured, faith, if it be true and saving, will not be alone in the soul, but will be attended with true repentance, and a thankful study of conformity to God's image.

Question 13: How shall I be sure that my heart doth accept God's offer, and doth close with Christ Jesus?

Answer: Go make a covenant expressly, and by word speak the thing unto God.

Question 14: What way shall I do that?

Answer: Set apart some portion of time, and having considered your own lost estate, and the remedy offered by Christ Jesus, work up your heart to be pleased with and close with that offer, and say unto God expressly that you do accept of that offer, and of Him to be your God in Christ; and do give up yourself to Him to be saved in His way, without reservation or exception in any case; and that you henceforth will wait for salvation in the way He hath appointed.

Question 15: What if I break with God afterwards?

Answer: You must resolve in His strength not to break, and watch over your own ways, and put your heart in His hand to keep it; and if you break, you must confess it unto God, and judge yourself for it, and flee to the Advocate for pardon, and resolve to do so no more: and this you must do as often as you fail.

Question 16: How shall I come to full assurance of my interest in Christ, so that it may be beyond controversy?

Answer: Learn to lay your weight upon the blood of Christ, and study purity and holiness in all manner of conversation: and pray for the witness of God's Spirit to join with the blood and the water; and His testimony added unto these will establish you in the faith of an interest in Christ.

Question 17: What is the consequence of such closing with God in Christ by heart and mouth?

Answer: Union and communion with God, all good here, and His blessed fellowship in heaven for ever afterwards.

Question 18: What if I slight all these things, and do not lay them to heart to put them in practice?

Answer: The Lord cometh with His angels, in flaming fire, to render vengeance to them who obey not His gospel; and thy judgment shall be greater than that of Sodom and Gomorrah; and so much the greater that thou hast read this Treatise, for it shall be a witness against thee in that day.

Mbuma Zending Meeting Address

(Address given by Rev. A. McPherson at the annual meeting of the Mbuma Zending in Utrecht on Wednesday, 30th April, 1985)

It gives me much pleasure to be present once again at this huge gathering of supporters of our African mission work. Your interest, prayers, and material support of that work have always been most encouraging to us in Scotland, and immensely helpful through the difficult times of the past, and the continuing hindrances of the present. You are well aware that many of our preaching places are open to attacks by armed dissidents, and that this hinders free movement on the part of our missionaries. Nevertheless, in the kindness of the Lord, the work has gone on, and since I last addressed you, has spread to the midlands of the country. Rev. Mazvabo's presence here today is proof of that expansion.

You will, I am sure, be very interested to learn that our prayers and yours for much-needed staff have again been answered to the extent that a young accountant, the son of our minister in Perth, has been accepted to fill the post of Mission Treasurer left vacant by the much regretted resignation of Mr Campbell. Our committee have also agreed to employ one of your own people as a doctor, once she has undergone some additional training. This, God willing, should lead to the hospital at Mbumba coming into full operation again. We have much reason to thank the Lord for his help in these ways.

It is His work we are engaged in. It is the work specifically of Christ, the Head and King of the Church, and I would now like to bring before you a verse from Psalm 72 which should hold special interest for us at this time. As you know that Psalm is all about Christ, as He presently reigns at God's right hand, and verse 15 speaks of his reign as perpetual. "And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba; prayer also shall be made for him continually, and daily shall he be praised."

"And he shall live." It has long been a custom at the crowning of Christian monarchs, to pray, "God save the king," or "Long live the queen." When kings had more power than now, such prayers expressed the hope that the reign commencing would be so good that it would last a long time. It is, however, a glad thought for believers that the Church's King lives **forever**. It is no mortal who controls the Church's affairs, but One Who, "was dead, and is alive, and is alive for evermore."

"Christ shall live" because as the Son of God He cannot cease to be. His own words on the subject are, "For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." It is because Christ is eternally self-existent that John said, "In him was life." He is the ever-living One who made all things including those that have life, like you and me. Thus He was able to raise the dead, notably Lazarus, then four days under death's power; claiming as He did so, to be the resurrection and the life. What reason there is for rejoicing and confidence inasmuch as the King of Zion is eternally alive, and able to impart spiritual life as well as physical.

Yes, it is also a fact that Christ shall live because as the God-man mediator He has won eternal life for Himself on behalf of his people by being obedient unto death. And the life He laid down, He was entitled to take again, because by that death He had expiated his people's guilt. With the penalty fully paid, justice required that He should not continue under the power of death. Therefore, Christ rose from the dead with the life promised by the covenant of grace to Him who had fulfilled it. It was

not life that He, the ever-living One, needed for Himself; but it was life that his people needed; for them it had been obtained, and to them he would give it. So, having been highly exalted, Christ reigns in order to give to those He redeemed, spiritual and eternal life, and to build his Church.

The people whom God gave to his Son to save are found among all nations, kindreds, peoples and tongues. And however sinful, ignorant and distant from God these elect persons may be, Christ is able to quicken them into spiritual life. Our African mission gives full proof of that. Africans were held by sin and Satan in a vice-like grip, but Christ broke their bands by effectual calling, and bound them to Himself in a spiritual union that none can sever. Yes, "He shall live," and at the appointed time each blood-bought soul shall be brought alive by Christ's Word and Spirit. It has been well proved that Christ had many people in Zimbabwe, and there is reason to think that there are more yet to be brought alive spiritually by His great power. For this reason, as long as the door is open to let us work, we must do so.

This great King is to be given of the gold of Sheba so that his work, through his Church, of raising the spiritually dead shall not be hindered. When this Psalm was written, Sheba was thought of as very distant. Yet, neither distance nor anything else was to prevent Sheba's abundant gold coming into the hands of this great King. And it just means that Christ is to have the necessary means to maintain and extend his Church. "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine saith the Lord of hosts." It seems clear to me that the existence of Mbumba Zending, its goodwill, prayers and active support, of the Zimbabwean mission, is just another of the ways in which "the gold of Sheba" is given to Christ so that His royal progress towards the completion of his Church is not hindered.

But this Scripture goes on to say that, "Prayer also shall be made for him continually." This cannot mean that Christ Himself suffers any lack that requires prayer to be made for Him. God has made Him most blessed forever. No, the prayer concerns the coming of his kingdom, the progress of his work of quickening dead souls. It is certain to go on, yet his people are to pray for it too — "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." Is this the greatest good you can think of, that Christ's kingdom should come, that the whole world would be filled with his glory as Saviour, and King of kings and Lord of lords?

Now, prayer of that sort will always be accompanied with praise. The verse ends, "and daily shall he be praised." This prayer for Christ's kingdom is being continually answered, and this fact draws forth his

Church's praise for what He has already done. It could be asked, what other monarch pleased all his subjects so much that they desired him to go on reigning exactly as he had been doing? The answer has to be, No other! In this respect as in everything, King Jesus is unique. Therefore, let us conclude in the same way as this 72nd Psalm: "Blessed by his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen."

On behalf of my committee and my entire Church, I give you our sincere thanks for all you have done and are doing still.

They Comfort Me

(Psalm 23: 4)

I have been through the valley of weeping,
The valley of sorrow and pain:
But the God of all comfort was with me —
At hand to uphold and sustain.

As the earth needs the clouds and sunshine,
Our souls need both sorrow and joy;
So He places us oft in the furnace —
The dross from the gold to destroy.

Then He leads through some valley of trouble,
His omnipotent hand we trace;
For the trials and sorrows He sends us
Are part of His lessons of grace.

Oft we shrink from the purging and pruning,
Forgetting the Husbandman knows —
That the deeper the cutting and paring,
The richer the cluster that grows.

Well He knows that afflictions are needed,
He has a wise purpose in view;
And in the dark valley He whispers —
"Hereafter you'll know what I do."

As we travel through life's shaded valley,
Fresh springs of His love ever rise
And we learn that sorrows and losses —
Are blessings just sent in disguise.

So we'll follow wherever He leadeth,
Let the path be dreary or bright;
For we've proved that our God can give comfort
Our God can give "songs in the night".

W. M.

Gillespie's "Aaron's Rod Blossoming"

By the Rev. D. Beaton

The Church of Scotland, whose roll of honour contains some of the greatest names of our country, can scarcely point to a more brilliant debater or more acute writer on ecclesiastical polemics than George Gillespie. In Principal Cunningham's opinion he was the most learned and conclusive reasoner among the great men who adorned the Church of Scotland at that important era in her history.¹ George Gillespie was born in Kirkcaldy in 1613.² In his sixteenth year he entered the University of St. Andrews, and gave early promise to his future ability. Owing to conscientious objections to the prelatic form of Church government he refused to receive ordination from a bishop, with the result that he could not obtain admission into the ministerial office. During this period he acted as tutor and domestic chaplain in the household of Lord Kenmure until this nobleman's death in 1634. Afterwards he acted in a similar capacity to the family of the Earl of Cassilis. It was during the tenure of this tutorship that Charles made the attempt to force the Book of Canons upon the Scottish people. The memorable scene in St. Giles, when Jenny Geddes threw her stool at the Dean of Edinburgh, is one of the picturesque events of history, but its chief interest does not lie in its picturesqueness merely, but as an act that interpreted in a rather forcible way the deep-seated hatred of the Scottish people to the new Liturgy. While the country was in an intense state of excitement George Gillespie's *Dispute against the English Popish Ceremonies obtruded upon the Church of Scotland* appeared. The work was a remarkable piece of erudition and dialectic skill, coming from the pen of a young man of 24. So great was

¹ "Historical Theology," i: 58.

² Vide Hetherington's "Memoir on the Presbyterian's Armoury," i. p. ix.

its effect that the Privy Council commanded all the copies which could be found to be burned. Baillie, in his cautious and timid way, thus refers to Gillespie's first literary effort: "this same youth is now given out also, by those that should know, for the author of the 'English Popish Ceremonies,' whereof we do all marvel, for though he had gotten the papers, and help of the chief of that side, yet the very composition would seem to be far above such an age." The *Dispute against the English Popish Ceremonies* is divided into four parts, in each of which the author discusses, respectively, the necessity, expediency, lawfulness, and the indifferency of the prelatic ceremonies. In 1638 he received a call from the congregation of Wemyss, and on the 26th of April he was ordained by the Presbytery of Kirkcaldy, the well-known Robert Douglas presiding at the ordination. Gillespie was the first at this period to be admitted to a charge of the Presbytery without the authority of the bishops.

We next find Gillespie preaching before the famous Glasgow Assembly of 1638. Baillie's account, as usual, is interesting. "After a sermon," he says, "wherein the youth very learnedly and judiciously, as they say, handled the words, 'The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord,' yet did too much encroach on the king's actions; he (Argyle) gave us a grave admonition to let authority alone, which the Moderator seconded, and we all religiously observed so long as the Assembly lasted." In 1641 the town of Aberdeen gave him a call, but as he strenuously opposed it he was permitted to remain at Wemyss. The following year, however, an application was made to the General Assembly by Edinburgh to have Gillespie translated to one of the city charges — an application which the Assembly granted — and for the remainder of his brief but brilliant life George Gillespie was known as one of the ministers of Edinburgh. But even though Edinburgh gave wider scope for the talents which he possessed, he was soon to be called to take part in one of the most memorable events in the annals of Presbyterianism. In 1643 Commissioners appeared at the General Assembly from the English Parliament and the Westminster General Assembly, with the purpose of establishing some bond of united action between the two kingdoms in their present critical position. The outcome of these deliberations was the famous Solemn League and Covenant. The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland now, in answer to the request of the English Commissioners, appointed some of their number to attend the meetings of the Westminster General Assembly. The Commissioners appointed were Alexander Henderson, Robert Douglas, Robert Baillie, Samuel Rutherford, and George Gillespie, ministers, with

the Earl of Cassilis, Lord Maitland, and Sir Arch. Johnston of Wariston, elders.

The Assembly of Divines first turned its attention to the revision of the Prayer Book, but soon left it and took up the thorny question of Church government. Doctrinally the Assembly of Divines were remarkably united, but on the question of Church government long and wordy debates kept the divines for many a long day ere the matter was finally settled in favour of the Presbyterian polity. These debates revealed three parties in the Assembly — Presbyterians, who were in the majority; Independents, who were few to begin with but latterly increasing in numbers, generally known as the "Five Dissenting Brethren"; and the Erastians, who had only two divines — Coleman and Lightfoot, men of great erudition and dialectic skill — representing them in the Assembly, but who had a strong following in Parliament, with the "learned Selden" as their leader. It was in these debates on Church government that the youthful George Gillespie so signally distinguished himself. He was not abashed to come into the arena with the Colemans, Lightfoots, and the Seldens, with all their weight of patristic and Talmudic lore, and the result proved that he was a foeman worthy of their steel. Baillie, who was an eyewitness of these intellectual encounters, has left on record in glowing terms the keen pleasure he enjoyed as he witnessed the defeat of the English Goliaths at the hands of the Scottish youth. "None in all the company did reason more, and more pertinently, than Mr Gillespie. That is an excellent youth; my heart blesses God in his behalf. . . . Very learned and acute, Mr Gillespie, a singular ornament of our Church, than whom not one in the whole Assembly speaks to better purpose, and with better acceptance by all the hearers. . . . Mr George Gillespie, however, I had a good opinion of his gifts, yet I profess he has much deceived me: of a truth there is no man whose parts in a public dispute I do so admire. He has studied so accurately all the points that ever yet came to our Assembly; he has got so ready, so assured, so solid a way of public debating, that however there be in the Assembly divers very excellent men, yet, in my poor judgment, there is not one who speaks more rationally and to the point than that brave youth has done ever." There is a picturesque incident in the history of the Assembly which bears out what Baillie has said in the foregoing sentences. The subject of debate was Church discipline. The Independents denied any authoritative excommunication, while the Erastians, admitting such power, place it in the hands of the civil magistrate. After the arguments of the Independents had been disposed of, the Erastians entered the arena of

debate, and their great champion, Selden, came down to the Assembly to deliver one of his ablest speeches. The place of meeting was thronged, and Gillespie, who had been late in coming, had difficulty in pressing his way through the crowd to his place. Finding progress difficult, at last he said, "Can ye not admit a pinning?"¹ The appeal was successful, and the "pinning" awaited his time. The subject under discussion was excommunication and the bearing of Matthew 18: 15-17, on this theme. Selden endeavoured to prove that the passage related to the practice of the Jews in the ordinary civil courts. This position he sought to uphold by a great array of rabbinical learning. The effect of the speech was crushing. Herle and Marshall both attempted a reply, but both signally failed.² At last some one made an appeal to Gillespie — it is generally believed to be Rutherford: "Rise, George, rise up, man, and defend the right of the Lord Jesus Christ to govern, by His own laws, the Church which He hath purchased with His blood." Gillespie arose, and by irrefutable arguments proved that the passage did not refer to what was done at a civil court, but was of a purely spiritual nature. When Gillespie sat down the effect of his speech was so great that even Selden acknowledged defeat in the oft-quoted words, "That young man, by his single speech, has swept away the learning of ten years of my life." Wodrow's contribution to this incident is worthy of quotation. "When he (Gillespie) was in London he would be often upon his knees; at another time reading and writing. And when he was sitting at that great Assembly at Westminster he was often observed to have a little book, and to be marking down something with his pen in that book, even when some of the most learned men, as Coleman and Selden, were delivering their long and learned orations; and all he was writing was his pithy ejaculations to God; writing these words, *Da lucem, Domine; da lucem!*" He further tells us that so great was the impression made on the divines by Gillespie, that Calamy, if "he had not been stained by being against our way and judgment for the engagement,"³ says they were ready to think of Mr Gillespie more than was meet. The Assembly having finished the Directory for Public Worship, Baillie and Gillespie were entrusted to lay it before the General Assembly of 1645. The Directory was accepted by the General Assembly, and Baillie and Gillespie returned to their labours in London.

(To be continued)

1. "Pinning" is the small stones used by builders to fill up the openings between the larger stones in a building.

2. Though this is the traditional account of this famous encounter it is not accepted by Dr Mitchell. Herle's speech, even from the fragmentary jottings of it in the *Minutes*, was a very able speech. Gillespie's speech does not appear to have been delivered until the following day — *Westminster Assembly*, p. 288 (footnote).

3. Wodrow informs us that he was called "Malleus Malignantium", and that it was the testimony of the Earl of Glencairn, after Gillespie had an argument with some of the promoters of the Engagement. "There is no standing before this great and might man."

Christianity and Marxism

Recently public attention was drawn to the fact that pupils in certain schools throughout this country are being indoctrinated by teachers with Left-wing views.

Marxism, alternately known as **Scientific Socialism** or **Communism** (not Socialism in general though the term is loosely applied), has a special appeal to the masses suffering poverty and unemployment or political oppression and also for young intellectuals and idealists who are discontented with existing conditions in society. But Marxism is not just an economic system — that of public ownership of the means of production with a total nationalisation and a centralised planned economy; or just a system of social reform: it is an ideology with a basic philosophy.

G. D. H. Cole in his Introduction to “Das Capital” by Karl Marx wrote: “It is now generally recognised that the **Materialist Conception of History** is the clue to the Marxian system, and that Marx’s other doctrines grouped themselves in his mind round this conception as an organising principle of thought.”

“The Manifesto presents a summary history of the world in terms of successive class struggles.”

Since a third of the world is under Marxism it is important to know something of this ideology with its materialist conception of history.

We are possibly familiar with its declared theory of class struggle — the necessity of the overthrow of the capitalist system by the “proletariat (the people or the workers) in a Revolutionary or Liberation struggle so as to be free from the exploitation of their labour to acquire profit for others. Marxism maintains that they will eventually reach the stage when to each person will be given according to his need — complete social equality and justice in society; no more war but peace and happiness. The movement has always been international — proletarian internationalism.

Leslie T. Lyall in “Red Sky at Night” O.M.F. has written: “In opposing Marxism or Communism Christians should know what it is to which they are opposed — Christianity is not allied to capitalism or to any kind of social or economic theory . . . the Christian rejects Communism as a way of life on ideological or theological grounds. He cannot accept its atheism and materialism nor the false theories which are based upon them. Communism’s denial of the unique claims of the Lord Jesus Christ would force the Christian to oppose it on this ground alone.”

The materialist Marxist conception of History declares that "the material world to which we belong is the only reality." The provision of food, shelter, clothing are the aims which man fulfils, and so all progress is determined by **economic factors**. It rules out the existence of God and the supernatural and any possibility of a soul in man or life after death with a future judgment. So there are no moral absolutes based on God's Law. For Marx all religion including Christianity is an illusion, a fantasy created by the human mind. Religion was thought to act as opium to the people diverting their minds away from present misery to a future happiness in another world. But in Marx's own time Christian humanitarians like the Earl of Shaftesbury and Wilberforce were bringing about practical social reforms in Society. God's Law has social justice and the care of the poor as important issues in the Old Testament and New Testament.

The Marxist movement may appear to be striving for the same goals as Christianity — sometimes using the same type of language; but it is all man-centred — what is to be attained through the Party and its members. They ignore the fact that the basic nature of Man is inherently sinful and selfish. The History of Man is based on Evolution — the progress from the ape stage to Man (*Homo sapiens*) with his tool making activities and man's consequent struggle in overcoming his environment until he arrives at the stage when "a classless society — Communism — will affirm everlasting Peace on earth." This progress is regarded as inevitable and predetermined (in spite of hindrances) as the outcome of any other scientific law, and hence the term "scientific socialism." Thus History is seen to be a series of class struggles for the ownership of the means of production.

School textbooks and other literature can be written to create the consciousness to accept this socio-economic ideology.

The Christian is also interested in the past History of our race. In God's Word, the Bible, he will find the key to all History. God created the Universe and Man was made a reasonable, responsible and eternal soul, thus different from the animal creation. But our first parents Adam and Eve sinned against God and so sin entered into human nature. We have here the key to understanding the misery of this world — SIN. But God promised a Saviour to save His people from their sins, and in the Bible we trace God's plan.

We have in the Old Testament the history of God's ancient people the Jews and the rise and fall of great Empires in ancient times. Individuals

by their leadership for good or evil influence the course of History. God speaks of future events through His prophets, warning the Jews of the consequence of continuing in their refusal to give Him obedience. This was fulfilled and judgment came with their captivity. But God's plan to bring a Saviour continues to unfold, and Jesus was born in Bethlehem and crucified at Calvary, according to the Scriptures. "But this Jesus hath God raised up, where of we are witnesses." Acts 2: 32. "That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3: 16. Those who are brought to believe in Jesus as their Saviour from sin have a new nature created in them in the midst of the old sinful nature by God the Holy Spirit who dwells in them. They now have a higher motive for giving of their best. "Whatsoever you do do it heartily as to the Lord and not unto men." Col. 3: 23.

God is the Ruler of the Universe, of nations and individuals, and He has fore-ordained for His own glory whatsoever comes to pass. "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice." Psalm 97: 1.

"He cometh to judge the earth: He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth." Psalm 96: 13. The Marxist movement is international but so is Christianity, for Christians look to the promise that "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ and He shall reign for ever and ever." Rev. 11: 15. His rule is through Love, and obedience to His Moral Law would ensure social justice when people would love God and consequently their neighbours. The Marxist looks to life in this world only, but the Christian lives with regard to a judgment to come. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Matt. 6: 34.

"One cannot simultaneously be a Marxist and a Christian for Marxism stands not only for a certain doctrine of property but also for a comprehensive world view to which atheism is an important presupposition . . . Nobody should underestimate the philosophical consistency of the Marxist system of thought . . . Marxism and Christianity are incompatible", from "The Challenge of Marxism" by Klaus Bockmuhl (Inter Varsity Press). While in this world, the Christian must be subject to governments "the powers that be" (Romans 13: 1) in his society, except where it clashes with his allegiance to God's Word, the Bible. As a good citizen he will contribute to the well-being of his society.

K. M.

Book Reviews

Jonah, Micah and Nahum by John Calvin. Banner of Truth Trust. 534 pp. £6.95.

Habakkuk, Zephaniah and Haggai by John Calvin. Banner of Truth Trust. 411 pp. £5.95

These two well-bound volumes consist of Volumes III and IV of Calvin's Commentaries on the Minor Prophets and the Trust is to be commended for making them readily available through this reprint. As has often been pointed out the Minor Prophets are called "Minor" not on account of being of less value than the other prophets but on account of being shorter in length than the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel. These Minor Prophets have much to say to the men of this generation if they had ears to hear them and therefore Calvin's exposition of them is very valuable. Calvin was not slow to apply these Scriptures to the men of his own day and took opportunity in his exposition to expose the errors of the Roman Church and other false teaching. As to Calvin's prowess as a expositor of Scripture the following commendation bears eloquent testimony:-

"His great strength is seen in the clear, comprehensive view he takes of the subject before him, in the facility with which he penetrates the meaning of his Author, in the lucid expression he gives to that meaning, in the variety of new yet solid and profitable thoughts which he frequently elicits from what are apparently the least promising portions of the sacred text, in the admirable precision with which he unfolds every doctrine of Holy Scripture, whether veiled under figures and types, or implied in propheticall allusions, or asserted in the records of the Gospel. As his own mind was completely imbued with the whole system of divine truth, and as his capacious memory never seemed to lose anything which it had once apprehended, he was always able to present a harmonised and consistent view of truth to his readers, and to show the relative position in which any given portion of it stood to all the rest. This has given a completeness and symmetry to his Commentaries which could scarcely have been looked for; as they were not composed in the order in which the Sacred Books stand in the Volume of Inspiration, nor perhaps in any order of which a clear account can now be given. He probably did not, at first, design to expound more than a single Book; and was led onward by the course which his Expository Lectures in public took, to write first on one and then on another, till at length he traversed nearly the whole field of revealed truth.

That, in proceeding with such want of method, his work, instead of degenerating into a congeries of lax and unconnected observations constantly reiterated, should have maintained, to a great degree, the consistency of a regular and consecutive Commentary, is mainly to be imputed to the gigantic intellectual power by which he was distinguished. Through the whole of his writings, this power is everywhere visible, always in action, ingrafting upon every passing incident some forcible remark, which the reader no sooner sees than he wonders that it had not occurred to his own mind. A work so rich in thought is calculated to call into vigorous exercise the intellect of the reader; and, what is the best and highest use of reading, to compel him to think for himself. It is like seed-corn, the parent of the harvest . . .

But that which gives the greatest charm to these noble compositions is, the genuine spirit of piety which breathes through them. The mind of the writer turns with ease and with obvious delight to the spiritual application of his subject. Hence the heart of the reader is often imperceptibly raised to high and heavenly things. The rare combinations of intellect so profound and reasoning so acute, with piety so fervent, inspires the reader with a calm and elevated solemnity, and strengthens his conviction of the excellence and dignity of true religion."

Accordingly we are glad to commend these further Banner of Truth reprints.

D. B. M.

The Life of Rabbi Duncan by David Brown. Free Presbyterian Publications Paperback. 511 pp. £6.50.

This book gives the life of one of the spiritual giants of last century. When the book was first published in 1872 twelve hundred copies were sold in three months and another edition was soon called for. In Scottish Reformed circles the name of Prof. "Rabbi" Duncan is still well known and revered. By the re-publication of this interesting account of his life which was full of variety as well as usefulness, we trust that his memory will be kept green. The earlier publication by our Publications Committee of some of "Rabbi" Duncan's writings should also promote this and testify not only to the profundity of the mind of the Professor but also to his spirituality of mind. His deliverance from atheism and his abiding interest in the conversion of the Jews are two matters, among others, that should make this book of great interest to those who read it. David Brown's intimate acquaintance with Professor Duncan enables him to give an accurate picture of this noted minister of Christ.

D. B. M.

All Things for Good by Thomas Watson. Banner of Truth Trust Paperback. 127 pp. £1.50.

This paper back reprinted from the works of Thomas Watson was published in 1663 as "A Divine Cordial." Under this last title it was also published in the U.S.A. in the 1950s, copies of which were circulated in this country also. The book deals with the well-known text in Romans 8: 28, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." After showing that the best things and the worst things work for good to the godly, Watson goes on to show why it is so. The following three chapters take up the subject of the love of God, the tests of that love and an exhortation to love Him. He then deals with effectual calling before concluding with exhortations to them who are called and a brief reference to God's purpose in salvation.

Those familiar with the other writings of this Puritan writer will realise the value of this short treatise and it will need no recommendation from us. To any unfamiliar with his writings we gladly commend it.

D. B. M.

Pages from the Past. Edited by Alex. McPherson. Free Presbyterian Publications Paperback. 85 pp.

The contents of this book have been selected from the pages of The Young People's Magazine. The book is made up chiefly of shorter items but there are two longer ones. It is intended mainly for younger readers as there is a dearth of **good** reading material for them at the present time. It is hoped that it will do something to meet this need.

D. B. M.

Notes and Comments

Commonwealth Conference on Sabbath

The Commonwealth Conference called in London early in August, like many other international meetings of Government ministers, intruded on the sanctity of the Sabbath. The Conference was called in order to consider the imposition of sanctions on South Africa to try and force that Government to abandon its policy of apartheid. Politicians in different countries seem to think that they have liberty to dispense with the law of the Sabbath to engage in secular discussions on that day whenever they please, yet the Lord shows once and again that those that honour Him He will honour and those that despise Him shall be lightly esteemed. If the evils

of the apartheid system are to be removed and be replaced by a Government in which black and white can co-operate together for the benefit of South Africa, and of Africa as a whole, then the trampling of God's holy day under foot by the rulers of the Commonwealth nations is not going to hasten that desired end.

Immorality

The tragic increase of immorality in the nation is highlighted in the statistics for illegitimate births in England and Wales. Last year almost one fifth of children born in England and Wales were illegitimate. In 10 years the number has doubled. The ordinance of marriage, ordained by God for the benefit of mankind is being spurned by a generation that has grown up without the knowledge of God. What the end of these things shall be we cannot tell but one thing is sure — "God is not mocked" — and unless the nation is brought to seek and obtain repentance then the judgments of God will undoubtedly fall upon an ungodly nation. We are ripening for judgments, and the sins of the flesh which are so prevalent in our day is one evidence of this. May the Lord in mercy turn the nation before His wrath takes hold of it.

Crime

Violent crime rose by 10 per cent last year and drug offences by over 10 per cent. Cases of serious assault rose by 9 per cent and those involving weapons increased from 3000 to 3600. The Shadow Scottish Secretary, Donald Dewar said that the rise in crimes involving firearms was alarming. He maintained that economic deprivation and high unemployment lead to frustration and pressures which often encourage violence. Whatever the effect of the factors mentioned by Mr Dewar may have on the crime rate, yet it is all too clear that through the relaxation of sanctions against law-breakers, Governments have paved the way for a more violent society. By the removal of the ultimate sanction of the death penalty they vitiated the whole system of penal sanctions and this has spawned a society that is violent and cruel. Those who suffer most are the weak and the elderly who are an easy prey to persons of corrupt and depraved tendencies. We are but reaping what we have sown. If only we would learn this lesson then it might be possible to make a new start in making the penalty fit the crime. Abandonment of religion has had its own effect in withdrawing from men those restraints which true religion necessarily imposes. May the day speedily come when men will again take the Word of God as their guide and not their own perverted imaginations.

Church Notes

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Western: At Laide on 2nd September at 11 a.m.

Outer Isles: At Stornoway on 2nd September at 12 noon.

Canadian: At Toronto on 5th September at 2 p.m.

Skye: At Portree on 14th October at 11 a.m.

Southern: At Glasgow on 16th September at 6 p.m.

Zimbabwe: At Bulawayo on 14th October at 2 p.m.

Northern: At Dingwall on 28th October at 2 p.m.

Committee Meetings (D.V.)

The following Committees will meet at Inverness Church:

Tuesday, 7th October

9.00 a.m. — 10.00 a.m.	Church Interests
10.00 a.m. — 11.00 a.m.	Training of Ministry
11.00 a.m. — 12 noon	Church Magazines
12 noon — 1.00 p.m.	Publications
2.00 p.m. — 3.00 p.m.	Welfare of Youth
2.00 p.m. — 4.30 p.m.	Finance
3.00 p.m. — 4.00 p.m.	Sabbath Observance
4.30 p.m. — 5.30 p.m.	Dominions and Overseas Religion and Morals
7.00 p.m. — 9.00 p.m.	Jewish and Foreign Missions
7.00 p.m. — 8.00 p.m.	Church Centenary Commemoration Committee

Foreign Mission Deputies

Rev. Alex. Murray and Rev. D. Ross returned to this country in the middle of August after six weeks abroad during which time they visited Zimbabwe, Malawi and Kenya. We would acknowledge the Lord's goodness in their safe-keeping during their travels. We trust that their journey was not in vain but may prove to be for the extension of our witness in Africa.

Overseas Deputies

Rev. L. MacLeod expects to return home (D.V.) in the middle of September after six months as the Church's Deputy to Australia and New Zealand. The Committee is indebted to him for this long period of service overseas and trust that he and his wife may be brought home in

safety. We trust that a blessing will follow his labours in Australia and New Zealand.

Rev. Neil Ross expects to leave this country on 10th September (D.V.) as Church Deputy overseas. He expects to visit Canada, Australia and New Zealand. He is due to return home at the end of the year (D.V.). We pray that he may be carried in safety during the journeys he will make and that the Lord will be pleased to bless his labours during his period abroad.

Stirling Communion

It is hoped (D.V.) to hold the Stirling Communion this year on the 1st Sabbath of October.

(Rev.) D. J. MacDonald.

Sydney, Australia — New Address

Attention is drawn to the new address for our congregation which meets in Sydney. The new address at Blacktown, advertised in the magazine, moves the place of worship from a church hall to a school room, which is considerably cheaper and more convenient for times of worship. Those who regularly attend have young families and the long distances and time involved required painstaking efforts to be able to attend the former place of worship.

Although the new position is further west from the city centre, it is not only closer to our people but the rents are cheaper. Plans have been drawn up for a church building to be put on our own land. However, the costs proved out of our reach at present. Revised plans are now being drawn up for a cheaper building which we hope can be, or soon will be, within our financial reach. I would like to thank those who in the past, have donated to the funds and would also add that more funds are still required. Any help would therefore be much appreciated.

Rev. E. A. Rayner

Acknowledgment of Donations

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

Sustentation Fund: Anon., £50; A MacG., Tarbert, Harris, £50.

Home Mission Fund: Anon., £25; A MacG., Tarbert Harris, £25.

Foreign Mission Fund: Anon., £200; O. W., £50 and £50 for famine relief; Anon., £20 for poor in Zimbabwe; A MacG. Tarbert, Harris, £12.50.

Aged & Infirm Ministers' etc. Fund: Anon., £200.

College, Library & Bookroom Fund: Anon., £200.

Organisation Fund: Anon., £25; Anon., £300; A MacG. Tarbert, Harris, £12.50.

Dominions & Overseas Fund: Anon., £200.

Home of Rest Fund: Anon., £500.

Nkulumane Church Building Fund: Anon., £1000.

The Publications Treasurer, Mr R. W. M. MacKenzie CA, Geanies House, Fearn, acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:-

Free Distribution Fund: N. M., £5; J. S., £3.20; J. H., £3.20; E. K., £2.60; H. M., £2.20; I. M., £1.55; R. F., 80p; J. M., 20p; B. N., 20p; I. M., 20p; M. C., 10p; D. M., 10p; I. J., 10p, all per Ian MacKenzie; Anon., £200.

Publications Fund: Stirling, £7; St. Jude's, £15; Applecross, £8.90.

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

Bonar: A Friend, £50 (in plate) for Bonar Bridge General Funds.

Bracadale: Mr & Mrs MacA., £50 per Mrs MacA; Friend of the Cause, £10 per J. Campbell, both for Congregational Purposes; From the Estate of John MacAskill, Carbostmore per Christie & Ferguson, Solicitors, Portree, £3,625 for Portmalong Property Fund; In memory of a beloved one, £50 for Bracadale Church (in plate).

Daviot: Anon., £50 for Manse Fund.

Dumbarton: Anon., 4/5/86, £20 for Congr. Funds (in plate).

Dundee: Glasgow Friend, £10; Edinburgh Friend, £5, both per Rev. D. C. M.

Edinburgh: A Friend, £20 for Congr. Funds per Rev. Angus Morrison; A Friend, Edinburgh, £20 for Sust. Fund; From Strathclyde Bus Group at Rev. Angus Morrison's Induction, £20, all for Manse Purchase Fund; Anon., Glasgow Postmark, £5 for Induction Church door Coll.; Anon., Inverness Postmark, £10; Anon., Edinburgh Friend, £10, both for teas at Induction, both per Ian MacKenzie.

Fort William: Friend, Caol, £10 for Sust. Fund; Friend, Valtos, £5; Friend, Drinishadder, £5, all per Rev. J. A. MacDonald.

Glasgow (St. Jude's): Mrs MacK., £4 for Congr. Fund; As you see fit, £20; Anon., £20; Matt. 6 v. 3 (2 donations), £20; J. M. D., £10; Anon., £10, A. MacL., £10; Anon., £1, all for Bus Fund; Anon., £10; Anon., £5, both for Sust. Fund; Anon., £20; Anon., £10, both Home Mission; Anon., £10 for Publications Fund; Anon., £50 to Sponsor a Blind Child; Anon., £35 for T.B.S.; Anon., £5 for T.B.S.

Glendale: Anon., (envelope in plate), £30; Friend of the Cause, £20, both for Communion Expenses; Anon., £25 for Church Door Coll., last two per Rev. D. Nicolson.

Portree: D. M., Dingwall, £40 for Sust. Fund and £10 for Home Mission per F. M.; Anon., £2 for Organisation Fund (envelope in plate).

Raasay: Anon., £20 for Organisation Fund; C. F., Lochcarron, £10 for Raasay Funds; Friend, Inverarish, £5; Envelope in plate, £3; Friend at Communion, £4 per J. M. Macleod, last three for Comm. Exps.

Stirling: Friend of the Cause, North Tolsta, £10 for Congr. Funds per Mrs J. M.

Stornoway: Miss K. A. MacLeod, The Cottage, Callanish, £30; Rev. D. J. & Mrs McA., £10, both for Sust. Fund; Anon., £25 where most needed, all per Rev. J. MacLeod; Anon., £30 for Sust. Fund, £5 for Home Mission Fund, £5 for Foreign Mission.

Correction: In August issue, page 259, line 13 from bottom of page should have read as follows:- "will be preserved only where those restraints are recognised which God Himself imposes in those portions of His Word which require."