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Deep Waters

The true people of God are often called to pass through many trials and afflictions in this world. The Lord in His providence brings them from time to time into deep waters, in order that they may be tested and tried, and to make His mighty power known to them in His delivering them out of those deep waters into which He has brought them. Some of the Lord's people, no doubt, know more in their experience of what it is to be brought into deep waters, yet all His people will in some measure experience such trials. In these deep waters His people may be ready to write hard things against themselves, yes, and hard things against God, yet the Lord will ultimately bring them out of those deep waters and cause them to glorify His great Name for the wonders of His grace and His redeeming love.

Sometimes it is through the world that the children of God are brought into deep waters. The powerful ensnaring influences of the world can be so brought to bear upon them that they are brought into deep waters by them. So too, the reproach and mockery and persecution with which the world lying in the wicked one assaults them brings them into deep waters in their experience. Peter found in His experience that entering into the high priest's palace was something other than he had thought it to be, and very quickly he was in deep waters. Often have the children of God in this world to bear the taunts of the wicked saying to them in their trouble, Where is thy God now gone? This can bring them into deep waters in their soul especially when the Lord is hiding His countenance from them.

At other times it is through the temptations of the wicked one that they are brought into deep waters. The subtlety of Satan is such that he can lay snares for the feet of the godly when they least expect it. He has the

wisdom of the serpent in knowing how, when and where to attack the child of God. His aim is to come upon them unawares so that he may entangle them in his net. How successful he has been in his efforts, the many falls of the children of God in the world testify to. How often have they been brought, and how often are they still being brought into great deeps. Is it any wonder then that at times they are ready to cry out, I shall fall by the hand of Saul one day? This great Saul, this arch-enemy of the people of God cannot be overcome by the strength of man's arm, and even when the soul seeks to overcome him in the strength of divine grace, into what deep waters the soul may be brought before it obtains the victory.

Sometimes the people of God are brought into great deeps by reason of the corruption that they find within their own hearts. In the old nature there is the seed of every evil and hurtful lust. These seek to raise their heads and in so doing bring the soul into great deeps. The flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh. The old nature at one time appears to be dominant, at another time the new. But the conflict is real and deep and of long duration. Unless subdued by divine grace these lusts shall rise up and break out. The living soul must therefore ever be in conflict with them. On one occasion it may be one particular lust, on another occasion some other lust. Yet the warfare goes on and when it wages hottest the soul is in deep waters.

Not only are individual believers brought into deep waters but the Church collectively as well. The Church of God in the world is exposed to attacks from within and without and its very existence in the midst of so many foes is a standing miracle. She is often brought into deep waters and appears ready to be swallowed up, such is the hatefulness of her enemies to her. The believing people of God are painfully aware of it when the Church is in deep waters and they long and pray for her deliverance from her enemies and have encouragement from the Word of God to believe that He will bring her out of these deep waters. As is true of the children of God individually that they come out each one of them from the deep waters more sanctified than when they went into them, praising the Name of the Lord, as Jonah did, so the Church of God comes forth from the deep waters more separated unto His service.

The question must arise as to how the true children of God and the Church of God are to be borne up when they come into deep waters. The answer must be in their looking to the One who was borne up in the midst of deep waters and who went into these deep waters for them. The

experience of the divine Redeemer in this exceeds in its nature and extent any of the deep waters into which His people or His church is brought. His experience was unique in the nature and depths of it. The language of His soul was:

Save me, O God, because the floods
do so environ me,
That ev'n unto my very soul
come in the waters be.

I downward in deep mire do sink,
where standing there is none:
I am into deep waters come,
where floods have over me gone.

It was these same deep waters which wrung from Him the cry of dereliction:

My God, my God, why hast Thou me
forsaken? Why so far
Art Thou from helping me, and from
my words, that roaring are?

Into what deep waters the Lord of life and glory was brought when as the great Sin-bearer He took upon Him the load of His people's transgressions. Into greater depths He could not go, for there were none greater. Into whatever deep waters His people are brought these are not to be compared to His sufferings. He was the Surety-Substitute of His people and as such had to meet all the demands of law and justice and this He did fully. The law can never say of Him that its requirements were never met, nor can justice say that its demands were never satisfied. He magnified the law and made it honourable. Justice had at last to say concerning the sufferings of Him who went down into the deep waters of Calvary's Cross, It is enough. I am satisfied, infinitely and eternally satisfied with the price that has been paid. It was then that Christ lifted up His head and said: It is finished. The cup that the Father hath given me, I have drunk to the bitter dregs. On the foundation which Christ has laid in His death, His people are never to perish, no, not even when they have to say with Jonah: "The waters compassed me about, even to my soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever." With him they will have to say: "Yet has Thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God."

Sermon

by Rev. Wm MacLean

(This recorded sermon was preached by Rev. W. MacLean, M.A., in the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, Gisbourne, N.Z. on 4th July, 1965.)

"And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage; and the door was shut." Matt. 25: 10.

In particular the words, *"and the door was shut."*

In the first part of the chapter we have the Parable of the Ten Virgins. "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish." By the kingdom of heaven in this place we are not to understand the kingdom of glory, for there are no foolish virgins in the kingdom of glory. The kingdom of heaven is Christ's kingdom or church in this world.

My kingdom, Christ says, is not of this world. It is in the world, but not of it. Christ had a kingdom in this world from the beginning. There was the Old Testament dispensation or administration of the kingdom, but when Christ, the King Himself, came in the flesh, and when He began His public ministry, He was calling upon men to repent because the kingdom of heaven was at hand — that is the New Testament dispensation of the kingdom. The Old Testament dispensation administered through sacrifices and types — a dispensation which was largely typical — was to pass away through His own death and His resurrection, and the kingdom — the New Testament dispensation of the kingdom — set up.

After His resurrection He showed Himself alive for forty days to His apostles, to whom He gave commandments and spake to them concerning the kingdom of God. The commandments which He gave, during these forty days, were in connection with the kingdom of God, the New Testament Church in this world. This dispensation of the kingdom is to remain until the end of time as we find the Apostle saying to the Hebrews: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire." And in this kingdom, the kingdom of heaven, or in other words the visible Church in the world, we have, as Christ here points out, the two classes — the wise and the foolish virgins or, as in other parables, the wheat and the tares, the sheep and the goats. We have these two classes in the kingdom.

Now in connection with the words of our text, "and the door was shut," we may in the first place make a few remarks about the door here

mentioned. The words imply that the door was open, but now, when the midnight call came, that is at death, the door was shut. We may make a few remarks about the door here mentioned and the opening of this door.

In the second place, those who are to be shut out. There will be those who will enter in at death — those who are wise.

“They shall be brought with gladness great,
And mirth on every side,
Into the palace of the King,
And there they shall abide.”

But there are those, and this is what will meet them at death, a shut door, “And the door was shut.” We shall notice, therefore the character of those who shall be shut out who shall meet with this solemn truth at death “and the door was shut”, and the character of those who shall enter in. In the last place we may make a few remarks about what is implied in the door being shut.

First of all, the door, which is here mentioned, is the door of the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. Christ is the door, for it is in Christ that God is merciful. It is in Christ that God receives sinners. It is in Christ that He is a Saviour.

Christ is set before sinners as a door of hope, a door of mercy, and a door of salvation, as He Himself declares, “I am the door, by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved and shall go in and out and find pasture.” Now in connection with Christ being a door of salvation in the everlasting Gospel, we may notice first of all that there was a door of life set before Adam in a state of innocence in the promise of the Covenant, “Do this and thou shalt live.” If Adam continued to give the obedience which God required in terms of the covenant which the Lord made with him, then Adam and his posterity, the whole human race, would be confirmed in a state of innocency. They would enter into full possession of the life promised in the covenant. This door of life, of eternal life and felicity, was set before Adam and the human race in him, in the promise of the covenant. But we see how Adam by sinning against God and breaking the covenant, closed the door of life, and opened the door of death — spiritual, temporal and eternal death — the death threatened in the covenant. The Lord said, “In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,” and Adam, by sinning against God, closed the door of life and opened the door of death and the door of hell for himself and for his posterity. Accordingly when we are born into this world our faces are set on the door of death.

Every moment that is passing is bringing us nearer the door of death, and if we are Christless, nearer to the door of hell, for death will be the door for Christless sinners into a lost eternity. God could have left all mankind in that condition, but in His mercy and love He had a purpose of mercy towards lost and perishing sinners, that He would open a door of life for them in the second Adam, the Lord from Heaven, His only begotten Son. That door, as a door of hope, of mercy and of salvation, was first opened and set before Adam and Eve in the first promise. Christ in the promise was the door, the door of salvation. Christ was also set forth as the door of hope and of salvation, in the sacrifices and the types of the Old Testament, all of which pointed to Christ as the only name given under heaven among men whereby we can be saved. All who were saved in Old Testament times were saved through entering in by Christ, the door. He was the only door of salvation set forth in the promises and the types, and all who were saved, were saved through faith in Him as the One who was to come.

It is when He did come, and when He offered Himself as a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice on Calvary's accursed tree — when He cried on the cross "It is finished" — that the door was actually opened, that atonement was made for sin.

When He cried "It is finished" we read that the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, indicating among other things, that a new and living way was now opened up. Christ in the Gospel is set before us as the door of salvation. This door is not set before the angels who kept not their first estate. It is not set before sinners in a lost eternity. The door of mercy is forever closed upon them. It is to those to whom the Gospel comes that Christ is setting an open door, as He declares, "Behold, I have set before thee an open door and no man can shut it."

He is the door that is set before us and we are called upon to strive to enter in. He, as the door of salvation, calls upon sinners to strive to enter in while it is yet called today for the door shall not always be open. "Now," He says, "is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." We ought to be seeking to enter in while it is called today, lest death will find us, as it found the foolish virgins who, with all their profession, never entered in through faith in Christ, and when death came it was a shut door that confronted them. How solemn the words "and the door was shut"! And the door was shut, and shut for all eternity, but it is an open door that is now set before us in the everlasting Gospel.

We shall notice in the second place those who shall be shut out at

death. The Word of God makes it clear who they are that shall be shut out: all who die in their sins shall be shut out. We find the Apostle, in writing to the Galatians, making mention of the fruits of the flesh; he gives a long list of divers sins, and he goes on to say that they who do these things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Those who go on living in these sins shall be shut out at death. He says the same in his First Epistle to the Corinthians — “Be not deceived”, — “neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.”

“Be not deceived” — that clearly shows that sinners deceive themselves. They think they can live in those sins and at last inherit the kingdom of God. In our day people are being deceived by persons in high places telling them that they can live in those sins and yet inherit the kingdom of God. But this is what the Holy Ghost through the apostle declares, “Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.” They shall be shut out at death unless they repent. The Lord Jesus Christ solemnly warns us that except we repent we shall assuredly perish. The apostle, in the case of the Corinthians to whom He was addressing these words, goes on to say “and such were some of you,” some of them were guilty of these sins, “but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.” And as the Lord washed away the sins of the Corinthians, these terrible sinners, there is the same efficacy, and the same merit in His blood to cleanse from all sin.

But in this parable we shall notice that those who shall be shut out at death are spoken of as foolish virgins. They professed to be virgins, they professed to go forth to meet the bridegroom, and they fully expected that they too would enter in at death; but we see that when the midnight call came the door was shut, and they were shut out for all eternity. Now in connection with the character of the persons here mentioned who shall be shut out, we may notice some of the respects in which the wise and the foolish are similar. There are four respects in which they are similar. To all appearance the wise never suspected the foolish. They were similar in this respect that they all had the name of virgins. The foolish had the name of virgins as surely as the wise. We see that the apostate church of Rome is called the great harlot and the mother of harlots, and that, because she has corrupted and defiled the doctrines of God's Word.

When persons depart from the doctrines of God's Word and from His Worship, the Word of God calls that spiritual whoredom, and harlotry, spiritual adultery. Now the church of Rome, at one time, was a virgin as she was when the apostle wrote his epistle, keeping to the truth and to the doctrines of the truth, and gave many martyrs for the truth. The catacombs of Rome are a standing witness to the numbers who laid down their lives for Christ, for the church of Rome pays tribute to these martyrs and canonizes them.

Nevertheless, she is not keeping to the doctrines for which these martyrs died. She has apostatized from the faith. She is a harlot in this respect, that she has corrupted and defiled the doctrines of the everlasting Gospel. She is called the mother of harlots. There are other churches which are harlots in that they are not pure virgins with respect to the doctrines of the Truth and to the mode of worship which God set up in His Church. But in the case of the foolish they had the name of virgins. They could not be accused of having corrupted or departed from the doctrines of God's Word. They were sound in doctrine, and in their walk and conversation evidently showed that they honoured their profession outwardly. They had the name of virgins as surely as the wise.

Secondly, they were similar in this respect that they all went forth to meet the bridegroom. They all professed to be betrothed to the bridegroom — that Christ was their Saviour. They also went forth in the way of a public profession, in the way of testifying and professing to be on His side. And thirdly, we see that they all had a lamp, the lamp of a public profession or the lamp of their hope, although in the case of the foolish the lamp was a false hope. We read that the hope of the hypocrite shall perish, his hope shall go out at death. But the righteous hath a hope in his death.

Now they had this lamp of a profession as surely as the wise had. It is the Lord who could see whether they had a true hope or not. They professed outwardly to have a hope and, as we mentioned, to all appearance the wise never suspected, but that they had the same hope as they had. But they proved that their hope was a false hope, that they were hypocrites, that they were self-deceived, for that is what the hypocrite very often means in the truth, persons who are self-deceived. Persons may try to throw dust in people's eyes and deliberately try to make out that they are what they are not. That is what we usually mean by a hypocrite. They are trying to get a name for themselves and a place for themselves, and if they get a name and place that is all that they are after, and they may go so far as to deceive the very elect. Well, these are cer-

tainly hypocrites in the strict sense of the term, but the term hypocrite is also applied to persons who deceive themselves, who are self-deceived and who, instead of having a good hope through grace, are entertaining a false hope which shall go out at death as the hope of the foolish virgins did.

Then they were similar in this respect that they all slumbered and slept. By the slumbering and the sleeping of the wise virgins we are to understand their backsliding. They first slumbered instead of being lively in their graces, (perhaps the world and divers lusts got the upper hand of them) and instead of being lively in following the Lord they began to slumber. They got sleepy and at last they slept, but such backsliding will be made bitter to His own. They shall learn that it is an evil and a bitter thing to forsake the Lord. He shall awaken them and they shall hear His voice as surely as the Ephesians did, for it is to the saints in Ephesus that the words are addressed in the first place, "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead" — "Come out from among them and be ye separate," and "Christ shall give you light."

The wise slumbered and slept and so did the foolish. This was a comfort to the foolish that they could see the wise slumbering and sleeping. The slumbering and sleeping of the wise, however, was made bitter to them, and they could receive no consolation until the Lord restored to them the joy of His salvation, as we find the psalmist confessing, "my soul He doth restore again and me to walk doth make within the paths of righteousness, ev'n for His own name's sake."

Those who are wise want their souls to be restored. But the foolish would say, "Oh well, the wise, the saints, in the Old Testament and the New fell and went astray." That is the plaster that they will put on their wounds, the short-comings and the failings of the Lord's people. "Because they are like that" they say, "we are just like them; some of them the joy of His salvation, as we find the psalmist confessing, "my consolation. But that is no consolation to those who are wise. What will console and comfort their soul is the Lord's restoring to them the joy of His salvation, His receiving them graciously, and His taking away their iniquity so that their souls are restored to walk again in the paths of righteousness.

But the foolish saw the wise slumbering and sleeping and therefore they excused themselves. They made excuses for their fallings and their failings, and for their backsliding. But those who are wise cannot make excuses for themselves. They beat upon themselves and say, "My folly makes it so." Instead of trying to excuse themselves they will be making

an open breast of their failings and of their fallings to the Lord, and seeking that he would cleanse them and receive them graciously. Desertion of soul and mourning an absent Lord are experiences to which the foolish virgins are strangers.

We shall now come to notice the respects in which they differed, and there are three respects, we believe, in which they differed. We see that in the case of the wise they took oil in their vessels with their lamps. The wise had an oil vessel along with their lamp. The foolish had just the lamp and whatever oil they had in the lamp, and however bright their lamps might appear for a time we see that when death came their lamps went out. They went out in despair and they were shut out. But there was this great difference between the wise and the foolish, that the wise had oil vessels along with their lamps. Then there was this difference, that it was the custom of the wise to go to them that sell to buy oil. They needed to have their lamps replenished with oil, and they went to them that sell. That was not the custom of the foolish. And thirdly, there was this respect in which they differed, that the wise were betrothed to the bridegroom of the Church, but the foolish, whatever profession they made, were never betrothed to Him.

In making a few remarks on these points of difference, we shall notice first of all that they differed in this respect that the wise had an oil vessel as well as having a lamp. We may say that the oil vessel which the wise had is the new creation, the effectual work of the Holy Spirit in the soul. The wise are those who are called effectually, "Whom He called them He also justified; whom He justified them He also glorified." That was true in the case of the wise. They entered glory at death, for they had the oil vessel of the effectual work of the Holy Ghost in their souls.

They had the Holy Spirit, for the Holy Spirit dwells in His own work, in the souls of those who are created anew in Christ Jesus. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His", for it is through His Word and Spirit that Christ dwells in the souls of His people. Now we see that the Holy Spirit is compared to oil, to an anointing or an unction. The apostle John in writing to the saints, to those who were wise, who were new creatures in Christ Jesus, says to them, "but ye have an unction," ye have an unction or anointing "from the Holy One and ye know all things."

And he also says, "but the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you", that is the spirit which they received, "and ye need not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall

abide in Him." They have this anointing that teacheth them of all things, that is, of all things pertaining to salvation, necessary for their eternal salvation.

They are inwardly taught and inwardly illuminated by the Holy Spirit. They have this unction. They have the Holy Spirit who teaches them, the Holy Spirit in His effectual work as distinct from the Holy Spirit in His common operations, for it was the Holy Spirit in His common operations that the foolish had, and under the influence of these common operations they went forth and took up the lamp of a profession and entertained the hope which they had, which proved to be a false hope. But in the case of those who are wise, they had the gracious and effectual teaching and working of the Holy Spirit. "Ye have an unction from the Holy One." They had this anointing which was teaching them and abiding with them.

(to be continued)

Difference between Acquired and Experimental Knowledge

A letter by the Rev. John Newton

April 1766

My Lord — I shall embrace your permission to fill my paper. As to subject, that which has been a frequent theme of my heart of late, I shall venture to lay before your Lordship — I mean the remarkable and humbling difference which I suppose all who know themselves may observe, between their acquired and their experimental knowledge, or, in other words, between their judgment and their practice. To hear a believer speak of his apprehensions of the evil of sin, the vanity of the world, the love of Christ, the beauty of holiness, or the importance of eternity, who would not suppose him proof against temptation? To hear with what strong arguments he can recommend watchfulness, prayer, forbearance, and submission, when he is teaching or advising others, who would not suppose but he could also teach himself, and influence his own conduct? Yet alas! *Quam dispar sibi!* The person who rose from his knees before he left his chamber, a poor, indigent, fallible, dependent creature who saw and acknowledged that he was unworthy to breathe the air or to see the light, may meet with many occasions before the day is closed, to discover the corruptions of his heart, and to show how weak

and faint his best principles and clearest convictions are in their actual exercise. And in this view, how vain is man! what a contradiction is a believer to himself! He is called a *believer* emphatically because he cordially assents to the Word of God: but, alas! how often unworthy of the name! If I were to describe him from the Scripture character, I should say, he is one whose heart is athirst for God, for His glory, His image, His presence; his affections are fixed upon an unseen Saviour; his treasures, and consequently his thoughts, are on high, beyond the bounds of sense. Having experienced much forgiveness, he is full of bowels of mercy to all around; and, having been often deceived by his own heart, he dares trust it no more, but lives by faith in the Son of God, for wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification, and derives from Him grace for grace; sensible that, without Him, he has not sufficiency even to think a good thought. In short, he is dead to the world, to sin, to self; but alive to God, and lively in His service. Prayer is his breath, the Word of God his food, and the ordinances more precious to him than the light of the sun. Such is a believer, in his judgment and prevailing desires.

But were I to describe him from experience, especially at some times, how different would the picture be. Though he knows that communion with God is his highest privilege, he too seldom finds it so; on the contrary, if duty, conscience, and necessity, did not compel, he would leave the throne of grace unvisited from day to day. He takes up the Bible conscious that it is the fountain of life and true comfort; yet perhaps while he is making the reflection, he feels a secret distaste, which prompts him to lay it down, and give his preference to a newspaper. He needs not to be told of the vanity and uncertainty of all beneath the sun; and yet is almost as much elated or cast down by a trifle, as those who have their portion in this world. He believes that all things shall work together for his good, and that the most high God appoints, adjusts, and over-rules all his concerns; yet he feels the rising of fear, anxiety, and displeasure, as though the contrary was true. He owns himself ignorant, and liable to be deceived by a thousand fallacies; yet is easily betrayed into positiveness and self-conceit. He feels himself an unprofitable, unfaithful, unthankful servant, and therefore blushes to harbour a thought of desiring the esteem and commendations of men, yet he cannot suppress it. Finally (for I must observe some bounds), on account of these and many other inconsistencies, he is struck dumb before the Lord, stripped of every hope and plea, but what is provided in the free grace of God, and yet his heart is continually leaning and returning to a covenant of works.

Two questions naturally arise from such a view of ourselves. First — How can these things be, or why are they permitted? Since the Lord hates sin, teaches His people to hate it and cry against it, and has promised to hear their prayers, how is it that they go thus burdened? Surely if He could not or would over-rule evil for good, He would not permit it to continue. By these exercises He teaches us more truly to know and feel the utter depravity and corruption of our whole nature, that we are indeed defiled in every part. His method of salvation is likewise hereby exceedingly endeared to us; we see that it is and must be of grace, wholly of grace; and that the Lord Jesus Christ, and His perfect righteousness, is and must be our all in all. His power, likewise, in maintaining His own work, notwithstanding our infirmities, temptations, and enemies, is hereby displayed in the clearest light — His strength is manifested in our weakness. Satan, likewise, is more remarkably disappointed and put to shame, when he finds bounds set to his rage and policy, beyond which he cannot pass; and that those in whom he finds so much to work upon, and over whom he so often prevails for a season, escape at last out of his hands. He casts them down, but they are raised again; he wounds them, but they are healed; he obtains his desire to sift them as wheat, but the prayer of their great Advocate prevails for the maintenance of their faith. Farther, by what believers feel in themselves they learn by degrees how to warn, pity, and bear with others. A soft, patient, and compassionate spirit, and a readiness and skill in comforting those who are cast down, is not perhaps attainable in any other way. And lastly, I believe nothing more habitually reconciles a child of God to the thought of death, than the wearisomeness of this warfare. Death is unwelcome to nature; but then, and not till then, the conflict will cease. Then we shall sin no more. The flesh, with all its attendant evils, will be laid in the grave — then the soul, which has been partaker of a new and heavenly birth, shall be freed from every incumbrance, and stand perfect in the Redeemer's righteousness before God in glory.

But though these evils cannot be wholly removed, it is worthwhile to inquire, secondly, how they may be mitigated. This we are encouraged to hope for. The Word of God directs and animates to a growth in grace. And though we can do nothing spiritually of ourselves, yet there is a part assigned us. We cannot conquer the obstacles in our way by our own strength; yet we *can* give way to them; and if we do, it is our sin, and will be our sorrow. The disputes concerning inherent power in the creature have been carried to inconvenient lengths; for my own part, I think it safe to use scriptural language. The apostles exhort us, to give all

diligence to resist the devil, to purge ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, to give ourselves to reading, meditation, and prayer, to watch, to put on the whole armour of God, and to abstain from all appearance of evil. Faithfulness to light received, and a sincere endeavour to conform to the means prescribed in the Word of God, with an humble application to the blood of sprinkling, and the promised Spirit, will undoubtedly be answered by increasing measures of light, faith, strength, and comfort; and we shall know, if we follow on to know the Lord.

I need not tell your Lordship that I am an extempore writer. I dropt the consideration of whom I was addressing from the first paragraph; but I now return, and subscribe myself, with the greatest deference, &c.

Steps of Spiritual Experience

A letter by Mr C. B. Van Woerden, Akkrum, Holland

"Akkrum, 27th July, 1908

Dear Sir, — I received your kind letter of 19th June and will try to answer you with a few lines. I delayed my reply longer than I should have done, but I was very busy. I had also some objection in my mind, being a bad writer and having meantime many correspondents; also the importance of your questions, being often in many fears whether I am really in a state of grace or not.

I cannot deny that I have some hope that the Lord commenced a work of grace in my heart from my very youth. At least, I remember that when about seven years, I got very strong impressions of my sins, which made me confess them with many tears, begging the Lord that He would pardon me. It was an old year's night, and I could not sleep until I had a strong hope that He had heard me, and it was as if I felt that I loved Jesus for it; but on New Year's morning I sinned again, and lost my hope. From this time, until up to my 24th year (1884), I was never without impressions of my unconverted state, and I went as in a circle — of sinning, confessing my sins, promising the Lord not to sin again, and breaking my promises the first occasion I had. In these years there were principally two things which cast me much down, namely, the impossibility of believing in Christ, which I often tried with all my power (I had been always taught the Arminian doctrines); and a persuasion by many passages from Scripture, that I would not be saved unless I was elected, which stirred up my enmity and stood in my way of self-efforts to move the Lord to have mercy upon me. I did all that I could to deny 'election,' which was in my eyes the same as 'closing the doors of heaven for ever to

me,' for it was impossible for me to have the least hope that the Lord would have chosen such a one as I was. Terrible Scriptures, also dreams, frightened me, and my hope arose from my fulfilling the condition of the conditional promises, especially this one, 'Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.' Under all these my efforts to conquer my sins and to get reconciled with God, my hope went more and more down that I would ever succeed, and I was more and more convinced of my lost and helpless condition. On a Sabbath morning, reading a sermon of Spurgeon from Isaiah 54: 7-10, the love of Christ was shed abroad in my heart in a very wonderful manner. I cannot say that it was by means of the sermon, and I cannot remember that any word was applied with power to my soul, but I was sick of love, and I expected that I would die that day, without any fear of death. The way of life was opened, and Christ became precious to me. I abhorred sin, and thought I was now really converted. Delivered from the dominion of sin, I would never sin again, and happy as I was, I expected to go henceforth on my way with joy and gladness. But to my sad experience sin came back again, and I turned more miserable than ever before. From this time there came a change in my labour, knowing the power of Christ to save, but being unacquainted with the way in which the Lord carried on the work of salvation through Christ, my guilt came back again, but the Lord Jesus showed me the fountain of His blood, with His willingness to save me, also His necessity and suitableness, which brought peace into my soul, and I made a covenant with Him to serve Him for ever, giving myself into His hands for time and eternity. In these times I enjoyed much, but noticed very little. I had communion with Christ, access in prayer, no trouble with sin; in one word, I was happy. I cannot say how long this lasted, but at last the power of sin returned again, and with it, felt love retired, and fear came back, also the accusations of conscience. But the love of Christ enabled me to justify God in my damnation, though I could not live without Christ, and I besought the Lord that when He would send me to hell, He would grant me to love Him there. I thought hell would be a desirable place with Christ as a companion to love.

With the power of sin and the loss of felt love, fear came back, and it came into my mind to meditate what the reason was, that, though I believed that Christ loved me and that I loved Christ, yet I could not look upon God without fear to meet Him, because of the strength of sin and the guilt it pressed upon my conscience. My heart was a fountain of sin, and I was distressed, abhorring myself. Then it pleased the Lord to reveal

to me God the Father, in His sovereign, electing love, making a covenant with Christ to save me, because He loved me from everlasting, and that, therefore, Christ had delivered me. It was as if God the Father spoke to my soul, 'I have known from all eternity what you are, but I love you for my own sake, and all your sins are forgiven, those under which you sigh now, as well as the past and future.' A sense of the everlasting, electing love of the Father in Christ filled my heart, and quite broken I exclaimed, 'Abba, Father, dear Father.' I cannot express my feelings, but I believed that I was justified freely, and that nothing would separate me evermore from the love of God. But, afterwards, sin prevailed again and has often thrown me down, which brought me again under the bondage of the law.

The letter which you refer to in 1897, was written after this experience, which at this time was really so far hidden from my memory that I could not even touch it. About six years ago, I was again brought up a little out of my depths. Justifying God in my eternal condemnation, it pleased Him to give me a strong hope in His faithfulness, notwithstanding my unfaithfulness, and He gave me again much freedom which I had entirely lost. I have often thought that He would not spare me a moment, and He would have been just in it, yet I remain until this day, and what a wonder it is, I still hope in Him, and I will hope even if He would slay me. More than ever before, I believe that if I shall be saved, I will not have to boast, but the glory will be to the Lord and His free grace in Christ; and if it would please Him to throw me into hell, I hope never to open my mouth against Him, for He is, and will ever be, just in all His ways. . . .

There is no Church we are connected with, but we continue in reading sermons at present — Erskine, and John Owen, and Charnock. . . .

A letter from you or your wife will always please me, but you must not expect me to write often. May the Lord be with you and your family and all His dear people! Remember me at a throne of grace, when you have access there. — With kind respects, your unknown friend,

(Signed) C. B. Van Woerden."

Obituaries

Mrs Margaret MacCaskill, Carbost

In a variety of ways even by obituary notices in the pages of this Magazine we are reminded of the passing of the older generation of the Lord's people who by their lives and conversation set us a godly example to follow. One such was Mrs Margaret MacCaskill, "Heatherbell," Carbost, Isle of Skye, who was well known not only in her native island but

to a wide circle of friends throughout the Church who will remember her as a gracious and cheerful Christian.

Mrs MacCaskill was born in the village of Amer, in the parish of Bracadale in December 1896 and became associated with our Church when in 1922, she married William MacCaskill and made her home in Carbost. Like so many of her generation she was reticent to speak of her spiritual experience but we have been able to establish that Mr Donald MacSween, who was missionary at Portnalong, had noticed that the young woman who was a regular attender at the Means of Grace was now listening with a new interest. She often spoke feelingly and appreciatively of Mr MacSween and also of Duncan MacKinnon and Alister Beaton, gifted and spiritual lay missionaries with which our Church in Skye was blessed at that time.

In July 1942 the late Rev. M. MacSween was inducted to the pastoral charge of Bracadale and Mrs MacCaskill was one of those who waited prayerfully and earnestly on his ministry. This was but the beginning of a life-long attachment to Mr MacSween. In 1947 Mrs MacCaskill publicly professed her faith in Christ. The writer has gleaned that on that occasion she mentioned the portion, "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin," as having been blessed to her in giving her a personal view of Christ and enabling her to close in with Him. After her acceptance by the Session as a member in full Communion it is recalled that Mr Alister Beaton said to her "Ni e feum dhuit fhein is dhuinne" (It will benefit you and it will benefit us) meaning of course, that her taking this solemn step would by the Grace of God prove a means of strengthening to her own faith and would be a "benefit" to the congregation.

Mrs MacCaskill was no stranger to the trials of the world, losing one child in infancy and suffering the loss of her son, Archie, in his teens as a result of an accident, as well as her husband. Though she felt these blows keenly, by the blessing of God she was reconciled to His will. she will be remembered as a bright, cheerful Christian with a warmth to the Lord's people which is becoming rare. Her home was a real Bethel at Communion Seasons and among those often present were the late Maggie Gillies (of whom an obituary has recently appeared in this Magazine), the Misses MacAskill, Portree, Alister Beaton, Kenneth MacAskill and others too numerous to mention who were notable Christians in their day and who have passed to their eternal rest but whose memories are still fragrant in Skye.

Mrs MacCaskill was an exercised believer who in private, held up the hands of those who declared the Word of life. Like many of her contem-

poraries she was blessed with much of the spirit of discernment and could distinguish between "pulpit oratory" and feeding for her soul. Though naturally slow to speak she could administer gracious and telling rebukes when she felt it her scriptural duty. She was no stranger to trials and temptations yet had a solid, foundational assurance based on the truth of God's promises and His gracious personal dealings with her own soul. A distinguishing mark of Mrs MacCaskill was her love to the Lord's people and her earnest desire for the prosperity of the Cause of Christ both locally and in the wider sphere. The troubles through which the Church passed in her lifetime were a constant source of sorrow to her and she was truly one who was grieved for the afflictions of Joseph. She had no greater joy than to see sinners turning to Christ and she had a particular affection for the young who began to follow the footsteps of the flock, to many of whom she was a source of encouragement as well as an example. She loved the ministers of Christ following them with her prayers and making them always welcome in her hospitable home.

One of the highlights of her life must have been the time when her daughter, Cathie, was herself brought to know the Lord and to profess His name publicly. On reflection one cannot but say firmly that the outstanding grace which was to be seen in her life was contentment. This was no superficial outward show but came from a daily communion with her Saviour which enabled her to endure as "seeing him who is invisible."

Mrs MacCaskill maintained an unspotted profession for close on 40 years and even in her last illness which was debilitating and long drawn out she maintained her inner peace and outward composure. She longed to be with Christ which is far better and she was often in weakness, borne up by the promise, "In my Father's house there are many mansions." On the morning of Monday, 21st January, 1985 she passed to her eternal rest, in her 89th year. She is now as to her soul in the place where there is nothing but eternal joys, where the remembrance of Christ's death is not confined to "Seasons" but where there is a constant anthem of praise, "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood." We are left to mourn the passing of a mother in Israel but our lives are enriched by having known her.

To her like minded daughter and all the relatives we extend our most sincere sympathy.

D. J. MacD.

Miss Kate Macaskill, Portree

Miss Kate Macaskill, more affectionately known as Cathie, was born

in North Uist in 1896, just three years after the inception of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. She was too young to appreciate initially the spiritual and ecclesiastical significance of this recently formed denomination. In due course, however, by free and sovereign grace she was brought to understand and appreciate the character and necessity of the noble witness raised against the rationalistic and infidel views tolerated by the old Free Church of Scotland. She made no secret of her love and admiration for those honoured of God to conserve purity of doctrine, discipline and worship in the land of the Covenants. Like all the fallen posterity of Adam, she followed the course of corrupt nature. The prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience, was too strong for her, and even the unspeakable blessings of a godly unbringing failed to counteract in her the lure of sin and the appeal of the world. At the tender age of 16 she went to study in a college in Glasgow. This providence afforded her the privilege of attending upon the ministry of the late Rev. Neil Cameron, that eminent servant of God, but it appears that instead of being impressed by the Gospel, she actually ceased to attend St. Jude's or any other church. The Sabbath evenings found Cathie among the profane Sabbath breakers, mostly of Highland origin, who had a well known rendezvous in the city. During that period of her life she gave no evidence of interest in the Gospel, her soul, or the house of God. In the Divine Providence, she soon returned to her native isle, and it was there that He who gathereth the outcasts of Israel found her, and brought her to Himself. A very telling, solemn, arresting, yet appealing article in the pages of the Free Presbyterian Magazine was used by the blessed Spirit to awaken the subject of this obituary notice, to a sense of her lostness, and her desperate need of Christ. The Article, written in Gaelic, was entitled "An Cunnart a tha ann an Dàil" (The danger that lies in procrastination) and exposes in a most graphic yet realistic manner the extreme folly of stifling convictions, and Felix like waiting for a convenient season. The writer presses home the wisdom and propriety of the Biblical injunction to seek the Lord in youth. The content and incisive thrust of this article was the instrument in the hand of the Spirit to disturb Miss Macaskill's carnal security, and to lead her to His own Word, where she ultimately found rest and peace for her soul, in a crucified Lord and Saviour. Apparently she was so enamoured of what she read, that she sent a copy of it to her loved ones, no doubt with the prayer that it would be rendered as precious and effectual to them as it was to herself. By the grace of God she was strengthened to make public profession of her faith in the year 1926,

while her dear father was still alive to witness the grace of God that was in her. That profession Miss Macaskill adorned for well nigh 60 years in the house of her pilgrimage. Her love for the Lord and for His cause she could not hide; Her motto seemed to be "Nothing is too good for His people."

Our friend had strong convictions and was not afraid to voice them. This trait may have offended some and puzzled others, but for her, the Word of God put an end to all controversy. As a young believer, like many others, she delighted in secret prayer. A good man with whom she was well acquainted seemed to her to be remiss in this exercise. His conduct worried her much, but Romans 14: 22 was spoken with power to her heart, and her doubts and misgivings vanished. At a later stage in her sojourn in this world she went as far as Glasgow to purchase a wireless something of a rarity among Christians at that time. She found the shop, fancied a certain set, and decided to come back the following day to finalise the deal. In the interval, she felt herself rebuked by 1st Corinthians 10: 21. Some may smile cynically, but the Lord knows what may be a snare to one and not to another. She also shared a conviction in which many of her generation concurred, namely that it was proper for women to cover their heads at family worship as well as public worship.

Her fidelity to her own church did not interfere with the catholicity of the spirit which is of grace. A flow of Evangelical Magazines from out-with the borders of her own denomination was well perused and then systematically circulated among her friends for their edification. For the last part of her life she lived in Portree with her like-minded sister. Theirs was a home that attracted many of the Lord's people, especially at communion seasons. The hospitality extended and enjoyed there, was proverbial.

In March 1979 Cathie suffered a severe stroke. Her paramount concern and distress was that her memory was affected so badly that she could not even recall what the Lord had done for her soul. The writer and others detected this, and reminded her that although she had forgotten, the Lord had not, and could not forget. This provoked a smile which appeared to give some degree of relief. Frailty and great disability did not diminish her desire to hear the Word of God preached in public, or read in private. Conversely she struggled to take her seat in the sanctuary, and her whole countenance often lit up when, ultimately confined to her home, worship was engaged in. Great was her gratitude and joy when Mr Duncan MacLean, elder and neighbour would take worship with her in Gaelic. She called him affectionately "fear an aoraidh."

The end came on 1st October, 1985, when she passed away from this earthly scene to be for ever with the Lord. Her remains were interred in Stronuirinish cemetery, Portree, in close proximity to the grave of her well loved brother, Rev. Alexander Macaskill, there to await the morning of the resurrection.

To her only surviving sister and to all the family circle, we extend our deep and sincere sympathy, and commend them to the God of all grace and comfort.

"Help, Lord; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men." Psalm 12: 1.

F. M.

The writer is indebted to the sister of the deceased for the anecdotes.

Miss Elizabeth Campbell, Inverness

The followers and friends of Christ during his earthly life numbered in their company godly women, some of whom the Saviour had healed of their diseases and rescued from the power of evil. They ministered to Christ of their substance and gave loving devotion to his service. They loved him because he first loved them and gave himself for them an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour. They showed in their lives something "of the savour of his good ointments" and something of the "loveliness of Christ." On one visit to Philippi the apostle Paul went on the Sabbath by the riverside to the spot where prayer was wont to be made and found a company of women who were accustomed to resort thither for prayer, among them Lydia "whose heart the Lord had opened." They welcomed the apostle who conversed with them for they were obviously women of prayer. To such a company belonged, we believe, our worthy friend who is the subject of this brief notice.

Mrs Elizabeth Campbell was born in 1889 in Leadclune, Stratherrick, one of a family of 11. In the home of her God-fearing parents, William and Margaret Fraser, she was brought up in a godly atmosphere and came under the instruction and example of true religion as exemplified in the lives of her parents which stayed with her all her life and which she recalled later on with sincere gratitude. When the time came for her to leave home, like many of the youth of the Highlands, she went to Glasgow to train for the nursing profession and while there attended the ministry of the late Rev. Neil Cameron at St. Jude's church and for this godly minister she ever after retained a warm place in her affections. We have no doubt that it was at this period under the preaching of this

faithful ambassador of Christ that her early religious impressions were deepened which later under the Spirit's work opened the way to her conversion. Her aunt, the late Matron MacGillivray, also had a strong religious influence on the young girl. It was not, however, till 1942 on the occasion of the Stratherrick Communion that she obtained the liberty of the gospel, the minister concerned being the late Rev. James MacLeod of Greenock and the passage of God's word being "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" — John 12: verse 32.

She settled down in Inverness when she was joined in marriage to Mr James Campbell, son of the then godly Inverness elder, James Campbell, a building contractor whom the son followed in the building trade. Their home at Riverbank on the banks of the River Ness, not far from the beautiful Ness Islands, soon became the centre which attracted the Lord's people who came to attend the communion occasions and where throughout the years that followed there was an open door to all who feared the Lord whom Mrs Campbell loved. During the long nine years' vacancy in the congregation from 1938, the Campbell home at Riverbank welcomed the ministers who came to provide church services in the congregation.

Both Mr and Mrs Campbell were spared to observe the occasion of their golden wedding with their children and grandchildren who gathered to be with them. Mr Campbell passed away in 1980 but his wife was spared to live on for another six years. In February of this year, at the great age of 96, while staying in the Fairburn Nursing Home in the Corry district above Muir of Ord, Ross-shire, she was called to go, we believe, to be with Christ.

Mrs Campbell will be greatly missed far beyond her family and friends, as a woman who feared the Lord above many. She exercised a sturdy faith in Christ which when occasion called for it, she unobtrusively expressed. She was a keen and discerning observer of the religious world around her and often deplored the falling standards of conduct and the religious declension of the churches and prized the witness of her own church made by Revs. D. MacFarlane, Dingwall, and D. MacDonald Shieldaig, against the Arminianism of the 1893 Declaratory Act. In the troubles which beset our church in the intervening years, she showed a decided independence of mind. In the last months of life, she was severely tried by unbelief and the temptations of the evil one, even questioning the reality of her faith in Christ. This severe trial passed, however, and she emerged into the light and joy of the Gospel. Our church has lost a true friend in the passing of Mrs Campbell who by her prayers, her

strong witness to the Gospel and her consistent walk and conversation was evidently an "Epistle of Christ". "Help Lord; for the godly man ceaseth — for the faithful fail from among the children of men" — Psalm 12: 1. To her sons and daughters and their families we would extend our deep sympathy.

A. F. M.

Gillespie's "Aaron's Rod Blossoming"

by the Rev. D. Beaton

(Continued from page 294)

In July, 1645, Coleman, one of the Erastian divines, had preached a sermon before the House of Commons, in which he strongly advocated the Erastian position. In August, Gillespie preached before the Lords, and when his sermon was published he added an appendix, entitled "A Brotherly Examination of some Passages of Mr Coleman's late printed Sermon." Coleman replied in his "A Brotherly Examination Re-examined." Gillespie met Coleman's arguments in his "Nihil Respondes." Coleman, stung by Gillespie's clever exposure, replied to him in the "Male Dicis Maledicis." Gillespie's reply was given in his "Male Audis," in which he takes a survey of the whole Erastian controversy. But these phamplets were but steps leading up to his greatest work, *Aaron's Rod Blossoming: or, The Divine Ordinance of Church Government Vindicated*, which appeared near the end of 1646, and of which more anon. In 1647 Baillie and Gillespie laid before the General Assembly the Confession of Faith, which was ratified. The same Assembly passed a resolution authorising the publication of a series of propositions against Erastianism. These were the famous One Hundred and Eleven Propositions, in which the whole Erastian position is refuted. The following year Gillespie was called to the highest honour his Church could bestow in being placed in the Moderator's chair. The Assembly began its deliberations on the 12th of July and did not end until the 12th of August. During the great labours of this Assembly the frail frame of this faithful young ecclesiastic was gradually getting weaker and weaker by the insidious approach of the consumption that was soon to lay him low. Feeling death near at hand, he wrote and partly dictated his "Testimony against Association with the Malignant Enemies of the Truth and Godliness."

On the 17th day of December the end came. Patrick Simpson has preserved for us an account of these last days, which may be found in the first volume of Wodrow's *Analecta*. Like Mr Valiant-for-Truth, "when the day that he must go hence was come, many accompanied him to the river side." The saintly Rutherford was one of them. "The day, I hope, is dawning and breaking in your soul that shall never have an end." "It is not broken yet," he said, "but though I walk in darkness and see no light, yet I will trust in the name of the Lord and stay upon my God." But as he went further into the valley the light of the coming dawn came to his weary eyes, and he gave utterance to his hope in the words, "Glory! glory! a seeing of God! a seeing of God! I hope it shall be for His Glory!" A tombstone, erected by his relatives and friends, with a Latin inscription recording the chief actions of his life, was, with vindictive and petty spleen, broken in pieces by the order of the Committee of Estates at the Restoration. "A just undignity upon the memory of so dangerous a person," is the spiteful comment of the *Mercurius Caledonius*. The storm that was to test the trustworthiness of many a fair professor's barque had not yet broken when George Gillespie passed from the troubled scene of ecclesiastical politics, but the clouds were gathering, and he was mercifully delivered from feeling the anguish that pierced many a heart in Scotland.

The best edition of Gillespie's works is that consisting of two volumes, with a Memoir by Rev. Dr Hetherington, in the *Presbyterian's Armoury*, and for students interested in ecclesiastical polity and the great questions involved in the Erastian controversy, the reading of these volumes is a liberal education. Gillespie's pages, though burdened with references to authors now little known, and broken up into those numberless divisions and sub-divisions so dear to the heart of our fathers, has as clear and limpid a style as Hugh Binning, allowance being made for the differences of the subject treated.

His masterpiece, *Aaron's Rod Blossoming, or the Divine Ordinance of Church Government Vindicated*, was published in London at the sign of the King's Arms in Paul's Churchyard, 1646. It was reprinted in 1844 at Edinburgh, in the second volume of the *Presbyterian's Armoury*. It has been described as "distinctly the most complete and thorough confutation in our language, perhaps in any language, of the Erastian theory."¹ The author, in laying down his thesis, has continually in view the

¹ MacPherson's "Doctrine of the Church in Scottish Theology," p. 39

arguments of Selden, Coleman, Hussey, and Prynne. Selden and Coleman have already crossed our path. Hussey was minister at Chesselhurst in Kent, and was a man of outstanding gifts and influence. Prynne is remembered as one of the victims of the Laudean policy, having lost both his ears as punishment for his opposition to Prelacy. He was a man of learning and a decidedly able controversialist. Gillespie's work is divided into three books. The first book deals with Jewish Church Government, and in 13 chapters, with an appendix, Gillespie sets himself to prove that even under the theocracy the Church was distinct from the State. For the Jews had an ecclesiastical Sanhedrim and an excommunication distinct from the civil magistrate. The greater part of this book is taken up with establishing the thesis stated, that in the Jewish Church the power of discipline was exercised distinct from the State, and in doing so he deals with the arguments of Prynne and Erastus. The ease with which he quotes from Casaubon, Philo, the Talmud, Grotius, Zepherus, Piscator, Gerhard, Bucer, Walaeus, Bertranus, Buxtorf, and a host of others — many whose names are now forgotten even to students — fills one with wonder. It appears as if he did nothing else but study and read, and had the rare ability of bringing the vast stores of his learning to elucidate the subject under discussion. The second book, which in some respects is the most important of the three, deals with Christian Church Government. The first chapter is devoted to the rise, growth, decay, and reviving of Erastianism. The question is then stated, and the argument begins with the fourth chapter, which treats of the agreement and differences between the nature of the civil and ecclesiastical powers. With rare skill and ability Gillespie proceeds to prove that there is a difference between the civil and ecclesiastical powers, by showing that Christ has a twofold kingdom. As the eternal Son of God, head of all principalities and powers, He reigns over all creatures; as the Mediator, He reigns over the Church only. Now, if it can be proved that it is as the eternal Son and not as Mediator that the civil magistrate has his power from Christ, then, says Gillespie, much will have been done in deciding the Erastian controversy. In the seventh chapter he proves from certain passages of Scripture that the civil government was not given to Christ as Mediator. A goodly number of careless readers are ready to rush to the conclusion that because Gillespie denies that the power of the civil magistrate does not belong to Christ, he is taking up the Voluntary position. No such idea would ever enter the mind of any student of Gillespie's works, but it must be admitted, from many of the expressions used, and from a forgetfulness of the standpoint from which Gillespie is

arguing, the reader may readily rush to the above conclusion.¹ In the eighth chapter he deals with the difficult question of the power and privilege of the magistrate in matters ecclesiastical — the *circa sacra* and *in sacris* of ecclesiastical polemics. This subject played a prominent part in the Disruption controversy, and Dr Cunningham's masterly pamphlet, "Remarks on the Twenty-third Chapter of the Confession of Faith as Bearing on existing Controversies,"² deals with some misrepresentations of Gillespie's position, and is as fine an exposition of this difficult theme from the standpoint of confessional polity as can be found. The third book deals with the subjects of Excommunication and Suspension from the Lord's Table. The Erastians denied the Church's power to excommunicate, maintaining that this function belonged to the civil magistrate alone. In the first six chapters the question is stated, and an exposition of several passages of Scripture is given to prove that the Church has power to excommunicate. In discussing the question of Suspension from the Lord's Supper he proposed the question — Whether Judas received the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper? And the answer is given in the negative; but even though the affirmative could be proved, he maintains it would not nulify the Church's right to exclude wicked persons from the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The same marvellous wealth of references and clear, logical analysis are shown in the second and third books as in the first.

Aaron's Rod Blossoming has remained unanswered until this day. Gillespie entered into the arena with the most powerful disputants that perhaps the Erastian party ever had in this country. Men whose intellectual endowments were of the highest order and who were weighted with the rich stores of theological learning, he met them, a young man of 33 summers, and made the ablest of them acknowledge his prowess. Erastianism had more or less disturbed the Reformed Churches since Erastus had sent his theses in manuscript to Beza, who wrote a reply to them which led Erastus to publish his *Thesium Confirmatio* in 1570. The controversy was carried on with great vigour in Holland some time later, and in 1615, Walaeus — often quoted by Gillespie — produced his able work *De Munere Ministrorum Ecclesiae et Inspectione Magistratus circa illud*.

1 The civil magistrate is God's vicegerent, but not Christ's — that is, the magistrate's power hath its rise, origination, institution, and deputation, not from that special dominion which Christ exerciseth over the Church as mediator and head thereof, but from that universal lordship and sovereignty which God exerciseth over all men by right of creation; in so much that there had been (for order's sake) magistrates or superior powers, though man had not fallen, but continued in his innocency; and now, by the law of nature and nations, there are magistrates among those who know nothing of Christ, and among whom Christ reigneth not as mediator, though God reigneth over them by the kingdom of power. — *Aaron's Rod Blossoming*, book 2, chap. 9.

2 Reprinted in Cunningham's *Discussions on church Principles*, chap. 8, with the title "The Westminster Confession on the relation between Church and State."

Revius, Apollonius, and Triglandius also wrote on the same side. The controversy broke out in England during the Westminster Assembly period when the ablest book on the Erastian side was published, viz., Selden's *De Synedriis*. Dr Hetherington¹ and Dr Mitchell² give very full accounts of the debates in the Assembly of Divines on the subject, and for a brief historical survey of the controversy and its literature, there is nothing to equal Principal Cunningham's in the second volume of his *Historical Theology*.³

Book Reviews

Genesis 3. A Devotional and Expository Study by Edward J. Young, Banner of Truth Trust; Chapters — 24; Pages — 165; Price £1.95. Paperback.

In this concise and careful study of Genesis 3 Professor Edward J. Young of Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, U.S.A. states at the outset: "the scriptures are the Holy Bible." There follows the reverent exposition of this chapter of God's Holy Word which is not consigned as is the case so often today to the category of fable and myth, and although the chapter is full of poetic imagery, not treated as mere poetry nor the importance of the message made to supersede the form in which the message is conveyed. The historicity of Genesis 3 is emphasised. Adam and Eve are regarded as historical persons who were placed in the pleasant surroundings of the garden and were corrupted and fell by yielding to the subtlety of the devil in the form of a serpent speaking to the woman. The result is that Professor Young has given in the 24 chapters of this paperback a fine, helpful work on Genesis 3. Each chapter is given to the exposition of each individual verse.

Chapter 3 of Genesis is one of the most important chapters of the Old Testament books, for upon its clear exposition depends the true understanding of the Bible — "the interpretation of Genesis is crucial for one's understanding of the Bible and the Christian Gospel" — words on the cover. The subjects and theme of Genesis 3 bear out the truth of these words. The book opens with the appearance of the serpent conversing with the woman, instilling into her the doubts and questionings of unbelief

¹ Hetherington's *History of the Westminster Assembly*, chap. 4.

² Mitchell's *Westminster Assembly*, chap. 9.

³ *Hist. Theology*, II, 569, et seq.

which led to the downfall of our first parents. The use of the serpent for the devil's purposes is not new in scripture. In Revelation he is referred to: "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the devil and satan" — ch. 12, v. 9; and again "He laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent which is the devil and satan, and bound him a thousand years" — ch. 20, v. 2. The three parties to this tragic event which brought about the fall of the human race in Adam were arraigned before the Lord to receive sentence. For the devil was reserved the humiliation of hearing the first promise of the coming Saviour in "words of infallible authority" — "and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel" — v. 15. Finally, this fine paperback ends with words of life and hope: "Only in Him who was dead and liveth for evermore, do we have life" — Epilogue, page 165.

A.F.M.

Zechariah and Malachi by John Calvin. Banner of Truth Trust. 712 pp. £8.95.

This volume is the fifth of Calvin's series of expositions of the Minor Prophets and completes the series of reprints of these volumes by the Banner of Truth Trust. While there may be diversity of opinion as to which of Calvin's Commentaries is the best, yet there is no difference of opinion as to his merits as an expositor of Scripture. His rare endowments as an interpreter of Scripture drew forth expressions of profound admiration even from those who did not agree with his system of doctrine. Even Arminius conceded that he was incomparable in interpreting Scripture and that his commentaries were of more value than all the writings of the Fathers of the Church. Rev. John Owen of Thruxington, who translated Calvin's Commentaries on the Minor Prophets from Latin, states in his preface that before he read Calvin on the Minor Prophets it was to him one of the least interesting and least instructive portions of the ancient Scriptures; but that afterwards he found it to be one of the most interesting. Owen also says of him: "Some Commentators excel him as critics, and others in the number of practical deductions; but he surpasses them all in pointing out and illustrating the main drift of a passage, in catching as it were its very spirit, and in the power he possessed of impressing on the mind in a few words both its meaning and its practical lessons."

D.B.M.

Notes and Comments

Sudden Tragedy in Cameroon

Of the 700 inhabitants of the village of Myos in Cameroon only six survived when an eruption in a nearby volcanic lake poured out suffocating gases on the village. In the area affected by this disaster it is estimated that a total of 1,500 persons perished. It was reckoned that the death of the people by asphyxiation was instantaneous. Relief from different countries was sent to Cameroon to help the survivors.

The sudden death of so many at one time is a solemn event wherever it happens on the face of the earth. It is a reminder to men everywhere of the need to be prepared when death comes, and in whatever way it may come. Men by nature put death far from them yet how quickly calamities come and how frequent they are in our day. May these solemn reminders of death be blessed to the souls of many so that poor sinners may be found seeking the way to Zion with their faces thitherward.

Consequences of Chernobyl Disaster

The Russians estimate that the consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear power station disaster will be felt for 70 years. It is thought that during that time 6,530 deaths are likely from cancer due to exposure to radiation. Every effort is being made to remove contaminated soil in order to reduce risks through it.

In one way or another men are being made to realise that they are not in control of events. There is a God in heaven who does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the world. Nothing takes place without His permission. It becomes men to hear His voice when He speaks so loudly in His providence to them, and let them remember that however loud His voice appears to them now yet it is but a whisper of His power.

Church Notes

Edinburgh Induction

On the evening of Friday 27th June the Southern Presbytery of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland met in the Edinburgh Church for the induction of Rev. Angus Morrison, M.A., Oban, to the pastoral charge of the Edinburgh Congregation. Friends from many parts of the Church gathered for the occasion and it is estimated that some 500 people were present. After the Moderator the Rev. A. MacPherson, Lon-

don, had constituted the Presbytery, proclamation in the usual form was made and there being no objections the Moderator went to the pulpit and conducted public worship. Mr MacPherson took as his text the words, "for they watch for your souls," Hebrews ch. 13 v. 17 and he referred particularly to three matters: 1. The significance of the word 'soul'. 2. What is involved in watching for souls. 3. What this means for congregation and minister alike.

At the conclusion of public worship, Rev. D. MacLean moved the motion, "That ministers from other Presbyteries who were present, namely Revs. A. F. MacKay, S. F. Tallach, J. Tallach, J. Ross and D. M. Boyd from the Northern Presbytery, Revs. N. M. Ross, D. A. Ross and A. N. MacPhail from the Western Presbytery be associated with the Southern Presbytery." This was seconded by the Clerk and agreed to. The Clerk was then asked to give a brief narrative of the proceedings leading to his Call.

The Moderator put the stated Questions to Rev. A. Morrison which he answered satisfactorily before signing the Formula which had previously been read by the Moderator. The Moderator then engaged in prayer after which he inducted Rev. A. Morrison to the pastoral charge of the Edinburgh congregation and along with all the members of the Presbytery gave Mr Morrison the right hand of fellowship.

Rev. D. MacLean, Glasgow, addressed the new minister basing his remarks on Paul's exhortation to Timothy, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine". Rev. D. J. MacDonald addressed the Congregation relative to their duties to their minister. Rev. A. F. MacKay, Inverness, the senior minister of the Church present was called to speak. Mr MacKay referred to the long and eminent ministries of the late ministers of the Edinburgh congregations the Revs. N. MacIntyre and D. Campbell and expressed his confidence that the pattern set by these ministries would be followed by Mr Morrison. The Clerk read messages of goodwill from Rev. M. MacInnes, Toronto, Clerk of the Canadian Presbytery and from Rev. L. MacLeod, Greenock, presently in Auckland as the Church's deputy, also indicating that there were brief messages from Revs. J. A. MacDonald, Fort William, and H. I. MacKinnon, Broadford. Presentations were made by the Moderator on behalf of the Edinburgh Congregation to Rev. A. Morrison and to Revs. D. J. MacDonald and D. MacLean who had both acted as Interim Moderator at various stages of the vacancy. The proceedings were brought to an end with prayer, singing and the benediction and the congregation were given an opportunity to shake hands with the newly inducted minister at the door of the church.

Afterwards the ladies of the Edinburgh congregation provided tea in the hall of an adjoining school.

In the good providence of the Lord there is again a minister settled over the Edinburgh congregation, left vacant by the death in November 1983 of Rev. D. Campbell their much loved and respected pastor, after a ministry in Edinburgh extending over 30 years. It is our prayer that the ministry now begun in Edinburgh — a city graced by many eminent ministries in the past — would be richly blessed in the building up of the Cause of Christ there. May it be used by the great Head of the Church Himself for the building up of believers there and for the bringing of many sinners to Christ. It is our fervent desire that pastor and people would be visited with power from on high so that the Word declared there would be a “savour of life unto life” to many, and that it may be recorded of this pastorate, to the glory of God, “Thou, O God, didst send a plenteous rain, whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance” (Ps. 68: 9).

(Rev.) D. J. MacDonald,
Clerk of Presbytery.

Committee Meetings (D.V.)

These will take place at Inverness Church on Tuesday, 7th October. The list of Committees appeared in the September issue.

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

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

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

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

Outer Isles: At Stornoway on 18th November at 12 noon.

Western: At Laide on 13th January, 1987 at 11 a.m.

Zimbabwe Mission — Staff Vacancies

GENERAL — Post of Administrator/Treasurer.

JOHN TALLACH SECONDARY SCHOOL — Graduate Teachers (Four Posts) with qualifications in English, History, Geography and Mathematics.

MBUMA HOSPITAL — A doctor is still urgently required, also a further Nurse/Midwife and preferably with teaching experience.

With the new situation that exists in Zimbabwe consequent upon independence it is desirable that all of the seven above posts be filled as soon as possible. The work provides a real challenge to all who may have these necessary qualifications, and all our Church people should make the needs of our Mission a matter of constant prayer.

Enquiries to Rev. A. Murray, F.P. Manse, Lairg, Sutherland, IV27 4EH. Telephone 0549-2176.

Acknowledgment of Donations

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

Foreign Mission Fund: Mrs Eliz. MacKenzie, £100 for Nkulamane Church Building; Anon., £110.

Organisation Fund: Anon., £60.

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

Achmore: Friend of the Cause (envelope in plate at Communion), £10 for Comm. Exp.
Bracadale: Anon., in memory of a loved one, £110 for erecting fence at Struan Church per R.M.K.

Dingwall: In memory of a beloved husband, £15 for the Trinitarian Bible Society; Wayfarer, £10.

Dornoch: From the Estate of Mr Wm B. Sim, £1150.67 for Dornoch Congregation.

Flashadder: H. M., Gairloch, £10; Anon., £20 both for Church Building Fund; D. M., Portree, £10 for Comm. Exp., all per D. M. MacKay; Mrs D. N. MacF. Edinbane, £30 for Church Funds.

Fort William: A. McG., £10 for any useful purpose per D. McN.; Herrach, £10; Friends, Caol, £10 for Sust. Fund, both per Rev. J. A. MacD.

Names: Friends, Gourock, £40 for Church funds.

Laide: Friend, Laide, £10 per D. McR.; Friend, Edinburgh, £20; Friend, Shieldaig, £10, both per Rev. D. A. Ross; Anon., £20; In memory of a much loved husband, £50; In memory of loved ones, £10; Anon. (in plate), £50; A. R. (in plate), £45; Anon., £20, all for Church Building Fund; Friend, Edinburgh, £10 for Church Door Coll.; Anon. for Sust. Fund, £20.

London: Friends of the Cause, £300 "where most needed", per General Treasurer.

North Uist: E. MacD., Tigharry, £200; M., Struan, £50; Miss M. Clarkston, £100, all for Church Repairs.

Portree: Anon., £20 for Foreign Mission Fund (envelope in plate); Anon., £10 (envelope in plate, Anon., £15; A. M., £50, both for Congr. Purposes; A. M. £50 for Sust. Fund, last three per F. M.

South Harris: Miss J. M., Geocrab, £10; Mrs C. M., Rodel, £10; Anon., £10 (in plate); Anon., £10 (in plate); D. M. £5 (in plate), all for Comm. Exps.

Stornoway: Friend, Tarbert, £10 for Congr. Fund; Friend, Harris, £10 for Car Fund; Friend, Murray Place, £20 for Sust. Fund; Anon., £5 for Free Distribution of Magazine Fund, first three per Rev. J. MacLeod.

Ullapool: Anon. (in collection plate), £10, £10, £10, £5, £5; Mrs H. R., Invergordon, £4, £3, £24, £5, £5, all for Sust. Fund; Anon., £10; O. S., £5, both for Congr. Fund, last six per Rev. N. Ross.