

THE
Free Presbyterian Magazine
and Monthly Record

Vol. 92

JANUARY 1987

No. 1

Until the Day Break

A glorious prospect is before the true children of God — the prospect of a day breaking and the shadows fleeing away — of a day breaking upon which the sun shall never set — a day that shall know no night — for there shall be no night there. This is the cheering prospect that the Word of God sets before all those who have fled for refuge to the hope set before them in the gospel, for all those who have been begotten again unto a lively or living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. However dark things may at present appear as another year opens, and things are dark indeed, yet the believing child of God has before him or her the prospect of an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them. The Lord whom they serve has given them the promise of it — “I go to prepare a place for you” — but He has also given them the assurance — “I will come again and receive you unto Myself.” His purpose for them is that where He is, there they may be also. This is in accord with their own desires also — that they might see Him as He is, that they might be like Him and that they might be with Him for ever.

As the people of God face the beginning of another year in the wilderness of this world, and as they see the threatening dark clouds of God's judgments descending, they cannot but be afraid of what may lie before them during another year. As the sins of the land rise higher and higher, and as the God of heaven is more and more provoked to anger by them, the voice of God is heard saying: “Come, my people enter into thy chambers until the indignation be overpast.” They cannot but sigh and cry for the abominations done in the land. So, too, the people of God have to fear much from the power of indwelling corruption. “Oh

wretched man that I am," said the Apostle, "who shall deliver me from this body of sin and death?" Yet he was not without hope of deliverance from it for he went on to say, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." It is to the Lord His people have continually to look, for there is no help in man for them. The One in whom they have come to trust is the great Deliverer and He is able to preserve them from the hand of the enemy. He will never leave them nor forsake them and when their father and mother forsake them then the Lord will take them up.

The language of the true child of God is, with the Church in the Song of Solomon, "Turn, my Beloved and be as a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether. They acknowledge that there are mountains of separation between them and the One on whom the love of their heart is set, and they acknowledge that these mountains are largely of their own making. They have raised them but they cannot reduce or remove them, but there is One who can surmount them and come to them over these mountains of separation. To them, though separated from them by these mountains, He is still their Beloved. The throne of their heart is reserved for Him and they will give it to none other. They know not the voice of strangers. But His voice they know and know so well that there is instant recognition of it when He speaks to them — "the voice of my Beloved! behold He comes leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills." Often He comes when they are ready to give up hope that He will ever speak to them again. They have so often grieved and slighted Him. How then can they hope that He will ever manifest Himself to them again in His love. How good it is for them that it is written: "My ways are not your ways, nor my thoughts, your thoughts", or else they would never hear His voice again. To them He says: "I know the thoughts that I think of you, thoughts of peace and not of evil to give you an expected end."

He comes to relieve their tried hearts, to comfort them with His comforts, to console them with His consolations, to lift up their drooping spirits and to remind them that He ever liveth and has their concerns at heart. What hard things they are ready to write against Him but one taste of His love will drive all that away and they will have to say: There is none like Christ, there is none like Christ. He is altogether lovely, His love is most sweet.

But what of the godless? No such prospect is before them as they enter another year still without Christ and without God in the world. Well may they ask themselves at the beginning of another year whether they will ever see the end of it. During it will their sun set never to rise again

throughout all eternity. Oh the awfulness of a soul that goes down to the blackness of darkness for ever. Surely then these dread prospects ought to alarm the souls of those who are yet in their sins and urge upon them the need to seek the Lord while He may be found. The Word of God gives every encouragement to sinners to seek Him, holding out the prospect of finding for all who truly seek Him. Let this then be the desire of the soul that has not been delivered out of Satan's kingdom, that is, to be delivered out of it by the mighty power of God. The issues are momentous. Let the New Year not be a time of empty resolutions, but a time of real desire to be delivered out of Satan's dark kingdom. Let us cry to the God of hope that He might beget in our souls that good hope that shall never be put to shame.

May we then be enabled in going forward into another year to set the Lord always before us. May He lead us in a plain path. May He guide us with His counsel. May we be numbered amongst those who are looking for a city that hath foundations whose builder and maker is God. The Psalmist was saying:

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

Psalm 73: 24

And again:

Thou wilt me show the path of life:
of joys there is full store
Before Thy face; at Thy right hand
are pleasures evermore.

Psalm 16: 11

May this be the ultimate portion of everyone of us!

Sermon

by the Rev. Matthew Henry

"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" — Matt. 16: 26.

The soul of man is a jewel of inestimable value. This is plainly intimated here, where the loss of the soul is represented as such a loss that the gain of all the world will not be a compensation for it. Observe here,

1. What those things are that are here compared — "the whole

world", and "thy own soul"; these are here put into the scales against one another. The world here means not the universe, or the whole creation, that is more excellent than any one part, but the things that are seen, that are temporal, 2 Cor. 4: 18; the riches, honours and pleasures of this present time. See a map of this world, 1 John 2: 16. Now the "whole world" is here set in the balance against one soul, if that one be thy one. It is not a small estate, or a lordship, that is here supposed to be of less value than the soul, but the world, the whole world. Our temporal concerns are compared with our spiritual, the "life that now is, and that which is to come," 1 Tim. 4: 8.

2. What judgment is here passed upon them — That our own souls are of infinitely more value than the whole world. The value of a thing is reckoned partly by its nature and intrinsic dignity, and partly by its use. That is most valuable, that is most delightful, most profitable and most necessary. We reckon that is most worth that is most worth to us. Now our own souls are more to us than all the world is or can be. The design of this is to show of what little worth the world is, and the things of the world they are weighed in the balance and found wanting; not worthy to be compared, or to be named, with the soul; Rom. 8: 18.

3. Who is it that passeth this judgment. It is our Lord Jesus himself, one who had reason to know the worth of souls, for he made them, and bought them; and who, we may be sure, would not under-rate the world, for by him "the worlds were made", Col. 1: 16; Heb. 1: 2. This doctrine I shall endeavour.

I. To prove — The true worth of the soul, and that it is more to us than all the world. Consider,

1. The *production* of the soul. Trace it up to its original; and it is breathed into us by the breath of God: it is a spark of heaven; it is that part of man by which he is allied to the world of spirits; it is the masterpiece of God's workmanship in this lower world, Gen. 2: 7. The image of God is stamped upon it, Gen. 1: 26, 27. When it returns to God, it doth but as all the waters do, return to the place from whence it came. It is of a noble extraction. That which makes up the world, that men covet so much, is but of the earth, earthy:—honour is a shadow; the pleasures of the world, and the wealth of the world, are of the earth; gold and silver are but refined earth — Man found thee poor and dirty in a mine, *Herbert*. But man was made last of all the creatures, as the chief of the works of God. It is good for us often to ask whence we came; and being so nobly descended, disdain to serve the base and sordid lusts of the flesh, and to prostitute an immortal soul to the drudgery of this world.

2. The *powers* of the soul. These are very great; its apprehensions are not confined by the horizon of sense, but rove far beyond it. The faculties of the human soul are such as above any other creature prove the eternal power and wisdom of the Creator. It is the soul that knows right well how marvellous God's works are, Ps. 139: 14, by reflection upon itself. Think what the soul of man is capable of, and you will say that it is of inestimable value.

(1.) It is capable of glorifying God in this world. It has a power of knowing God, as he has been pleased to reveal himself. It is that which is within us, that renders us capable of blessing and praising God, Ps. 103: 1, 2. It is capable of "knowledge", in which, especially, the image of God consists, Col. 3: 10. It is capable of reasoning and "bringing to mind", Isa. 46: 8. It is capable of receiving a divine revelation to this purpose, and in the use of instituted ordinances is capable of "having fellowship" with God — of being wrought upon, and witnessed with, by the Holy Spirit of God, Rom. 8: 16. It is capable of being "sanctified".

(2.) It is capable of being glorified with God in the other world; of seeing and enjoying him within the veil; of conversing with angels and glorified spirits, and drinking in the sweet and glorious rays of divine grace and love; things which are above, out of the sight of sense. It has a power of doing that, which the body, till it is refined and become a spiritual body, is not able to attain. It is capable of seeing God face to face, which an embodied soul, till stripped of this veil, cannot possibly do, Exod. 33: 20.

(3.) The *perpetuity* of the soul. This is one great thing which speaks the worth of the soul — that it is to last for ever, it is an immortal spirit. It is a flame that can never be extinguished. It will survive the body, and will live and act in a state of separation from it. It is one of those things which are not seen, but are eternal, 2 Cor. 4: 18. It is an awful consideration, when a child is born, to think, here is the beginning of a being that will outlive all the ages of time. The world is but for a moment, Prov. 23: 5, the fashion of it, the scheme, the outside of it, (for it is but a superficies), "passeth away", 1 Cor. 7: 31; 1 John 2: 17. But the soul is perpetual; the things themselves towards which it desires extend, and those desires that are so formed, are eternal. The brute creatures are mortal, but man will be immortal. This makes it such a serious thing for a man to die, above what it is for a beast to die, Eccl. 3: 21. Things are reckoned valuable according to their duration. Gold therefore is the most precious metal, because it will not rust nor waste; but the utmost of the duration of this world's goods is within time.

(4.) The *propriety* of our souls — “thy own soul”. In order to ascertain the right value of a thing it must be considered, not only what the thing is in itself, but what interest we have in it. The loan of a thing is nothing so valuable as the possession of it. Now the world is but lent us; whatever we have in it, it is not to be called our own; but our souls are our own. We brought them into the world, and we shall carry them out — they are our own, they are, in fact, ourselves. The soul is the man. What is man but a “living soul”? Gen. 2: 7. Abstract the soul as living, and the body is a lump of clay; abstract the soul as rational, and the man is as the beasts that perish. It is a certain truth that the soul is the man. “Persons,” in Scripture, are often reckoned by souls, as Acts 2: 41. What we are is more to us than what we have. It is the spirit that is the substance of the man; and what is the chaff to the wheat, the shell to the kernel, the clothes to the body? This is one of the first things that the convinced sinner is made sensible of — that the soul is the man; and if he would do well for himself, he must do well for his soul.

(5.) The *projects* that are laid about souls. There is great work about souls, more than you think of. That is valuable which those that are intelligent are concerned about. This speaks the soul of man to be of very great value. Consider,

1. What projects the love of God has to save souls. The God of infinite wisdom, whose the worlds are, has been pleased to concern himself with a peculiar care about the world of mankind, the world of souls. Some observe, that in Scripture, God is never brought in consulting with himself but when man is concerned. God has thoughts “to usward,” Ps. 40: 5. Infinite Wisdom was from eternity, devising means that poor banished souls might not be forever expelled, Eph. 1: 11, compare verse 9. God had thoughts of love to the sons of men, *i.e.* the souls of men, before the worlds were.

2. What projects the malice of Satan has to destroy souls. It is a sign the soul of man is very precious, when God and Satan, those two adverse powers, are as it were contending for it. He seeks to get and keep possession of the soul, that he may devour it, I Pet. 5: 8. The great dispute between Michael and the dragon is, who shall rule the souls of men. The devils’s agents trade in the “souls of men,” Rev. 18: 13. The devil saith, as the king of Sodom, Gen. 14: 21, “Give me the souls.” There is great striving about the soul.

(6.) The *price* that was paid to redeem souls. We reckon the value of a thing by that which a wise man will give for it, who is not ignorant of it, nor under necessity. Christ the Wisdom of God, gave himself, his own

precious blood, to redeem souls, and he knew what they were, and had no need of them. The redemption of the "soul is precious," Ps. 49: 8. Corruptible things, as silver and gold, would not do; then did Christ, for us men and for our salvation, make his soul an offering, 1 Pet. 1: 18, 19. "His soul was an offering" for ours, his life a "ransom" for many, Matt. 20: 28. See here the worth of souls — nothing could be a ransom for forfeited souls but the blood of the Son of God. Lo I come, saith he — for us men and for our salvation, saith the Nicene creed. Neither the fruit of the body, nor the fruit of the estate, would atone for the "sin of the soul," Mic. 6: 7, but Christ gave himself. Blood of bulls and goats would not do. God proves the excellency of his people by this, Isa. 43: 4, "I will give men for thee;" — much more doth it demonstrate the excellency of souls, when God gave his Son for them. The blood of Christ is precious blood, of immense value.

(7.) The *pains* that are taken to renew souls. God hath manifested his favour to man in the provision made for his body, that that might be put into, and kept in, a capacity to answer the end of its creation. See the first instance of this care, Gen. 1: 29, and afterwards, Gen. 9: 3. But there is a great deal more done to provide for the soul, and to put that into, and keep that in, a capacity to answer the ends of its creation. The power of God is wonderfully exerted in this important work, to sanctify a soul, to recover it from its degenerate state, to reduce it to its integrity, and to prepare it for glory. The word of God is given for these ends, that mighty word, which is so quick and powerful, Heb. 4: 12. The spirit of God is at work for the good of the soul — the arm of the Lord is revealed — and the work of faith fulfilled with power. These things show what a value God puts upon souls. A word made us, but far more is required to new-make us.

(8.) The *preparations* that are made to receive souls. There is much in progress for them in the other world. Souls being immortal, have immortal things provided for them.

There are preparations of wrath for sinful souls, to which they are "reserved," 2 Pet. 2: 9. There is a Tophet that is ordained of old, Isa. 30: 33, an everlasting fire, that is prepared for the devil and his angels, is reserved for wicked men, Matt. 25: 41. It is sealed up among his treasures, treasures of wrath, after the long season of his patience.

And there are preparations of glory for sanctified souls. These must needs be of great value when there is so much laid out to make them great and happy. They have a glory proportioned to their capacities.

Knowledge and love are the principal faculties of the soul; and these are sources of bliss in heaven.

II. I shall improve this subject. The serious consideration of the worth of our souls should have a mighty influence upon us to make us religious; for what is religion but a concern about the present and the future state of our souls? The practice of serious godliness is that, and that only, which befriends the soul both in its present and its eternal interests. What is it that we are persuading you to in all our preaching, but to mind your souls and do well for your souls?

Be convinced that you have souls, every one of you. Consider thyself. Thou hast a mortal body and an immortal soul. Most men live as if they had no souls, no souls by which to be "governed," and no souls for which to "provide." They discover nothing truly rational, they have no concern for what is immortal. But I hope better things of you, or else I shall never hope any good of you. It is not enough to gainsay this truth, but you must consider it.

Be convinced of the worth of your souls. It is no breach of the law of humility to put a value upon our own souls, and to think so well of ourselves as to think ourselves too good to serve sin. Value the body less and the soul more, and it would be better for you. There are some important inferences which may be drawn from these things.

1. If the soul be so precious, then those are our best friends that are friends to our souls, and we should look upon them as such. The best friend to souls that ever was is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the soul. Look upon him as a good friend, and prize him accordingly. Study what you shall render for his love. The good shepherd is the "Shepherd of our souls," I Pet. 2: 25. He laid down his life for our souls, and has provided food, and healing, and rest for them: let our souls love him. Faithful ministers are friends to your souls, Heb. 13: 17. Their work is to watch for them. Look upon reprovers as friends to your souls, and reckon friendly rebukes as kindness. They are so, Ps. 145: 5. They help to prevent sin, and save the soul from death. Let them find more favour now, for they will afterwards appear more kind than flatterers. Those that instruct you and comfort you are friends to your souls. Show yourselves to be friends to the souls of others. Do all the good you can to the souls of those with whom you are connected. Be concerned for the souls of your children and servants; gain their souls by guiding them to God.

2. If the soul be so precious, then those are our worst enemies that are enemies to our souls. The devil is the great enemy to our souls; he is the

tempter, and so is the destroyer, and he has his agents, that are busy to ruin souls. There are persons and things that war against the soul, 1 Pet. 2: 11, the worst war that can be: those that seduce the soul and beguile it, 2 Pet. 2: 54, that tempt us to sin; and lay stumbling-blocks before us; that entice us secretly, though they pretend love; — look upon them as enemies to your souls. David complains often of those that did persecute his soul. Wicked companions are real enemies to the soul; therefore say to such, “Depart,” Ps. 119: 115. Enemies to the soul are very subtle, Eph. 6: 12. Therefore we have the more need to stand upon our guard. Consider how precious that soul is which they would injure and destroy.

3. If the soul be so precious, then mercies to the soul are the choicest mercies, for which we should pray most earnestly. This is the favour that God bears unto his chosen. The hallowing of God’s name by us, and the coming of his kingdom into us, are mercies to the soul which are to be desired above all others, — that is the order in the Lord’s prayer, Matt. 5 33. The renewing of the soul, and the saving of the soul, are things that must have the pre-eminence in our desires and prayers. Other mercies must be begged with a proviso, but mercies to the soul absolutely. Be more earnest for these than for corn, and wine, and oil, Ps. 4: 6, 7; wrestle with God for these, as Jacob did. Be more concerned in prayer about your sins than your afflictions. So likewise we must be most thankful to God for spiritual mercies, Eph. 1: 3 — redeeming love, gospel grace, Ps. 113: 3, &c. Value every mercy by the reference that it has to the soul, and be thankful for it accordingly, Isa. 38: 17. “In love to my soul.” Go by this rule in your valuation of public mercies; — reckon those the best times that are opportunities for the soul, in which there are plenty of the means of grace.

4. If the soul be so precious then judgments upon the soul are the sorest judgments. Spiritual plagues are of all others the worst, and to be most dreaded, as “leanness in the soul,” Ps. 106: 15, when the mind is blinded, the conscience seared, the heart hardened, and the reins laid on the neck of sinful passions. These are spiritual judgments, Isa. 6: 9, 10; ps. 81: 12, the worst condition a man can be in on this side hell. How sad would our condition be if we were deprived of both the bodily senses of seeing and hearing (such instances have rarely been heard of), but much worse to have the soul blind and deaf. Do not provoke God to deny and withdraw his grace. There are judgments upon the soul too, that sometimes befall God’s own children, and they are very painful; as — when the terrors of God set themselves in array against them, Job 6: 4; Ps. 88: 3, &c, and he wounds the spirit, Prov. 18: 14. If God has kept us

from these terrors, we must be thankful, but not secure. Our Lord Jesus suffered in his soul that he might have compassion, Matt. 26: 38.

5. If the soul be so precious, then the prosperity of the soul is the best prosperity. There is such a thing as soul prosperity, 3 John 2, and it is that which we should most earnestly desire of God, both for ourselves and for our friends. The soul prospers when it is in a good state, and in a good frame, when it is in the right way, and when it grows in grace; as the body prospers that is in health, and as the estate prospers that increases. That is a prosperous soul that is adding grace to grace, and securing not only an entrance, but an abundant entrance, into the kingdom of God, 2 Pet. 1: 5. The soul prospers when its holy dispositions are lively, its comforts strong, and its evidences clear — when it is walking in the light, and singing in the ways of the Lord. Seek this as the best prosperity. Soul prosperity either brings outward prosperity along with it, Matt. 6: 33, or sweetens the want of it; and it is that which all the malice of hell and earth cannot disturb or take away.

6. If the soul be so precious, then we are to look upon that condition as best for us which is best for our souls. That is best for us that is most free from temptations, and that gives us the greatest advantages for spiritual things. That relation is best for us that is best for our souls. Look upon this as a reason why we should be content under afflictions, because they tend to the good of our souls. Though the flesh be destroyed, yet if the spirit be thereby saved, it is well enough, 1 Cor. 5: 5; Heb. 12: 9. Sanctified afflictions are the soul's promotions; — the chastening is bad for the body, but the teaching that attends it is good for the soul, Ps. 94: 12; 119: 71. Submit willingly to that which is for the good of the soul, though it be displeasing to flesh and blood.

7. If the soul be so precious, then they are fools that "despise their own souls." There are those that do so, Prov. 15: 32. This is the fundamental error of sinners, — they despise this jewel of value, which Christ put such a value upon. Let us see who they are that despise their own souls:

(1.) Those that make a light matter of sin despise their own souls, Prov. 14: 9. It is certain that sin is a wrong to the soul, Prov. 8: 36. How do people regard their souls that abuse them thus every day? Those that expose their precious souls to the wrath and curse of the eternal God every day, by wilful sin, do not value them as they should. Those despise their souls that continue in unbelief and impenitency, and will not be awakened to see the misery in which their souls are; they feel nothing from sin, the sins of so many years; they are not concerned though their

souls be ready to drop into everlasting burnings. They despise their souls that rush into sin, Jer. 8: 6, that run upon God, Job 15: 25, 26. There are some so daring as to challenge God himself to damn them. They despise their souls that, when they have fallen into sin, make no haste to repent and turn from it.

(2.) Those that take up with a cheap and easy religion despise their own souls; that are afraid of doing too much for their own souls. Did we put a right value upon our souls, we should object to no pains or care for the securing of their welfare. We should go from strength to strength; we should give diligence to add to our graces, and thus make our calling and election sure, 2 Pet. 1: 5 - 10. But those that only inquire, yet will not serve, manifest that they despise their souls: they labour at the world, and sleep at an ordinance; they crowd their religion into a corner, and make not a business, but a by-business, of it. What account do such make of their souls who will scarce go over the threshold to hear a sermon? They "refuse instruction". He that is slothful in work for his soul is brother to him that is a great waster.

(3.) Those that are prodigal of their time despise their own souls. Time is an opportunity of doing something for the soul, and is to be redeemed accordingly, Eph. 5: 16, because there is an eternity depends upon it. Time may be well spent, either in doing something for God with the soul, or in getting something from God for the soul; yet with many their time is a drug. What value do those put upon their souls that fill up their time with mere recreation, and all this while neglect their souls? Every day might be a harvest day for the soul, but it is idled away; the time of the morning and evening sacrifice stolen away by one idle companion or other. Value your souls and you will value your time.

(4.) Those that make themselves drudges to the world despise their own souls. The soul should be our darling, but many make it a slave, and send it to feed swine, Luke 15: 15, and to provide for the flesh, Rom. 13: 14. Those that are eager in pursuit of wordly wealth despise their souls, not only because the soul is neglected and the body preferred before it, but because it is employed in these pursuits, Ps. 127: 2. Care about the world fills the soul and disquiets it. It is a great disparagement to an immortal soul to be thus wholly employed.

(5.) Those that by sin unfit their bodies to aid their souls in the service of God despise them. Drunkenness especially does this, it overcharges the heart, Luke 21: 34. Those put a great slight upon their souls that drown them in wine and strong drink, and suffer their hearts thus to be taken away, and themselves to be put out of possession of them. They

make beasts of themselves only to please a sensual appetite. They are not their own masters — to govern themselves, and by degrees come to be not their own men — to understand themselves.

(6). Those that venture their souls upon a false and deceitful foundation despise them. What we value we shall be sure to lay up in a safe place, and that which we despise we shall venture any where. Those that build their hopes upon the sand, Matt. 7: 26, that presume upon their visible profession, and are willing to take it for granted, without any strict scrutiny, that all is well with them, Rev. 3: 17. Such have a low opinion of their own souls, and must necessarily end in a painful manner; their hope must perish.

(7). Those that take up with a portion in this life despise their own souls — who think that will serve them for a happiness which neither suits the nature of a soul, nor will last so long as the soul will last; that take up with that for a portion which doth but fill the belly, Ps. 17: 14. And when they have a great deal of the world, say, "Soul, take thine ease," Luke 12: 19. And take these for their good things, Luke 16: 25. Let us not despise our own souls, let us desire a better portion for them than the world, even an interest in His love, whose favour is the safety and the felicity of all who truly seek him.

Christ not Knowing the Day and Hour of His Coming

"But of that day and that hour knoweth no man; no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." — Mark 8: 32.

The day and hour to which our Lord refers in this passage, are that day and hour when "he shall be seen coming in the clouds with great power and glory, and shall send his angels to gather together his elect from the four winds;" the precise moment, in short of his second coming. And the wonder is, that such an awful mystery should have been made to hang over this eventful period, as to shroud it, in some respects, even from the eye of Christ; so that, while he could speak with the utmost confidence of its certainty, and could foretell the circumstances by which it should be attended, he yet declared his ignorance concerning the exact time of its occurrence. This confessed imperfection in Christ's knowledge has commonly been seized on by the disbelievers of our Lord's proper divinity, as a conclusive proof that he possessed only the powers and capacities of a man; and has sometimes, we doubt not, proved a little staggering to the

faith even of the genuine believer. It would be presumptuous folly to attempt a complete explanation of the statement, such as might have been done with a subject lying fully within the field of human insight and observation; but the following explanatory remarks will be sufficient we trust, to remove from it, in the view of every thinking and sober-minded Christian, any appearance of contrariety to the orthodox belief concerning Christ's person, and to show, that there is here something of profitable and wholesome instruction for a humble faith:—

1. It is plain, first of all, on a slight reflection, that while our Lord here attributes to himself, as compared with the Father, a certain measure of inferiority or imperfection, he at the same time asserts for himself a very high dignity; so high, that the want of the knowledge in question cannot be supposed to have arisen from the subject being in itself too profound for him. The manner in which he speaks of himself manifestly implies, that he ranks above all created beings — above angelic as well as human natures; for he rises continually from the lower to the higher: No man knows it; not only no *man*, but no angel in heaven; not only no *angel* (who is still but a creature and a servant), but not the Son himself — only the Father. Clearly, then, the Son is next to the Father in standing — superhuman, super-angelic. And if, with so lofty a standing, whatever may have been its exact nature, he still did not know the day and hour of his coming in the clouds of heaven, this surely could have arisen from no incapacity or unfitness to know, but rather from not willing to get and express the knowledge. For knowing, as he did, the certainty of the event itself, how it was to take place, and for what ends and purposes (verses 24-27), it is impossible to conceive that, in the time *when*, there should have been any such height or depth as to be, if he had so willed it, beyond the reach of his attainments. Wherever the ground might lie of this ignorance of Christ concerning the precise time of his future advent, there is enough even here to show that it could not consist in this being too sublime a mystery in itself for him to apprehend; how much more if we couple with what is said here such passages as these: "All things are delivered unto me of my Father" — "I am he which searcheth the reins and the hearts" — "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

2. Then, again, let it be considered, whether this deficiency of Christ in knowledge concerning a particular event in the history of his kingdom, be in its own nature essentially different from the other defects and infirmities which are also ascribed to Christ, and which were, indeed, inseparable from his human nature. To say nothing of such

human affections as his thirst and hunger, his fatigue and weariness, his agony and death, which all manifestly bespeak him to have been compassed about with infirmity, what can we think of his praying, which, of course, implied the dependence of his will upon the Father's? or of His "increasing in wisdom," which implied the dependence of his knowledge on the Father's revelations to him? or of his "increasing in favour with God," which, in like manner, implies a growth in his capacity for enjoying the love and communion of the Father? What can we think of one and all of these, but that they denote an inferiority and a limitation on the part of Christ, precisely similar, at least in *kind*, to that which is asserted in the words now under consideration? In all those respects in which Christ is said to have experienced an increase, or to have sought something from the hand of the Father, it must have been proper to say of one period, as compared with another, that, as yet, he did not know what he should afterwards perceive, or did not possess what he was still destined to obtain.

3. How, then, it is asked, with such defects on the one hand, and such growing attainments on the other, could Christ be God as well as man? We may reply to the question by asking in turn, How could he, without them, be man as well as God? How could he have possessed our nature in union with, though still distinct from the divine, unless everything could be affirmed of him which properly and essentially belongs to man? For it is carefully to be remembered, what the adversaries of the orthodox faith always contrive to forget, that while we hold Christ to be God and man in one person, it is so in two distinct natures, which, of course, must still preserve each their essential properties. Had he possessed no human soul, had his body been simply inhabited by the divine power of Godhead, then, no doubt, the person of Jesus must have been incapable of any defect or increase in knowledge. But it entirely alters the position of matters, when he is known to have taken to himself a reasonable soul as well as a true body — the whole nature of man — into personal union with the Godhead. For then we must say of this human nature, with Owen: "It is not deified; it is not made a God; it does not even in heaven coalesce into one nature with the divine by a composition of them; it is not made omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent; but it is exalted in a fulness of all divine perfection, unspeakably above the glory of angels and of men. It is incomprehensibly nearer to God than they all; it has communications from God, in glorious light, love, and power, ineffably above them all: but it is still a creature."*

* On the glory of Christ.

“We readily avow,” to use the language of another eminent divine, “that we pretend not to know in what manner the divine and human natures are united in the sacred person of the Messiah. We believe, that in this respect especially, ‘his name is Wonderful,’ and that ‘no one knoweth the Son but the Father’.”* How, indeed, could it be supposed that we, who know so little of the mysteries of our own being — who can tell, in a manner, nothing about the union in ourselves between flesh and spirit, and how substances so diverse should yet, without confusion, be combined into one person — that we should be able to scan that grand mystery of godliness? It is enough for us to know that it is, without pretending to declare, or presuming to inquire, how it can be. But the fact being as it is, two natures, the divine and human, in one person, it inevitably follows, that what is said of Christ, with an especial reference to his human nature, or to his work as Messiah, in which he had to perform the part of a servant, must have presented him to our view in a capacity inferior to the Father. Not only this, but it also follows, that as every gift he receives, every revelation he communicates, and every act he puts forth as Messiah, belongs to him alike in his human and his divine nature, he must have been conscious of a growth in these corresponding to the increase of his capacities as a man and the progress of his work as the Messiah. Violence would otherwise have been done to his human nature — the manhood must have lost itself in the Godhead. So that if there was any reason in the nature of things, or in the state of his disciples, why at this particular stage of his history he should not know the day and hour of his coming in the clouds of heaven, we need not be surprised at his not possessing, or even seeking to possess it.

4. Now, we can have no difficulty in discovering such a reason. It would have been most inexpedient at such a time, to have given any precise information to his followers regarding the moment of his second coming; for had they obtained it, they would assuredly have been lulled into a fatal security, and have lost one of the greatest incentives to constant watchfulness and diligence. Yet the carnal minds of the disciples, and just because they were so carnal, were ever longing for exact and definite information of this kind; and not long afterwards, when taking his departure from among them, he had to rebuke their prying curiosity in this very direction, and to admonish them, that it was “not for them to know the times or the seasons, which the Father has put in his own power.” It was to take them off from this dangerous and unwholesome line of inquiry — to convince them in the most striking and effectual

* Dr Pye Smith's Scripture Testimony to the Messiah, vol. 2, p.333.

manner that such knowledge was too high for them, and that, in withholding it, he was not denying them a privilege, but refusing a piece of intelligence which it would have been anything but profitable for them to possess — for this purpose it was that our Lord had not sought to know, and declared that he actually did not know, the exact period of his coming again from heaven. If He, their head and forerunner, himself also immediately interested in the glorious event, was content to be so far ignorant, how much more should they! The knowledge of the precise period of his return might, indeed, have been possessed by him without the slightest danger or possibility of abuse on his part; but it was not one of the gifts or qualifications at that time needed for the fit discharge of his mediatorial office, and for *their* sakes he voluntarily continued without it — he did not *will* to possess it, and so restrained the intercommunion between the divine and human natures from proceeding so far. He did so, that in this, as well as in other things, they might learn, from his example, to be content with what they had, and might feel assured that nothing was withheld from them which they actually needed, or could profitably use.

What was there singular or incredible in the matter? It was just a particular instance, suited to the circumstances of the time, of a restraint being laid upon the exercise of the attributes of Godhead. And do we not constantly see in nature and providence instances of a similar restraint? Nowhere does God put forth all his power when he works, or communicate all his knowledge when he reveals his truth to the souls of his creatures; but he always employs so much as is necessary to accomplish the design he aims at. And we have no reason to suppose there should have been more, when the Eternal Son of God entered into union with the man Christ Jesus. The great mystery is in that union itself, as the apostle notices in Tim. 3: 16: "Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh." But admitting it to have existed, we could not have reasonably expected more power to be put forth, or more knowledge to be possessed and manifested, than was necessary to render Christ in all respects a complete and perfect mediator. While in his state of humiliation, his heavenly glory veiled, and his divine nature acting under peculiar limitations, "he received all that was necessary for the execution of his office, beyond the powers and gifts of his human nature, by communication from above, which he supplicated in prayer. In himself he possessed neither the power to do a miracle, nor to look through the future; but this power was never denied to his prayer, since, on account of the unity of his will with that of the Father, he could pray

for nothing which was not in accordance with the Father's designs. Hence the ignorance of the Son regarding his future coming was a simple consequence of his not willing; and this again, was owing to the condition of his disciples."*

5. This profound and solemn subject, which, in its full compass, lies so much beyond the reach of human apprehension, insofar as we have endeavoured to unfold it, suggests two important practical reflections, which we shall do little more than indicate. It first teaches the necessity of sober thought and careful inquiry in regard to the deep things of God. If we give that, we shall not fail to perceive their perfect harmony and agreement one with another. On the other hand, a superficial and hasty look at them will find many stumbling-blocks connected with them, and will perhaps altogether reject some portions of them as absolutely incredible. Here especially it is the part of wisdom to "drink deeply" at the fountain of instruction — reaching after the higher measures of spiritual discernment, and comparing spiritual things with spiritual; for they who are most distinguished for this will ever be found the soundest in faith. A doubting or an unbelieving age is always one of loose and shallow thinking upon the truths of God's Word. Then, again, we are here furnished with a more special lesson regarding the times and seasons of God's kingdom — not to be unduly concerned about knowing them, and more particularly the grand time and season of our Lord's second coming. Christ's desire is, that there should be among his disciples a daily looking and waiting for it; and the nearer it comes he may possibly increase the expectation and confidence of its speedy arrival among those who really love his appearing; but any certain knowledge of the day and hour would be a most dangerous and fatal snare, and should not even be wished for. If the Master, in his state of humiliation, did not seek to possess it, how much less the frail and erring children of his household! Let it be ours mainly to seek and labour that we may be always ready for the event itself — to be so deeply impressed with a conviction of its absolute certainty and possible nearness, and so much alive to its true character and purposes, that it shall not take us unawares, but find us in the condition of wise and faithful stewards, waiting for the Lord.

Salton.

P. F.

Christ has told us that He will come, but not when, that we might never put off our clothes, or put out the candle.

— Wm Gurnall.

* Hengstenberg's Christology, vol. 2, last page.

Sketch of Ewen Cameron

by Rev. Neil Cameron

(Continued from Vol. 91, page 365)

On a Sabbath day, at Strontian, after sermon, he went to the house of one of the godly men of the place. This man had a very intelligent brother who read much of the writings of Dr. Owen, Thomas Boston, and other divines of the orthodox school. This man asked Ewen what, in his opinion, was the meaning of a certain truth, which he mentioned. Ewen told him his opinion of it. The man said to him: "You are wrong; for Owen and Boston agree on this other meaning of it." Ewen answered: "They should know the meaning better than I;" and he immediately rose off his chair and went out. The man went to the window to see where he would go, and he saw that he went into a thick bush of willows at the bottom of the garden. In this place he remained a considerable time. He then came back into the house, and coming up to the man, said to him: "Were you not the servant of Satan, for you knew perfectly well that both Owen and Boston held the same opinion of that truth which I hold;" The man got such a fright that he never again said a word to any person about such matters, although before that day he used to take pleasure in airing his own knowledge and in contradicting the godly men of the place. He confessed to one of the men that Ewen was right in charging him with having misrepresented Owen and Boston, and endeavouring to confound Ewen by what he himself knew to be a lie; but, because Ewen did not know of this till after he prayed, he was sure the Lord alone revealed it to him.

The late Dr. John Macleod of Morvern told a friend the following story about Ewen. The Doctor and Dr Norman, his brother, met Ewen on the public road near the Manse of Fiunary one day, and he brought him into the manse. When he got him into a room, he closed the door, and asked Ewen to pray. He refused. The Doctor told him that he could not get out of the room till he prayed. When he saw that he could not get away without obeying the Doctor, he bent his knees beside the chair on which he sat, and began to pray by saying, "'Thou hast, O Lord, the tongue of the learned to speak a word in season,' and seeing I am now in the presence of these learned men, give me the tongue of the learned that I may know what to say." He then went on to pray and continued for a considerable time. The Doctor was very surprised at the prayer Ewen offered, for he considered it one of the most wonderful prayers he had ever heard. He said that he had heard much from others about Ewen as a man

of extraordinary power in prayer; but that, owing to the weakness of his capacities in other matters, he could not believe it till he heard him for himself, but that he now confessed that it was no exaggeration he had heard. From that day he became very friendly towards Ewen, and provided him with most of the clothing he required to the end of his days.

The Rev. D. Gray, meeting him one day, asked him, "What is the meaning of this truth, Ewen?: 'Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up on wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint'." Ewen answered: "Well I have been thinking on that truth. The old Christian learned by painful experience to walk straight on the middle of the narrow way, and to watch at every step where he should plant down his foot, and also to walk very slowly and cautiously. The young Christian comes up from behind him, walking briskly with a careless and light step, and says to the old Christian, 'If thou wilt not walk better than that, thou shalt not reach thy journey's end before the night overtakes thee.' The old Christian gave him a serious look, but said nothing, and the young one passed on. The old one did not proceed very far till he saw the young one in the ditch at the side of the way sunk to the neck in the mire. He stepped cautiously down, took him out, taking good care that he himself should not fall into it also. When he had brought him up to the side of the way, and brushed some of the mire off him, he left him and walked away slowly, keeping the middle of the way more cautiously now than ever before. When the young one got his clothes dried, and got some of the mud rubbed off, he came on again with a quick, light step, and accosted the old Christian as he did before, and passed on with a confident air. In a little while the old one saw him sunk to the neck in the ditch, this time, however, on the other side of the way. He pulled him out again as he did before. But the young one, after a little, came past him again, and fell the third time into the ditch. And from ditch to ditch — the old one always helping him out — till at last the young one became more slow than the old; and the old reached his journey's end long before him.

"I thought of it also this way: — The old Christian may be compared to an ox taken out of the yoke in the evening and let into a park. The animal, being tired, lay down on the green sward to rest. The young Christian may be compared to a calf that was let out to this park also. The calf was never out before. It ran round the park with all its might. Seeing the ox lying on the ground it ran up to him, and with a bound jumped over him, uttering 'baw'; and ran round the park again,

repeating the same every time it came to the ox. The ox cogitated with himself: — 'Thou art very merry and lively, being fed each day on thy mother's milk; but when thou art weaned and taken in hand as I am, and put to plough all day long with only some dry straw to eat, thou shalt not run, nor jump, nor "baw" so much.' On one of the calf's rounds through the park, a foal that happened to be in the park with its dam, ran along with the calf. When the calf came to the ox it jumped over him as usual, and the foal jumped over him also. The ox got up at once, as much as to say: 'Although I allowed the calf to jump over me, I will not allow thee'." Mr Gray asked him: "What do you mean by the foal, Ewen?" "What," said he, "but the hypocrite?" This was the way by which he set forth the toleration and forbearance of experienced godly men towards the young and inexperienced; and the difference they make between what they consider folly in the heart of God's child, and hypocrisy and presumption in the carnal formalist.

We may see from the above, the simple and very instructive way in which Ewen set forth the doctrines of the Word of God. It has been felt by us a great loss that so little of his teaching has been preserved. At the same time, we always felt indebted to the man who gathered the few crumbs which we have recorded above, because we consider it a fair specimen of the simple and parabolic manner in which he used to lecture to the people. It reveals a mind that meditated much on the Word of God.

He went to a communion to Tobermory when the late Rev. Peter Maclean was minister there. Angus of the Hills came to that communion also. Ewen and Angus never saw each other before. Coming out of the Church after the service on the Fast Day, they met at the door. They looked at each other straight in the face. Ewen asked Angus: "What is your name?" Angus put the same question to Ewen. The introduction being over, they walked away arm in arm. Ewen's first question to Angus was: "What is saving faith, Angus?" He replied: "Saving faith is a soul setting its own seal to every word recorded by the Holy Ghost from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation." This answer gave full satisfaction to Ewen. Coming to a place where there were a few men standing right opposite the windows of the Free Church Manse, Ewen began to address them about the everlasting concerns of their immortal souls. Angus placed his back to a corner and listened very attentively. The Rev. Peter Maclean saw themselves and the crowd of people that had gathered by this time to listen to Ewen, and said to the Rev. John Macrae (MacRath Mōr) that he would have to go out to order these men

into the Manse, as the people would only make fun of them. Mr Macrae, who knew both Angus and Ewen better than Mr Maclean, said to him if he would take his advice he would let them alone. Mr Maclean went out, and coming to them, said: "What are you both doing here? Away into the Manse." Angus immediately said: "You are doing very well, Ewen; never heed him, for that is Satan's way, always when anyone is doing good, he tells him to stop it and to go home." So Ewen took Angus's advice and continued his lecture. When Mr Maclean went back to the Manse, Mr Macrae asked him how he got on with their friends. "Get on with them! They compared me to Satan, and did not take my advice." Mr Macrae replied: "Did I not advise you to let them alone?" Angus and Ewen spent six months going together among the godly of the Island of Mull before they parted; and we understand that it was a painful thing to others, who were eye-witnesses of their grief, when they had to separate from one another, to meet no more on this side of the grave. We have no doubt but they are together now, where they shall never separate, and where sorrow and sighing have for ever fled away.

Ewen spoke publicly against the soul-ruining doctrines and practices of the Roman Catholic Church sometimes very strongly. This aroused the blind zeal of a young man of that persuasion. He met Ewen in a lonely place far from human habitation one day as he was returning from a Communion, and told him that he would kill him on the spot because he mis-called their Church. Ewen said to him that, if he had any human feelings in his breast, he would allow him time to get his sword, so that he might defend himself. The young man, knowing perfectly well that he had no material sword, let go his grip of him, and stood right in front of him on the mountain track. Ewen stretched forth his hand toward the young man's breast, saying as he did so: "It is written, 'Ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him'." The young man ran away, and left Ewen to continue his journey homeward unmolested.

He was not ignorant of Satan's devices and temptations. Satan harassed him often about things which might seem to men possessed of stronger mental faculties of very little importance. The Rev. Alex. Macintyre gave him a suit of clothes which he had himself cast off. He gave him also a hat, bag and umbrella. Ewen met the Rev. Donald Gray one day attired in this suit, who said to him: "Who is this little minister?" and asked him to turn round till he would see how the coat fitted him. He turned his back, and Mr Gray praised the suit, and told him the coat fitted him very well. "But," Ewen said, "I must put it off; for the Pharisees had long coats, and this coat makes a Pharisee of me." Mr Gray reasoned with

him that that was a temptation from Satan, and that he should not yield to it. At last he persuaded him that the sin of the Pharisees was not their long coats, but their hypocrisy. So Ewen did not cast away the coat. Mr Gray praised the bag, and told him how very useful he would find it for carrying things that would be necessary for him when away from home. "But I must put the bag from me," he said. Mr Gray said to him: "Why will you throw away the bag?" "Because Judas had the bag," said he. Mr Gray endeavoured to show him that there was a very great difference between the purpose for which Judas carried the bag and the use he intended to make of his bag, and told him that was another temptation to which he should not yield. At last he got him persuaded not to throw away the bag.

He went with Mr Gray that night to Mr Gray's sister's house, and was put to bed in a little room beside the kitchen. About four o'clock next morning he came into the kitchen — where the goodman and wife slept — scratching his left arm above the elbow with his right hand, and looked very much harassed. She asked him what was wrong, and he said to her: "Do you know where my umbrella is?" She told him that she did not know, and asked him where he did leave it. He said that he did not remember. She told him to try his hand down at the back of the meal-chest, as it might have fallen there if he left it on the top of it. He did so, and finding it there, he opened it and said, "Ah! was Satan not a liar as usual, for he told me the rats had torn it all into shreds?" He took it with him, and went away to his bed.

We have been told a similar story about Angus of the Hills. A kind man in Portree once gave Angus a good overcoat to keep him warm in winter, and made him try it on. When Angus put on the coat the man said to him that it would keep him warm, and that it would make a gentleman of him. "But I must put it off, for it will ruin my soul with pride, as I feel my pride rising up already," said Angus. So he did put it off, and could not be persuaded to put it on any more.

Ewen lived the last few years of his life with an eminently godly man — a Mr Macfarlane, an Inland Revenue Officer — near Lochaline, Morvern. The kindness and attention bestowed on him in this family exceeded all praise. The last day of his life on earth he asked them to take him out so that he might see the world once more. They told him that he was too weak to walk himself, and that unless they would lift him bodily as he was in the bed — bolster, bedclothes and all — he could not be carried out any other way. "Will you not, then, carry me out that way itself?" he said. So they lifted him out, and sustained him in a sitting

position on the lawn opposite the door. He looked round on the beautiful panorama formed by the mountains of Mull, with the Sound of Mull lying at their base — a view which has been admired by men who have travelled much in foreign lands. Ewen gazed on this view for a little while, and then said: "Is not the world which God created beautiful? But what is good for me is that I have found Christ in it." He told them then that they might carry him in again; and, on being placed again in his bed, he thanked them for their wonderful kindness to him. That night Ewen Cameron went to be forever with the Christ he found in this world.

Visit to Zimbabwe, Malawi and Kenya

by Rev. D. A. Ross

Zimbabwe

On arrival in Bulawayo, Tuesday, 8th July, Rev. A. Murray and myself received the usual hearty welcome from mission friends. Our stay in Zimbabwe being of short duration, the visit was a rushed affair, however, with the advantage of new development on our mission field, namely the hiring of light aircraft, we were able to fly to Zwishavane and Mbumba. On the second day after arrival, we flew to Zwishavane where two services were taken and returned to Bulawayo that evening. The following day, till Monday, we assisted at the Cameron Communion, Mr A. Murray taking the action service. That same Sabbath I took two services at Bulawayo, returning to Cameron to take the afternoon service and going on to Ingwenya to take the school service. On the Tuesday we flew to Mbumba where Mr Murray took the morning prayer meeting going on to Lutsha in the evening and myself to Mpagama where services were held. On my return from Mpagama I took worship at the hospital giving a short address from the Word of God. The following morning we headed for Zenka, Mr Murray taking the service and we returned that evening to Ingwenya. Throughout our trip to the Mbumba and Zenka areas we were escorted by the police, these areas not as yet clear from trouble by various factions. After Mr Murray took the morning meeting at Ingwenya we headed back to Robertson Street, Bulawayo, staying there for the night in preparation for our flight next day to Malawi, on which occasion we were to be accompanied by Rev. A. Ndebele.

Our stay in Zimbabwe was pleasant. During our visit we stayed in the homes of Mr James Taylor, Miss Marion Graham and Miss Jessie Coote. Their kindness, along with that of the ministers, mission staff and others

was overflowing. The affectionate welcome received, especially from some of the old christian ladies was quite overwhelming. I understand there is an increase in church attendance; this I noticed in some of the congregations to whom it was my privilege to preach. One of the elders remarked to me that whereas before they had to go out to the people constraining them to come to the means of grace, now people come to them requesting places of worship in their locality. Work in the schools and hospital goes on as in the past but not without many difficulties and concern as to the future. Those who devote their lives, whether in whole or part to that work, are to be admired and constantly brought to a Throne of Grace, and staff whether on a temporary or permanent basis are due thanks and appreciation from the church. May the Most High graciously bless and prosper all that is done in that part of His vineyard with a view to the extension of His glorious Kingdom.

Malawi

Friday, 18th July, we arrived safely at Blantyre Airport Malawi. This was the beginning of the principal business for which the Foreign Missions Committee sent us, namely to investigate a request from pastors in Malawi and Kenya that the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland be established in these countries. At the Airport we were met by Rev. J. Gonakumoto and some of his ministerial brethren. After receiving a warm welcome, Mr Gonakumoto took us to The Ryall's Hotel which was to be our headquarters and dwelling place from time to time.

Much of our time in Malawi was taken up with travelling in our hired Nissan to the various places of worship and taking services. We took services in rotation and attendances differed from place to place from as few as 30 to over 200, but most of the gatherings were small. Some of the gatherings did not come up to the predicted size, but we would be told that for one reason or other the people were unable to congregate. We had three services in Blantyre and the rest north-east and south of Blantyre. We travelled north-east to Blantyre to take services in the Liwonde area which lies south of Lake Malawi, thereafter working our way south and taking services in the districts of Mulanje, Thyolo, Chiromo and finally Nsanje on the border of Mozambique. Generally the people listened well, and were outwardly respectful during the worship of God and seemed used to meeting around the Word of God. One particular gathering of people had the appearance of being steeped deeply in sin and seemed to lack the will to listen to the Word of God. However, from individual people and various groups there was sincere expressions of

gratitude for the Word preached. There was an evident lack of appreciation as to proper Sabbath-keeping. The first Lord's Day in Blantyre we were told that the reason for small numbers at the place of worship was due to attendance at Independent celebrations, and there were other incidents which showed an obvious lack of understanding in connection with proper Sabbath-keeping. The places of worship were mainly enclosures of grass, while the preacher had the privilege of a grass canopy or the shade of a tree. There were two church buildings made of mud bricks and thatch with tiers of brick for seats and the pulpit one mass of brick. Small openings in the walls which did not let in much light served as windows. One of the church buildings was badly dilapidated, part of which appeared to be constructed of pole and mud. One group took great pride in showing us burnt bricks which they had prepared in readiness for the building of a new church. On a number of occasions we had the privilege of the local chiefs attending our services who, after the service, would give a few words of welcome and express the wish that we establish places of worship among the people. In a number of places the people were extremely poor and uneducated, and little prospect for the children attending school.

At Nsanje, our last station and the most southern point of Malawi bordering Mozambique, two Mozambicans came across the border to attend the services. We were told that there is no freedom of worship in Mozambique. Times of worship must be short lest discovered by the soldiers, who when coming across worshippers scatter them and tear their Bibles. The dissidents who are opposed to the Government, we were told, encourage the people to worship. However, other reports coming from Mozambique speak of dissidents harassing those attending religious services.

During our travels public and Government resthouses were for the most part less than mediocre. The people showed us much kindness and made us most welcome in their homes and with an abundance of food placed on the table, each with a portion that would feed at least two men. Indeed the Malawian people in all our contacts proved to be a most friendly and helpful people.

Our preaching tour now at an end the time came for interviewing pastors, elders and students, 15 in all, who expressed their wish that the Free Presbyterian Church be established in Malawi and that they be taught the doctrines of the Word of God. Mr Murray then related the five points of Calvinism with which they agreed and expressed the wish that this was the kind of church they wanted. However, it became evident

during interview that there was no proper understanding of Calvinism. Some had the view that what sin they fell into was by accident, and if to judge by the words of others they held to a kind of antinomianism and perfectionism. They do express the wish to be taught and that is a good starting point. One pastor who was formerly a Seventh Day Adventist and left because of error, expressed the concern that they do not hear basic doctrines, and that most of the churches do not exalt Christ and wished that the Free Presbyterian Church would come to do this.

In their former organisation EVERY HOME CRUSADE, they received regular salaries from America, but due to the misappropriating of funds, money ceased to come from America, and EVERY HOME CRUSADE was disbanded. Thereafter they set up an Independent Church called The Church Of Christ Groups, and which as far as I understand could be registered as an Independent Church, and had that been desired by the Malawians they were not in a position to meet the fee necessary for registration. The pastors do not receive support from their congregations apart from travelling expenses. It would appear not to be a problem for the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland to register in Malawi providing a given number of Malawian people express that desire. I have no doubt about the fact that we should endeavour to do all we can to bring the teachings of God's Word to Malawi and with freedom of worship in Malawi, apart from Jehovah's Witnesses, who are not allowed to operate in the country, we trust the Lord will open the way.

The little we saw of the country which was in the southern parts, impressed us with its natural beauty and fertility. The endless clumps of mango trees, banana and guava, especially around Blantyre and to the north-east of the country indicated an abundance of fruit. Travelling from Blantyre to Nsanje consisted for many miles of extremely steep downhill roads with endless hairpin bends to sudden and breathtaking views until finally gazing on the vast expanse of flat lands in the Chikawa area with the Shire River winding as if lazily on its way, these and such like views, along with fruitfulness, left us with no doubt as to the beauty and fertility of Malawi.

Mr MacDougall who in the first instance and in the providence of the Lord was the means of asking our Church to Malawi was in Scotland at the time of our visit, which for us was a pity since his help and advice would have been much valued. This approach resulted in the Church sending Rev. A. Ndebele and Mr J. van Worden to Malawi which developed to the present activity and we hope that together we will contribute to the setting up of the Free Presbyterian Church in Malawi.

Kenya

The next lap of our journey took us to Kenya. With a few delays on the way we eventually arrived at Nairobi and were welcomed by the Kisii men. We spent the following day, Thursday, 31st July, in Nairobi, and on Friday, with our hired mini-bus travelled about 400 km to the Kisii district. Forty kilometres to the west of the town of Kisii we arrived at the home of Mr and Mrs Richard Magara, where we lodged and were most kindly entertained as also in all the homes when invited for refreshment.

Our preaching tour began the day after arrival, and as in Malawi so here likewise the deputies took services in rotation. Sites of worship in country places consisted of grass structures with three sides and roof and in a number of places under the shade of trees. The gatherings were smaller than in Malawi, and were attended mostly by men, the women remaining at home to attend to the family. The people listened well and were happy to have us with them, and expressed the desire to be taught the Word of God. Prior to our arrival in Malawi the matter of psalms in the praises of public worship had been attended to by our former deputy the Rev. A. Ndebele along with the assistance of Rev. Gonakumoto; in Kenya there was no such preparation. On arrival this was one of our first tasks and Mr Murray and Mr Ndebele had to go to considerable pains to gather psalms from various sources. In all, seven psalms were rescued from a number of hymn books and the Kisii men, under the tuition of Mr Murray and Mr Ndebele worked hard to grasp the tunes, and appeared to accept what to them is an unfamiliar mode of worship. The people showed little understanding of a proper keeping of the Sabbath; for example, one preacher was busy on a Sabbath morning sorting a television mast for the purpose of viewing. This is only one example of a number of incidents. It was gratifying on another occasion to hear one of them say to a group of men who when rebuked for Sabbath-breaking, "We will have to change our ways."

At one of the preaching stations we received a special welcome from the district chief. His concern was to show us a suitable site for the building of a church. We had to climb a pretty treacherous track with our mini-bus and, at times, such was the degree of side slope that one feared the throwing over of the vehicle. Once, when we came as far as the bus could take us we had a very steep climb to the proposed site and the chief then assured us of his desire to see us established in his area. It is cause for thankfulness to the Most High to have that kind of welcome given in connection with our wish as a church to extend our borders. May the Lord graciously prosper the matter.

There is the undoubted desire that the Free Presbyterian Church be established among them. The origin of that desire, began when seeking out a church in Nairobi with which to be associated, and in the process came across Witherow's booklet, "The Apostolic Church", which on being read it was decided to enquire further, and contact was made with the Bookroom in Glasgow. This contact resulted in Rev. A. Ndebele and Rev. B. B. Dube going to Kenya and, on the basis of their report, a further deputation was sent by the church. As with Malawi, registration of our church does not appear to be a problem, and providing a number of people in these countries apply, the Governments make provision for registration.

While the fertility of Kenya easily excelled that of Malawi it fell short in the variety of scenery. We had the privilege of a short visit to Lake Victoria in the Kisumu area. The lake accounts for the excellent rainfall in areas round about and no doubt contributes to the abundant cropping of bananas, tea and sugarcane which the people enjoy.

It is cause for much thankfulness to the Most High that throughout Zimbabwe, Malawi and Kenya, we as deputies were given strength for, and were enable to go about our duties without the least interference, and we trust have contributed some few steps towards what we hope and pray will be the setting up of the Free Presbyterian Church with its purity of doctrines, worship and practice in Malawi and Kenya.

During the interviewing of the Malawi and Kenya men the matter of conversion was enquired into and there was a sad lack of experimental religion among them. However, on other occasions certain of the men gave every evidence of a true sense of sin and knowledge of Christ as the only refuge from the terrible consequence of sin. For the founding of the Church true conversion is of course essential, and such as are converted we expect them to be the true recipients of the teachings of the Word of God, and our hope and prayer is that the Lord will open up a way whereby that can be done.

The Lord himself did give the word,
the word abroad did spread;
Great was the company of them,
the same who published.

Psalm 68: 11

Notes and Comments

Religious and Moral Education in Schools

The situation in some schools in the land has become extremely serious so far as the teaching of religion and morals is concerned. Although it is a statutory requirement in all schools that Religious Education be taught yet, where it is still taught, it tends to be a study of comparative religion instead of the teaching of Christianity. So far as moral instruction is concerned, things have deteriorated to such an extent that in some schools the amoral and perverted outlook of the permissive society is advocated unashamedly. This is true especially in areas where Communist or extreme left wing councillors are in power but it is done also by individual teachers elsewhere.

The Government by the provisions of its Education Bill hope to rectify matters to some extent though it will not be possible to undo the evil that has already been done in perverting the minds of the young through sex education classes and in other ways. One Member of Parliament demanded recently that the books used in sex education classes should be banned, indicating the immoral nature of some of these publications. By the new regulations governors of schools will have full oversight as to whether sex education is taught and, if taught, over how it is taught in order to stamp out in these classes the advocacy of promiscuous and deviant behaviour.

The corruption of the young in schools has gone on for far too long but it is good that the Government has been brought at last to exercise its responsibility in this matter. However, it will not be easy to block up all the avenues when English, History, Modern Studies and other subjects can all be utilised to propagate the humanistic beliefs of far left teachers. These are the teachers who cry out loudest about indoctrination in religious education, yet are themselves more guilty of indoctrination than any. It is to be hoped that the present decline in standards can be halted and reversed. It will require a radical transformation, yet a day of God's power would quickly accomplish this.

A.I.D.S. Alarm

As indicated in last issue the Government is taking drastic steps to warn people of the danger of the incurable disease of A.I.D.S. It is very clear that the disease has arisen as a divine judgment on the sin of sodomy. Through promiscuity it has spread to other sections of the com-

munity and even children are born with it through infected parents.

In the light of this it is profoundly sad that a Cambridge Professor of Religious Studies, Canon John Bowker, has advocated that homosexual couples should be blessed by the church in order to stem the spread of A.I.D.S. His view is what they are doing is not morally wrong nor condemned in the Bible. Such sentiments mark him out as a blind leader of the blind.

It is very regrettable, too, that in Government circles sufficient emphasis is not laid on the real cause of this plague. The blame must be laid squarely where the blame is due, that is, on those who are guilty of unnatural lusts. So, too, should legislation be brought forward to make these relationships criminal offences. The Sexual Offences Act which gave official sanction and reign to the unnatural lusts of men has produced this monster. Let those who supported that legislation in Parliament now try to tame the monster which their evil action produced.

Church Notes

Editor's Overseas Visit

As intimated in the December issue of the Magazine, the Editor has agreed at the request of the Foreign Missions Committee to visit Zimbabwe for three months and also pay short visits to Malawi and Kenya. I would ask for the prayers of the Lord's people in connection with these Church duties. I expect to leave this country on 6th January and return on 30th April (D.V.)

The magazine Committee has agreed that Rev. John MacLeod, Stornoway should act as Editor during my absence. I wish to acknowledge my gratefulness to him for undertaking these duties in addition to the many burdens which he already carries. In view of this all material for insertion in the Magazine should be sent to Rev. John MacLeod, F.P. Manse, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis from the 1st of January until further notice.

Staff for Zimbabwean Mission

Further movements of staff have taken place on the Mission. Mr James Taylor was due to return to this country on 18th December, while Mr W. M. Campbell hopes to resume his work on the Mission Field in January (D.V.). Miss MacAulay has already returned to her teaching post at Ingwenya and Miss Macaskill is due to resume her nursing work at Mbuma in January (D.V.).

I would draw readers attention to the fact that vacancies still remain for the posts of a fully qualified nurse/midwife at Mbumba Hospital and for teachers of various subjects at John Tallach Secondary School at Ingwenya.

Enquiries to Rev. A. Murray, Lairg, Sutherland, IV27 4EH. Tel: 0549-2176.

Return of Church Deputy

Rev. Neil Ross who has been visiting Canada, Australia and New Zealand as Church Deputy was due to return on 27th December. We have reason to acknowledge the Lord's goodness to him in His preserving care over him during his travels over so many thousands of miles and we trust that his labours in different countries which he visited may be blessed of the Lord. Mr Ross will, no doubt, be giving a report of his visit to the Synod in due course. We are grateful to Mr Ross for the service he has rendered to the Church overseas.

Overseas Minister's Illness

We are glad to know that Rev. Donald Campbell, Chesley who suffered a heart attack early in September has since made good progress though laid off work for a time. We trust that he may, in the Lord's good providence be fully restored to health and strength.

More recently news has come of the illness of Rev. Alfred Mpofu who was very ill in hospital in Bulawayo. We were glad to hear that he was able to leave hospital, and again it is our hope and prayer that he may yet be restored, if that is the Lord's will.

The laying aside for a time of the Lord's servants ought to remind us anew of the great need there is that the Lord would be pleased to raise up many faithful ambassadors at home and abroad to preach the everlasting gospel of God's grace.

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

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

Australia and New Zealand: At Auckland on 23rd January at 2.30 p.m.

Skye: At Portree on 10th February at 11 a.m.

Outer Isles: At Stornoway on 10th February at 11 a.m.

Southern: At Glasgow on 17th February at 6 p.m.

Northern: At Dingwall on 3rd March at 2 p.m.

Zimbabwe: At Bulawayo on 10th March at 2 p.m.

Acknowledgment of Donations

The Treasurers of the following congregations desire to acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:-

Bracadale: Anon., £50 for Struan Funds per J. C.; In memory of a loved one £20 for Bracadale Church per R. M. K.

Daviot: Anon., £25 for Manse Fund.

Dingwall: From a Wellwisher, Harris for Bibles £10.

Edinburgh: Anon., £10 (envelope in plate); A Friend, Edinburgh Congregation £5, both for Communion Expenses.

Fort William: Anon., £2 (envelope in plate); Friend, Caol, £10; M. MacD., £10; J. MacD., £55; A MacG., £10; Mrs B., £10; Misses MacD., £5; Friends, South Harris, £10, last seven per Rev. J. A. MacDonald; Envelope in plate, £10; Anon., £50; J. F. £200; Anon., £100, last 11 for Church Floor Repairs.

Greenock: Received from the Estate of the late Miss Marion S. Rankin £100 per Rev. L. MacLeod; Anon., £40 (£20 for Foreign Mission and £20 for T. B. S.) in collection plate; Mr D. C. £15; D. R. M., Glasgow £25, both for Communion Expenses and both per Rev. L. MacLeod.

Inverness: Anon., (envelope in plate) £50 for Famine Relief and £50 for Help the Blind.

Laide: Friend, Alness £10; A. N., Gairloch £10; Friend, Badluarach £5, all per Rev. D. Ross; Two Friends per A. McR. £20; Friends, Aultbea £50, all for Laide Church Building Fund; Friend £5 for Car Fund, per Rev. D. Ross.

Perth: Friend, Chequers £2 for Perth Congregation per Rev. D. J. MacDonald.

Raasay: A Friend, Raasay £20 for Sust. Fund; A Friend, Inverarish £5 for Communion Expenses; envelope in plate £30 for Church Door Collection; Friend, Raasay £30 for Minister's Car Fund.

Stirling: Townsley's Cambusbarron £10 for Communion Expenses, per Rev. D. J. MacDonald.

Stornoway: Miss K. A. MacLeod, The Cottage, Callanish £30 per Rev. J. MacLeod; Anon., £120, Anon., £120, Anon., £30, all for Sust. Fund; Anon., £50 for Nkulamane Church Building.