

THE
Free Presbyterian Magazine
and Monthly Record

Vol. 92

OCTOBER 1987

No. 10

The Judgment Seat of Christ

The Word of God does not leave us ignorant of the things that are yet to come but reveals them to us before they come to pass in order that we will not be found coming short in that day. Among the last things, the great day of Judgment and our standing before the Judgment Seat of Christ occupies a conspicuous place. The solemnities of that day are set before us in unmistakable clearness so that none will be found with excuse in that day who are on the left hand. John in the Revelation gives a solemn representation of what shall then take place. "And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." Such is the solemn setting of judgment as brought before us in the Word of God and is fitted to put a solemn awe upon our spirits did we lay these things to heart. John goes on to describe also the execution of judgment. "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." These things are surely unspeakably awful, fitted to make the hearts of men tremble even now, as men will surely tremble in that day if on the left hand.

One aspect of the great Day of Judgment which we ought to lay to heart is that it is to the Judgment Seat of Christ that we are to be called. God has committed all judgment unto the Son. God is to judge the world

in righteousness by that Man whom He has ordained, even His Beloved Son. While Christ was in this world in the days of His humiliation He refused to act as a judge over men in their disputes. "Who made me a judge or a ruler over you?" He said to one who thought that He would judge His case. To those of His disciples who asked Him if they should call down fire from heaven on those who refused to receive Him He said: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of, for the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives but to save them." His first coming into this world was not to judge the world but to save the world. This was His mission to save men's lives. "God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son into the world that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Christ was faithful to the commission given to Him and persevered in it even when His own disciples would turn Him away from it. "Far be it from Thee to suffer such things," Peter said to Him, as the Lord was recounting to them the things that He must endure for their sakes. To that attempt to turn Him aside from His divinely appointed task, Christ replied. "Get thee behind me, Satan, . . . for thou savourest not the things that be of God but those that be of men." There was to be no turning back from the work that was given Him to do. He set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem where He was to give His life a ransom for many. This was the great work of man's redemption. This was the baptism with which He was to be baptised — a baptism of suffering in the room and stead of the guilty — and how He was straitened until it would be accomplished.

How solemn then it will be in the Day of Judgment for all who have lived out their life in the ways of sin and who have despised and rejected the Christ of God, the Saviour of Israel, when they appear before the Judgment Seat and find it to be the Judgment Seat of Christ. How solemn it will be for sinners in that day, that the Saviour whom they refused is now to sit as their Judge and pronounce sentence of condemnation upon them. For every eye is to see Him and they also which pierced Him. What excuse will do in that day? Surely none. None shall escape who are rejecters of the holy Lamb of God. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" The Word of God tells us that we shall not escape. Men will then know how near salvation was to them when Christ was preached to them in the Gospel and they refused Him. They will see that the seasons of opportunity are now gone and that the day of mercy has passed. It will then be fulfilled: "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." What can there be for such but a fearful

looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversary. "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power." What solemn transactions are these and how different from those of His first coming when He came to seek those that were lost. Let men tremble in the face of these solemn revelations lest they be found on the left hand in the day of judgment.

What a different appearance shall the Day of Judgment have for the people of God — that is, for those who look and wait for His coming. It is for them the time of their full redemption when their bodies shall be raised incorruptible and they shall go in to the marriage supper of the Lamb. The Day of Judgment for the true people of God will be the day when they shall be acquitted in the presence of an assembled universe and be made perfectly blessed to the full enjoying of God to all eternity. Their sins have been washed away in the blood of the Lamb; they have been accepted in the Beloved; they have been clothed in the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ; and now they are to hear the blessed invitation from the lips of the Judge of the whole earth, and their Saviour and Redeemer: Come, ye blessed of My Father and inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. And Christ will present them to the Father, a glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, and so they shall ever be with the Lord. May we be of them!

Action Sermon

By Rev. John Colquhoun, Glendale.

(Preached in St. Jude's F.P. Church, Glasgow, on Sabbath, 12th November, 1950*)

"Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak of righteousness, mighty to save." — Isaiah 63: 1.

The Book of the Prophet Isaiah has often been referred to as the fifth gospel, and that, because of how much the prophet speaks beforehand of "the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." For

* This sermon was originally delivered in Gaelic and subsequently written out in English by the author.

instance, if we take the 53rd chapter of the prophecy, although, in common with the rest of the book it was written 700 years before the coming of Christ in the flesh, yet His sufferings are so minutely described that one would think that the writer was sitting at the foot of the Cross on Calvary when the unspeakable sufferings of the Son of God were taking place. Not only so but, in the same place, he makes a clear mention of the glory that should follow when he says, "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many."

In the verse, chosen at this time as the basis of a few remarks, we find the prophet, as if he were transported into the New Testament dispensation, beholding the triumphant march of the Messiah on His return from conquering His own and His Church's enemies, asking questions concerning this mighty Person who is attracting the attention of all who see Him.

From the words read we shall notice, as enabled, at this time, three things in particular:—

- I. The person spoken of.
- II. From whence He comes.
- III. His own answer to the inquiry.

1. The Person spoken of. There are two things said of Him in our text. He is "glorious in his apparel," and He is "travelling in the greatness of his strength."

We cannot understand the words of the text as applying to any other but to the Lord Jesus Christ as the one who appeared in this world to save poor lost sinners of our race. He is here represented as "glorious in his apparel" in order to show that to Him belongs great honour and dignity, as it is true concerning men who are high in the estimation of the world that the garments which they wear show the rank which belongs to them. The One spoken of here is one who has infinite honour and dignity in His Person as God and man in two distinct natures and one person for ever. It is true that in assuming human nature He veiled His Godhead so that in the world He was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," but to the eye of faith He was "the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world," and in various ways His glory as the God-man appeared when He tabernacled among men.

That glory appeared in the miracles which He performed. In connection with turning water into wine at the marriage in Cana of Galilee we read, "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him." John 2:

11. The same thing is true also of His other miracles in healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, giving sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, giving speech to the dumb, and life to the dead, and these manifestations of His glory enabled His Church to say, "He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death." Psalm 68: 20.

On the Mount of Transfiguration the disciples saw His glory shining brightly, with their bodily eyes, as He conversed with Moses and Elias. One Evangelist records, "But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him." Luke 9: 32. This manifestation of His glory was given them in order to substantiate the wonderful matters which they heard, for they heard the conversation He had with Moses and Elias respecting "his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem," and they heard the voice from the excellent glory saying of Him, "This is my beloved Son: hear him."

His glory appeared in His teaching, and does appear in His teaching throughout all ages. In the days of His flesh we read that "the people were astonished at his doctrine for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." The scribes taught from the Scriptures and from tradition but He was, not only an infallible interpreter of the Law, but the Lawgiver Himself. Similarly, when He begins, through His Divine Spirit, to teach sinners, they feel a power, which they cannot resist, in His teaching, causing them to forsake their former manner of life, and to lay hold of eternal life, for as He Himself tells us, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." John 5: 25. When the officers were sent to apprehend Him they felt something of that power, whether or not it was in a saving manner in their case, when they had to confess, "Never man spake like this man." Thus His people are enabled to say in all ages, "And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father."

His glory is also seen in those offices which He executes in His estate of humiliation and exaltation. He is the great Prophet of His Church in revealing to sinners by His Word and Spirit the will of God for their salvation; the Great High Priest who offered the most wonderful Sacrifice that was ever offered in this world, entered into heaven itself with His own blood, and on the ground of the efficacy of it, intercedes for sinners; the mighty King who conquers all His enemies, and rules His people in love. The exercising of all these offices show Him to be clothed

with a glory which transcends, in an infinite manner, all the glory which our finite minds can comprehend.

The second thing that our text tells us concerning this Person is, that He is "travelling in the greatness of his strength".

In the days of His humiliation, when it was amply fulfilled in Him what the Psalmist says of Him, "But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people," He speaks of His great power when He says, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." John 10: 17, 18. This shows clearly that He was not the victim of circumstances, as many hold, but that, in every step He took from Bethlehem's stable to Calvary's Cross, He was Master of every situation into which His love for sinners took Him. Pilate arrogantly said, "Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?" but that He was at the time travelling in the greatness of his strength" is evident from His reply, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above."

The advancement of His kingdom shows Him to be "travelling in the greatness of his strength." Other kingdoms and empires have prospered for a while, such as ancient Greece and Rome, but, like modern examples which flourished in our own day on the continent of Europe, have been overthrown, so that they have no place among the kingdoms of the world. This fate will never happen to the kingdom of Christ, for by His own might it shall stand for ever. "All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; to make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations." Psalm 145: 10-13. Many kingdoms have turned their power against the kingdom of Christ for the purposes of putting it out of existence, and, many will exert themselves for the like purpose yet, but they shall all know, in a greater or lesser degree, what Julian the Apostate learned. He had professed the Christian religion but had become a persecutor of it till at last in a battle he was wounded. When he knew that his wound was mortal he took a handful of his own blood and flung it into the air, saying, "O Galilean, thou hast conquered." On account of the fact that His kingdom shall never come to an end His people in all ages will express their minds in the words which we had been

singing, "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee." Psalm 45: 3-5.

He also shows that he is "travelling in the greatness of his strength" by the way in which He rules nations and makes them subservient to His purpose though nothing may be further from the intentions of these nations than to serve Him. Some of us here have seen two wars of world-wide extent, and we know something of the disorders, uncertainties and anxieties, from the human point of view, which these wars occasioned, and, no doubt, many would be ready to conclude that God was merely acting the part of an uninterested spectator. Nothing could be further from the truth. "He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth," "bringeth the princes to nothing," and "maketh the judges of the earth as vanity." The potsherds of the earth may turn covetous eyes and stretch covetous hands towards each others possessions, and strive with each other over them, but, by these very things, the Lord fulfills His purposes towards His own Church, for the ingathering of His people, "the perfecting of the saints," and "the edifying of the body of Christ."

His dealings in Providence shows that He is "travelling in the greatness of his strength." We are so ready to take the recurring of the seasons of the year as a matter of course, and think little of the wonderful order in the universe and the Guiding Hand behind it all, which causes seed-time and harvest to appear at the expected time, yet on this order depends the preservation of man and beast. This, however, is, comparatively, a small portion of God's providential work. Nothing in this world happens by chance, but all things in it are foreordained and they shall surely come to pass in the order in which they were foreordained. As the God of Providence the Person spoken of in our text rules kingdoms and sustains the countless living organisms of this globe, yet not a sparrow falls to the ground without His knowledge. That He has done so, and will do so in all ages, shows Him to be "travelling in the greatness of his strength." "The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing." Psalm 145: 15, 16.

In that same strength, in the greatness of which He is travelling, His grace is very manifest. In all ages of the world, as in all ages to come, there are a people who serve Him and acknowledge Him as their Lord and Saviour. None of these presume to do so in their own strength, for "who

is sufficient for these things?" They have many duties to perform which they find to be beyond their strength, and many trials, afflictions and temptations, as long as they are in the world, but in connection with all these things their Saviour says, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Obstacles stand in the way of their receiving grace for their needs, and they themselves could never surmount these obstacles, but He who is "travelling in the greatness of his strength" causes them to hear His voice as the voice of their beloved, "leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills."

II. The second thing which we indicated our intention to notice is, From whence this Person comes.

Our text tells us that He comes from Edom and from Bozrah which was the capital of Edom. The Edomites were the sworn enemies of the Israelites, and we find the Lord's ancient people, raising their supplications to Himself on that account. "Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof." Psalm 137: 7. It would, no doubt, be in Bozrah as the capital that all the plans of the kingdom were devised for the destruction of the Israelites, and, therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of sinners, is represented here as coming from the very citadel of His, and His people's enemies.

We may look upon Calvary as that citadel. It was here that the greatest battle was fought, as far as revealed to us, that was ever witnessed by Heaven, earth or hell. God had foreordained that a countless number of our race should be saved and from eternity devised the plan by which they should be saved; the time had now come for the great Surety of the elect to fulfil His Covenant Engagement. The enemies of His glory and of the souls of His people were determined that He should never fulfill it, but that they should be masters of the field. All the claims of the holy law of God, and the requirements of all the attributes of the Godhead would need to be satisfied. This along with His delight to do the will of the Father, and the place which God's holy law had in His heart, caused Him to exclaim as He approached the battlefield, "I have a baptism to be baptised with: and how am I straitened till it be accomplished."

Among those enemies who ranged themselves against Him were the devil, sin and death, an unspeakably strong combination, skilful in all the arts of their infernal warfare, crafty beyond the comprehension of the minds of human beings, strong to retain their power over their slaves, and goaded on to exert their utmost power by the sure knowledge that here was the One, referred to in the Garden of Eden, who was to bruise

the devil's head. Every slave among their hosts bore the image of their father, the devil, in their enmity towards holiness; sin was pleasant to their carnal taste, and death prevented them seeing the fearful consequences of their captivity.

When that phase of the battle which was enacted on Calvary was actually begun it was, therefore, to be expected that these enemies should work through as many of their human slaves as were present. On the eve of the battle He, against whom all their enmity was poured forth, could say, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness." That it was so can be seen when, in the midst of His agonies on the Cross, "the chief priests, mocking, said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; himself he cannot save. Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe." Others said, "Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself and come down from the cross."

When men are fighting a great battle they must dispense with those comforts to which they are accustomed in days of peace, and when the Lord Jesus Christ was fighting that great battle by which He forever emancipated the whole elect of God, all comforts were denied Him. At that time the words of prophecy were fulfilled in Him; "Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters but I found none. They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." Psalm 69: 20, 21. Because men were animated by the spirit of the devil they gave Him what would add fire to His thirst, and of the thousands whom He fed miraculously with bread and fishes, and the still greater number of thousands who hung upon His words as He preached by the sea-side or upon the mountains, not one was found to minister unto Him the smallest comfort. The disciples, who had more intimacy with Him, forsook Him. Where art thou Peter, who was ready to go to prison and to death with Him? Poor Peter had shamefully denied Him with oaths and curses. Where art thou John, that beloved disciple who leaned upon the bosom of Jesus at supper? He had gone his own way for the time being. If we look to angels, those glorious creatures who are higher up in the scale of created beings, and who were employed at other times to minister comfort and strength to Him, we find none of them, by their presence, supporting Him. They cannot, they dare not, come near, for no command has been given them to help at this awful moment when the Eternal Father Himself has hid His face from Him, for from eternity

it was ordained that He should have to say, "I have trodden the wine-press alone; and of the people there was none with me."

When that inglorious confederacy which had marshalled all their hosts against Him, had done all that they were permitted to do, we see one of them approaching nearer and laying his chilling hand upon Him. This also was done, be it remembered, by permission, but O the significance both of the act and of the permission. As He said to Pilate so He could say to Death. "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above." But there was something unusual in connection with this act of Death, and something which ought to draw our attention and awaken in us inquiring thoughts. Death had touched millions of our race before, and at his very touch they showed signs that the strength of nature was declining, but not so in this case. We read that "When Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thine hands I commend my spirit; and having said thus, he gave up the ghost." Luke 23: 46. That loud voice was not the voice of defeat but of triumph. It spoke of a work that was finished by His active and passive obedience whereby Justice was satisfied, the ransom for His people fully paid, and the law magnified and made honourable. It was in order that the Law would be satisfied to the uttermost, and magnified as only the Lawgiver, as the Substitute of His people, could magnify it, that Death was permitted to lay his hand upon Him, but in laying his hand upon Him by that mysterious permission already referred to he brought Him to the dust of death.

Our text, however, represents the Person spoken of, not as a fugitive from His enemies, but as returning from Edom and Bozrah as from a crowning victory. Death's triumph was but short-lived. We remember hearing the late Rev. Neil Cameron, on one occasion in Edinburgh, using an illustration in connection with this matter. He said that, sometimes, when two champions are engaged in wrestling, the stronger is put down first. It was so in this case. Christ was put down and Death was on top of Him in the grave, but when the time appointed came we find Christ turning in the grave and putting Death under Him, rising victoriously and putting that song of triumph in the mouth and in the heart of His own, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Never again was death to have the mastery over Him, which, in itself, is an unspeakable comfort to His people. "Knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God." Rom. 6: 9, 10.

In returning from this victory he brings His captives with Him. It was the custom in ancient times for the victor to bring back his captives in chains, not only to show their bondage but to show their inability to do further harm. Christ returned from this great victory bringing the devil, sin and death in His train. We read that one reason for His incarnation was "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." The weakness of Christ, in His death, was stronger than all the powers of the devil and hell. What has now become of all the plots hatched in hell to rob God of His glory and to frustrate His design to save sinners of Adam's race? They have all miscarried and Satan given a wound from which he shall never recover in time or eternity. Sin, that mighty power which had made captives of the whole human race has been made an end of as far as the elect of God is concerned, for, by this victory, transgression was finished, an end made of sins, reconcillation was made for iniquities and an everlasting righteousness was brought in. Death is seen in that train, not as a mighty conqueror, but as one deprived of his sting, and made now to serve Him who leads him captive. His office as King of Terrors is done away with as far as the Lord's people are concerned, and they have before them their "Saviour, Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." II Tim. 1: 10. Thus we see fulfilled what we had been endeavouring to sing, "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou has received gifts for men: yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." Psalm 68: 18.

He also brings His people in His train, freed from all their enemies. The question was asked of old, "Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered?" and the answer was supplied, "But thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children." Isaiah 49: 24, 25. This may have an immediate reference to the captivity of Israel in Babylon and their deliverance, but it has a prophetic meaning with reference to the work accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary when He paid the ransom for His people and spoiled principalities and powers. When He overcame death and broke the bands of the grave it was not alone that He rose, for His people rose with Him. The Apostle had an eye to this when he says, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." Col. 3: 1. He could not be said to have "spoiled

principalities and powers," if He had not taken with Him those who were captivated by those principalities and powers.

He is a crowned Victor. It was the custom in olden days to crown a victor on his return from a battle in order to give him a kingly appearance, and Christ, in prospect of the victories He was to obtain has been crowned King by the Eternal Father. "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion, I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." Psalm 2. He is also crowned by His people whom He has delivered. As each of them come, through the saving work of the Holy Spirit, to know of their deliverance they put the crown of their salvation upon Christ. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake." Psalm 115: 1. It is thus that He is seen by the prophet coming from Edom and Bozrah, and his question is put, in order to draw the attention of gospel-hearers to Him to the end of time. This is in accordance with the exhortation in the Song of Solomon, "Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart." Song 3: 11.

III. We now come to the third thing to be noticed from our text at this time, that is, Christ's own answer to the inquiry. In that answer He gives a two-fold description of Himself, (1) "I that speak in righteousness," and (2) "Mighty to save."

His use of the personal pronoun "I" is not without significance. It is the name by which He revealed Himself to Moses when we read, "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." Exod. 3: 14. It signifies that He is self-existent, eternal and immutable, and in that passage has special reference to God as a covenant-keeping God. The One brought before us in our text, being none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, all these attributes are applicable to Him, yea, in His contention with the Jews, He says, "Before Abraham was, I am," to signify His eternal existence. Well did the Jews understand His words in that sense for we read, "Then took they up stones to cast at him." John 8: 59.

There is a difference of opinion among interpreters as to the meaning of the words, "that speak in righteousness," but the words convey the meaning, "I that speak out of the very midst of righteousness." This righteousness out of which He speaks can be no other righteousness but His own as the God-man. As such it is a completed righteousness. You remember that when He tells His disciples of the work that the Holy

Spirit, that Comforter who was to be sent to them by Him, was to do, He says that He was to reprove the world "of righteousness," and explains that by saying, "Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more." John 16: 10. Here He indicates that the righteousness of which the Holy Ghost was to reprove the world was of such a nature that it was not necessary for Christ to come back to this world to add anything to it. It was a completed righteousness, and all to whom it is applied by the Holy Spirit, and by whom it is received by a Spirit-wrought faith, are perfectly and eternally righteous before God.

It is a righteousness that is suitable and sufficient for every one of the Lord's people. They are lost, ruined and undone, as they are by nature, having nothing with which they may come before the Lord, and may well make the Scriptural confession, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." Isaiah 64: 6. The righteousness of the Lord Jesus is a righteousness that was expressly worked out in the room and stead of creatures in that condition. It is sufficient to cover the guiltiest sinner found in this world, and those who have been clothed with it can say with the Apostle Paul, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." It does not matter how many have already been clothed with this righteousness it is sufficient to cover all who come to Christ in their need, for it will cover a number which no man can number. O friends, this is a righteousness which is suitable and sufficient for you, and if you but come you will not be cast away, for Christ says, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

This righteousness is freely made over to sinners who feel themselves self-lost, and here we see the wonderful condescension of God in providing so freely such a righteousness. The Justice of God could accept of nothing short of a perfect righteousness, and such a righteousness no sinner of our race could bring forward, but when none could show such a righteousness God Himself, in the Person of the Son, brought forward a perfect righteousness, saying, "Hearken unto me, ye stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness: I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory." This righteousness is without money and without price, as are all the gifts received by Christ for the rebellious. It was purchased by Christ at the high price of his heart's blood and freely made over to the vilest sinner. It is out of the very midst of this

righteousness that Christ is speaking as He comes from Edom and Bozrah.

The second thing we have in the description which Christ gives of Himself, is that He is "mighty to save." This leads us into the unspeakably large field of the work of the Holy Spirit, of whom Christ says, "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." It is by the work of the Spirit that sinners are called effectually out of a state of nature into a state of grace, and in connection with this effectual calling they are justified, adopted and sanctified, and by the same Spirit they are assured of God's love, have peace of conscience, joy, increase of grace and perseverance unto the end. As it is the salvation wrought by Christ which is applied to sinners by the Holy Spirit it is clearly demonstrated that Christ is mighty to save. No matter how joined a sinner is to his sins Christ is able to save him from them. No power is able to take him out of the condition of spiritual death in which he is by nature but the power of Christ, but Christ is "mighty to save" from that condition, as He Himself says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live."

Many instances of His power to save is given in the Scriptures. We read of Manasseh who "shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another, besides his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, in doing that which was evil in the sight of the Lord." II Kings 21: 16. Christ, in his case revealed that He is "mighty to save," for we read of Manasseh, "When he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto him: and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God." II Chron. 23: 12, 13.

Another notable instance of His power to save we have in the case of Saul of Tarsus. He himself says concerning his dealings with the servants of Christ. And I punished them oft in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities." Acts 26: 11. Yet he has to record that the fame of his conversion went abroad to the churches of Judea, when he says, "But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past, now preaches the faith which once he destroyed." Gal. 1: 23.

A third instance of His power to save may be given in the case of Mary Magdalene out of whom He cast seven devils. We have no record in

Scripture of the particular manner in which she spent her life before Jesus met her but, by the statement that He cast seven devils out of her, we can well understand that her life was a notoriously wicked one, and that those who knew her then would look upon her as a particularly hardened sinner, yet the power of Christ to save is wonderfully brought out in her life, and in her attachment to Him when few cared to acknowledge Him. We find her among the women who witnessed His crucifixion afar off; She attended His burial with Mary the mother of James and Joses, and brought spices to embalm His body, and was the first to see Him after His resurrection. When, under these circumstances, she kept close to Him, we may well see that He touched her heart with a power which no creature could exercise.

From these instances of His power to save we may see what is of great encouragement to the Lord's people in all the circumstances in which they may be placed in the world. Of Him who saved Manasseh, Saul of Tarsus and Mary Magdalene it can be said, "Behold the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear." The experience of His people in all ages have been that He was both able and willing to save them, and that they could rely on Him for the future. The Apostle records to the glory of God and the encouragement of believers what happened to himself and others, when in Asia they were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that they had despaired even of life, and yet in these circumstances he says, "But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us." II Cor. 1: 9, 10.

Thus, child of God, there is set before you in our text One who can fight your battles and shall never experience a defeat; One who will carry you through all the trials that may be in your lot in the world, for He overcame all your enemies and has, on your behalf, entered Heaven, whose gates have opened to Him amidst the acclamations of the heavenly host proclaiming Him "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle."

May the Lord bless anything said that was consistent with His Word.

"Faith in Christ is that grace whereby the Church is united unto Him — incorporated into one mystical body with Him."

John Owen.

“He Lingered” (Gen. 19: 16)

by J. C. Ryle

(Continued from Page 289)

III. Let us next consider *the reasons that may account for Lot's lingering.*

This is a question of great importance, and I ask your serious attention to it. To know the root of a disease is one step towards a remedy. He that is forewarned is forearmed.

Who is there among the readers of this paper that feels secure and has no fear of lingering? Come and listen while I tell you a few passages of Lot's history. Do as he did, and it will be a miracle indeed if you do not get into the same state of soul at last.

One thing then I observe in Lot is this, *he made a wrong choice in early life.*

There was a time when Abraham and Lot lived together. They both became rich, and could live together no longer. Abraham, the elder of the two, in the true spirit of humility and courtesy, gave Lot the choice of the country, when they resolved to part company: “If you,” he said, “will take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if you depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.” (Gen. 13: 9).

And what did Lot do? — We are told he saw the plains of Jordan, near Sodom, were rich, fertile and well watered. It was a good land for cattle, and full of pastures. He had large flocks and herds, and it just suited his requirements. And this was the land he chose for a residence, simply because it was a rich, well watered land.

It was near the town of Sodom! He cared not for that.

The men of Sodom, who would be his neighbours, were wicked! It mattered not.

They were sinners before God exceedingly! It made no difference to him.

The pasture was rich. The land was good. He wanted such a country for his flocks and herds. And before that argument all scruples and doubts, if indeed he had any, at once went down.

He chose by sight, and not by faith. He asked no counsel of God to preserve him from mistakes. He looked to the things of time, and not of eternity. He thought of his worldly profit, and not of his soul. He considered only what would help him in this life, — he forgot the solemn business of the life to come. This was a bad beginning.

But I observe also that *Lot mixed with sinners when there was no occasion for his doing so.*

We are first told that he “pitched his tent towards Sodom.” (Gen. 13: 12). This, as I have already shown, was a great mistake.

But the next time he is mentioned, we find him actually living in Sodom itself. The Spirit says expressly, “He dwelt in Sodom.” (Gen. 14: 12). His tents were left. The country was forsaken. He occupied a house in the very streets of that wicked town.

We are not told the reasons of this change. We are not aware that any occasion could have arisen for it. We are sure there could have been no command of God. Perhaps his wife liked the town better than the country, for the sake of society. It is plain she had no grace herself. Perhaps she persuaded Lot it was needful for the education of his daughters. Perhaps the daughters urged living in the town for the sake of gay company:- they were evidently light-minded young women. Perhaps Lot liked it himself, in order to make more of his flocks and herds. Men never lack reasons to confirm their wills. But one thing is very clear, — Lot dwelt in the midst of Sodom without good cause.

Reader, when a child of God does these two things, which I have named, you never need be surprised if you hear, by and by, unfavourable accounts about his soul. You never need wonder if he becomes deaf to the warning voice of affliction, as Lot was (Genesis 14: 12), and turns out a lingerer in the day of trial, and danger, as Lot did.

Make a wrong choice, — an unscriptural choice, — in life, and settle yourself down unnecessarily in the midst of worldly people, and I know no surer way to damage your own spirituality, and to go backward about your eternal concerns.

This is the way to make the pulse of our soul beat feebly and languidly.

This is the way to make the edge of your feeling about sin become blunt and dull.

This is the way to dim the eyes of your spiritual discernment, till you can scarcely distinguish good from evil, and stumble as you walk.

This is the way to bring a moral palsy on your feet and limbs, and make you go tottering and trembling along the road to Zion, as if the grasshopper was a burden.

This is the way to sell the pass to your worst enemy, — to give the devil the vantage ground in the battle, — to tie your arms in fighting, — to fetter your legs in running, — to dry up the sources of your strength, — to cripple your own energies, — to cut off your own hair, like Samson, and

give yourself into the hands of the Philistines, put out your own eyes, grind at the mill, and become a slave.

Reader, wake up and mark well what I am saying. Settle these things down in your mind. Do not forget them. Recollect them in the morning. Recall them to memory at night. Let them sink down deeply into your heart. If ever you would be safe from lingering, beware of needless mingling with worldly people. Beware of Lot's choice. If you would not settle down into a dry, dull, sleepy, barren, heavy, carnal, stupid, torpid state of soul, *beware of Lot's choice*.

Remember this is choosing a dwelling-place, or residence. It is not enough that the house is comfortable, — the situation good, — the air fine, — the neighbourhood pleasant, — the expenses small, — the living cheap. There are other things yet to be considered. You must think of your immortal soul. Will the house you think of help you towards heaven or hell? — Is the Gospel preached within an easy distance? — Is Christ crucified within reach of your door? — Is there a real man of God near, who will watch over your soul? I charge you, if you love life, not to overlook this. *Beware of Lot's choice*.

Remember this in choosing a calling, a place, or profession in life. It is not enough that the salary is high, — the wages good, — the labour light, — the advantages numerous, — the prospects of getting on most favourable. Think of your soul, your immortal soul. Will it be fed or starved? Will it be prospered or drawn back? I beseech you, by the mercies of God, to take heed what you do. Make no rash decision. Look at the place in every light, the light of God as well as the light of the world. Gold may be bought too dear. *Beware of Lot's choice*.

Remember this in choosing a husband or wife, if you are unmarried. It is not enough that your eye is pleased, — that your tastes are met, — that your mind finds congeniality, — that there is amiability and affection, — that there is a comfortable home for life. There needs something more than this. There is a life yet to come. Think of your soul, your immortal soul. Will it be helped upwards, or dragged downwards by the union you are planning? — Will it be made more heavenly, or more earthly, — drawn nearer to Christ, or to the world? — Will its religion grow in vigour, or will it decay? I pray you, by all your hopes of glory, allow this to enter into your calculations. Think, as old Baxter said, and think, and think, and think again, before you commit yourself. "Be not unequally yoked." (2 Cor. 6: 14) Matrimony is nowhere named among the means of conversion. *Remember Lot's choice*.

Remember this if you are ever offered a situation on a railway. It is not

enough to have good pay, and regular employment, the confidence of the directors, and the best chance of rising to a higher post. These things are very well in their way, but they are not everything. How will your soul fare if you serve a railway company that runs Sunday trains? — What day in the week will you have for God and eternity? — What opportunities will you have for hearing the Gospel preached? I solemnly warn you to consider this. It will profit you nothing to fill your purse, if you bring leanness and poverty on your soul. Beware of selling your Sabbath for the sake of a good place. *Beware of Lot's choice.*

Reader, you may perhaps think, "a believer need not fear, — he is a sheep of Christ, he will never perish, — he cannot come to much harm. It cannot be that such small matters can be of great importance."

Well: you may think so; but I warn you, if you neglect them, your soul will never prosper! A true believer will certainly not be cast away, although he may linger; but if he does linger, it is vain to suppose that his religion will thrive.

Grace is a tender plant. Unless you cherish it and nurse it well, it will soon become sickly in this evil world. It may droop, though it cannot die.

The brightest gold will soon become dim, when exposed to a damp atmosphere.

The hottest iron will soon become cold. It requires pains and toils to bring it to a red heat. It requires nothing but letting alone, or a little cold water, to become black and hard.

You may be an earnest zealous Christian now. You may feel like David in his prosperity, "I shall never be moved." (Psalm 30: 6). But be not deceived. You have only got to walk in Lot's steps, and make Lot's choice, and you will soon come to Lot's state of soul. Allow yourself to do as he did, — presume to act as he acted, and be very sure you will soon discover you have become a wretched lingerer, like him.

You will find, like Samson, the presence of the Lord is no longer with you.

You will prove to your own shame an undecided, hesitating man, in the day of trial.

There will come a canker on your religion, and eat out its vitality without your knowing it.

There will come a consumption on your spiritual strength, and waste it away insensibly.

And at length you will wake up to find your hands hardly able to do the Lord's work, and your feet hardly able to carry you along the Lord's way, and your faith no bigger than a grain of mustard seed; — and this,

perhaps, at some turning point in your life, at a time when the enemy is coming in like a flood, and your need is the sorest.

Ah, reader, if you would not become a lingerer in religion, consider these things! Beware of doing what Lot did.

Spurgeon and the Down Grade Controversy

by Rev. Dr. Donald M. Boyd.

On the 28th October, 1887, exactly one hundred years ago, Charles Haddon Spurgeon left the Baptist Union with great publicity on account of the Down-Grade controversy. This was a controversy about the liberalism that he was noticing within the Baptist Union and to which he had drawn attention in the pages of his paper called *The Sword and Trowel*. In spite of his attempts to correct the matter by establishing a better doctrinal basis to the Baptist Union, he became convinced that he would not succeed and that his duty was to withdraw from fellowship with the Baptist Union as a Union, although he maintained fellowship with individuals within the Union. (See *The Forgotten Spurgeon* by Iain Murray for history of this controversy).

This conscientious stand can only be applauded by all lovers of the truth. It is interesting that at the very time that the Free Church in Scotland was trying to modify its Confession of Faith, Spurgeon was trying to introduce a more discriminating creedal subscription to the Baptist Union, with the intention of smoking out the liberals from their ranks. It teaches us of the need of a solid constitution based upon a scriptural confession or, as surely "as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies" (II Peter 2: 1), history will be seen to be repeating itself, Spurgeon puts it like this:

"So long as an Association without a creed has no aliens in it, nobody* can wish for a creed *formally*, for a spirit is there; but at a time when "strange children" have entered, what is to be done? Whatever may theoretically be in your power, you *practically* have no power whatever. You will go on as you are; and, unless God's grace calls back the wanderers, their numbers will increase, and their courage will cause them to speak out more plainly, to the sorrow of

* Spurgeon goes too far when he says that *nobody* can wish for a creed when there are no aliens. It is their wisdom to do it sooner rather than wait till later, which is the lesson he himself draws from the Down-Grade controversy.

the faithful ones who shielded them in patient hope of better things."

It is probably impossible to trace any direct influence between Spurgeon's stand and the historic stand made by Rev. Donald Macfarlane in 1893, but there are two points worth pondering. One is that *The Sword and Trowel* was being read extensively throughout the land and copies were finding their way throughout the Highlands. Spurgeon was personally known in the north ever since Dr. John Kennedy brought him north to open his new church in Dingwall in 1870. The second point is the influence of Spurgeon's stand upon Rev. Neil Cameron. Mr Cameron kept a notebook of newspaper cuttings from the era of the origin of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Apart from the addition of dates, the names of the newspapers from which the extracts are taken, and the correction of one name, Mr Cameron has added nothing of his own to these newspaper cuttings. However, there is one solitary exception in the 22 pages of cuttings and this respects some underlining in an article on Spurgeon's views of the Free Church of Scotland. The following is an extract from what Spurgeon wrote in *The Sword and Trowel* with Mr Cameron's underlining.

"The Free Church of Scotland must unhappily be for the moment regarded as rushing to the front with its new theology, which is no theology, but an opposition to the Word of the Lord. That Church, in which we all gloried as sound in the faith and full of the martyr's spirit, has entrusted the training of its future ministers to two professors, who hold other doctrines than those of its Confession. *This* is the most *suicidal* act that a Church could commit. It is strange that two gentlemen who are seeking for something newer and better than the old faith should condescend to accept a position which implies their agreement with the ancient doctrines of the Church; but delicacy of feeling is not a common article now-a-days, and the action of creeds is not automatic, as it would be if consciences were tender. In the Free Church there is a Confession, and there are means for carrying out discipline, but these will be worth nothing without the personal action of all the faithful in that community. *Every man who keeps aloof from the struggle for the sake of peace, will have the blood of souls upon his head.* The question in debate at the Disruption was secondary compared with that now at issue. It is Bible or no Bible, Atonement or no Atonement, which we have now to settle. Stripped of beclouding terms and phrases, this lies at the bottom of the discussion, and every lover of the Lord Jesus should feel himself called upon to take his part in an earnest contention for the faith once for all delivered

to the saints. From the exceeding boldness of Messrs Bruce and Dods, we gather that they feel perfectly safe in ventilating their opinions. They evidently reckon upon a majority which will secure them immunity, and our fear is that they will actually gain that which they expect. We are not sanguine enough to believe that they are mistaken. Unless the whole Church will awaken to its duty, the evangelicals in the Free Church are doomed to see another reign of Moderatism. Have they suffered so many things in vain? Will they not now make a stand?"

It is evident from the sentence that Mr Cameron underlined that the sentiment stuck a chord with himself. From all that is known of Mr Cameron's life, there can be little doubt that it was the good of souls that actuated him in his personal and ecclesiastical stand. It is a moot point how much influence Spurgeon's stand had upon Mr Cameron, and how much influence Mr Cameron had upon Mr Macfarlane at the crucial stages leading up to 1893, but it is worth recording the connection on this hundredth anniversary of Spurgeon's historic stand. It could be that Spurgeon's words and action steeled Mr Cameron for the ensuing break with the Free Church. Mr Cameron evidently considered the quotation apposite and germane to the contendings of our own church for it appears in Volume 2 of the Free Presbyterian Magazine, p. 196, possibly inserted by Mr Cameron. It is interesting to notice that in Spurgeon's biography, his wife mentions that the passage in Jeremiah 15: 19,20 "was so peculiarly appropriate to the circumstances of the case, that many friends afterwards sent it to my beloved, who was greatly comforted by the reassuring message which was thus conveyed to him." The same was true of Mr Cameron — the text reads, "Therefore thus saith the Lord, if thou return, then will I bring thee again, and thou shalt stand before me: and if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth: let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them. And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brasen wall: and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee: for I am with thee to save thee and to deliver thee, saith the Lord."

Mrs Spurgeon refers to the results of her husband's witness on the side of the truth in the following words, "So far as the Baptist Union was concerned, little was accomplished by Mr Spurgeon's witness-bearing and withdrawal. But, in other respects, I have had abundant proofs that the protest was not in vain. . . . The ultimate results of the whole matter must be left in the hands of Him who never makes a mistake, and who will, in His own right way, vindicate His obedient and faithful servant from the 'censure' so unjustly passed upon Him." Among the "ultimate results", it is

unlikely that Mrs Spurgeon thought about the effects that his heroic stand was to have north of the border, in Scotland, of which Spurgeon said, “. . . as to gospel preaching, we have always regarded it as the choicest part of the three kingdoms, and so it is, and so it shall be by the grace of God.” May the God of all grace, Who has preserved to us His heritage, continue it among us by that same grace.

Book Reviews

In All Their Affliction by Murdoch Campbell, Gospel Standard Publications, 159pp, £2.95.

This book is a reprint of a paperback issued a number of years ago and is by the late Rev. Murdoch Campbell, Resolis. It is a book well fitted to minister comfort and encouragement to the tried and afflicted people of God, as its title would suggest. Mr Campbell was very gifted in this line, no doubt through personal experience, and his own experimental acquaintance with the Lord's dealings with His people enabled him to be a Barnabas — a son of consolation. The truth of God's Word confirms this: “Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.” Here then in this reprint the children of God may derive help and comfort by being led to the Fountainhead — to Christ Himself, and to God in Him who is the source of all comfort.

We are glad to commend this volume to readers of the Magazine.

D. B. M.

Five Pioneer Missionaries, Banner of Truth Trust Paperback, 345pp, £3.95.

This is a reprint of a paperback issued first in 1965. It consists of prize essays on five noted Missionaries, David Brainard, Wm. C. Burns, John Eliot, Henry Martyn and John G. Paton. The lives of these men who all served the Lord in the ministry of the Gospel and in particular on the Mission Field are interestingly told by the five writers of these essays. Being essays the writers were necessarily confined to an outline of the lives of the men about whom they wrote, along with a selection of particular incidents which bring out the daunting task which faced each of them in the different parts of the world or areas to which the Lord had directed them. While not as satisfactory as a full life of each of these missionaries, yet this paperback gives a suitable introduction to these longer and more detailed accounts, and we are glad to recommend it in this way.

D. B. M.

Notes and Comments

The Hungerford Massacre

The whole country has been stunned by the killings which took place in the small town of Hungerford when Michael Ryan went on the rampage gunning down people at will and shooting to kill before finally killing himself when police surrounded the schoolroom where he had sought refuge. Included in the list of victims was Ryan's own mother. The reason for the killings appears to be inexplicable. Following the massacre, the BBC immediately withdrew from TV certain particularly violent films and the Government has announced it is examining ways of tightening gun laws. These actions are salutary and it is to be hoped that those responsible for screening TV programmes will now take into account the potential for evil of some of the programmes which are televised. Anything that can be done to prevent guns falling into wrong hands should be done but this may not be an easy task.

The Hungerford Massacre has brought out in a stark and solemn way that we are living in the midst of a violent society. What is important is to consider why our society has become so. The answer should not be difficult to find. It is obvious that the further we have departed from the Word of God as a nation the more evil and violent has the nation become. We need not expect any betterment through the remedies that men propose. Rather we must expect things to become worse and worse so long as we follow our present course as a nation. The only remedy is national repentance through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon us, and a turning from sin to God. So far there is no evidence of such a spirit taking hold of people, nevertheless let us plead for it, as only in this way can the nation be delivered from the terrible judgments which are threatening us for our sins.

Sabbath Shopping

Before Britain entered the Common Market warning was given that soon Britain would have the Continental "Sunday" and that the law of the Sabbath would be set aside. This has now taken place in many parts of the country, not only in the large cities, but also even in the towns of the North of Scotland. The attitude of Argyll Stores in opening their Presto Store at Wick is typical of these large companies. The view expressed by them to opposition raised by the Caithness Church of Scotland Presbytery was that while they respected the Church's beliefs, they had an over-riding duty to their customers for whom Sunday shopp-

ing had proved popular. It is sad to think that there are people in the Highlands today who will make use of these Stores on the Sabbath, yet this will not excuse those who are responsible for opening them when they appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ. The breakdown of the law of the Sabbath in the nation is a main factor in the breakdown of law and order in the nation and if persisted in will bring even greater judgments upon an ungodly nation.

Church Unity

Early in September a declaration of inter-church co-operation and goodwill was signed by 350 Church leaders, including the Archbishop of Canterbury and the R. C. Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Hume. It is to be read from the pulpit in Churches throughout Britain in October. The Roman Catholic Church has now agreed to play a full part in a new structure of inter-church co-operation, leading it is hoped to the eventual unity of all Churches in Britain. As the Roman Catholics had remained aloof to a large degree from the British Council of Churches, this new commitment means a large step forward for them, and a step they would never be prepared to take unless they had some reason to believe that they were to make some substantial gain from it. Even Dr Runcie described the Cardinal's announcement as a historic moment — yes, no doubt historic in the sense that the Roman Catholic Church is actively on the move to swallow up what is left of the once Protestant Churches in the land. What Cardinal Hume aims at is eventual "full communion, Communion which is both visible and organic." The Clerk to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland gave his Church's welcome and endorsement to the declaration. What a sad day it will be for Scotland and for Britain as a whole if this new approach to Church Unity is successful, and how exposed to harassment and persecution those Churches would be who remained outside this united Church. May the Lord in His mercy prevent it.

Statement by Church Interests Committee

Court of Session Case — Rev. J. M. Brentnall and Rev. H. R. M. Radcliff v. the Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

As the people of our Church are aware, Revs. J. M. Brentnall and H. R. M. Radcliff introduced an overture into the Synod of 1980, which dealt with the question of the Synod's view of a Protest made against a

decision of the Supreme Court of the Church. The Overture also sought to set right supposed wrongs which had been done to Revs. E. MacQueen and R. MacKenzie and others, in connection with the matter of Protest.

The Synod took the view that the raising of this issue endangered the peace of the Church, by opening an old wound, from which the Church had suffered for many years in the past. The Synod were further opposed to this issue being raised because, as recently as 1978, the position with regard to Protest had been reiterated, and the Synod had made it plain that it did not wish the issue to be raised again. The Synod accordingly dismissed this Overture without discussion. Against this decision Revs. Brentnall and Radcliff entered a Protest, which they refused to change to a Dissent, although given the opportunity to do so. This Protest, being a Protest against a decision of the Supreme Court of the Church, could not be received, and a Motion to this effect was agreed to. The Synod proceeded to deal with Revs. Brentnall and Radcliff by way of discipline. As a preliminary step, it was agreed to ask these ministers if they were prepared to desist from any further action of any kind in connection with spreading their views of Protest, which were contrary to the views of the Church. The purpose of the Synod in proceeding this way was to preserve the peace of the Church, but neither of these ministers would agree to so desist. The Synod drew up a charge against the ministers in which they were accused of acting in a way very disrespectful to the Synod, and to the Moderator's warning. Both ministers denied the charge at the Bar of the Synod. The Synod, having heard the answers of the parties at the Bar, and taking into account all the circumstances of the Case, decided to suspend them both from exercising the functions of the Holy Ministry for the period of one year, and from Church privileges for the same period. Both ministers acquiesced in this sentence.

At the 1981 Synod the Case came up again. These two ministers appeared, and showed their continued defiance of the Synod by refusing to promise that they would desist from any action of any kind in connection with spreading their views of Protest, as this was desired by the Synod to preserve the peace of the Church. The Synod therefore resolved to suspend both ministers "sine die".

This brief resumé of the events in this Case brings us to the stage when these ministers raised an Action in the Court of Session against the Synod, in which they sought that the Resolutions of 1980 and 1981, passing sentence of discipline upon them, were invalid and of no effect. They also sought damages. The Case was heard before the Lord Ordinary, Lord Dunpark, in June 1984. He issued his Judgment, in which he

dismissed the Case against the Church. An Appeal was taken against this Judgment. This Appeal was heard on 1st December, 1985, in the 2nd Division of the Court of Session before the Lord Justice Clerk, Lord Ross, and Lords Robertson and Brand. The result of this action was that the Appeal was upheld, and Lord Dunpark's Judgment overthrown. As the main Judgment in this Appeal is the Judgment of the Lord Justice Clerk, it could be right to make the following observations. On the question of Protest he made it clear that the Court of Session would not determine the question of whether or not a member of the church is entitled to "protest" against a decision of the Synod. In a historical reference to Protest he stated that it was a Protest which brought about the Disruption of 1843, and that the Free Presbyterian Church was initiated by a Protest in 1893.

The Lord Justice Clerk followed the long established rule of law that the Civil Courts cannot intervene in the internal affairs of a Church except on a very limited basis. To enable the ministers to succeed it was necessary to show that the Synod had acted outside its powers, or had otherwise been guilty of some breach of natural justice in dealing with the Cases which led to the sentence being passed on the ministers. In fact, the two issues before the Court became rather intermingled, and in the end of the day the Court, when approaching the matter, seemed to wish to determine whether what the ministers had done amounted, in effect, to contumacy, and that their conduct was such as to allow the Synod, acting within its powers, to discipline them. The Court determined that the Synod did not have a defence, because the conduct which the ministers had undoubtedly perpetrated at the meeting of the Synod was not, as the Court defined it, contumacious. In considering the definition of contumacy, the Lord Justice Clerk ruled that that was disobedience to a direct order which had been given, and which was disobeyed. In this case the two ministers had been asked a question — if they were willing to desist from spreading their views of Protest. They were unwilling to do so. On these facts, when the Lord Justice Clerk applied his definition of contumacy, he concluded that the conduct was not contumacious. If, however, the ministers had been given a direct command and had disobeyed that command, there is no doubt that even on this Court's ruling on contumacy, that conduct would have been contumacious. The fine line between what is contumacious and what is not, thus drawn by the Court, may be attractive to those used to determining sophisticated legal arguments: it is less than helpful where the Synod, as it had to do in this case, required to take decisions on the basis of what was immediately

happening before it. Certainly the Committee are of the opinion that the distinction which the Court sought to draw would never have occurred to a Court of christian brethren, such as the Synod, who were seriously concerned to preserve the peace of the Church. The Committee have been advised also that it is doubtful, at best, whether the Court were right in seeking to decide what was contumacy, as that may, as a matter of the Civil Law, really be a matter for the Synod.

The Church appealed the Decision to the House of Lords. They were advised that they had some reasonable prospects of overturning the decision of the Court of Session. However, the consequence of a successful appeal would not have been, in this case, that the matter was at an end, but the Case would have been sent back for reconsideration to the Court of Session, and there was no guarantee that the Court of Session would reach any different result the second time round. Accordingly, after due consideration and particular regard to the costs, your Committee decided that it was the sensible course to seek to resolve this matter by settlement with the ministers. After the Decision of the Court of Session was issued, and the House of Lords Appeal was abandoned, the ministers lodged documents radically increasing their claims for compensation from the Judge to £90,000 in the case of Rev. Radcliff, and £45,000 in the case of Rev. Brentnall. That these demands were much more than the ministers could reasonably expect to get was borne out by the fact that after negotiations Rev. Radcliff accepted £30,000 and Rev. Brentnall £17,500 as *ex gratia* settlements from the Church. The Court proceedings are now at an end.

The Committee consider that it is regrettable, and highly significant, that the Lord Justice Clerk and his colleagues, who held the Appeal in the Court of Session, did not approach the matter from the same standpoint as Lord Dunpark, the Lord Ordinary, who found in favour of the Church, and, in particular, did not consider anywhere in their Judgment the motivation of the Synod in carrying out this case of discipline. The motivation was the preserving of the peace of the Church, one of the great principles of Church Government. It can hardly be expected that a Civil Court could or would approach these matter from exactly the same point of view as a Church Court, and this demonstrates the error of taking such matters to a Civil Court. The Civil Court, with respect, must apply different principles to those which a Church Court is obliged, in conscience, to follow. The decision of the Civil Court does not, as such, affect the decision of the Synod as such, and, in the opinion of the Com-

mittee, the ministers remain suspended "sine die", and all that they have achieved by raising this Civil Action, contrary to their ordination promises, is a monetary payment from the church.

Rev. Donald Maclean, Clerk of Synod

Church Notes

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

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

Western: At Laide on 29th December at 11 a.m.

Committee Meetings (D.V.)

The following Committees will meet at Inverness Church:

Tuesday, 6th October

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

Medical Missionary for Kenya

The Foreign Missions' Committee wishes to hear from any person who would be interested in engaging in Medical Missionary work on its behalf in the Kisii District of Kenya. Enquiries to Clerk to the Committee, Rev. A. Murray, F.P. Manse, Lairg, Sutherland, IV27 4EH. Telephone 0549-2176.

Ordination and Induction of Rev. P. L. Roberts.

Applecross Free Presbyterian Church was filled to capacity by friends from as far afield as Toronto, Portree, Glasgow, Inverness and Lochinver, as well as from the Applecross area, when the Western Presbytery met there on the evening of 21st July, to ordain and induct Mr Peter Lloyd Roberts as the minister of the Applecross Congregation.

Several ministers from other Presbyteries were present and were associated with the Presbytery for the meeting.

Rev. J. W. Ross, the Moderator of Presbytery, presided and preached, his text being Galatians 6: 14, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." He pointed out that our desperate state and utter poverty as sinners are exposed by, and also made necessary the cross or death of Christ. He also showed that the cross is to be gloried in by among other things, relying upon it alone for salvation and by proclaiming it to a lost world.

The Moderator then gave an account of the steps in the Call to Mr Roberts. Following this, Mr Roberts, having answered the ordination questions and signed the Formula, was ordained to the office of the ministry by the imposition of hands and with solemn prayer led by the Moderator. He was then inducted to the pastoral charge of Applecross Congregation by the Moderator, in the name of the Presbytery, and received the right hand of fellowship from the members of Presbytery. Thereafter the new pastor was suitably addressed by Rev. A. E. W. MacDonald, and the congregation by Rev. A. N. MacPhail.

Two former ministers of the congregation, Revs. A. F. MacKay and A. Murray, spoke affectionately of the congregation and of some of its noted people of bygone days. They both stated their prayerful wish for the rich blessing of the Lord to rest on the congregation and their minister. (Mr MacKay was the first minister of the congregation, from 1935 to 1947; Rev. J. A. MacDonald, whom we regret was quite unable to be present, ministered there from 1947 to 1954; and Mr Murray was the third and last minister, from 1956 to 1984). Rev. Fraser MacDonald, Portree, who has been Mr Robert's pastor in recent years, expressed his cordial good wishes and his prayerful desire that Mr Robert's work among his flock would be greatly blessed. Good wishes were also conveyed by Rev. Malcolm MacInnes, Clerk of the Canadian Presbytery, from the friends in Canada, by Rev. A. Murray on behalf of the Northern Presbytery, the Rev. F. MacDonald for the Skye Presbytery, and by Rev. G. Macaskill on behalf of his brethren in the Southern Presbytery. Messages from other ministers were read by the Clerk.

The people had the opportunity of meeting and welcoming Mr Roberts after the service, when they shook hands with him at the church door. We then met together in the Community Centre, where a generous tea was kindly provided by the ladies and friends of the congregation.

The Presbytery warmly welcomes Mr Roberts into its midst and prays

that just as the Lord has opened a door for the Applecross Congregation to have another minister and for Mr Roberts to have this charge, so He would open the windows of heaven and pour down a blessing upon both pastor and people; such an overflowing blessing as would greatly strengthen His cause there and elsewhere.

Neil M. Ross, Clerk of Presbytery

Letter from the Queen

Readers of the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* will remember that in May the Synod sent a letter to the Queen signed by the Moderator, expressing its concern over the attendance by the Prince of Wales at a Roman Catholic service last year. The following is the reply received on behalf of Her Majesty.

(Rev. Donald MacLean, Clerk of Synod)

BUCKINGHAM PALACE

23rd July, 1987

Dear Mr Tallach,

I am commanded by The Queen to thank you for your letter about the attendance by The Prince of Wales at a Roman Catholic Service last year.

Her Majesty has taken note of the contents of your letter and of the concern you have expressed, and has asked me to pass on her appreciation of the assurance of your prayers.

Yours sincerely
Robert Fellowes

“This Word was made flesh, not by any change of His own nature or essence, not by a transubstantiation of the Divine nature into the human, not by ceasing to be what He was, but by becoming what He was not, in taking our nature to His own, to be His own, whereby He dwelt among us.”

Owen on the Person of Christ.

Acknowledgment of Donations

The General Treasurer, Mr Wm. D. Fraser, Room 7, Seafield House, Seafield Road, Inverness, LV1 1SJ, acknowledges the following donations with sincere thanks:-

Sustentation Fund: A. M. G., Harris, £50.

Home Mission Fund: A. M. G., Harris, £25.

Foreign Mission Fund: A. M. G., Harris, £12.50.

Organisation Fund: A. M. G., Harris, £12.50.

African Relief Fund: Gairloch Congregation, £30; Bonar Bridge Congregation, £50; Skye Friend, £25; Anon., Inverness Church plate, £50.

Trinitarian Bible Society: Envelope in plate, per Lairg Treasurer, £15; Friend, Raasay, £200 for Bibles to foreign countries.

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

Achmore: Envelope in collection plate at Communion, £10.

Barnoldswick: A friend, £50; Scottish wellwisher, £100; A friend — South Harris, £100; Anon., £5; Wellwisher — Glasgow, £35, all for Manse Building Fund.

Bonar Bridge: Envelope in plate, £30; Anon., £20, both for African Relief Fund.

Dingwall: Mrs M. Clark and family, £50, in memory of a loving Husband and Father.

Dumbarton: M. MacL., £10; Stornoway Friend, £20, both for Congr. Fund; Anon., Stornoway, £30; Anon., Stornoway, £10, last two for Sust. Fund; Mrs F. B., £10 for Mozambique Relief.

Dundee: R. J. M., £35, where most needed; Canadian Friends, £30, for Manse Expenses; Inverness Friend, £100, for Sabbath School expenses; all per Rev. D. C. M.

Flashadder: J. MacDonald, Dingwall, £10, for Flashadder Church Building Fund, per Rev. D. Nicolson; Mr and Mrs D. N. MacF., Edinbane, £30, for Church Funds, per Treasurer.

Fort William: Mr and Mrs D. MacL., £50; Anon., £10, for new church door, envelope in plate; Friend, Caol, £10; per Rev. J. A. M.; Friend, Inverness, £7, last two for Sust. Fund.

Gairloch: Anon., £1400; Anon., £20; Anon., £100; Anon., £100, in appreciation of adherence to A. V., last three per Rev. A. MacDonald, all for Congr. Purposes; Dutch friend, £20, for Sust. Fund, per Rev. A. MacDonald; Anon., £10; Anon., £20, both for African Relief Fund.

Greenock: Anon., £10, for Jewish and Foreign Missions; Anon., £10, towards Synod Proceedings; Anon., £50; Anon., £10; all per Rev. L. MacLeod.

Laide: Anon., £20; In memory of loved ones, £10; N. R., £13.22, all for Church Building; A. Ross, £25; Donation, £10.61, both for Car fund; Strathgarve resident, £15 for General Funds; Dutch friend, £10; Friend, Irvine, £1, both for Sust. Fund. **Correction:** In September Issue Anon., £100, should have read Anon., £1000.

Portree: Anon., £10 for Church Bus; Anon., £5 for T. B. S.; Anon., £5; Anon., £5; Anon., £8 for Italian Mission, all envelopes in plate; Friend, £20 for Sust. Fund per F. M.

Raasay: Friend, Portree £3 per J. M. MacLeod; Raasay friend, £20, both for Sust. Fund; Envelope in plate, £15 for Communion Exps.; Friend, Raasay, for Bibles to Foreign Countries, £200 for T. B. S.; Raasay friend, £20 for Home Mission; Envelope in plate, £20 for tapes.

South Harris: C. MacL., Rodel, £10 for Congr. Fund per D. MacDonald; A friend, Geocrab, £20 for African Relief Fund; Friend, Geocrab, £10 for Comm. Exps., both per Rev. J. MacLeod.

Stornoway: Friend, Seilebost, £5 for Petrol; M. & C., £40 for Door Collection; Miss K. A. MacLeod, The Cottage, Callanish, Isle of Lewis, £50 for Sust. Fund, all per Rev. J. MacLeod; Anon., £10 for Comm. Exps.

Strath, Skye: Dutch friends, £20 per Rev. H. I. MacKinnon; Envelope in plate, £4, both for Congr. Fund.