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The Whole Earth Filled with God's Glory

This was the prayer of the Psalmist: "Let the whole earth be filled with His glory." Immediately after the above petition is recorded it is said: "The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended." In the comprehensive petition which he had uttered he had reached the zenith of his desires so far as this world is concerned. What more could be asked for? What more could be conceived of than this — that the glory of the Lord would fill the whole earth? Here was a petition so comprehensive that it reached out to and encircled all the globe. This was the longing desire of the soul of the Psalmist that souls everywhere might be blessed from all kindreds and nations and tongues. We must ask the question then whether it is the purpose of the Lord ever to answer such a request as this. Or has the Psalmist asked beyond what it is the will of God to grant?

We know that many petitions are sent up to heaven which will never receive an answer, or at least will not be answered in the way envisaged by the petitioner. In offering up petitions to God we are required to ask for things agreeable to His will, otherwise our prayers are not God-honouring prayers. He has revealed in His Word what His will is so that we may know those things which it is legitimate to pray for. Some things we are very specifically directed to pray for. We are exhorted to pray for certain persons, such as kings and all in authority, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. We are taught by the Saviour to pray to the Father for the sending forth of labourers unto the harvest. The Saviour also said to His disciples: "Pray that ye enter not into temptation." We are commanded also to pray for one another,

whether in health, sickness or sorrow. Such prayers we have reason to believe will not go unanswered, of offered believably and in the Name of Christ, for whose sake all gracious blessings are bestowed. In offering such prayers we may look to the Holy Spirit to intercede for us, for we know not what to pray for as we ought, yet the Spirit helps our infirmities and makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. With regard to this we are told: "and He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

But this brings us back to the question as to whether God always hears prayer? We know assuredly that "He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer," and that "He heareth the prayer of the righteous." The petitions of the ungodly are another matter, however, for we are told that the Lord is far from the wicked, and we are further warned that "he that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." Clearly then, such prayers shall not even be heard, far less receive an answer from God. God will shut His ears to petitions from lying and deceitful lips. He will not regard such offerings. How many prayers are offered in carnal boldness. These prayers shall not be answered except in the way of judgment. So far as impenitent sinners are concerned who harden themselves in their sins, the time comes when He will hear them no longer. Of such He says: "Then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer; they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me." What a calamity that will be for impenitent sinners!

In David's petition, however, when he pleads, "Let the whole earth be filled with His glory," we have a desire expressed for the extension of Christ's Cause and kingdom in the world, so surely this petition will be heard in heaven and receive an answer in peace. In answering this question we must ask ourselves as to whether God has given any encouragement in His Word as to the extension of His kingdom world wide. The answer must be that God has given this encouragement, therefore we are warranted to pray for it and warranted to look for an answer to this petition. In Numbers 14: 21 God has stated most emphatically: "But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." And again in Isaiah 11: 9 He has declared: "For the earth shall be full of knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." This truth is reaffirmed in Habakkuk 2: 14, "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Here then are promises concerning the worldwide spreading of the kingdom of

Christ which we are fully warranted to plead with confident expectation that the Lord will fulfil these promises in His own good time.

While the Lord has His own set times for the fulfilment of the promises of His Word, yet we ought to look forward in faith to their fulfilment and rejoice in the certain fulfilment of them, just as Abraham looked forward to Christ's day and saw it and was glad. The Psalmist was encouraged to pray for it in His day, and so are we in our day. He could also speak prophetically of the fulfilment of the promise as though it had already taken place. What encouragement and enjoyment this must have afforded to his soul. May we be similarly encouraged and made to rejoice.

“Thou shalt arise, and mercy yet
Thou to Mount Sion shalt extend:
Her time for favour which was set,
Behold is now come to an end.

God in His glory shall appear,
When Sion He builds and repairs,
He shall regard and lend his ear
Unto the needy's humble prayer.”

Met. Ps. 102: 13, 16, 17 (2nd Version).

Prayer Meeting Address

by Rev. D. A. Macfarlane

“And they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.” Psalm 72: 16.

This is a covenant promise, a God-given promise given over to the soul of the Psalmist. In a suitable way it was fulfilled in the days of Solomon, although certainly it was a prophecy to be fulfilled in later days, and has not yet been fulfilled in its vast, holy, enriching fulness. I believe there were a great many godly people in the days of David and Solomon. Though Solomon fell away as he did, and brought much trouble on himself, yet we believe he was refined as silver is refined, and went home to Glory. At the prayer of the dedication of the temple, of which we read in 1 Kings, this promise got holy, spiritual fulfilment. They of the city of Jerusalem, which spiritually means the kingdom of grace here and of glory hereafter, flourished like grass of the earth in those days. The Great Day alone shall declare who they were. David also, although he

had his failings which caused him to mourn and brought tears in God's bottle which are recorded in His Book, yet in his day the Church, or spiritual city was flourishing. There were thousands of citizens in the kingdom of King Jesus. The Lord had His own Israel within the general Israel. They knew that although Christ had not yet come in the flesh, He would come according to His promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and also of the seed of David.

These citizens, like David and Solomon, put their seal to it that they had a plague within; as Solomon said in his prayer at the dedication of the temple, "Which shall know every man the plague of his own heart" and David, "My wounds do stink and are corrupt, my folly makes it so." They had the disease of unholiness and inability to believe the promises. May the Holy Spirit enable us to put our Amen to the confession, "I have a plague in my bosom. I need not go to my neighbour. I have it myself." If we are to prize the King of Zion we must by the Holy Spirit set to our seal that we are unholy, filthy, carnal, sensual, devilish. David and Solomon did that, and all their hope and confidence was placed in the Most High, and in His promise that the Son of God would come in the fulness of time. They had not the noonday light of revelation concerning the person and offices of Christ, but they did have the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. They knew that the Angel of the Covenant was no ordinary angel, but that He was set up from everlasting — the Angel that appeared in the bush, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, whose Name should endure for ever. They saw that all the attributes of the Most High kiss one another in the Redeemer. They saw Christ's day afar off and were glad.

However few in number the godly may be in any generation, when they are gathered together at last, they shall be as the blades of grass in number. They did flourish in the fear of God. The chief way to flourish spiritually is to fear God, which means loving Him and trembling at His Word, rejoicing as those of spoil that find great store. They are like the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley. Whatever the colour of this rose and lily, (it may, or may not be known), they are the handiwork of God, and the Redeemer in the womb of the virgin is the handiwork of God, beautiful for eternity, the emblem of purity, and of all that is glorious, and God-honouring. So you can use it carefully in that way. The Redeemer is looking through the lattice of the prophecies and types of the Old Testament, and through the Lord's Supper, the Gospels and Epistles of the New, revealing Himself secretly to the soul, making it healthy, like healthy grass. Ask that if the Holy Spirit dwells in you, He

will dwell more and more in you, that if you believe, you may believe more deeply.

Under the New Testament the city flourishes like grass of the earth. This points to the day of Pentecost. What liberty they got! Three thousand were turned from being briers into beautiful green grass. They confessed what a plague they were, and yet were enabled to look through the lattice of Psalm 16, and Psalm 110. In Psalm 16 they saw the King of Zion in His death and resurrection. In Psalm 110 they saw the Divine Melchisedec Priesthood. "Melech" means King and "Sedek" Righteousness. In Ephesus and in Corinth we find people who had been walking in immorality, in the horrible pit and in the miry clay, on their way to hell, and God the Holy Ghost brought them to Christ as their Divine Lord, Priest and Sacrifice, and therefore King. We cannot have the Mediator as King without having Him as Priest and then Christ as Prophet opening His mouth and saying, "God gave Me to be Priest and King," and those taught realise that they are fools. "Did you become a fool Peter, that you might be wise?" "Yes, Yes," And so with the others.

How many blades of grass were scattered over the western and eastern provinces? How many blades of the godly were there, and down to the present day? We cannot tell. The Lord knows all the citizens having the Redeemer as their Prophet, Priest and King. Though in the case of Peter fear got the upper hand, — and this can easily happen, for none of us likes to be mocked, yet the Lord says, "Write this, Peter, 'I am a witness of the sufferings of Christ and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed'." Where was the glory to be revealed? Inside Peter! What was the glory? A holy relish for Christ, holy lowliness, the love of God in his heart. There is no perfection here. Yet, the Lord's people are partakers of the glory to be revealed, because Christ is precious to them.

Though the Cause is low today, yet He has His own, and if it were the adorable will of the Most High, Christ could rapidly bring about a spring time of green grass all over the world. He could renovate souls with the invisible rays of the Holy Ghost, so that they might sing, "And in that purest light of Thine we clearly Light shall see," They would have the fear of God, peace of conscience, and be of the salt of the earth and at the same time mourning that they cannot fear or serve Him as they would like to do. If so, you have a little of the spirit of the Godly. Have you reason to believe that you are a citizen on your way to glory? If so, the Lord is looking at you, and I cannot grasp the significance of that. It is so easy to use a few words, and perhaps thinking we know a lot. Suppose

you say, "I am not a believer, but I would sort of like to be, in some sort of way. I fear I am not a believer, but, oh, I would like to be." If you have reason to believe your soul is getting a bottom on the solid masonry of the blood of Christ, and the finished work of the Redeemer, and your soul with all its wants is lying down sweetly, and tenderly, totally, lowly lying down on nothing but the blood of Christ; if you desire to be indebted to the Redeemer, and learn a little of Him; if you have all your hope and confidence set upon Him, — then we have reason to conclude that Christ is precious to you and that you are of the city which shall flourish as grass of the earth. Amen.

Saving Faith: An Exposition of Hebrews 11: 1

by Rev. Donald Nicolson, Glendale

(The following Paper was delivered at the Theological Conference held in Glasgow in December 1987).

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Hebrews 11: 1.

This verse is connected with the end of the preceding chapter where Paul exhorted the Hebrew believers to persevere in the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, and profession of the Gospel against temptations and trials, which they were experiencing on account of their adherence to, and constancy in the faith of the Gospel. Since there might be yet greater trials awaiting them, even striving unto blood or the giving of their lives for the faith of the Gospel, it was necessary for them to know more about the nature and efficacy of saving faith and also have proof that this faith was able to preserve their souls and enable them to persevere in the most fiery trials and most fierce persecutions that might befall them. This the Apostle does in bringing forward this description of faith in the first verse of the eleventh chapter and throughout the chapter, giving instances of its efficacy and its power in believers throughout the whole range of history even from the beginning of the world, beginning with Abel.

In endeavouring to expound this passage of Scripture, we may consider the following divisions:—

First: Saving Faith.

Second: The acts of Faith.

The faith mentioned here is justifying faith, though the Apostle does not treat or describe it here as justifying or of Justification but rather of

its operations in them who are justified. It is one of the principle graces imparted by the Holy Spirit at Regeneration. It is never alone, like dead faith, but is always accompanied by hope and love as it worketh by love and gives substance and subsistence to the things hoped for.

It may be appropriate here to refer to other faiths mentioned in the Scriptures which are not saving. There is historical faith which is a bare assent to the truth or accepts the Scriptures as one might accept any other history in which he is not personally interested. This faith leaves the heart without being suitably impressed, and is not accompanied by spiritual insight into the truth, neither does it convince the soul of the importance and demands of the truth. Agrippa had this faith for Paul in addressing him said: "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest." But his faith did not issue in true conversion or change of conduct. Evidently it was historical faith that Paul himself had in the days of his ignorance when he says that according to the righteousness of the law he was blameless. He had the letter of the law and believed it, otherwise he would not have been so diligent conforming his life to it, but this did not touch his conscience, neither did it convince him of sin.

Another false faith is temporary faith, which we have in the parable of the sower and other parts of Scripture. Unlike historical faith, here the word made an impression upon those who heard it, stirring up their affections and even receiving the word with joy, but did not endure the test of trials and tribulations. The cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches did choke the word so that there is no lasting fruit. The Saviour said that they believe for a while, and because they have no root in themselves they wither away.

The Scriptures also speak of what is called a miraculous faith. This is a persuasion wrought in the minds of man by the common operations of the Holy Spirit, that God would work a miracle by him or on his behalf. The Magicians in Egypt are an example, and the Saviour speaks of some who would be able to do wonderful works in His Name and cast out demons, and still be rejected. Paul also speaks of faith that would remove mountains which is not of the saving operations of the Spirit.

The faith mentioned in our text is of a different nature. It has its roots in regeneration and is the fruit of the Spirit, or is of the saving and effectual operations of the Spirit. Regeneration and faith cannot be separated. Faith is the hand or the eye of the "new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him who created him."

The Scripture bears testimony of man in his natural state. He is in darkness, impotent without strength, unable to believe of himself.

Therefore saving faith must be of the effectual operations of the Spirit, as the Apostle declares that his "speech and preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration, of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." And again, he would have the Ephesians know, what was "the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places." This is the origin of Justifying faith. It is wrought in the sinner by the same mighty power by which Christ was raised from the dead and set at the right hand of God in the heavenly places.

Satan and all the powers of darkness opposed the Resurrection of Christ with all their might. There was death to be abolished and the raising of One who was dead to life, and this could only be achieved by supernatural power. The sinner is dead in sin; death reigns over him, and he is in the power of the wicked one. And as Thomas Goodwin says: "A wolf will sooner marry a lamb or a lamb a wolf than ever the carnal heart will be subject to the law of God who was the ancient husband of it." Therefore it is evident, clear as daylight, that "except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." The Lord alone must bring about this change in the sinner and work faith in his heart, and He does this by the word of truth. Then the sinner believes and receives the word, not as the word of man, but as it is indeed the word of God, when it comes to him in power and in the Holy Ghost. The authority, faithfulness and veracity of God revealed in the Scriptures evidence themselves to his faith by the light of the truth itself which is the word that shines in a dark place, the entrance of which gives light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. All light whether external or internal, not only discovers objects that are indiscernible in the darkness, but discovers itself to those who have eyes to see. The sun when it is shining is seen in its own light and we need no evidence or argument to convince us that the sun does exist and that its light is real. It is in His light that we see light. It is through the eye of faith, or the eyes of our understanding being enlightened. God gives us eyes to see, then with the eye of faith we behold the glory of Christ, "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," while to the unenlightened eye He is "as a root out of a dry ground."

It is said that "all men have not faith," and it was in connection with this that a Puritan wrote: "The Scriptures abound with commands and

cautions for our utmost diligence in our search and inquiry whether we are made partakers of Christ or not, or whether His Spirit dwells in us or not, which argues both the difficulty of attaining assured confidence herein, as also the danger in our being mistaken, and yet the certainty of a good issue upon the diligent and regular use of means to that purpose."

Secondly, we may consider the acts of faith which are firstly the substance of things hoped for, and secondly the evidence of things not seen.

There is a mutual relation between hope and faith in that hope springs from faith. Faith believes, receives and takes hold of the promise, while hope expects the fulfilment of the blessing therein.

The "things" in this portion of scripture which are said to be hoped for, are all the blessings that God has promised to those who believe, even all that pertain to grace here and to glory hereafter, and we have no right or warrant to hope for anything that God had not promised. The believer exercises hope in this world in expecting future and renewed grace as he also does unto all things of future glory. Hope in those things that are promised to be fulfilled at the set time, has been the strength and comfort to believers under great trials and suffering at various times, as we learn from the experience and history of believers in all ages. Things hoped for, though real and true are at a distance and future, and it is in these circumstances that there is the necessity of the assistance and work of faith. It acts and operates in believers so as to give real subsistence in their mind and soul to those things hoped for, though still at a distance. The divine promises that are given to the church of God in this world contain all the blessings of grace and glory for all God's people, as these blessings are stored in them by Divine institution, hence they are called the "treasures of consolation." All this is the object of hope but it is faith that gives them a being in the mind. Faith does not create these things but it brings them into the mind to be present with us, and it gives them a subsistence in the soul so as to give us experience of their fulness, even the treasury and fulness of grace that God has laid up for us in the promises.

Faith also in its actings towards the promises is said to receive them as, for example, those mentioned in the thirteenth verse of this chapter, they are said to have received the promises and having seen them afar off they were persuaded of them and embraced them. It is in this way that faith gives the object hoped for, though still future, a present reality in the soul as if it were already in possession of it. Another aspect of the actings of faith is to receive the word as it is indeed the word of God and in this

way receiving Christ Himself and His atonement into our mind and soul to abide there. This is what is meant by "Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith." It is to have spiritual meditation upon His Person, His work of Atonement, His love, and His excellencies, and in this way that he may have a constant place in our thoughts and affections.

Faith gives the soul a taste of the grace and goodness of God in the promises as it incorporates itself with them and makes them to be present and to subsist in the minds of believers. It is in this manner that the word becomes meat and food to their souls when they experience the nourishing virtue of spiritual things and which could not be if these things were not present with them. Christ said that He was the bread of life, the bread that came down from heaven, that His flesh was meat indeed and His blood drink indeed. This is the life of faith not in a carnal manner, as the Jews understood it, but in a spiritual manner. In eating, when food is digested it is turned into the very substance of the body, the blood and spirits, so it is spiritually by the work and actings of saving faith as it is exercised with regard to the word and the promises.

Faith also worketh by love in discovering the glory and excellency of those things hoped for, and gives them a subsistence in the minds of believers. In this exercise faith sets love at work upon these excellent objects till love engages all the affections and heart and the mind is filled with thoughts about them and desires after them. It is also faith that brings to the heart an experience of the power of spiritual things or of the Gospel as it is the power of God unto salvation in transforming the soul and conforming believers to the image of Christ. Saving faith gives such a living reality to these things that the impression made is so real that the soul is changed into the image of God which we have lost by sin.

Faith moreover gives subsistence to the things hoped for in the souls of believers by communicating unto them the first fruits of the promise, namely, the Spirit of grace as He is the earnest to believers for present and future grace in this world and glory in the world to come. The Holy Spirit is received by faith and wherever He is there is the persuasion in the mind of things hoped for, and of the faithfulness and certainty of their fulfilment.

It is further said in the description and actings of faith that it is the evidence of things not seen. Things unseen and hoped for are much the same though there are some things unseen which are not the object of hope, such as the creation of the worlds mentioned in this chapter. But the things hoped for and the things unseen are both spiritual and heavenly things and are all related to our salvation and redemption. John Owen

says: "The glory of our religion is that it depends on and is resolved into invisible things. These are more excellent and glorious than anything that sense can behold or reason discover." The word "evidence" here is the same word that is translated reproof in II Timothy 3: 16, "all Scripture is profitable for reproof," which means "to convince" or "to demonstrate", so that faith convinces the mind of the reality and certainty of spiritual and Divine things.

It is said of unbelievers: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Therefore spiritual and invisible things are unreal and uncertain to him. He believes only what he sees with the eyes of the body, but the things that are "unseen and eternal" are demonstrated by faith to the minds of believers in such a manner that they are persuaded and convinced in their own minds of all that God has revealed in His word, and they cannot do otherwise but believe them notwithstanding all the efforts of Satan, unbelief and all opposition to the contrary.

The natural man may have some knowledge of God from the light of nature and creation as the Apostle declares in the first chapter of Romans, where we read: "that the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead. But this knowledge of God and of His power does not dispel the darkness and unbelief that is in the hearts of men, neither does it silence all opposition against the truth and invisible things. This knowledge and light in the understanding is different from the evidence and demonstration of faith in that it is derived from the "things that are made," and does not impart to man light and knowledge of spiritual and heavenly things; while faith mixes and incorporates itself with the truth and promises, the invisible and eternal things revealed therein, demonstrates and convinces the mind of their reality and excellency, as it is said of Moses that "he endured as seeing Him who is invisible."

Therefore faith is the only way or means by which we can live to God and obtain eternal life. It gives substantiality to the things hoped for, conviction and infallible evidence of the reality and existence of those things that are invisible. It silences unbelief and all opposition to the contrary, so also all the temptations, devices and darts of Satan. Hence the design of the Apostle in this part of the Epistle in the description which he gives of saving faith, was to encourage and strengthen the Hebrew Christians to persevere in their profession of the Christian faith, and it was also to

this end that he declared in this chapter the effects and power of faith in the lives of believers from the beginning of the world and proves that it will not be different with those who follow the same path.

Their faith already gave the Hebrew Christians evidence and conviction "knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better and enduring substance" when they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods. It discovered to them that the worst of what they had to undergo in this world did bear no proportion to the "glory that shall be revealed in us." May it be said of us when there is time for us no more: "these all died in faith."

"Are You Holy?"

by J. C. Ryle

(Continued from page 20)

"Holiness without which no man shall see the Lord," Hebrews 12: 14.

II. Let me try, in the next place, *to show you some reasons why holiness is so important.*

Can holiness save us? Can holiness put away sin, — cover iniquities, — make satisfaction for transgressions, — pay our debt to God? No! not a whit. God forbid that I should ever tell you so. Holiness can do none of these things. The brightest saints are all unprofitable servants. Our purest works are no better than filthy rags, when tried by the light of God's holy law. The white robe which Jesus offers, and faith puts on, must be our only righteousness, — the name of Christ our only confidence, — the Lamb's book of life our only title to heaven. With all our holiness we are no better than sinners. Our best things are stained and tainted with imperfection. They are all more or less incomplete, — wrong in the motive, or defective in the performance. By the deeds of the law shall no child of Adam ever be justified. "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephes. 2: 8, 9.)

Why then is holiness so important? Why does the Apostle say, "Without it no man shall see the Lord"? Let me set before you a few reasons.

For one thing, we must be holy, because *the voice of God in Scripture plainly commands it*. The Lord Jesus says to His people, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 5: 20). "Be

ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matt. 5: 48.) Paul tells the Thessalonians, "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." (1 Thess. 4: 3.) And Peter says, "As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation. Because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy." (1 Peter 1: 15, 16.) "In this," says Leighton, "law and Gospel agree."

We must be holy, because this is one grand *end and purpose for which Christ came into the world*. Paul writes to the Corinthians, "He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again." (2 Cor. 5: 15.) And to the Ephesians, "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it." (Ephes. 5: 25, 26.) And to Titus, "He gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." (Titus 2: 14). In short, to talk of men being saved from the guilt of sin, without being at the same time saved from its dominion in their hearts, is to contradict the witness of all Scripture. Are believers said to be elect? — it is "through sanctification of the Spirit." Are they predestinated? — it is "to be conformed to the image of God's Son." Are they chosen? — it is "that they may be holy." Are they called? — it is "with a holy calling." Are they afflicted? — it is that they may be "partakers of holiness." Jesus is a complete Saviour. He does not merely take away the guilt of a believer's sin, He does more, — He breaks its power.

We must be holy, because this is the *only sound evidence that we have a saving faith in our Lord Jesus Christ*. The Twelfth Article in our Church says truly, that "Although good works cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgment; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith; insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by its fruits." James warns us there is such a thing as dead faith, — a faith which goes no further than the profession of the lips, and has no influence on a man's character. True saving faith is a very different kind of thing. True faith will always show itself by its fruits, — it will sanctify, — it will work by love, — it will overcome the world, — it will purify the heart. I know that people are fond of talking about death-bed evidences. They will rest on words spoken in the hours of fear, and pain, and weakness, as if they might take comfort in them about the friends they lose. But I am afraid in 99 cases out of a hundred such evidences are not to be depended on. I suspect men generally die just as they have lived. The only safe evidence that you are one with

Christ, and Christ in you, is a holy life. They that live unto the Lord are generally the only people who die in the Lord. If we would die the death of the righteous, let us not rest in slothful desires only, let us seek to live His life. It is a true saying of Traill's, "That man's state is naught, and his faith unsound, that finds not his hopes of glory purifying to his heart and life."

We must be holy, because this is the *only proof that we love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity*. This is a point on which He has spoken Himself most plainly in the 14th and 15th chapters of John. "If ye love Me keep my commandments." "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me." "If a man love Me he will keep my saying." "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." Plainer words than these it would be difficult to find, and woe to those who neglect them! Surely that man must be in an unhealthy state of soul who can think of all that Jesus suffered, and yet cling to those sins for which that suffering was undergone. It was sin that wove the crown of thorns, — it was sin that pierced our Lord's hands, and feet, and side, — it was sin that brought Him to Gethsemane and Calvary, to the cross, and to the grave. Cold must our hearts be if we do not hate sin, and labour to get rid of it, though we may have to cut off the right hand, and pluck out the right eye in doing it.

We must be holy, because this is the *only sound evidence that we are true children of God*. Children in this world are generally like their parents. Some, doubtless, are more so, and some less, — but it is seldom indeed that you cannot trace a kind of family likeness. And it is much the same with the children of God. If men have no likeness to the Father in heaven, it is vain to talk of their being His sons. If we know nothing of holiness we may flatter ourselves as we please, but we have not got the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, — we are dead, and must be brought to life again, — we are lost, and must be found. As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they, and they only, are the sons of God. We must show by our lives the family we belong to, — we must let men see by our good conversation that we are indeed the children of the Holy One, or our sonship is but an empty name. "Say not," says Gurnall, "that thou hast royal blood in thy veins, and art born of God, except thou canst prove thy pedigree by daring to be holy."

We must be holy, because this is the *most likely way to do good to others*. We cannot live to ourselves only in this world. Our lives will always be doing either good or harm to those who see them. They are a silent sermon which all can read. It is sad indeed when they are a sermon

for the devil's cause, and not for God's. I believe that far more is done for Christ's kingdom by the holy living of believers, than we are at all aware. There is a reality about such living which makes men feel, and obliges them to think. It carries a weight and influence with it which nothing else can give. It makes religion beautiful, and draws men to consider it, like a lighthouse seen afar off. The day of judgment will prove that many besides husbands have been won "*without the word*" by a holy life. You may talk to people about the doctrines of the Gospel, and few will listen, and still fewer understand. But your life is an argument that none can escape. There is a meaning about holiness which not even the most unlearned can help taking in. They may not understand justification, but they can understand charity.

And I believe there is far more harm done by unholy and inconsistent Christians than we are at all aware. Such men are among Satan's best allies. They pull down by their lives what ministers build with their lips. They cause the chariot wheels of the Gospel to drive heavily, they supply the children of this world with a never ending excuse for remaining as they are. "I cannot see the use of so much religion," said an irreligious tradesman not long ago: "I observe that some of my customers are always talking about the Gospel, and faith, and election, and the blessed promises and so forth; — and yet these very people think nothing of cheating me of pence and half-pence, when they have an opportunity. Now if religious persons can do such things, I do not see what good there is in religion." Oh, brethren, I blush to be obliged to write such things, I fear that Christ's name is too often blasphemed because of the lives of Christians. Let us take heed lest the blood of souls should be required at our hands. From murder of souls by inconsistency and loose walking, good Lord deliver us! Oh, for the sake of others, if for no other reason, let us strive to be holy!

We must be holy, *because our present comfort depends much upon it*. We cannot be too often reminded of this. We are sadly apt to forget that there is a close connection between sin and sorrow, holiness and happiness, sanctification and consolation. God has so wisely ordered it, that our well-being and our well-doing are linked together. He has mercifully provided, that even in this world it shall be man's *interest* to be holy. Our justification is not by works, — our calling and election are not according to our works — but it is vain for any one to suppose that he will have a lively *sense* of his justification, or an *assurance* of his calling, so long as he does not strive to live a holy life. A believer may as soon expect to feel the sun's rays upon a dark and cloudy day, as to feel

strong consolation in Christ, while he does not follow Him fully. When the disciples forsook the Lord and fled, they escaped danger, but they were miserable and sad: when shortly after they confessed Him boldly before men, they were cast into prison and beaten, but we are told, "They rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name." (Acts 5: 41). Oh, for our own sakes, if there were no other reason, let us strive to be holy! He that follows Jesus most fully, will always follow Him most comfortably.

Lastly, we must be holy, *because without holiness on earth we should never be prepared to enjoy heaven*. Heaven is a holy place. The Lord of heaven is a Holy Being. The angels are holy creatures. Holiness is written on everything in heaven. The book of Revelation says expressly, "There shall in nowise enter into it, anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie." (Rev. 21: 27.)

Brethren, how shall we ever find a place in heaven, if we die unholy? Death works no change. The grave makes no alteration, Each will rise again with the same character in which he breathed his last. Where will our place be if we are strangers to holiness now?

Suppose for a moment that you were allowed to enter heaven without holiness. What would you do? What possible enjoyment could you feel there? To which of all the saints would you join yourself, and by whose side would you sit down? Their pleasures are not your pleasures, their tastes not your tastes, their character not your character. How could you possibly be happy, if you had not been holy on earth?

Now perhaps you love the company of the light and the careless, the worldly-minded and the covetous, the reveller and the pleasure-seeker, the ungodly and the profane. There will be none such in heaven.

Now perhaps you think the saints of God too strict, and particular, and serious. You rather avoid them. You have no delight in their society. There will be no other company in heaven.

Now perhaps you think praying, and Scripture reading, and singing praise, dull and melancholy, and stupid work, — a thing to be tolerated now and then, but not enjoyed. You reckon the Sabbath a burden, and a weariness; you could not possibly spend more than a small part of it in worshipping God. But remember, heaven is a never-ending Sabbath. The inhabitants thereof rest not day or night, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty," and singing the praise of the Lamb. How could an unholy man find pleasure in occupation such as this?

Think you that such a one would delight to meet David, and Paul, and John, after a life spent in doing the very things they spoke against?

Would he take sweet counsel with them, and find that he and they had much in common? Think you, above all, that he would rejoice to meet Jesus, the Crucified One, face to face, after cleaving to the sins for which He died, after loving His enemies, and despising His friends? Would he stand before Him with confidence, and join in the cry, "This is our God: we have waited for Him. We will be glad, and rejoice in His salvation"? Think you not rather that the tongue of an unholy man would cleave to the roof of his mouth with shame, and his only desire would be to be cast out? He would feel a stranger in a land he knew not, a black sheep amidst Christ's holy flock. The voice of Cherubim and Seraphim, the songs of Angels and Archangels, and all the company of heaven, would be a language he could not understand. The very air would seem an air he could not breathe.

Brethren, I know not what you may think, but to me it does seem clear that heaven would be a miserable place to an unholy man. It cannot be otherwise. People may say, in a vague way, "they hope to go to heaven," but they do not consider what they say. There must be a certain meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light. Our hearts must be somewhat in tune. To reach the holiday of glory, we must pass through the training school of grace. Brethren, you must be heavenly-minded, and have heavenly tastes, in the life that now is, or else you will never find yourselves in heaven, in the life to come.

Be Not Deceived

by Rev. Wm. MacLean

Our greatest danger in the matter of the soul and of eternity is self-deception. We have a heart that is "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." Jer. 17: 9. That is God's verdict on the human heart. "Out of the heart of men," said Christ, "proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man." Mark 7: 21-23. What else can be expected from a heart of so depraved a nature but deceit and deception? Along with a deceitful heart, there is the "old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world," Rev. 12: 9, and if grace prevent not we shall succumb to his temptations and delusions. A deceitful heart and a deceiving devil will cause us to make light of sin and to fondly hope that we may live in sin and die in

peace. "Be not deceived" is the warning of Him who cannot lie, "neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the Kingdom of God." 1 Cor. 6: 9-10. "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh adomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life," Rev. 21: 27. What a black catalogue of sins, and alas, how common! A deceitful heart and false teachers may assure us that all shall be well, but "Be not deceived." "Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them." Eph. 5: 6-7. "The vengeance of eternal fire," Jude 7, the holy wrath of the Almighty in a lost eternity is the end of these things.

How absolutely hopeless would be the case of mankind but for the grace of God! As soon may the Ethiopian change his skin and the leopard his spots than for man by efforts of his own to eradicate the evil propensities of his heart and the sinful practices of his life. Resolutions and expedients, however, plausible, having their source in the wisdom of man, and their success in energy and endurance on his part, will prove futile and fatal. Frustration and despair will be the result. "Be not deceived." Salvation is not of works but of grace. "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." Eph. 2: 8-9. The infinite and eternal merit of Christ's one sacrifice for sin on Calvary's Cross, to the exclusion of human merit which is non-existent as far as the salvation of the soul is concerned — for "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" — is alone sufficient to redeem and to renew our guilty sin laden souls. "If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Heb. 9: 13-14. There is no solace for a guilty conscience but in the blood of Christ. There is no solvent for the power of sin but the blood of Christ. "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." 1 John 1: 7. It is the "fountain opened" by God Himself "for sin and for uncleanness." Zach. 13: 1. "Be not deceived" cleansing and pardon are not to be found in any fountain of man's device. They are not to be found in the confessional box nor in penance. They are not to be found in works of righteousness on our part. They are gratuitously bestowed by the Lord Jesus Christ through His Word and Spirit. "Him hath God

exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." Acts 5: 31.

Apart from the Word of God we shall inevitably fail of these blessings for "faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God." Rom. 10: 17. The word of God as applied by the Holy Spirit is the seed of regeneration in the soul. The Lord's people are "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever." 1 Peter 1: 23. A regenerate soul is a renewed soul, a pardoned soul and a soul at peace with God. The Word of God is the bread that sustains the divine life in the regenerate soul. It is through the Word that the regenerate soul is sanctified, purified and prepared for glory. "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." John 17: 17.

"Be not deceived" by infidel attacks on the authenticity and divine authority of God's Word. "Let God be true and every man a liar." "Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away." Luke 21: 33. If saved by free and sovereign grace we shall be, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament in their entirety will be to us the living Word of the living God. If they are not so it is because we are still under the deception and power of sin.

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word." Ps. 129: 9. "Search the Scriptures" is Christ's own command. Search them prayerfully, for they contain the "pearl of great price." All the blessings that sinful man stands in need of are treasured up in the volume of the book. "Thy words were found" said the prophet of old, "and I did eat them and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart." Jer: 15: 16.

Gracious Desires

by Rev. J. A. Macdonald, Fort William

Nothing else but God-honouring desires proceeded from the heart and soul of our first parents while they remained in a state of innocence. How long that continued no one can say with accuracy. We have reason to believe that Satan did not leave them long undisturbed.

In this way we have much need that the Holy Spirit would teach us to heed Christ's counsel to others: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

God was well pleased with His servant David, that there was in his

heart the blessed desire to build a house for the Lord. So, too, it was in the heart of Abraham to offer Isaac, if necessary. We read that "Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt-offering in the stead of his son." Gen. 22: 13. Indeed this was a type of the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

How David rejoiced in God's omniscience, and so should we. He had to say:

"O, Lord, all that I do desire
is still before thine eye;
and of my heart the secret groans
not hidden are from thee."

Ps. 38: 9.

Oh, what delight God took in Solomon's gracious desires or wishes, as he asked for Heavenly wisdom rather than and above all the things which this world can afford. Were he left to himself, he would have preferred a long life with much riches.

The Apostle Paul's desire to be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness, must of necessity be ours if we are to be among the Redeemed when the Heavens are no more, and the dispersed of Israel shall be gathered into one. Ps. 147: 2. This is surely as if the Apostle Paul were thinking of the church in the Song of Solomon when her beloved said unto her, "O, my dove, that art in the cleft of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely." Notice God's great delight in her countenance as well as in her voice. This, together with her many longings to be washed in the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness was precious to Him.

The Church of old sought the Lord above all things. When He withheld His countenance from her, even for a little, she was cast down both in soul and heart. "By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought Him, but I found Him not." Her beloved soon came to her relief. "It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found Him whom my soul loveth. . . ." That was a morning without clouds for her.

When the Lord hid his face from his servant Job he was cast down also. Just like David when he said:

O why art thou cast down, my soul?
why in me so dismay'd?
Trust God, for I shall praise him yet,
his count'nance is mine aid.

Ps. 42: 5

The gracious wish of the former is often that of the Lord's people. "Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; when His candle shined upon my head. . . ." Job 29: 2, 3. Yet he could recall former times when he said: "The blessing of him that was ready to perish, came upon me" — "I put on righteousness and it clothed me," Job 29: 13, 14. Let us be very thankful to the Lord that we can recollect a time when we too sat under the preached Gospel, and felt as if the dew of Heaven were descending upon our souls. As the church was saying: "He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love."

If God spoke to you once in love and kindness, your chief desire and longing of soul is to hear His voice again:

"God hath it spoken once to me,
yea, this I heard again,
That power to Almighty God
alone doth appertain."

Ps. 62: 11

"His mouth is most sweet," said His beloved Church of old. (Is ro mhillis a bheul).

Rest assured, dear friend, that as sure as God hath spoken kindly and faithfully to you while in the valley of Baca, He shall do likewise on the great day of judgment. This is obvious from what He will say then: "I was a stranger and ye took me in, naked and you clothed me." But to the wicked it shall be the opposite. David's expressed wish was: "Oh that I had wings like a dove," so that he could fly away to leave his troubles behind him. However, this was not granted him, but what was infinitely better — supernatural grace to acquiesce in God's will, thus drinking his cup to the very dregs. Many of the Lord's people can well understand his plight. Paul's heart-felt wish was: "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better." He had, at the same time, peace in his conscience that he had fought a good fight and kept the faith intact.

Blessed be the Lord that it is written: "A bruised reed shall he not break and the smoking flax shall he not quench." The desire to bear His yoke while yet young must be of the Holy Spirit. Samuel when very young had this very gracious desire after God: "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." The late Rev. A. Beaton, minister of Gairloch, told me this when we were students together: "I cannot recollect a time in my life when God was not striving with me." The writer could say likewise. To honour God was the desire which (so to speak) overflowed the heart of Paul while yet a newly converted man: "Lord what wilt thou have me to

do?" Thus Paul was fully occupied in his good Master's service, until the Lord placed that crown of glory upon his head, which he shall bear eternally, unlike earthly crowns. To the feeblest of the flock He is still saying: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." In conclusion, let us hear God's warning: "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

Obituaries

Mr Alexander MacLennan, Elder and Missionary, South Harris

Alexander MacLennan was born in South Harris on the 16th day of February 1905, and departed this life on the 27th day of July 1987. Apart from the last few years of his life the period of his sojourning in time was spent in the Outer Isles and the far greater part of it in the place of his birth and upbringing.

We have no information with regard to his spiritual experience in passing from death to life. His contemporaries and fellow-labourers have all departed and we could find no-one that was able to enlighten us. But if we know not what manner of experience he passed through at the beginning of his Christian course we know, from the consistency of his life, that he was indeed among the living and a true-hearted servant and follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. He publicly professed his faith in Christ at the August communion in Finsbay in 1935. The following year he was ordained as a Deacon. In 1945 he was appointed a full-time missionary and in that capacity began his labours in Breasclete but within two years he was transferred to Breanish, in the parish of Uig. At the beginning of 1949 he returned to South Harris and for the next 32 years he was to labour there until he finally returned at the beginning of 1981. After the death of Peter MacLeod, Strond, in 1949, Alexander was appointed Session Clerk having been earlier that year elected to the office of elder. He faithfully performed the duties of this office over many years.

In 1936 he was married to Annie MacLeod, also from South Harris, and their home in Finsbay was to become far-famed for its hospitality, especially at communion seasons. There, these two eminent Christian men Edward Morrison and John MacInnes were often found and in the company of their host the brotherly love which bound the three of them to one another was something good and pleasant to behold. They were men united in heart and unwavering in their attachment to the Church

which they served and all that it stood for. Alexander MacLennan performed his duties, both as an elder and as a missionary, as to the Lord and with His glory in view. Always willing and dependable he, on week-day and Sabbath, was found unfailingly giving attention to the particular duties allotted to him. He was held in the highest esteem by the people of Harris and the great day shall declare what fruit followed his diligent sowing of the good seed of the Word of God. We believe that he has entered into the joy of His Lord with the commendation, "Well done, good and faithful servant." Toward the end of his life he was afflicted by arteriosclerosis, a progressive disease which led to his memory being much impaired as far as the ordinary affairs of life were concerned. It was, however, evident that he was not forgetful of the Word of God stored in his memory over the years and which had moulded his Christian character. After having been tenderly and devotedly cared for by his two daughters, each in turn, for as long as they were able, he was admitted into hospital in Inverness and it was there that he passed away. His remains were taken to Harris and interred beside those of his beloved helpmeet in life and there together they now rest until that trumpet sounds which shall awaken them out of sleep but only to enter, body and soul united, into the Kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world. To his family we extend our sincere sympathy.

Mrs Alexander MacLennan, Finsbay, South Harris

Mrs MacLennan was a highly intelligent Christian lady who, in her own sphere, laboured much to advance the interests of Christ's cause and kingdom. In our view, she was a fine example of a mother in Israel. As a young woman, she was brought to that knowledge of the truth which brings life eternal to the soul through the ministry of the Rev. D. N. MacLeod who left Harris for Ullapool in 1925. She loved and revered him as an ambassador of Christ. Mr MacLeod preached at the opening of new meeting house in Kintail from the text, "Lord, I have loved the habitation of thine house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth." and it was on that occasion, it appears, that she came to realise for the first time that she had an immortal soul in need of salvation. How and when she came to have an assured hope that that salvation was hers is not known. Mrs MacLennan suffered much, and over many years, from arthritis and was often in great pain. She bore her affliction with exemplary Christian fortitude and patience. On the 11th day of July 1980, she finished her course here and entered the land where the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick.

Mr John MacLean, Elder and Missionary, South Harris

John MacLean's end came with startling suddenness on the 23rd day of May, 1982. The community was stunned but we venture to say that there was not a single individual within it who did not believe that John was a man of God and that his soul, on its departure, passed immediately into glory. His light shone too clearly before men for it to be otherwise.

John was born in Glasgow in 1909. His father was from Northton and his mother a native of that city. When he was but one year of age his father died and about seven years afterward his mother remarried. Her second husband was a Roman Catholic and John's earliest recollections of things spiritual were associated with the services and ceremonies of the Church of Rome. But he was, in the holy Providence of God, to be brought out of the atmosphere. His mother having also died, he and his sister were brought home to Harris by an uncle in 1918 to be brought up in the home of their grandparents in Northton. These grandparents, Mr and Mrs John MacLean, did not make a public profession but it was evident to all around them that they were truly God fearing. By precept and example John was thus to be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

On attaining manhood John MacLean seems to have been quite unconcerned about the salvation of his soul and for many years was quite at home in the companionship of the world. He was, however, always attentive on the means of grace. His spiritual awakening apparently took place when he was in his mid-thirties but we regret that it is not possible to record his soul-experience at the time. We know from what he used to say himself that he much loved and respected the Rev. D. J. MacAskill who was then the minister in South Harris and that he was very attached to the late Peter MacLeod, Strond, who was a missionary there at the time and frequently kept the services in Northton. After, we believe, much soul-searching he came forward to the Lord's Table for the first time in March 1953. John was well-endowed intellectually and his ability to express himself in Gaelic or English soon came to be appreciated. His first attempts at keeping services were within a labourers' camp at a Ross-shire Hydro Electric Scheme site. He had a very retentive memory and even then his knowledge of the Scriptures and the ease with which he could quote verses and passages from them must have been impressive. His mind was steeped in the Truth. Around 1960 he was appointed a full-time missionary and took up his duties in Broadford but after one year in that place he was transferred to Portree where the congregation was at the time without a settled pastor. There, he faithfully and acceptably kept

the services for the next five years. Thereafter he was to labour in Raasay for a further period of five years before returning to his home in South Harris where he was still in harness at the time that the summons came. John's labours as a lay-preacher were not, however, confined to the places mentioned. From Assynt to London he was well-known and wherever he went his services were always appreciated.

As an elder he took an active part in ecclesiastical affairs. He loved the Church and passionately defended all it stood for and it was to be expected that his faithfulness in this connection would expose him to the reproach of men and so it was. John's courage, however, matched his convictions. He is beyond all trouble now, within the bounds of the better country, even a heavenly, and with the Master who he loved to speak of here in time and served so devotedly.

To his sister we anew extend our sympathy. "The memory of the just is blessed."

Mr Norman MacKay, Elder, Geocrab

Norman MacKay was born in Geocrab in 1903. His father was an upright, highly respected man; his mother, also from the same area, was from early womanhood a member in full communion in the South Harris congregation. Norman was very circumspect from his youth and highly respected in the community long before he made a public profession of his faith. He served that community as its representative on the Inverness County Council for a number of years and we may believe that he did his utmost in an honourable, lawful way to advance the interests of the people.

It was not until 1956 that he came before the Session to be received as a member in full communion but there is reason to believe that the root of the matter was to be found in him for many years before that step was taken by him. He was not a man given to speaking of his personal spiritual experiences and we are unable to record here anything concerning the circumstances and time that he underwent a saving change. At the same time we do know from his public utterances, especially when speaking at fellowship meetings, that he was deeply taught of the Holy Spirit with regard to that good work in the soul of which He is the author and which once begun is brought to perfection. Norman was well read and had a thorough intellectual, experimental knowledge of the foundation doctrines of the faith. He was thus well-fitted to take services when called upon to do and in the circumstances in which he was placed this was very frequently. Even when beset by infir-

mity he still endeavoured on Sabbath and weekday to serve His Master in this way.

In 1931, Norman was married to Mary MacLeod, a native of Diriclete. She predeceased him by a number of years.

In his latter years he was afflicted by a progressive disease which affected his mobility and speech. He spent considerable periods of time with his daughter in Stornoway where he received loving care and attention. It was however in his own home at Geocrab that he departed this life on the 2nd day of October, 1985. We believe that for him that was a blessed departure, "absent from the body" only to be "present with the Lord". To the members of his family which survive him and more especially his three daughters and only son we anew express our sympathy.

J. M.

Mission News from Zimbabwe

When we heard the very sad news of the deaths of 16 people on a Mission Station, 20 miles south of Bulawayo, we felt impelled to contact our own people. This tragic happening is another indication of how prayer should be ascending for missionaries there, and elsewhere, who are exposed to the malice of wicked men.

When speaking to Ingwenya we learned that Miss Macaulay was in Harare, 300 miles away, marking Examination Papers. This is a yearly assignment by request of the Education Department. Miss MacLennan, after a very strenuous two year period, teaching in the John Tallach Secondary School, attending to the school clinic, and other such duties, is preparing to leave on furlough when school closes. Mr William Campbell is flying to the U.K. on the 18th of December, leaving Mr Mziya as Treasurer.

The weather has been extremely hot, and although there have been a few refreshing showers, the continuous downpours so necessary for a good harvest had not as yet fallen.

It would appear that never has there been such an opportunity for preaching the Gospel as there is now in Zimbabwe, and from reports, in Malawi and Kenya, but the labourers are few. Both the Rev. P. Mzamo and the Rev. A. B. Ndebele have had to be away from their own congregations for over a month at a time, to supply other parts of the field. Our laymen are doing a very worthwhile work preaching in the various congregations, but there are many centres which should have a more regular ministry.

While writing these notes little mention has been made of Zenka, where the Rev. B. B. Dube is minister of our largest congregation. At Communion times, especially, there are many hundreds of attentive hearers gathered from surrounding villages.

Zenka is about 80 miles North of Bulawayo, and in previous years, missionaries and others travelling to Mbumba passed through Zenka, and spent a pleasant time there before continuing another 40 miles to Mbumba. However, of recent years the "Fighting" Road is used, a road carved out by the Army, and now a corrugated nightmare.

For those of us who knew Zenka in the past, there are many nostalgic memories of men and women of exceptional worth. Most, if not all, of the old generation have gone. Among them were Philemon Ndebele, father of the Rev. A. B. Ndebele, a gentle, gracious humble Christian, highly esteemed by all.

When the Rev. B. B. Dube was settled in Zenka as Pastor, the country was in a state of Civil war. Scores of young men were roaming through the country-side, killing and terrorizing the people. Realising that the young minister must be disturbed, two of the old Zenka elders, Philemon Ndebele and Magaya Ncube came to comfort and strengthen him. Ndebele told him, "It is a great honour that you should be sent here in these dangerous times. You are placed here for a purpose. You must fear no man. Only the wicked fleeth when no man pursueth." With such words the good old men strengthened their minister.

When Ndebele was nearing the end of his life the congregation gathered, one prayer-meeting morning, at his door, asking if he would preach to them once more. Ndebele had a text ready, but he did not have the strength to speak. He saw his old fellow-elder, Ncube, standing with the others, and he asked him to preach on the text, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." At Ndebele's funeral there was an exceptionally large number of young men present, about 400. Afterwards it was realised that half of that number probably consisted of the young warriors that roamed the country-side. However, all was quiet, and the Rev. B. B. Dube preached on a text he had heard Ndebele preach on, while he himself was a young man, and which had greatly impressed him, "For I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."

The memory of the just is blessed.

J. N.

Notes and Comments

British 'Martyrs'

The Pope in a ceremony at Rome has beautified no fewer than 85 so-called martyrs from among some of the oldest families in England, Wales and Scotland. They are supposed to have died for the Roman Catholic faith in this country. It is claimed that almost 200 priests and lay people were put to death in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. A closer study no doubt would show that many of these were put to death for their treachery. *The Times* report of this event refers to Queen Mary Tudor's reign as a time when she tried to roll back the Reformation with a zealous, and sometimes violent, campaign to restore Catholicism. If Mary's reign can be spoken of in this mild way, how beneficent a reign must Elizabeth's have been in comparison to it.

At the ceremony in the Vatican, Cardinal Hume and the Duke of Norfolk were present and, sad to relate, the Queen was represented by the British Ambassador to the Pope.

Three Hundredth Anniversary of James Renwick's Death

On 18th February 1688 in the 26th year of his age James Renwick was executed. He was the last to suffer martyrdom in Scotland of the many who gave their lives for Christ's Crown and Covenant during the Covenanting period, 1660-1688. The 28 years of persecution was one of the darkest periods in the annals of Scottish Ecclesiastical history after the Gospel returned to Scotland at the Reformation. Yet it was a period when men hazarded their all for Christ and counted not their lives dear unto the death. Their memory will remain fragrant with all who love the testimony for which they bore such sufferings. How sad it is in our day that the visible Church in the land is getting ready to sell this dearly bought inheritance into the hands of the Church of Rome, turning away from those precious truths for which the Covenanters contended and gave their lives. The Lord however will yet vindicate His own Cause in our land against all His enemies. What a blessed time that will be in Scotland for the true Church of God.

Syncretism in Worship

The Queen in her speech in December stated very clearly how she valued the opportunity of attending a yearly multi-faith service in which leaders of various different religions take part. While the Queen may rejoice in such a service as indicating a coming together and a sharing of

the beliefs of different religions, that is not how the Lord views it. To Him syncretism in worship is particularly abhorrent as it violates His claim to exclusive worship. "My glory," He says, "I will not give to another, neither my praise to graven images." For the Queen it constitutes a violation of her coronation Oath and exposes her to the just displeasure of the Most High, who has said: "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me."

Attacks on the Sabbath

Every effort is being made in our day to break down the Sabbath completely. Though the enemies of the Sabbath have already made many inroads on the sanctity of God's holy day through unnecessary and therefore unlawful work, and also through entertainment and sports, yet they are not satisfied and intend to break down every law which seeks to maintain the quietness and peace of the Sabbath. How Satan has deluded the minds of men when they seek to destroy what was given to man by His Creator for his moral and physical, as well as his spiritual good. It has pleased God to reserve one whole day in seven — now the first day of the week, the Christian Sabbath — for His own worship and service. By rejecting the claims of God, and living for the gratification of self, men could not show more clearly that they have no part or lot in the things of Christ and that they shall never enjoy the eternal Sabbath-keeping of heaven, but when their days here are done shall lie down in eternal sorrow.

May the Lord in His infinite mercy bring the people and leaders of the nation to a better mind, so that they will once again come to value and love the wonderful blessing of the rest of the Sabbath.

Church Notes

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Outer Isles: At Stornoway on 9th February at 12 noon.

Canadian: At Toronto on 11th February at 10 a.m.

Skye: At Portree on 16th February at 11 a.m.

Southern: At Glasgow on 23rd February at 6 p.m.

Zimbabwe: At Bulawayo on 8th March.

Northern: At Dingwall on 8th March at 2 p.m.

Opening of Leverburgh Church

The new Church at Leverburgh will be opened, the Lord willing, on

Friday, 12th February, 1988, at 7 p.m. The Rev. Donald MacLean, Glasgow, is expected to preach on the occasion. All are welcome.

The new residential Home will be opened earlier that day but due to space restriction that ceremony will have to be in private. An opportunity to viewing the Home will, however, be given to all attending the church opening service and tea, etc., will be served on the premises.

Church Library — Duplicate Books For Sale

A booklist of the duplicate volumes to be removed from the church library is being prepared for circulation. It is desirable that as many of these books should be kept within the church as possible. Therefore, any Free Presbyterian who would like to obtain the booklist should send a first class SAE to the F.P. Bookroom and they will receive an advance copy.

Oban Induction

The Oban Church was filled to capacity on the evening of Friday, 20th November when the Southern Presbytery of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland met for the Induction of the Rev. Hamish I. MacKinnon, Broadford, to the pastoral charge of the Oban Congregation. After the Moderator, Rev. A. Morrison, Edinburgh, had constituted the Presbytery, proclamation in the usual form was made and there being no objections the Moderator went to the pulpit and conducted public worship. Mr Morrison took as his text Ephesians 3: 8-10, concentrating on three perspectives of the Gospel ministry; 1. To make known the "unsearchable riches of Christ." 2. To enlighten all men regarding the purpose of God's grace. 3. To make known "by the church the manifold wisdom of God."

At the conclusion of public worship, Rev. D. J. MacDonald moved the motion, "That ministers from other Presbyteries who were present, namely, Revs. J. W. Ross and A. N. McPhail from the Western Presbytery, Rev. James Tallach from the Skye Presbytery and Rev. D. M. Boyd from the Northern Presbytery be associated with the Southern Presbytery." This was seconded by Rev. D. C. MacAskill and agreed to. The Clerk was then called to give a brief narrative of the proceedings leading up to this Call. The Moderator put the stated Questions to Rev. H. I. MacKinnon and he answered them all affirmatively, before signing the Formula which had previously been publicly read by the Moderator. The Moderator then engaged in prayer after which he inducted Rev. H. I. MacKinnon to the pastoral charge of the Oban congregation and

along with all the members of the Presbytery and associated ministers gave Mr MacKinnon the right hand of fellowship.

Rev. D. MacLean, Glasgow, addressed the newly inducted minister basing his address on the words, "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 2: 1). Mr MacLean emphasised that only grace could make any minister faithful and highlighted the need for faithfulness in three areas: 1) Doctrine, 2) Rule, 3) The position of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Rev. George I. MacAskill, Dumbarton addressed the congregation regarding their duties to their minister stressing their responsibility to attend on his ministry and to pray for him and his work that the Word of God as declared by him would be blessed. Rev. J. W. Ross, Lochcarron, spoke on behalf of the Western Presbytery assuring both pastor and congregation of their desire for a blessing on the ministry now beginning. Rev. J. R. Tallach on behalf of the Skye Presbytery expressed the sense of loss on the part of that Presbytery at Mr MacKinnon's leaving them and assured him of their continuing prayers for him in his new sphere of labour. Rev. D. M. Boyd, Farr, conveyed the desire that, in Oban, Mr MacKinnon would be blessed and made a blessing.

The Clerk read messages of goodwill from Rev. M. MacInnes, Toronto, Clerk of the Canadian Presbytery; Rev. N. M. Ross, Ullapool, Clerk of the Western Presbytery, and Rev. A. MacPherson, London, who was unable to be present. There were also briefer messages from Rev. F. MacDonald, Portree, Clerk of the Skye Presbytery; Rev. P. L. Roberts and Rev. J. Tallach.

Presentations were made by the Moderator on behalf of the Oban Congregation to Rev. H. I. MacKinnon and to Rev. G. MacAskill who had acted as Interim Moderator during the vacancy. Presentations were also made to M. I. Matheson and A. I. Paterson in appreciation of their services during the vacancy. The evening's proceedings in public were brought to an end with prayer, singing and the benediction and the congregation were given an opportunity to shake hands with the new minister at the door of the church. Afterwards the ladies of the Oban congregation provided tea in an adjacent hall.

In the good providence of the Most High there is a minister settled in Oban again, after the relatively short vacancy of 18 months. It is our prayer that the ministry now begun in Oban would be richly blessed. Our great desire is that pastor and people would be endued with the power of the Holy Spirit so that the Word preached there would be instrumental in comforting, establishing and edifying believers and in bringing many

sinner to Christ as their own personal Saviour. May it be true of Oban as of Zion. "This man and that man there was born; and He that is most High shall stablish her." (Ps. 87: 5).

Acknowledgment of Donations

The general treasurer, Room 7, Seafield House, Seafield Road, Inverness, IV1 1SJ, acknowledges the following donations with sincere thanks.

Sustentation Fund: R. MacKay, Cluer, £100.

Home Mission Fund: R. MacKay, Cluer, £50.

Foreign Mission Fund: W. Connelly, Belfast, £50.

African Relief Fund: Greenock Congregation, £40.

Aged and Infirm, etc Fund: A. Forgie, Redding, £10.

Dominions & Overseas Fund: Miss J. F. Fowler, Calgary, \$100.00 "in memory of my mother"; Collection at Calgary, per Rev. S. F. Tallach, £113.82.

Welfare of Youth Fund: M. M., Gairloch, £5.

Free Distribution Magazine Fund: Raasay Friend, £10; Anon., £6.70; M. M., Gairloch, £5; Anon., £5.

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

Barnoldswick: Anon., North Tolsta, £10; E. N., £20; Dingwall Friend, £20; Anon., £10 per Rev. D. J. McD. (twice), all for Manse Fund; Anon., £50 per C. M.

Dingwall: Anon., £50 for Congr. Fund per Rev. D. B. M.

Fort William: Mrs B., £10; Envelope in plate, £1; Friend, Caol, £10 for Sust. Fund.

Kames: Friend, Ballifeary House, Inverness, £5 per Wm. D. Fraser for the Archibald Crawford Memorial Refurbishing Fund.

Lairg: £45 in envelope in plate towards Lairg Church Heating; Anon., Assynt Congregation, £20 for Congr. Funds per Rev. A. M.

Lochbroom: Anon., £10; Anon., £20; Anon., £10, Anon., £100; Anon., £10; Anon., £10; Anon., £20; Anon., £10; Anon., £5; Anon., £50, all for Sust. Fund (in coll. plate); Mrs N., Achiltibuie, £30 for Sust. Fund; Anon., £50 towards new Communion Table Cloth, Anon., £25; Anon., £5; Anon., £10, for tapes per Rev. N. M. R.; Anon., £20 for Hearing Aid Repair per Rev. N. M. R.; J. MacL., Achiltibuie, £52 for Congr. Fund (in coll. plate).

Oban: Fort William Friend, £5 per M. I. M.; Envelope in plate, £100; Envelope in plate, £10, Psalm 133, all for Congr. Fund.

Portree: J. A. B., £25 for Sust. Fund and £25 for Home Mission Fund; M. M. £7 for Property Fund; In memory of a beloved and much missed husband and dad, Job 1: 21 £100 for Sust. fund; Anon., £20 for Foreign Mission Fund; Anon., £40 "where needed"; Anon., £3 for T. B. S., all envelopes in plate; Friend, £5 for Petrol; D. M. L., £40 for Sust. Fund and £10 for Foreign Mission Fund; A good friend, £20 for Sust. Fund, last four per Rev. F. M. Staffin: Anon., £100 for Property Fund; Anon., £40 — where most needed.

Stirling: Ps. 127: 1, £50 for Congr. Exps. (envelope in plate); In memory of loved ones, £20 for Property Fund.

Stornoway: M. & C., £40 for Congr. Funds; A Friend, £10 for Zimbabwe Mission Fund; M. M., £20 for Sust. Fund, and £10 where most needed, all per Rev. J. MacLeod.