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Be thou Faithful unto Death

The Church in Smyrna was a suffering Church. She had to bear much from the enemies of the truth and from the arch-enemy of the Church of God, Satan. She was to be brought into the furnace of affliction and for a period of time endure much trial and persecution. Her lot was not to be an easy one. This is in some measure true of the Church of God in every age of time. She has ever been a suffering Church exposed to the ravages of the enemy. In the history of the Church of God through the ages of time, what relentless persecution she has been subjected to and endured. Christ warned His disciples of the opposition they would meet with from the enemies of the cross. "In this world," He told them, "ye shall suffer persecution." In writing to the church at Philippi the Apostle had to say: "Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him but also to suffer for His sake." We must not expect, therefore, that it will be any different in our day. The Church of God can expect to pass through deep waters and particularly as the darkness deepens in the land. There has been a great forsaking of God in the land and this must have its own effect upon the nation, increasing hostility to the truths of God's Word and to any Church that maintains a witness to the doctrines of the truth. Our own Church may expect to bear a considerable share of this obloquy as witnessing in a marked way against the defections of the times. We are not to expect an easy passage in such a day as this but be ready to face opposition and hardship for the truth's sake.

What is required of the Church of God in a dark day when faced with reproach and persecution? The answer is given to us in the message sent to the Church at Smyrna. It is — "Be thou faithful unto death." There is no middle way, there is no easy road by which the difficulties and trials of the times may be avoided. We must pass through them whatever the

cost may be, and we are called in passing through these times of trial to be faithful in the discharge of all duties and in holding fast to the pure and infallible testimony of God's Word, however others may oppose or slacken their hold on that testimony. As a Church we have had committed to us, handed down from previous generations and in particular from the Fathers of our Church, a testimony second to none, and involving us in a faithful cleaving to the whole counsel of God. The Fathers of our Church were faithful in their day; we are called to be faithful in ours. Nothing less than this will do. It is no time for slackening our hold on the doctrines of the truth but for re-affirming these doctrines and holding fast to them amidst all the declensions of the closing decades of the twentieth century.

So far as the individual believer is concerned there is no let up in the warfare in which he is engaged against the world, the flesh and the devil. It is a warfare in which to the outward eye the enemy often appears to be getting the ascendancy and to be winning the battle. While the outcome for the believer is assured, yet that does not mean that the conflict is not sharp, nor the struggle easy. The battle is real and is fought out on the battlefield of the soul by two contrary forces which can never be reconciled. One of them must have the victory at last and the battle is to go on until death. In that struggle the believer is called to be faithful unto death.

As it is with the individual believer, so it is with the Church of God. She is in conflict with the same forces. The world the flesh and the devil, yea — and the world in the Church, are seeking with all their combined energy and power the overthrow of the Church of God. The Church of God in the face of such irreconcilable foes must stand firm. She must not be moved away in the least degree from the Word of God but hold firmly to it against all opposition. This no doubt will expose her to the mockery and scorn of her enemies. She will be treated no doubt as antiquated and antideluvian in her outlook yet let her hold fast. It is true her enemies are mighty, too strong for her, but it is also true that there is One who is on her side who is mightier than them all.

“But yet the Lord that is on high,
is more of might by far
Than noise of many waters is
or great sea-billows are.”

Through Him she will obtain the victory. To the servants of the Lord encouragement is given in the Word of God: “No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in

judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord." Let them then be faithful to their God and the outcome is assured. Let them be followers of Him who was faithful in all things, the One who was called Faithful and True and who had on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

To the Church at Smyrna was not only promised a suffering time but a time of reward and of rest from suffering. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." What was promised to Smyrna is promised to the Church of God in every age and generation if only she will be faithful unto death. There is a reward — the reward of grace. The Apostle could assure his beloved brethren amongst the Corinthians that their labour was not in vain in the Lord. It would receive a reward. Azariah the prophet also in King Asa's day encouraged the king saying: "Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded." "I will give thee a crown of life," the Church at Smyrna was assured. "When the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away," the Apostle Peter could write to the elders of the church. Paul, on his part, could say: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only but unto all them also that love His appearing." To Smyrna there was promised a crown of life, the possession of eternal blessedness — an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away reserved in heaven for her.

So are we called in our day to be faithful unto death. Only divine grace can make us constant and firm in the face of so many difficulties and so much opposition. Let us then seek grace so that we may stand firm in the evil day and be enabled to be faithful unto death and so obtain the crown of life.

Sermon

by Rev. Neil Cameron, St. Jude's, Glasgow.

"Ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." Jude 3.

There are two important reasons why the Church of God should contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. *First.* — The glory of God, in time, is so intimately connected with the

revelation of His mind and name in the word of truth that the one is lost sight of as the other is ignored. (1) In the work of creation, as the Bible records it, the glory of the infinite wisdom, power and Godhead of the Trinity was made manifest. This is a mirror in which the psalmist saw much of His glory, when he exclaimed in an ecstasy of admiration, "When I consider thy heavens the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visitest him?" (2) Immediately upon the entrance of sin, the inexorable glory of His justice, holiness, and truth blazed with such effulgence from His throne throughout the whole rational creation, thoroughly convincing the angelic hosts, "that God hath no pleasure in wickedness; neither shall evil dwell with him. The foolish shall not stand in his sight; he hates all workers of iniquity." They saw all this in "that God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." The glory of His power and wisdom in creation, and of His justice, holiness, and truthfulness were all displayed anterior to the fall of Adam, and of his posterity in him. Adam yielded to the temptations of Satan, broke the covenant of his God, and thereby, the whole human race immediately fell under the same sentence of condemnation with the angels that sinned. Satan may have thought that he had succeeded in ruining the whole human race, and in despoiling God of His glory in connection with the creation of man, and in destroying the image of God and His likeness in which man was created. The wisdom, power, justice, holiness, and truth of God would have remained impregnable forts defending His glory eternally; but Satan and man had obliterated, through sin, the obedience, reverence, and love due to God from His rational creatures of mankind. The victory seemed to be on the side of Satan. The whole human race were, willingly, his lawful captives, and were already on the way to hell. Who could deliver them? God's justice demanded their eternal punishment in that everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. "Then thou spakest in vision to thy Holy One, and saidst, I have laid help upon One that is mighty." "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." (3) Therefore a revelation of the free, sovereign love, purposes, mercy and grace of God was made to man, and therein the glory of the grace of God, in connection with the purpose of election, redemption, justification, sanctification, and glorification of sinners by the Mediator, or the seed of the woman held forth. The covenant of redemption or grace was brought to light whereby God should be

glorified on earth, the works of the evil one destroyed, and the election of grace saved by Jesus Christ. Thus a glory accrues to God from the work of redemption, and restoration of guilty sinners that exceeds the glory of His justice in their condemnation. Against this glory of the grace of the Most High the adversary and his children have been contending since it has been revealed in this world. All the above facts are set forth in the Word of God, or "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

Second. — The eternal salvation of perishing and guilty sinners depends upon "this faith which was once delivered unto the saints." The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Again, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Therefore salvation is so absolutely connected with the Word of God that none of our lost race, capable of making use of it, can be saved without it. Infatuated he must be who endeavours its destruction, for "where there is no vision, the people perish." Let us now in humble dependence upon the Spirit of truth, consider the words of the text.

I. — The cause of contention.

II. — The two contending parties.

III. — The method prescribed for the saints in their contending for the faith.

Jude, as a faithful servant of Jesus Christ, seeing the faith attacked, warned the saints of the imminent danger to which they were exposed. He reminded them that they had had warnings in the inspired writings of Christ's apostles concerning this danger, and that they had much need of holding fast the form of sound words in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This was a duty which they owed to Christ's cause to some who were led astray by the craftiness of the enemies of the faith, and to mankind down to the end of time.

I. — The cause of contention is "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

(1.) This embraces the whole Word of God. "The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him." "God, who at sundry times, and in diverse manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." Again, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness;

that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." This word God continued to commit to His own Church from the first promise in the garden of Eden till the record was solemnly closed by the book of Revelation. No book or portion of this heavenly record had to be delivered twice. The saints of the Most High kept this precious deposit most carefully in every generation. Thus was the word of reconciliation committed to and kept by the Church till it has come to our hands, and will be kept by Christ's seed until He shall appear the second time sitting upon the great white throne. The Church is the pillar and ground of truth, and while she keeps lies without her ground, and the truth in its entirety emblazoned on her standards, she is terrible as an army with banners. The Church of Christ, taking her stand upon the rock of truth, overcomes by faith all her enemies. "My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever." Nothing will overcome the devil, the world, and the flesh, but implicit faith in the Word of God. Who are the true Church? And how can they be distinguished? We answer briefly, "Where two or three are met together in my name." The saints having His Word as a lamp to their feet and a light to their path listened to the voice of God in that word, and refused to be led away by the delusions of Satan. The Bible contained their whole faith regarding spiritual and eternal realities and the purposes of God towards a guilty and perishing world. The word that proceeded from His mouth was of more value to them than thousands of gold and silver.

(2.) It is of the utmost importance that the word of the truth of the gospel should be so firmly held by the Church that none could be acknowledged as a member who should doubt any part of it; but it is in the heart that the Lord is delighted with the truth. The faith was once delivered to the saints personally and subjectively. The true nature of saving faith which justifies before God must be held. An error here is certain ruin. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Faith without charity or love is nothing.

All sinners are by nature dead in trespasses and in sins. The dead can never awaken themselves. When the Lord asked Ezekiel the question, "Can these bones live?" the prophet replied, "O Lord God, thou knowest." The Holy Spirit, through the reading but especially the preaching of the Word, awakens the dead faculties of the guilty sinner to realise the wrath and curse of God's law and justice, under which he lies.

This is fully demonstrated by the Word of God. The three thousand on the day of Pentecost, and the Phillippian jailor are indubitable proofs. Then the sinner begins in agony to ask the question. "What must I do be saved?" He has got no knowledge of saving faith, however elaborate his knowledge of the letter of the Word of God may have been. The Holy Spirit through the Word quickens the dead soul, regenerating it by the Word, and works faith in the soul, and enables it to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered in the Gospel. Christ by His Spirit comes into the heart, and dwells there, and the believer by faith enters into Christ — lives and walks in Him. This faith is described in Scripture as "the gift of God," as "a most holy faith", and as "a precious faith". There is more in it than a mere assent to the historical facts and truthfulness of God's Word, for many can lay claim to that rational faith who are never saved. "The devils believe and tremble." Saving faith looks unto Christ in His humiliation, obedience, sufferings, and death, and lays hold, by the power of the Holy Ghost, upon Christ in all He did, and in all He now does before the throne of God, as the great High Priest, pleading the merit of His own death and shedding of blood upon Calvary's cross. The sinner takes Christ as his own. The love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost, and he is made exceeding glad in the reconciled countenance of God the Father in Christ. He calls upon the heavens, seas, earth, and all that they contain to help him to sing of the mercy of God for ever. As he feels himself now taken out of the fearful pit and miry clay, and his feet set upon the rock, he can take a view of the prospect set before his eye in the Word of God. God shines into his heart, giving the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus. Looking backwards, he sees the fountain from which all the grace and mercy flow which are revealed in this world, the electing love of God — Father, Son and Holy Ghost. The covenant of grace is unfolded to his mind, as it stands between the Father and the Son; the heart-melting love of Christ revealed in the pity and compassion of his humiliation, sufferings, and death, for sinners and for himself personally causes him to cry, "Who loved me, and gave himself for me;" the love of the Spirit by which He came to his guilty soul, awakened, quickened, and enlightened him in the knowledge of the fearful disease of sin, and of Jesus Christ, the great Physician; the pardon of sins which God, the Father, the Judge bestowed upon him, justifying him freely by imputing the righteousness of Christ to him, and bestowing faith upon him to receive Christ; the peace with God which flowed into his guilty soul in that moment in which the Spirit purged his guilty conscience from sin, and how this

made all things new to him; the proof he had of this, in that the Spirit by the promise of the Word spoke it to his heart in some such words as these — “I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.” He is now amazed why other sinners are not seeing the beauty and the glory in Christ that fills his own soul with such delightful admiration. He cannot pass his fellow-sinners on the public road without urging them to believe in Christ and be saved. This is only a new-born babe. “As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby; if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.” The Holy Spirit keeps the Word almost without ceasing in the mouth of faith, and the soul drinks in and is “satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory.” Children are not fit for wars and contentions. They must be weaned and made to eat strong food, like men, before they are sent a warfare. “Whom shall he teach knowledge, and whom shall he make to understand doctrine! them that are weaned from the milk and drawn from the beasts.” The psalmist knew these things when he said — “Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother; my soul is even as a weaned child.” The weaned child by-and-bye must be sent to school to learn. Into what school must he go? Christ says, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” The Apostle Paul describes what he learned in this school. “I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere, and in all things, I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” The prophet Isaiah learned a difficult lesson before he became a soldier for Christ. “Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips: and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. Also I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I: send me. And he said, Go.” Though a man had all the learning this world can furnish, and all the faiths imaginable, if he should be ignorant of the learning which

can be found only at the feet of Christ, and of the faith which is above the power of man but which is the gift of God, he cannot "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." The weakest saint, who has got Christ dwelling in his heart by faith, will overcome all his enemies, and will come to the joys of eternal glory. "The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." But, as every inch of that way to Zion must be contended for by the sword of the Spirit, the believer need not expect rest by the way.

II. — Let us therefore review the contending parties.

I. The party against whom the contention must be sustained. Satan has kept up a continual warfare with the seed of the woman since God revealed His purpose of mercy contained in the first promise, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." As the servant of the Lord must not contend without the direct command of the Captain of the Lord's hosts, he must carefully read his orders. Were he to take as his enemies such as might be called bigots, narrow-minded, and infatuated men, he might be, all the while, slaying his best friends. Therefore the enemies are brought into the field in their true colours. "By their fruits ye shall know them." They are such as have crept into the church unawares, and were not detected until they began to air their thievish propensities. They vowed to assert, maintain, and defend her doctrines and principles, and to follow no divisive courses contrary to these, but their entire destruction was their intention. This is what we understand by their having "crept in unawares". Are there not many who make this their boast, that though they bound themselves by the most solemn vows, both to the Most High and to their fellow-sinners, to contend for the faith, they had in their hearts a secret purpose to destroy the whole work of Reformation in Scotland? "The Confession of Faith," which, by the "Questions and Formulæ" they have avowed to be based upon the infallible Word of God, and to be the confession of their faith, they scout as a thing which none ought to hold or believe. Is it against the Confession alone they contend? No, for all their complaints are clearly against the Word of God, but they endeavour to screen their impiety from the eyes of the people. Some have been so bold as to have distinctly stated that the most of the works of both the Old and New Testaments are writings of doubtful human authorship. This is perjury of the deepest dye, and will not escape its due punishment from the

Judge of all. The Spirit distinctly states in the words before us, in the context, that "they were before of old ordained to this condemnation." "Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!" They are further characterised as "ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness." What are the most of the office-bearers of the churches in this land doing but this? Churches are almost converted into theatres. Concerts, soirees, vain songs, and dancing are carried on under the guise of religion. Instrumental music, secular hymns, and lectures upon profane subjects on the Sabbath day, and in the place where they pretend to worship God, have driven the Word of God out of both pulpit and pew. The poor, deluded people are lulled asleep with false prophesying. They are taught that man is not the lost, dead, guilty and wretched sinner the Word of God declares him to be; that God is nothing but love and mercy; and therefore that they have nothing to fear. These spiritual thieves still go further, "they deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ." Many hold the doctrine of the Socinians — "That Jesus Christ is only a creature, and therefore is not God." Did not some affirm that one might be a good Christian, and not believe in the divinity of Christ? Is that the doctrine of the Church of Scotland or of the Word of God on the most essential tenet of our faith? The Word of God reveals the great mystery of the incarnation, "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles; believed on in the world, received up into glory." In our context Jude says of them, "But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves." How different their views of the person of Christ are from those held by the apostles! Let us turn to the Epistle to the Hebrews, and look at the first chapter, and listen to the voice of God's Spirit as to who Christ is: "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Again, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." And again, "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thy hands; they shall perish, but thou

remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture thou shalt fold them up, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." This is the Christ that was born in Bethlehem of Judah, and laid in a manger there. From the stable of Bethlehem to Calvary's Cross the Son of God in human nature, was under the law, its curse, and the penalty due to the sins of the elect. The obedience and sufferings were not that of a creature, but that of the Second Person of the Godhead. There never was such a sight as God veiled in flesh to obey His own law, and to make it honourable; and to atone for the guilt of sinners who had rebelled against Him, ruined themselves, and could never have saved themselves. His sacrifice is all-sufficient to satisfy divine justice, and to cleanse the sinner from the guilt and corruption of sin. This is the Christ held forth by our godly fathers in this land. This is the Christ of the Confession of Faith, because He is the Christ of the Word of God. If any other Christ be preached or declared in the confessions of men and churches he is only an idol of their own making. One thing is clear, that when men change their God they must of necessity change their creed to suit their new god. But as the Holy Ghost gives us three examples taken from the Old Testament Scriptures, we shall briefly consider them in their order.

(1) "Woe unto them! for they have gone the way of Cain." What way did Cain go in worshipping God? "Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering; but unto Cain, and to his offering, he had no respect. And Cain was very wroth and his countenance fell." Abel worshipped God by offering a sacrifice and shedding of blood. This mode of worship was instituted by God in the garden of Eden, before he drove our sinful parents out. Therefore Abel worshipped in accordance with "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." "Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord." He did not worship God in accordance with the revelation He had given as to the worship He would accept, and therefore the Lord had no respect unto the inventions of Cain's wisdom. He came to God, not looking by faith unto the one sacrifice and shedding of the blood of the Son of God on Calvary's Cross, as godly Abel did. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and by it he, being dead, yet speaketh." Cain thought he had a right to bring innovations into the worship of God. As God had respect unto Abel, and unto his offering,

but had no respect unto him, nor unto his offering, he immediately began to premeditate murder. He found fault with Abel for worshipping differently from him, and as Abel earnestly contended for the faith, he rose up and slew him. Many worship nowadays after Cain's fashion. They worship God by hymns of human composition and human authorship, instead of the inspired psalms of David. They may be coming with the best of the fruit of the earth (in their hymns), but they are only the fruit of that which is earthly. Let them consider Cain. "Is any merry? let him sing psalms." They worship with organs, instead of "By him (Christ), therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name." They deny man's total depravity, and, therefore, have no need of the atonement made upon the cross. Cain-like those, who will not submit to their unscriptural mode of worship, and declarations of faith, are made the objects of their hatred and envy. Were the law of the land favourable to their projects, the blood of their brothers would have fouled their hands before this time. "For this is the message that ye have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you." No works are more wicked, in the sight of God, than those which lead immortal souls away from worshipping God, as He has appointed in His own Word. Satan's aims are to get this nation to disbelieve the truth of God, to pull down that which our godly fathers built upon Christ, the rock, and to set up idolatrous worship, and he finds too many Cains willing to assist him.

(2) The next class composing the enemies' forces are described — "Woe unto them! for they ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward." The error of Balaam is recorded in the Word of God. Balak, king of Moab, sent elders to Balaam to come to curse Israel, so that he might destroy them. "And God said to Balaam, Thou shalt not go with them: thou shalt not curse the people; for they are blessed. And Balaam rose up in the morning, and said unto the princes of Balak, Get you into your land; for the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you." Balaam refused to go with idolaters to curse the people of God, but hints that had God allowed him he should go. It does not appear that he abhorred the very idea of complying with Balak's request. So Balak sent him princes more honourable than the first, saying — "Let nothing hinder thee from coming unto me; for I will promote thee unto very great honour. . . . And Balaam answered, and said unto the servants

of Balak, If Balak should give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more." How many are there in Scotland who said the same words? When the Moabites of this land desired to unite with a body who hold doctrines and principles antagonistic to the crown rights of the King of kings and Lord of lords, and to the teaching of the Bible and the Confession of Faith about the atonement, many said — "My congregation and others will not allow me to go with you." Others said — "We cannot commit so terrible a crime against God, His Word and people, and our own consciences, as to go with you." The latter stood boldly till death removed them one by one. The Moabites came back again with a Declaratory Act to sweep away, by one stroke, all the blessings of the true Israel of God. At first, men declared that this Act meant "Bible or no Bible, atonement or no atonement," and that nothing could ever prevail upon them to go with these men in their accursed work of destruction. When the time came to act, they — like Balaam — went with the Moabites to take part in their idolatrous worship, and to curse Israel. Who could believe a few years ago that the men who lectured to the people, in towns and country throughout Scotland, against such sacrilege, should be now fighting against the Word of God, the subordinate standards of the Church, their own statements in the past, and the few who could not follow them in their traitorous conduct? Wherein lay the secret of all this? The words of our text are very explicit on this point, "ran greedily after the error of Balaam *for reward*." We have no doubt but promotion and the desire for being popular weighed much with some, but the love for reward was at the very root, and caused their contending for the faith to wither and die. The Apostle Peter, in warning the true Church against such men and their pretensions, points at this same thing. "Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness." Let men say what they choose on the contrary, but the greed for reward, or the love of the wages of unrighteousness, and of a great place among men, were at the root of all the disgraceful compliance and most sinful compact formed between prophets and Moabites in Scotland. When men trample upon the conscience of the godly, break their vows to God and men, and are teaching Israel's enemies to lay stumbling blocks before the people, their case is very desperate. Had Israel kept aloof from the Moabites, Balaam's snares could not hurt them; but, going after strange flesh, twenty-three thousand of them fell of the plague. Let us therefore take the warning — "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learn-

ing; that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope." "Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

(3) The third company appear with Core as their leader. "Woe unto them! for they perished in the gainsayings of Core." In the 16th chapter of Numbers the conspiracy of Core &c, is recorded. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, with two hundred and fifty of the renowned princes of the congregation "gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, everyone of them, and the Lord is among them: Wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord? And when Moses heard it he fell upon his face." Notice the creed of these men. Moses spake much by the Word of God about the exceeding sinfulness of the congregation; but these men declare, "the congregation are holy, everyone of them." There are many Korahs who hold this creed in our day. Moses and Aaron were set apart by God to lead the people — the one their lawgiver, the other their high priest. The Church of Christ must not loose a pin of either law or gospel. These two men took no undue honour to themselves; for the truth distinctly states that both were called of God. Why did these men raise such a cry against them? Probably they thought that they were abler leaders themselves. At any rate their creed was too narrow for them. They endeavoured before the whole congregation to ruin the influence of God's servants. Had they attained their wish Moses and Aaron would not have had a single follower. The Lord can make of the lump of sinful clay one vessel to honour and another to dishonour. "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; that he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people." Again, "He poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness where there is no way." When He takes the worm Jacob by the hand, mountains are threshed like chaff before him, and carried away with the wind. Men say, "Do you take upon yourself to say that such an one is not more godly than any of you?" That sounds like the gainsayings of Core. Does that man of yours contend earnestly for the faith? Is he appearing against the enemies of the faith? or is he helping them and causing them to succeed in leading the people astray better than they could otherwise do? Does he continue to warn the people against the destroyers of the faith now, as he did in the past? "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them." Allow the truth of God to be doubted and carved by ungodly men at their pleasure,

and you cannot be guiltless in church fellowship with such. The master mariner in mid-ocean who should throw his chart and compass overboard in a storm when neither sun, moon, nor stars could be seen, would not be so infatuated as the most of the so-called divines of Scotland to-day. The truth declares the need of "holding faith and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made a shipwreck." This is metaphorical language, but very suggestive. A shipwreck is a most dangerous thing, as the apostle could certify by experience. Now, when some make shipwreck of the faith, and do all in their power to keep immortal souls in the wreck to ruin themselves and their posterity, who could find fault with the man that would "command the people that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea and get to land. And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship."

2. The defending party. As I have taken up so much space already these can only be mentioned by quoting a text or two of the Word of God. "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them: for he is Lord of lords and King of kings; and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful." That is the Captain of the Lord's hosts, with a part of His followers, and who can doubt the issue of the fight? The Lamb alone shall overcome them. Christ alone is more than a match for all His enemies. His soldiers overcame also as we are told, "And they overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto death."

III. — The method prescribed for the saints in the contending, "That ye should *earnestly* contend."

1. The soldier must obey the orders of his captain. "Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." This soldier must disentangle himself from earthly things, and set his face against wind and rain to make sure of fighting to the last. Demas stood many a battle, but the love of the world conquered him at last. Phygellus and Hermogenes turned away from "holding fast the form of sound words, and all they which are in Asia" followed them. Therefore Timothy must contend the more earnestly. Like Gideon's army, the Lord's orders are, "Whosoever is fearful and afraid let him depart early from Mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand. . . . And the Lord said unto Gideon, By these three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand." The man who has got one eye

towards the world, and the other towards the cause of Christ is in great danger. He may be compared to one holding a rope in each hand. While the tension is easy he can hold the two equally well, but let the tension become strong, and he must immediately let one of them go. He will act according to the value he sees in them respectively. If the Word of God be more precious to him than gold or silver, he will let the world go, and cling to the cause of Christ; on the other hand, if the world be greater and more precious in his estimation than the cause of Christ, he will let it go, and stick to the world.

2. The good soldier of Jesus Christ should do all in his power to get rid of the strength of the flesh with its weapons of warfare. Like David when "Saul armed him with his armour, and he put a helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with his coat of mail. And David girded his sword upon his armour, and assayed to go; for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them. And David put them off him." David slew a lion and a bear in the strength of the God of Israel and he would now do in His name what Saul, with his armour, and the whole army failed to do; he would slay Goliath, and pull down the insulting pride of the Philistines. "This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; holding faith, and a good conscience." The righteous is bold as a lion. He sees the power of carnal weapons extremely weak whether they be for or against him. The strongholds, which he has to attack both outwardly and inwardly, are impregnable without the perfect strength of Christ. "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh; (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;) casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." In order to accomplish his arduous task, this soldier must make up his mind to overcome all his spiritual and carnal enemies, or rest assured that he shall be overcome by them. There are no quarters in this fight. "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand, therefore, having your

loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."

3. Christ's promise is, "I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" Sin causes many bitter tears, hard words and thoughts, and much strife even among the true followers of Christ. Therefore, "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you, let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness and wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envy and strife is there is confusion and every evil work." The Apostle Paul found Christ as good as His promise, and so will we if we hold fast the confidence of our hope, steadfast unto the end. He had to say, "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me; I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me." "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." May the Lord grant us grace to contend earnestly for the faith, so that, when the hour of our departure comes, we may have a conscience clear from the blood of all men, and that it can be said of us, "All these died in the faith." To God be all the praise for ever and ever. Amen.

The Worth of the Soul

by Rev. Matthew Henry

(Continued from page 108)

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

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

is it that we are persuading you to in all our preaching, but to mind your souls and do well for your souls?

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

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

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

2. If the soul be so precious, then those are our worst enemies that are enemies to our souls. The devil is the great enemy to our souls; he is the tempter, and so is the destroyer, and he has his agents, that are busy to ruin souls. There are persons and things that war against the soul, 1 Pet. 2: 11, the worst war that can be: those that seduce the soul and beguile it, 2 Pet. 2: 54, that tempt us to sin; that lay stumbling-blocks before us; that entice us secretly, though they pretend love; — look upon them as enemies to your souls. David complains often of those that did persecute his soul. Wicked companions are real enemies to the soul; therefore say

to such, "Depart," Ps. 119: 115. Enemies to the soul are very subtle, Eph. 6: 12. Therefore we have the more need to stand upon our guard. Consider how precious that soul is which they would injure and destroy.

3. If the soul be so precious, then mercies to the soul are the choicest mercies, for which we should pray most earnestly. This is the favour that God bears unto his chosen. The hallowing of God's name by us, and the coming of his kingdom into us, are mercies to the soul which are to be desired above all others, — that is the order in the Lord's prayer, Matt. 5: 33. The renewing of the soul, and the saving of the soul, are things that must have the pre-eminence in our desires and prayers. Other mercies must be begged with a proviso, but mercies to the soul absolutely. Be more earnest for these than for corn, and wine, and oil, Ps. 4: 6, 7; wrestle with God for these, as Jacob did. Be more concerned in prayer about your sins than your afflictions. So likewise we must be most thankful to God for spiritual mercies, Eph. 1: 3, — redeeming love, gospel grace, Ps. 103: 3, &c. Value every mercy by the reference that it has to the soul, and be thankful for it accordingly, Isa. 38: 17. "In love to my soul." Go by this rule in your valuation of public mercies; — reckon those the best times that are opportunities for the soul, in which there are plenty of the means of grace.

4. If the soul be so precious, then judgments upon the soul are the sorest judgments. Spiritual plagues are of all others the worst, and to be most dreaded, as "leanness in the soul," Ps. 106: 15, when the mind is blinded, the conscience seared, the heart hardened, and the reins laid on the neck of sinful passions. These are spiritual judgments, Isa. 6: 9, 10; Ps. 81: 12, the worst condition a man can be in on this side hell. How sad would our condition be if we were deprived of both the bodily senses of seeing and hearing, (such instances have rarely been heard of,) but much worse to have the soul blind and deaf. Do not provoke God to deny and withdraw his grace. There are judgments upon the soul too, that sometimes befall God's own children, and they are very painful; as — when the terrors of God set themselves in array against them, Job 6: 4; Ps. 88: 3, &c., and he wounds the spirit, Prov. 18: 14. If God has kept us from these terrors, we must be thankful but not secure. Our Lord Jesus suffered in his soul that he might have compassion, Matt. 26: 38.

5. If the soul be so precious, then the prosperity of the soul is the best prosperity. There is such a thing as soul prosperity, 3 John 2, and it is that which we should most earnestly desire of God, both for ourselves and for our friends. The soul prospers when it is in a good state, and in a good frame, when it is in the right way, and when it grows in grace; as the

body prospers that is in health, and as the estate prospers that increases. That is a prosperous soul that is adding grace to grace, and securing not only an entrance, but an abundant entrance, into the kingdom of God, 2 Pet. 1: 5. The soul prospers when its holy dispositions are lively, its comforts strong, and its evidences clear — when it is walking in the light, and singing in the ways, of the Lord. Seek this as the best prosperity. Soul prosperity either brings outward prosperity along with it, Matt. 6: 33, or sweetens the want of it; and it is that which all the malice of hell and earth cannot disturb or take away.

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

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

(1.) Those that make a light matter of sin despise their own souls, Prov. 14:9. It is certain that sin is a wrong to the soul, Prov. 8: 36. How do people regard their souls that abuse them thus every day? Those that expose their precious souls to the wrath and curse of the eternal God every day, by wilful sin, do not value them as they should. Those despise their soul that continue in unbelief and impenitency, and will not be awakened to see the misery in which their souls are; they feel nothing from sin, the sins of so many years; they are not concerned though their souls be ready to drop into everlasting burnings. They despise their souls that rush into sin, Jer. 8: 6, that run upon God, Job 15: 25, 26. There are some so daring as to challenge God himself to damn them. They despise their souls that, when they have fallen into sin, make no haste to repent and turn from it.

(2.) Those that take up with a cheap and easy religion despise their own souls; that are afraid of doing too much for their own souls. Did we put a

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

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

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

(5.) Those that by sin unfit their bodies to aid their souls in the service of God despise them. Drunkenness especially does this, it overcharges the heart, Luke 21: 34. Those put a great slight upon their souls that drown them in wine and strong drink, and suffer their hearts thus to be taken away, and themselves to be put out of possession of them. They make beasts of themselves only to please a sensual appetite. They are not their own masters — to govern themselves, and by degrees come to be not their own men — to understand themselves.

(6.) Those that venture their souls upon a false and deceitful foundation despise them. What we value we shall be sure to lay up in a safe place, and that which we despise we shall venture any where. Those that build their hopes upon the sand, Matt. 7: 26, that presume upon their

visible profession, and are willing to take it for granted, without any strict scrutiny, that all is well with them, Rev. 3: 17. Such have a low opinion of their own souls, and must necessarily end in a painful manner; their hope must perish.

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

Zimbabwe Mission News

Among the expected delegates at the Synod this year will be the Rev. A. B. Ndebele and one of his elders, Mr Joseph Mazwi. They will be accompanied, we very much hope, by Mrs Ndebele.

In a recent letter, the Rev. A. B. Ndebele writes, "At the recent Meeting of the Presbytery the theme that prevailed was the expansion of the Mission influence in Zimbabwe. All the members of the Court were speaking of extending the boundaries of their own areas."

Mr Joseph Mazwi has his home at Elibeni, three miles from Ingwenya. He preached many times, during the past eight years, at a Station opened by the Rev. A. B. Ndebele about 30 miles away, and known as Inyathi. Mr Mazwi had a natural as well as spiritual interest in this place as he had a son working there. The people are in process of building a church to accommodate 150-200 people. The congregation at present numbers 70-100. There have been five or six received as members over the years.

Our small preaching Station is some distance from Inyathi proper, which is justly famous as being the location of the first Christian Mission in the country, and where there is still a Church, and a large Boys' School. It might be of interest to relate a brief history of the old Inyathi.

The first King of the Matabele left Zululand with his people early in the 19th Century, and after many skirmishes, travelled North and crossed the Limpopo River into what is now known as Matabeleland. During his progress north, Umzilikazi had heard tell of the wonderful Kuruman, where the renowned Rev. Robert Moffat had established an oasis in a spiritual desert. He preached the Gospel, taught school, had a magnificent garden of fruit and vegetables travelled in a house on wheels, a

wagon, and loved the people.

In 1829 Umzilikazi determined to send some of his most trusted men 700 miles to Kuruman, to be his "eyes and ears". They were amazed at what they saw, and after a stay of some weeks persuaded the kind-hearted Moffat to accompany them part of the way home in case they were attacked by enemies. They then prevailed on him to go all the way over the rough trackless country. The King was advised of their approach, and had a fearsome display of his formidable army prepared for their reception.

The King was completely won over by Moffat's warm, courageous personality, and always treated the missionary with the greatest kindness. Moffat travelled the same long journey on at least three occasions to see Umzilikazi and his people. Sad to say, Umzilikazi never became a Christian, but he did, albeit reluctantly, give permission to Moffat to open a Mission Station at Inyathi in 1859, providing the site and promising protection. A son of Robert Moffat, the Rev. John Smith Moffat, and a number of other missionaries, and their wives and children made the long trek by wagon through rivers and waterless deserts, until they arrived at Inyathi, 25 miles from where we are now at Ingwenya. There they suffered incredible hardships, and for 25 years saw no spiritual fruit. However, in later years worthy missionaries who followed the pioneers, saw a harvest of fine Christian converts.

An additional preaching Station has been opened by the Rev. A. B. Ndebele in the opposite direction. It is known as the Insiza Resettlement area and Mr Ndebele writes of it. "It gives us much joy to speak of Insiza. The services are well attended and men, women and children listen attentively. Most of our elders are very pleased to be asked to go to preach at Insiza or Inyathi. These people have not heard before the teaching we seek to give them, and they show a freshness of interest. We preach Christ crucified and the Holy Spirit works with His Word."

It has been a great pleasure to their many friends to welcome home Mr and Mrs Murray. They spent three weeks of their furlough in New Zealand, and saw there some friends who had visited Zimbabwe, and a few who had worked there such as Miss Jocelyn Cox, and the Hicklin family. Mrs Murray has a brother in Roturua.

Mr William Campbell and Miss Etta MacLennan are to attend the Young Peoples' Conference, and to show slides and give a talk on the Mission. Miss MacLennan's leave will soon be over, and although we will be sorry to see her go, we know she will receive a warm welcome, and her arrival will enable Miss Marion Graham to come home, D.V. **J.N.**

A Visit to Binga

History tells us that the Tonga migrated from East Africa, via Malawi, and eventually settled in Zambia along the Zambesi River valleys. As time passed a minority group crossed the Zambesi River and settled on the southern bank which was then called Rhodesia, today Zimbabwe. The Zambesi River is 1650 miles in length, flowing to the Indian Ocean. At that time the Kariba Dam had not been formed and so the river was navigable by canoe, and their contact with the Zambian Tongas continued. They maintained their own culture and customs. They had chieftains, with a Headman in each village, and elderly advisers who assisted when required. These Tonga were completely cut away from the rest of the world. The fertile valleys produced more than one crop a year of maize, sorghum, water melons and pumpkins. The game was plentiful, there were fish in the river, and there was much that was edible in the forest.

In 1957 came the construction of the Kariba Dam. This brought to an end their isolation, but it also cut off their communication with the Zambian Tongas. As the waters flooded the valleys the people were forced to move and they found themselves in a sandy, rocky, infertile area. The new Tonga Land was a land of starvation, poverty and illiteracy. There were some schools begun by Roman Catholic Missions. The first Government schools and clinics opened in 1980.

The above is a brief history of the Tonga people. It was to these people that I paid my first visit with David Ndlovu in August in 1987. David and others had visited Binga in 1981. Binga is a distance of 260 miles from Bulawayo. We left Mbuma at 10 a.m. with our Police escort accompanying us to Lupane, where we left them and proceeded on our journey, arriving at Binga at 6 p.m. The Rest Camp is situated on the Zambesi River bank opposite Zambia. It was very hot and there were many mosquitos. The following morning we visited the District Commissioner. He assured us we were very welcome to visit any area. We then visited the Superintendent of Police, who also gave us a welcome and assured us of his help.

There are many different denominations in and around Binga, Roman Catholics, Assemblies of God, Church of Christ, Salvation Army, Zionists, Apostolic Faith, the Roman Catholics being the most numerous. At that time we were told that there were three Canadian Priests working in different areas, and two Sisters doing house visitation.

The pure Gospel is needed. Our prayer and desire is that the Lord will raise up a people to serve Him.

On our first day we visited a place called **Samenda**. We called at the school and distributed tracts. Later, we called at a place called **Musenampongo**. Here we saw much poverty. We distributed some tracts. The following day we left the rest camp at 8 a.m. We called at the office of the District Commissioner. He kindly allowed one of his staff to accompany us to act as interpreter.

We travelled a distance of 120ks (75 miles) to a place called **Lubu**. We had to travel over very rough roads into the mountains (the heat was unbearable). When we arrived at our destination, the news soon spread. The poverty was unbelievable. David was soon recognised as he had visited them before. The Headman said to him, "You have come back". They were pleased to see him.

We saw a very disabled woman. She was covered in rags. It was explained to us that she was destitute and that people helped her as much as possible.

Many woman and children gathered, and a few men, most of them were poor, and covered in rags. Some of the children were naked. They ran away when they saw a white man for the first time!!!

When we managed to quieten them, I tried to speak to them on Rev. 22: 17 (last Clause). Most were attentive. David then prayed. We distributed clothing to them — gifts from our friends in Holland. Half of the people did not receive any, thus leaving them disappointed. We did promise them if it were possible, we would return to visit them. We left Binga the following day at 8 a.m. When we arrived at Lupane our Police escort was awaiting us, to escort us back to Mbumba. We were thankful to the Lord for granting us travelling mercies in taking us back to our own people in safety.

In January, we were able to keep our promise and visited our friends in Binga once again. This was made possible by kind friends from Dingwall, Aberdeen, New Zealand, Edinburgh, and Zimbabwe, who contributed very generously, the sum of \$1500. We were overwhelmed at the kindness shown and have to thank the Most High for putting such a desire into His people's heart to give to the poor people of Binga. With such a large sum of money, we were able to buy mealie meal, salt, sugar, pronutro (for the children) and other necessary items. We also prepared six large boxes of clothing, and tracts.

We left Bulawayo on Tuesday, 27th at 12 noon. On our way there was torrential rain, some of the rivers were overflowing. We were thankful to

arrive at the rest camp at 7 p.m. On Wednesday, we visited the District Administrator and the Chief of Police, who were pleased to see us once again. We left for **Lubu** at 10 a.m., arriving at the school at 12 noon, where we distributed tracts. The Deputy Headmaster accompanied us to the house we had previously visited. He was our interpreter. The news soon spread of our arrival. A large number gathered — between 200 and 300, and many children. Again we saw much poverty. David spoke, and then prayed. The Councillor thanked us for keeping our promise in returning to visit them. We distributed the tracts, and food. When we came to the clothing, this was not easy, as the people rushed upon us, all at the same time. After distributing what clothing we had — again some never received any — although we are thankful all received some food. We left **Lubu** at 4 p.m., arriving back at the rest camp at 6 p.m.

The following day we left for Bulawayo at 10 a.m., calling at **Samenda** where we were told two lions had been the previous night. We also saw the spoor of elephants. Here we distributed tracts to a few people. We arrived home at 6 p.m.

Again we would like to thank the Most High for His care and protection over us, and to our friends who enabled us to keep our promise in returning to visit our friends in Binga. Luke 10: 2.

N. Murray.

Obituary

The late Miss Barrie Campbell, Thurso

Barrie Campbell was born on 15th October, 1894, in the town of Thurso, Caithness; and died on 23rd September 1985, in an Old People's Home, run by the District council in Thurso; and was well cared for during two or three years, till near the end of her ninetieth year. In the kindness of the Lord her mental and physical health were maintained in good measure nearly to the end of her days.

She was only five years old when her mother died at the age of thirty. Her father married again. He bought an excellent house in Thurso for his two sisters, Jessie and Andrewina Campbell. These two women were known as professing believers in the Lord Jesus Christ: and Barrie and a sister called Catherine were given to them to take special care of them.

On leaving school, Barrie went to Glasgow to train as a Nurse in the Victoria Infirmary and also in Rotten Row Maternity Hospital in the centre of the city. Her sister Catherine was engaged as a business secretary in Glasgow also.

Barrie attended the Church of Scotland in Glasgow and her sister attended a Church near our former St. Jude's, where the late Rev. Neil Cameron was minister. Catherine in seeing crowds, real crowds, of people walking to St. Jude's on Sabbath to the services was influenced to attend Mr Cameron's faithful ministry in the Gospel of Christ; and was converted and became thereafter a member in full communion. She endeavoured to persuade Barrie to come with her to St. Jude's and reluctantly Barrie consented. Barrie told later on in her life that she was not brought to a knowledge of the Lord Jesus in Glasgow: although she was deeply impressed under Mr Cameron's preaching at times.

Barrie and her sister returned at intervals to the home in Thurso to see their Aunties when they became frail, about the year 1936. Later on Barrie stayed permanently with them at the home, 3 Duncan Street. She nursed one Auntie till she died in 1940 and the other until she passed away in 1942. She did this with much affection and regular nursing care. It should be recorded that she regularly exercised her nursing profession throughout the town of Thurso and it seemed concentrated on maternity work for which she was in constant demand. Her own attractive and friendly personality contributed to this.

It was in the middle of her life — a life of acceptable conduct — that she, while attending the services held in the Free Presbyterian Church in a school in the town, became seriously interested in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus and by time saw her way clear to become a member in full communion in the Church. She had been, before this, quite a period of time under the late Rev William Grant's ministry frequently; as he was often coming from Halkirk to take meetings in Thurso; and engaged "supply" from other places to hold services on Sabbath in the town.

Her Christian conduct was practical and helpful as a member of the Thurso Congregation after they purchased a church building in the town. In observing things needing to be done even by tradesmen in the Church building, Barrie would make this known to the minister. She became the Congregational Treasurer and was efficient in handling the finances regularly.

As to her home, Barrie had an open door to all her Christian friends, to ministers who came to hold services; and gave a warm welcome to people who came at communion seasons to attend the services. Unknown to herself she became well known for works of faith and labour of love, and was loved and respected throughout the community. She had by the grace of God a composed, friendly and active Christian personality.

Paul in Romans chapter 16, verses 1 and 2; refers to "Phebe our sister

... a servant of the Church . . . and a succourer of many.' There have been many Phebe's in the Church of Christ down through the ages and Barrie was one of them, in the opinion of many discerning Christians.

R. R. S.

Notes and Comments

Prince of Wales' Narrow Escape from Death

In mid-March Prince Charles while on a skiing holiday in Switzerland narrowly escaped death when a snow avalanche occurred. His friend, Major Lindsay, a former equerry to the Queen was killed by the avalanche, while another member of the party was dug out alive. The Prince was evidently greatly affected by this sad tragedy. While the Prince stated afterwards that the party were skiing there at their own risk and that they accepted that mountains have to be treated with respect, yet it is a matter of serious concern that the heir to the Throne should expose himself in this way to unnecessary risks. It is to be hoped, also, that the Prince's preservation from death on this occasion may be blessed to him in seeing the Lord's gracious hand in it and causing him to seek for himself a saving interest in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Murders in Strathclyde

In the region of Strathclyde alone last year the figure for violent deaths reached the figure of 72, a new record for the region. According to a Press report the Chief Constable stated that there was an increasing readiness to resort to weapons as 34 of these persons were killed by knives. He also said that the substantial rise of 20 per cent in crimes of violence was especially disturbing. The number of attempted murders rose from 222 to 263. These figures are alarming when it is remembered that before the legislation dealing with capital punishment was interfered with, the number of murders each year was in single figures. The blood of many hundreds slain in cold blood since then lies at the door of the nation and the Lord will require it of the nation in His own time. The increase in prison accommodation will avail nothing to curb these increases in crime but only a return to right standards of crime sanctions, including restoration of the death penalty.

Video Nasties

The Government has announced new powers to stop shops renting out "video nasties". The aim is to keep obscene material out of the hands of children. The Home Office Minister, Mr John Patten, stated that the

Video Recordings Act must be stepped up. This is a welcome and responsible response of the Government to this evil trade and it is to be hoped that it will be successful.

Northern Ireland

The shooting of three IRA terrorists in Gibraltar and the subsequent murder of a number of people at the funerals of these terrorists, including two British soldiers, has brought the situation in Northern Ireland to a new height or depth of violence. Until now funerals have been secure against such acts. In Ireland, however, one grows accustomed to hearing of increasing degrees of violence. The Government's Anglo-Irish Accord, so far as can be seen, has only aggravated the situation.

The Protestants of Northern Ireland have been subjected over a period of many years to a murderous IRA campaign designed to break the will of the people of Ulster and make them surrender their dearly bought civil and religious rights into the hands of the Roman Catholics of Ireland. The Protestants, however, have stood up to this continued onslaught and are as firm as they ever were, if not firmer, in their determination never to surrender to the Roman Catholic Church which is the motive force behind all these atrocities.

It is very difficult to see an end to the violence until more reasonable counsels prevail and the men of violence cease to have support among the people. The Roman Catholic Church has much to answer for in connection with the troubles in Northern Ireland. May the day speedily come when Roman Catholics north and south of the border will have their eyes opened to see the antichristian nature of the system which has enslaved them so long, and be delivered from it through the glorious gospel of the blessed God.

Church Notes

Meeting of Synod, D.V.

The Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland will meet in St. Jude's Church, Glasgow, on Tuesday 17th May at 6.30 p.m. when the Retiring Moderator, Rev. S. Fraser Tallach, M.A., is expected to preach.

The Meeting of Synod

As usual the ministers and representative elders of the Church expect to meet in Synod in Glasgow in the middle of the month. During the days

of the Synod cases coming before the Synod will be dealt with, reports of Committees will be given in, and many matters relating to our Church discussed. We crave the prayers of the praying people of the Church for this meeting that the Fathers and Brethren may be guided aright in all the matters brought before the Synod and that all that is done may be to the glory of God and for the advancement of His Cause in our midst at home and abroad.

On this occasion it is expected (D.V.) that for the second time in our history as a Church an African minister will be appointed to preside as Moderator of Synod, Rev. Aaron Ndebele. The first African minister to act as Moderator of Synod was Rev. Petros Mzamo who was Moderator at the 1963 Synod. It is a further token that the Lord has blessed the work of our Mission in Zimbabwe. Our Mission there was indeed begun by an African minister, Rev. John Radasi, and was continued by European missionaries and others raised up for the work in Zimbabwe itself. It will highlight also the continued interest that the Church has in its Mission in that part of the world, and will, we trust, stir up in the hearts of the people of the Church a praying spirit for the advancement of the Lord's Cause in Zimbabwe and elsewhere in Africa.

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Northern: At Dingwall on 7th June at 2 p.m.

Western: At Laide on 14th June at 6 p.m.

Zimbabwe: At Bulawayo on 14th June.

Australia and New Zealand: At Gisborne on 21st October at 2.30 p.m.

Church Deputies

Rev. Dr. D. Boyd was scheduled to return home arriving in Britain on 27th April after nearly four months in New Zealand and Australia as Church Deputy. Rev. J. W. Ross agreed to give five Sabbaths supply to Chesley, Ontario. He is expected to return to this country on Monday 16th May (D.V.). Our prayer and desire is that the Lord would bless the labours of the deputies who go out to assist in supplying congregations overseas.

Death of Mrs James Fraser, Toronto

The sympathy of the Church goes out to Mr James Fraser, one of our elders in Toronto, whose wife died as a result of a car accident in which he himself also was injured. We extend our sympathy also to his family and to Mrs Fraser's brothers and sisters in this country in their sore

bereavement. Mrs Fraser was one who manifestly feared the Lord and her passing is a great loss to the Toronto congregation. We believe that it is well with her. Our prayer is that Mr Fraser may be restored to health and strength again and that he and all the family circle may receive richly of the divine consolations in their time of sorrow.

Wellington, New Zealand, Church Building Fund

In the Lord's providence, the congregation in Wellington have been enabled to pay back the last of their loans and now the Wellington Church is free of debt. They wish to thank the people of the Church for their generosity to this Fund and wish to acknowledge also the help received from the Church Building Fund in Scotland.

Missionary Opportunities

At its meeting on 26th January the Jewish and Foreign Missions' Committee discussed the prospects for useful endeavour in different parts of Africa and resolved to bring to the attention of readers the following:-

1. That a Minister or other suitably qualified person is sought for to do missionary work in Malawi for an initial period of 12 months and,
2. That although the previous request in the Magazine for undertaking missionary work in Kisii, Kenya specified a "medical missionary" (and which, incidentally, attracted no response), the Committee would now be pleased to hear from any person willing to engage in missionary work, with or without a medical qualification.
3. Since the time of the above meeting I have heard from Miss Graham, Headteacher at the John Tallach Secondary School, Ingwenya, that there is a shortage of staff and that any person with a University Degree although not necessarily possessing Teacher Training, would be welcome there and would be acceptable to the Department of Education in Zimbabwe.

Readers should bear the needs of the mission-field to the Throne of Grace continually, and I look forward to hear from such as might feel compelled to fill one or other of the above posts.

Rev. Alexander Murray, F.P. Manse, Saval Road, Lairg, Sutherland, IV27 4EH. Telephone Lairg (0549) 2176.

Acknowledgment of Donations

The General Treasurer, Room 7, Seafield House, Seafield Road, Inverness IV1 1SJ, acknowledges the following donations with sincere thanks:-

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

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

! Foreign Mission Fund: Acts 18: 25, £5 for translating Psalms in Kenya; A Friend, £100 for

famine in Africa and £100 for teaching of blind children; Friend of the Cause, £200 per Rev. D. B. MacL., for work in Malawi and Kenya; Bethel Street Chapel, Luton, £55; D. F. G. Moore, £15.

Organisation Fund: A. M., Harris, £25.

Dominions and Overseas Fund: Larne Congregation, £250 per Rev. D. A. Ross, for Mission work in Communist countries.

Home of Rest Inverness: Bonar Friend, per Miss C. T., £10.

Magazine Free Distribution Fund: Donations per Mr D. MacKenzie, North Tolsta, £30.

Unspecified Donation: Anon., Glasgow postmark, £1000.

Church Bookroom: Mr N. MacLean, acknowledges with sincere thanks: Anon., Lewis, £10.45 per N. M.; A. M., Edinburgh, £5 per Rev. D. M., both for the Bookroom.

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

Aberdeen: Anon., £1000 for New Church Building per D. K. L.

Barnoldswick: Friends, Glasgow, £10; Anon., £5; Anon., £20, both for Communion Expenses; Anon., £25.

Dumbarton: Anon. (Envelope in plate) £20 for Congr. Fund; Anon., Stornoway, £20 for Sust. Fund per Mrs Macaskill.

Dundee: Anon., £100 per Rev. D. C. M.

Flashadder: Anon. Friend of the Cause, £100; Anon., £40, both for Church Building Fund, both per D. M. McKay, (regret these acknowledgments held over).

Fort William: Mrs Begg, £10 per D. MacN., Anon., Psalm 72: 8; £15 for Communion Exps., Friend, Caol, £10 for Sust. Fund.

Glasgow: S. W., £3 per R. MacLeod; Anon., (2 donations) £60 per W. D. F.; D. E. McL., £5 per Rev. D. M.; D. MacK., £100 per Rev. D. M., all for Congr. Fund; Matth. 6: 3, £10; M. B., £10; In loving memory of Hamish B. Grant, £100 per Rev. D. M., last four for Bus Fund; Anon., £30 for African Relief; Friend, Stornoway, £5 for Sust. Fund per Rev. D. M.; E. C., £5 for Sponsor a Blind Child; Anon., £300 for South Harris Church Building Fund.

Greenock: Friend, Stornoway, £5 for Sust. Fund per Rev. L. MacLeod; Anon., £20 for Congr. Purposes per Rev. A. MacPhail; Anon., £10 where most needed; Anon., £10 for Comm. Exps.

Inverness: F. MacL., Hilton, £50 for bus maintenance.

London: Glasgow Friends, £20 for Congr. Fund.

Portree: Anon., £10 for Sust. Fund per F. M.; Anon., £5 for Italian Mission (envelope in plate); Anon., £20 for Braes Bus.

Raasay: Friend in Stornoway, £5 per Rev. J. R. T.; In memory of a dear wife, £10; Friend, Raasay, £20, last three for Sust. Fund; Raasay Friend, £10 for Home Mission; Friend, Raasay, £10 for Tapes.

Rogart and Dornoch: Anon., £20 per Rev. A. M.

Shieldaig: Anon., Inverness, £25.

Stornoway: Anon., £60 for Sust. Fund; £20 for Home Mission and £20 for Jewish and Foreign Mission; Friends, Kyles-Scalpay, £10 for Petrol per Rev. J. MacLeod, (regret above acknowledgments overlooked); Anon., £30; Anon., £10, both for Comm. Exps; Anon., In appreciation, £50; Mr & Mrs M. M., £20 per Rev. J. MacLeod, both for Congr. Purposes; Anon., £10 for Communion Expenses per Rev. J. MacLeod; Miss K. A. MacLeod, The Cottage, Callanish, Isle of Lewis, £30 for Sust. Fund per Rev. J. MacLeod.

Watnish: Miss M. A. B., Dunhallin, £2500 for Church Repairs; Ps. 115: 12, £50, where most needed; Envelope in plate, £50 for Door Collection, all per R. Bain; From a Friend, £30 for Church Repairs.