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He hath done all things well

During the days of His humiliation, Christ did many wonderful works. Many were astonished at the miracles of healing which He performed. In these things the Lord manifested forth His glory, as is recorded of Him in connection with the turning of the water into wine at the marriage of Cana in Galilee. These miracles which He performed witnessed to the truth of the claim which He made that He was the Son of God. It is true that the disciples also did many wonderful works but they were empowered to do so and did these things in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When men brought to Christ one that was deaf and had an impediment in his speech they besought Him to put His hand upon him. No doubt they had witnessed some of the other works done by Christ and were persuaded that He was able to heal this case also. In this they were not mistaken. In the hands of Christ no case ever miscarried. Failure is written on all that man does but not so with the divine Redeemer. No affliction was proof against His dealing with it or handling of it. He could give sight to the blind, cleanse the leper, heal the lame and even raise the dead to life, so the deafness of the man brought to Him or the impediment in his speech was not beyond the healing power of this One. The Saviour took the man aside from the multitude, put His fingers into his ears, spat, and touched his tongue. Looking up to heaven, He said, Ephatha, Be opened. Immediately his ears were opened and the string of his tongue loosed and he spoke plainly. This was by the mighty working of the power of God. Though the Saviour charged them to tell no man, yet the more he charged them, the more they published it. They were so astonished at what had taken place that they could only say: "He hath done all things well: He maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to

“speak.” However astonished they were, if they did but know it, this was but a whisper of His power.

While the Saviour when He was in this world did manifest His power in the healing of physical troubles, yet this was not the great end for which He had come into this world. It was to heal the souls of men, the souls of poor lost sinners that the Saviour came into this world, by giving His life a ransom for many. He was to pay the ransom price of His people's deliverance in order that they might be set free from the plagues of sin and of death. What a mammoth task this was which was laid upon the Lord Jesus Christ and one in which He would have utterly failed were He not the God-man Redeemer. To give infinite satisfaction to the divine law and justice was impossible except for One who was perfectly holy and who was able to bear the wrath of God against sin. This the divine Redeemer did as the Saviour of sinners in order to deliver His elect inheritance from going down into everlasting destruction.

We have, then, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ One who is able to heal the souls as well as the bodies of men. Wherever a soul is healed of the leprosy of sin, there we may take it the hand of the Lord has been laid on that one. It is through the power of His Spirit that He effects this. The great deliverance wrought out by Christ is applied individually to the souls of men through the effectual working of God's Spirit in the soul. What virtue, what efficacy, what healing power there is in the atonement wrought out by Christ. Through the blood of His Cross sinners are healed, yea, made whiter than the snow. None ever remain the same after He has put his hand on them. His touch has still its healing power. The worst of men and of women brought into contact with the healing power of Christ are delivered. Whatever excuses men may entertain as to why they should not come to Christ to be healed by Him, none will stand. All who have availed themselves of the provision God has made in Him have found healing for their needy souls. Be they black or white, Jew or Gentile, it makes no difference. The efficacy of the blood of Christ is the same. And when healed by Him what can men say but what they said here at this time: “He hath done all things well.”

For ourselves the question must arise as to what we know in our spiritual experience of the healing power of Christ. Have we come in our spiritual experience to touch the hem of His garment or to be touched by Him in the secret recesses of our soul? This is a question of the greatest importance for us. It is not enough to think of what high and great profession of religion in the world we have made, but what do we know of His gracious healing power and of the efficacy of His shed blood to take

away all sin? If we have been healed by the great Physician then He will be all things to us. We will owe our all to Him. Is this true of us? Can we say in truth that Christ is all and in all to us? If not, nothing else will avail. We must be cut off from every other refuge and closed into Christ as our only refuge and hope for time and eternity. When this takes place we will see Him not only as the One who does all things well in bringing us to Himself but as the One who in His daily dealings with us in this world does all things well. If this is so in time, what will it be in eternity? What is the song of the redeemed in glory? It has many elements in it, but this is one of them — “He hath done all things well.”

Notes of a Sermon

by Ralph Erskine

“And as he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him.”
Luke 9: 42.

Here is the history of Christ's healing a lunatic child, whose father came to the disciples, and they could not cure him; and now he cometh to Christ. As we ought to come to Christ ourselves for healing, so we ought to bring our children to him; and when servants and other means can do us no good, we ought to go to the Master, and look over the head of all ministers and servants. After Christ had reproached the disciples for their unbelief, he gives the poor man an encouraging word concerning his son: “Bring thy son hither.” — (Ver. 41.) Bring him to me. We ought to bring our sons and our daughters to Christ; to bring our diseases, and all our various cases, to Christ. But after this encouragement, follows a trial in the text: “As he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him.”

Hence we may observe, that people who come to Christ, and whom he undertakes to heal and help, may have their distress growing on their hand, before the deliverance come, which yet will certainly come.

It is in this case, as it was with Israel in Egypt: God saw their affliction, and undertook to come and save them; and yet, behold, before their deliverance, their bondage becomes heavier. The darkest time of the night may be before daybreak. Thus it was with Israel, in returning from Babylon, to rebuild the temple in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. The king gives commandment to go and build; God stirs up the civil authority to give encouragement to them; but quickly the haters of Zion,

misrepresenting the work, procure an order to cause them to desist from it. This doctrine, then, is verified both with relation to God's public work towards a church, and his particular work on the souls of his people, as you see it was with the ruler of the synagogue, who applied to Christ in behalf of his daughter at the point of death, "that he might come and heal her." — (Mark v. 23.) Christ went with him; but see what sad news he gets from his house: "Trouble not the Master, for your daughter is dead." — (Ver. 35.) And now they looked upon the matter as hopeless, though yet Christ was on his way to save her.

The method we would lay down, for the farther prosecuting this subject, through Divine aid, shall be the following:—

I. We will speak a little of coming to Christ.

II. Inquire in what respects matters may grow worse with people, even when they are thus coming to Christ.

III. Inquire into the reasons whence it is that people who come to Christ for help, and whom he undertakes to help, may find their distress increase before their deliverance come.

IV. Make some application of the whole.

I. We are to speak a little of coming to Christ. There are only two things I would observe here.

1. Coming to Christ imports a view that vain is the help of man; vain is the help of creatures; vain is the help of ministers, means, and ordinances, of themselves. Thus it was here with the father of the child: "I besought thy disciples to cast him out, but they could not." (Ver. 40.) So they who come to Christ find all other refuges fail them (Ps. 142: 4); other physicians were of no value. None come to Christ till they can do no better; yet he is content with such comers, that see there is no other help for them.

2. This coming to Christ imports a putting the work in his hand: "Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son;" he prays, and he brings him to Christ at the Lord's call. They that truly come to Christ for help, put the work into his hand, and give him employment in his saving offices, looking on him as able, and willing, and ready to save. The disease is half cured when it is laid at Christ's feet. Happy they who come thus to him, and intrust him with their souls, and trust him with their cases. "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he will bring it to pass." — (Ps. 37: 5.)

II. The second head proposed was, to inquire in what respects matters may grow worse with people, even when they are thus coming to Christ.

here two things are recorded: — 1 Satan's assault: "The devil threw him down." 2. How he used him: "And tare him."

1. They who come to Christ, before they get the deliverance which is insured to them, may meet with downcasting providences: "The devil threw him down." They may be cast down with discouragement and despondency for a while; cast down with fears and doubts; cast down with jealous apprehensions and unbelieving thoughts. Believing souls after their coming to Christ, much more as they are coming, at first may be greatly cast down: "O my God, my soul is cast down within me." (Ps. 42: 6.) They may be cast down with a multitude of perplexing thoughts, despairing thoughts, and manifold objections and scruples, which their minds raise, or rather unbelief frames within them.

2. They may not only be thrown down, but torn by the way: "The devil threw him down, and tare him." Whenever a man begins to come to Christ, and the devil begins to fear he shall lose his possession, then he rages against that man, and would tear him to pieces. Therefore think it not strange that beginners in religion, and such as are coming, or but lately come, to Christ, or even those who have come formerly, and are coming again to him, may be mightily assaulted and attacked by all the powers of hell. So long as people remain at a distance from Christ, the devil does not oppose them. "He keeps the house, and the goods are in peace;" but in coming to Christ they may lay their account to be torn by torments, torn by terrors, and blasphemous suggestions; they may lay their account with fiery darts. When we expect the Lord is about to remove one burden, he may lay on another, that he may have the more mercy on us.

III. The next thing proposed was, to inquire into the reasons whence it is that people, who are coming to Christ for help, and whom he undertakes to help, may find their distress increase before their deliverance comes. Whatever malicious hand the devil has in this matter, God has a holy hand in permitting it.

1. God's design in it is to show his wisdom and power.

It is to manifest his wisdom; how he can advance his work by the stops in the way of it; and enrich his people by impoverishing them; enlarge them by imprisoning them; and "give them meat out of the eater, and sweet out of the strong."

It is to evince his power; how he can support them under, and deliver them from, their distresses, which would not appear so much, if their distress came not to a height. He suffers them to be dejected and torn,

that his wisdom and power may appear the more evidently in lifting them up and healing them.

2. It is to check the unbelief that attends our faith in coming to Christ. Sometimes when we commit our case to him by faith, we do not exercise this faith in a patient waiting for the Lord. Christ's first word to his people is, "Come to me," (Matt. 11: 28); and his last word is, "Abide in me." (John 15: 4.) It is well done to come, but, alas! we do not abide; and, therefore, to check our unbelief in coming, as if it were but one step, and going back the next step, he shows the need of going forward, by letting loose the enemy, and suffering matters to grow worse with us.

3. It is to raise the worth and esteem of his mercies in the hearts of those who come to him. We usually do not know the worth of mercy, till we are deprived of it; nor the worth of deliverance, till the distress is extremely great; help is then esteemed, when we can say, "I was brought low, and he helped me."

4. It is to try our faith, whether or not it be such as will not only come to Christ, but also abide with him till he work the deliverance; to try if we can keep our eye upon the Deliverer, when the deliverance is delayed; our eye upon the promise, when cross providences appear; and can hope against hope. He designs the trial of faith for the present, and a more glorious issue thereafter.

IV. The last general head proposed was, to make some application. Is it so, "That people who come to Christ, and whom he undertakes to heal and help, may have their distress growing on their hand, before their deliverance come, which yet will certainly come!" Hence we may see:-

1. What a cruel enemy the devil is to immortal souls and their eternal salvation; for, whenever a soul begins to mind religion in earnest, and to come to Christ for help and deliverance, then that soul becomes the object of the devil's spite and malice. As long as people remain graceless, and Christless, and formal, the devil will let them enjoy themselves, and lull them asleep in their security; but as soon as they begin to come to Christ, then he will attempt to cast them down and tear them, and stir up all his wicked instruments, either to discourage and ridicule them, or to tear their name and reputation to pieces, and to persecute them with tongue and hand, or to raise a hue-and-cry against them, as if they were turned distracted, and out of their wits. As they are "coming, the devil throws them down, and tears them".

2. Hence see the reason of all the melancholy moods, heavy damps, and great discouragements, of many beginners, that are setting out in the Lord's way. Though wisdom's ways be ways of pleasantness, yet Satan,

who is a liar from the beginning, would make the world believe that it is a bitter and unpleasant way; and that the beginning of religion is but the beginning of sorrows.

3. Hence also see the difference between the convictions of the Spirit and the temptations of Satan; and the difference between the distress of soul that arises from a law-work before conversion, and that which arises from the assaults of the enemy of our salvation: whenever conviction begins, and the soul comes to be troubled for sin, and under fear of hell and wrath, Satan indeed fishes in the muddy water, and mixes his temptations with the Spirit's convictions; and if he can bring all convictions to nothing, either by force or fraud, he will do it, that the convinced soul may never come to Christ for a cure: Satan will stand at his right hand to resist them. But the difference between them is —

(1.) The convictions of the Spirit are before a man comes to Christ, and tend as a severe "schoolmaster to bring him to Christ." (Gal. 3: 24). But the temptations of the devil are especially when a man is coming to Christ, in order to keep him from coming. — If the Spirit of God, by a law-work, seem as it were to cast down the man, and tear him to pieces, the design is to oblige him to go to Christ for help and healing; and to provoke him to come to the Saviour, and flee to the city of refuge. But the design of the devil's temptations, when he throws down and tears the soul, is, that when he is coming, or as he is coming to Christ, he may detain him from coming, or discourage him in coming.

(2.) The convictions of the Spirit are humbling, tending to make the soul despair of help in himself, or in God out of Christ. The temptations of the enemy are terrifying, tending to make the soul despair of help in Christ, or in God through him: the former shuts the door of hope by the law; but the devil would shut the door of hope by the gospel.

4. There is no ground to blame religion and religious duties, notwithstanding discouragements and downcasting trials in the way of duty. Though matters grow worse with you in the way of duty, and in the way of coming to Christ, blame not yourself for coming to Christ, because the devil attacks you by the way. You have enough to charge yourself with, though you charge not yourself foolishly. It would be far worse with you if the devil and your own wicked heart should prevail to take you off from the use of promising means. When, like Peter, you cast yourself upon the water to come to Christ, be not terrified, though the devil raise a storm; the Lord Jesus "sits upon the floods, and is mightier than the noise of many waters." (Ps. 93: 4.) Never think the worse of Christ, though matters seem to grow worse with you, when you come to

him for rest, and yet find trouble; for it is the devil and the ill heart that breeds all the trouble, keep up honourable thoughts of the Lord Jesus; believe he can do for you, and wait till you find that he will do. Let all cross providences hasten you nearer to your resting-place; for all that come to him shall find rest in spite of the devil; some rest shall be enjoyed here, however disturbed by the devil from time to time, and by unbelief, until rest be perfected in heaven.

5. Hence see an evidence of a true believer and comer to Christ: if the devil be no enemy to your faith, you may know it is a false faith. Many have a faith that the devil is well enough pleased with; and therefore he never troubles them, nor it: but if you have saving faith, it will be the eyesore of hell; or if you be truly coming to Christ, you may expect the devil to be upon you. No sooner doth true faith begin, but the fight of faith begins. Some may bless themselves they were never assaulted by the devil, and yet they are but sleeping, as it were, in the devil's cradle; he is rocking them. Try your faith; if it be from heaven, it will meet with opposition from hell: "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." — (Eph. 6: 12). Therefore we are called, as part of the Christian armour, to take "the shield of faith, whereby we shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." — (Ver. 16). The devil may let you go peaceably about duty; read, and pray, and communicate, because you may do these things carnally and formally, and go to hell when all is done; but if once you begin to come to Christ, or to go about any duty believingly, then you are on the way to heaven, and, if the devil can, he will draw you back, and throw you down with discouragements, and tear you with temptations, either as you are coming, or after you are come. But it is always the best faith that is most opposed by the devil.

This doctrine may be applied by way of address, — 1. To those who never yet came to Christ for help and salvation. 2. To those who are coming in obedience to his call.

1. To you who never yet came to Christ for help and salvation. Oh! stay not away from him for fear of the devil, lest he throw you down and tear you. Better be thrown down by the way in coming to Christ, than thrown down to hell, with the devil at last, by the hand of God, who will throw you and the devil down to hell, if you do not come to Christ. Better that the devil tear you to pieces, when there is a Deliverer, even Jesus, at hand to deliver you from him, than that God himself tear you to pieces when there shall be none to deliver: "Consider this, ye that forget

God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.” — (Ps. 50: 22). Come, otherwise you remain slaves to the devil and your lusts. O! be sensible of your slavery and malady! Know none can save you but our Lord Jesus Christ; he is a mighty Saviour, and a merciful one: “No name is given under heaven, whereby a sinner can be saved, but the name of Jesus.” Put the work in his hand; put your soul into his hand. Bring him here to me, says Christ to the man here. O! come and bring your children with you; hear him saying, Bring your son to me, bring your daughter to me, bring your soul and your case to me; O! bring your disease to me, bring your hard heart to me, and I will soften it; bring your filthy heart to me, and I will cleanse it; bring your heart possessed of the devil to me, and I will cast out the devil; bring your seven devils to me, and I will cast them all out.

2. We address ourselves to you who are coming in answer to his call. O! be not dismayed, though the devil throw you down, and tear you as you are coming. Here is a Saviour ready to lift up those whom the devil throws down; ready to heal whom the devil tears; ready to help all that are hurt by the old serpent. It is his office to destroy the works of the devil. You may be always sure that it is an evil spirit that is dealing with you, that would hinder you in your coming to Christ; for the voice of the Spirit of God is, “Come”; “the Spirit and the bride say, Come.” The Spirit of God, as a spirit of bondage, may cast down the soul before it come to Christ, and in order to its coming; but it is not the Spirit of God that casts down the coming believer. No; “we have not received the spirit of bondage again unto fear.” — (Rom. 8: 15). After coming to Christ, and believing in him, it is only the devil that casts down and tears you. Fear not the lion of hell; here is the Lion of the tribe of Judah to defend you: it is unbelief and departing from Christ, that may bring you to the greatest danger; therefore, “fear not, only believe.”

Self-Examination

by Rev. Joseph Irons

My dear brethren, let me entreat you to begin this important business today, examine the state of your hearts before God — do not deceive yourselves, but say, has the Holy Spirit begun His gracious work in you? Has He opened the depths of human depravity to your view? Has He made you feel that your case is so desperate that nothing but sovereign grace can reach it? Has He stripped you of self-confidence and legal hope? Has He led you to Calvary and disclosed the glories of Christ to

your view? And has He brought you to hunger and thirst after righteousness?

These are questions of infinite importance — they concern you for eternity, and I pray the divine Testifier of Jesus to apply them to your hearts. Can you answer them in the affirmative? then I congratulate you as “heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ”; safe, in the ark, while a deluge of persecution may surround you; “your life is hid with Christ in God”; nor can the powers of darkness, with all their malice, essentially hurt a soul beloved of God: you may expect to go “through much tribulation,” but “it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

Moreover, it is necessary we should examine ourselves relative to the use we are making of the means of grace. Are we induced to attend them from custom, fear or love? Custom draws a multitude of persons to church or chapel, who go and return, like the pendulum of a clock, unconscious of the rapid progress of time and the approach of eternity. Fear, like Pharaoh’s task-masters, drives nominal Israelites to their daily work, but allows them no real enjoyment in it. While love, like a heavenly magnet, draws with irresistible and delightful force the heaven-born soul to the centre of its enjoyments, and teaches it to “follow hard after God,” crying, “Draw me, I will run after Thee,” and the Father of mercies replies, “I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee” (Jer. 31: 3).

The Christian, with Christian graces in exercise, goes to the closet — the Bible — the house of God — and the divine ordinances with an object in view. He has wants which must be supplied, maladies he must have healed, and a tribute of love he is anxious to pay. He is a spiritual courtier, who goes to meet the King of Glory — the Prince of Peace — and the Divine Preceptor of the family of God, accompanied by the household of faith.

Say, my beloved hearers, what use are you making of the means of grace; will anything, short of personal intercourse with Jesus, satisfy you in His house? Can you be content with merely passing an opinion on the discourse? or do you come hungry, to be fed — burdened, to get relief — and conscious of your ignorance, seeking the wisdom which is from above?

What says your experience? Do you “grow in grace”? Have you become dead to the world? and can you “joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ”? Can you say, “I sat down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste”? or do you come up to the

assembly of saints, crying, "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon"? (Song of Solomon 1: 8).

Such are some of the uses the Christian makes of the means of grace: now let conscience decide for my hearers, whether they are taught of God thus to employ them, and whether they have been thus blessed in them.

It is an awful thing to be triflers in the house of God; to "draw nigh to Him with our mouths, and honour Him with our lips, while our hearts are far from Him"; yet I fear it is a common thing, hence the necessity of self-examination to prevent self-deception.

Our estimate of the value of our privileges will appear also by reviewing our attention to prayer meetings — weekly lectures — social intercourse — and fire-side religion? Are we alive to the importance of these things? Are we constant in our attention to them? Are we spiritually engaged in them? Or are we content with a little Sabbath-day religion, lulling our consciences to sleep in carnal security and false peace? O Thou searcher of hearts, "examine us, and prove us; try our reins and our hearts."

The Conscience

We must put a difference between a healthy and a sick conscience. A healthy conscience is that which, after examination of our ways according to the rule of God's word, doth justly absolve us, and speak peace to us toward God. Of such a conscience it is said by Solomon, "A sound heart is the life of the flesh", Proverbs 14: 30. By the heart he means the conscience, which ordinarily in scripture is called the heart. And "the sound conscience is the life of the flesh," because one is in a better case, when the conscience is at peace toward God. And this blessing is upon every believer in Christ in his orderly walking. "God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, of love and of a sound mind." 2 Timothy 1: 7. A conscience in this disposition needs not medicine, but spiritual nourishment and exercise in all Christian duties.

A sick conscience we call that which either is senseless of its own evils and dangers, sits down securely, and rests without a warrant; or which is justly wounded, and labours under the sense of its pain; or which is in ignorance of making use of the true remedy. By God's blessing a word in season may be spoken to awaken a secure conscience, or to refresh the weary soul, and being recovered from its malady, it may be able to feed

upon the bread and water of life, and work the works of God in the strength of Christ.

We must put a difference between a troubled soul and a troubled conscience. The soul comprehendeth all the powers and faculties of the man; but the conscience as we speak of it, is only one faculty of the mind, judging of the man's moral ill or well being, and so all the cases of the conscience are cases of the soul; but all the cases of the soul are not cases of the conscience. The soul may be troubled, while the conscience is not troubled at all; yea a man may have a commendable trouble in his soul, when he sees God dishonoured, or his church in hazard, whereby his conscience is so far from being troubled, that such a holy trouble strengthen his conscience in his address to God, as is seen in many places of the Psalms.

EXTRACT FROM A SERMON by DAVID DICKSON

Letter

Free Church Manse
DINGWALL
October 14th, 1870

My Dear Mrs Auld,

Excuse delay in replying to your last welcome letter. After preaching three sermons at home last Sabbath, I had to take part in an induction service on Tuesday, then to preach in Burghead on Thursday, returning only yesterday, and have today to prepare for tomorrow's work. I cannot look back on a week's work without wonder and shame, and wonder because of the "strength" sometimes "perfected in weakness", and with shame because of my misimprovement of the "grace" that is sometimes made sufficient. Oh! to have some realising view of His love who is the channel whence comes to us the grace and strength treasured up in the heart of God, for bestowal on His children. How near it brings Him when He actually puts forth His powers on the heart and effects the union of a sinner lacking in will and ability with the God who is all and in all! The exercises of His mediatorial offices in this respect — in bridging the gulf between Himself and His people, and bringing them to God — is as delightful to His love as was the great act of His Atonement when He put their guilt out of sight for ever from before God. Yea, His coming to them in a day of grace, and bringing them nigh, is the fruit and effect of His atoning death, the fulfilment of Covenant purpose, and the pledge of everlasting fellowship.

Please write me, before I go D.V. to Glasgow communion. Inverness follows Glasgow, but we must work while it is day.

From Dr. John Kennedy.

The Conversion of Captain Hedley Vicars

It was in the month of November 1951, that while awaiting the return of a brother officer to his room that Captain Vicars turned over the leaves of a Bible which lay on the table. The words caught his eye "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." Closing the book he said, "If this be true for me, henceforth I will live, by the grace of God, as a man should live who has been washed in the blood of Jesus Christ."

That night he scarcely slept pondering in his heart, whether it were presumptuous or not to claim an interest in those words. During those wakeful hours, he was watched we cannot doubt, with deep and loving interest, by One who "slumbers not nor sleeps" and it was said of him in Heaven "Behold, he prayeth!"

In answer to prayer, he was enabled to believe, as he arose in the morning that the message of peace was true for him — "a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance." "The past" he said "then is blotted out. What I have to do is, go forward. I cannot return to the sins from which my Saviour has cleansed me with His own blood."

On the morning which succeeded that memorable night, he bought a large Bible, placed it open on the table in his sitting-room, determined that "an open Bible" for the future should be "his colours". "It was to speak for me" he said "before I was strong enough to speak for myself." His friends came as usual to his rooms, and did not altogether fancy the "new colours". One remarked that he had "turned Methodist" and with a shrug retreated. Another ventured on a bolder measure of warning him not to become a hypocrite: "Bad as you were I never thought you would come to this." During six or seven months he had to encounter no slight opposition at mess, and had hard work as he said to stand his ground. But the promise did not fail, "The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger."

At this time he found great comfort in the society of two brother officers who were walking with God, but especially in the faithful preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ by Dr. Twining, Garrison Chaplin.

From: MEMORIALS of CAPT. HEDLEY VICARS.

Questions for Young Communicants

by Rev. Robert Murray McCheyne

The following questions were drawn up by Mr McCheyne for young persons seeking admittance to the Lord's Table. He dictated these to them and they were to be answered in secret to God.

"1. Is it to please your father and mother, or any one on earth, that you come to the Lord's Table?

2. Is it because your friends and companions are coming? and because it is customary?

3. Is it because you have come to a certain time of life?

4. Who, do you think should come to the Lord's Table? and who stay away?

5. Do you think any should come but those who are truly converted? and what is that?

6. Would you come if you knew yourself to be unconverted?

7. Should those come who have had some anxiety, but are not brought to Christ?

8. Do you think you have been awakened? brought to Christ? born again?

9. What makes you think so?

10. What is the meaning of taking the bread and wine into the hand? Have you as truly accepted Christ?

11. What is the meaning of feeding upon them? Do you think you are as truly feeding upon Christ, and deriving your strength from Him alone?

12. What is the meaning of giving them to those beside you at the same Table? Do you thus love the brethren?"

A Unique Purse

by Rev. J. A. MacDonald

All our needs both temporal and spiritual are very well known unto the God of all Grace; who Himself in His tender love and mercy, remembered our first parents, as they felt the cold wind of God's displeasure, outside Eden's garden. In their naked and lost state, He sustained them, and made them coats of animals skins. (Gen. 3: 21). As they felt the comfort and warmth of such coats, I doubt not, but their inward thoughts were:

In our low state who on us thought:
for he hath mercy ever. (Psalm 136: 23)

O, how often we have to say likewise, that He hath not forsaken us either. Of old He promised: "I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily. . . ." Were we spiritually minded enough, we would detect such beautiful golden threads as this throughout God's word. We should be thankful, however, that we have them still in our midst who like the church of old could claim, "My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand."

The Lord Jesus Christ visited his disciples at a time when they had a problem as to whom tribute money was to be paid. (Matt. 17: 27). Obviously they had no purse or scrip of their own from which to draw. They knew well the mind of the Lord, not to owe any man anything. Being themselves honest, truthful and faithful friends of His church in the world they had a dread in their soul of giving an offence, knowing that the displeasure of the Lord is upon such: for Jesus said, "Blessed are they who are not offended in me." Certainly, an empty purse and a debt to pay is most trying, yet there is a purpose behind it all. Unspeakable must have been the joy of Simon Peter when he hooked and then opened that unique purse, so to speak. There as their Redeemer had told them, was a coin adequate to pay the full tribute money was found. Notice, too, with what sweet affection He addressed them: "Thou shalt find a piece of money; that take, and give it unto them for me and for thee." How truly it was fulfilled: "In all their afflictions He was afflicted." (Is. 63: 9).

Truly Christ was and ever shall be "a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shelter from the heat. . . ." Many are the storms and turbulences which afflict God's people as they sail on to the land of uprightness. (Ps. 143: 1). Nevertheless the Holy Spirit, and Him who is the Captain of their salvation shall finally bring them to the harbour above.

"Then are they glad because at rest
and quiet now they be,
So to the haven he them brings
which they desired to see." (Ps. 107: 30)

"An sin tha iad ro-ait air son
gu bheil iad samhach beo;
'S gunn d'thug e iad do'n chaladh sin
'S **gu'n Phort** bu mhiannach leo."

This miracle together with all His other miracles are indicative of Christ's unchangeable love, pity and compassion. Indeed He is a present help in time of trouble.

Christ's unique purse of faithfulness and unfathomable love was never empty and never shall be. This makes it unique in His excellent glory and majesty in Heaven where God's people will find that their "sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended." (Is. 60: 20).

Our parents as well as our grandparents took much notice of, and learned much from God's providential dealings with them for He often provided for them when both purse and cupboards were empty. Perhaps fishermen took more notice of God's providence than any others in the past. One of our godly ministers, Rev. Neil MacIntyre, related the following story while at a Communion in my native island of Harris:

An elderly gentleman who was making his way to a Communion in the Highlands on a very stormy evening, came to a place where a number of fishing boats were sheltering from the inclemency of the weather. To save him having to walk many miles round the end of the bay, he asked a favour of one of the skippers, who immediately got his crew to ferry him across the bay. They landed him safely there. The gentleman then thanked them profusely saying, "God shall reward you richly, either in time or eternity for this kind deed." Those fishermen had not too long to wait for their reward. The first night they cast their nets, they caught an unusual draft of fish, which made them quite glad. However, among them was a middle aged man, who used to be so happy on such occasions but now seemed somewhat cast down. When asked the reason for that, he replied: "Don't you remember what the good man said when we ferried him across the bay the other day. He said: 'Assuredly God shall reward you richly, either in time or in eternity.' I would have preferred to have my reward on the other side of Jordan."

Here we see who maketh the one person to differ from the other. It is the Holy Spirit who caused the vast difference between the two malefactors, who were crucified with our Lord Jesus Christ. The one pleaded for a full and free forgiveness "... remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom," which was immediately granted (Luke 23). "Today," the Lord said, "thou shalt be with me in Paradise." Whereas the other one railed on Jesus, to his eternal sorrow.

Some time ago we visited real out and out Free Presbyterians and the conversation turned to the trials of our beloved church in 1893 when the

Declaratory Act was causing such pain. The friends had learned much from parental teaching on the subject. They spoke to us of the zeal, and the love for the truth in its purity which was evident then, and the deep appreciation which was felt for the stand taken by Rev. D. MacFarlane when he placed his historic and Scriptural Protest on the table of the General Assembly before walking out of that Assembly, never to return there again. He was a good soldier of Jesus Christ. An absolute clean cut separation was made and no compromising — a word which is so much in evidence today.

The story which our friends related was regarding the Sustentation Fund being collected in their district for our church. One Autumn evening two collectors called for the Sustentation Fund, being the first collection ever to have been taken under the auspices of our Church. The children were in bed. The mother in her wise and considerate manner told the collectors that her husband was out at present but that when he would return home she would inform him that they had called. When her husband came home and was told this he became very cast down as they had no money, and could not give anything to the Cause which they so loved. He said to his wife: "We have cattle on the moor, and the sales are on in two weeks time, we will sell and get money for the collection." He still, however, remained very cast down. When he was getting ready to go to bed that evening, and while undressing, a coin rolled out of the fold of his trouser. Picking it up, he said to his wife: "This is the money for the Sustentation Fund and we will send it in tomorrow." To his dying day this good man was fully convinced that it was none other but the unseen hand of Him who placed the coin in the fish's mouth for Peter to pay the tribute money, who placed that coin in the fold of his trouser.

One thing is sure. No one shall remain long in God's debt. Whosoever shall give you a cup of cold water he shall in no wise lose his reward. (Matt. 10: 42). It is my heart's desire that we be found of them to whom the God of Eternity will say: "I was a stranger, and ye took me in."

Free Presbyterian Intelligence*

The following article from the Free Church Quarterly, Vol. 2, No. 9, 1894 is an interesting observation on the Declaratory Act of 1893 and the position taken by the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland at its incep-

* This was the heading under which the article was included in the "Free Church Quarterly." It indicated that news had come to hand from distant parts about what was happening in the churches.

tion. Not many give credit for the stand taken by our church, but the writer of this article, far from the conflict in Victoria, Australia, discerned the issues at stake. This magazine was issued by a committee of the Free Presbyterian Church of Victoria, Australia.

THE POSITION OF THE FREE CHURCH SECESSIONISTS IN SCOTLAND

The party who separated from the Free Church of Scotland because that back-sliding Church would not return from her errors, manifest much zeal; and a home paper reports 27 congregations as now being in open protest against the Declaratory Act: though no more of the ministers have joined in the movement. A deed of separation has been drawn out and signed by the ministers, and a statement published giving the reasons for the step. The Revs. D. McFarlane, Raasay, and D. McDonald, Shieldaig are being proceeded against with a view to their deprivation of the churches and manses held by them; and have been summoned to appear before the Court of Session. It is very greivous to find some who are of their own mind regarding the evils of the Declaratory Act taking part with the Rainyite majority to dispossess them of their properties. The fact is that heretical ministers shielded by the majority have their positions thus secured, whilst the seceding ministers who are true to the principles to which the Church has proved false are to be thrown out of their homes and churches, if the civil law can do it. For 34 years the congregation of Shieldaig which is said to number 800 persons, worshipped under the shelter of some rocks; till in 1877 the church and manse were built at a cost of £3000, this successful result being that of the zeal of a Mr Ferguson, of Kilmundy, who set about collecting for the work in 1875. What a trial it would be should the church be taken from the people and they sent to worship under shelter of the rugged rocks again! As the Rev. M. McAskell says, though he holds that they have done unwisely in seceding, "In view of the true and real principles of the Free Church they have a far higher moral right to all the worldly benefits attached to the faithful holding of these principles than those who accept the Declaratory Act." It remains to be seen whether the seceding ministers are not technically liable to lose the properties, since they have taken the name of "The Free Presbytery of Scotland." However they can plead that they faithfully adhere to the principles which the Free Church required of them at their ordination; while those who have occasioned their separation have not. They only left the nominal Church because it ceased to be what it was when they

undertook to serve it. The Rainyite portion of the Church has really broken faith with them.

Mr McFarlane is being prosecuted by the presbytery of Skye and Mr McDonald by the presbytery of Lochcarron.

E. R.

Practical Effects of the Romish System

James Henley Thornwell was, in his day, a distinguished and erudite professor of theology in the Southern Presbyterian Church of the United States of America. He was also a watchful pastor who earnestly sought the salvation of souls and to this end not only declared what was true and founded on the Word of the living God but exposed what was doctrinally false and pernicious. The Banner of Truth Trust has done the Church at large a great service in recently reprinting his Works and the following is extracted from Volume 3 which contains his controversial writings and in particular from an article entitled "The Validity of the Baptism of the Church of Rome". There is no mistaking Thornwell's attitude towards Roman Catholicism and his confutation of Rome's erroneous teachings on justification and sanctification is masterly and altogether convincing. In his view, the Church of Rome was not a branch of the Christian church and it is clear that he did not arrive at that conclusion without having examined her credentials very carefully. Since semper eadem is still her proud boast Thornwell's strictures are as valid and apposite in 1988 as they were in 1846 and perhaps even more so in view of the false dogmas which have been promulgated by Rome in the interval.

J. MacL.

The *practical effects* of the Romish system are so modified by the temper and constitution of those by whom it is received as to present no uniform appearance. In some it produces an awful bondage. Anxiously solicitous about the salvation of their souls, and taught to seek for the Divine favour in works of righteousness which their hands have wrought, they exhaust the resources of their nature in vain and servile efforts to compass obedience to the law. Tortured by conscience, which always in the guilty forecasteth grievous things, groaning in spirit under the intolerable burden of aggravated guilt, they multiply devices of superstition and will-worship, in the delusive hope of bringing peace to their troubled and agitated breasts. They know nothing of the liberty of the sons of God. Strangers to that glorious spirit of adoption which the sense

of acceptance generates, they feel existence to be a curse, and dread the presence of God as a terrible calamity. Their obedience is the effort of a slave to propitiate a tyrant, and after a life dragged out in galling servitude, death comes to them clothed with tenfold terror. Eternity is shrouded in insupportable gloom, and the dismal tragedy of life closes with an awful catastrophe. To such sensitive and conscientious minds Rome presents her system in the aspect of unbending severity. She imposes penances and privations, pilgrimages and fasts, vows of poverty and self-denial, haircloth and rags, the torment of the body for the good of the soul. Eternity alone can disclose the groans, the sufferings, the agony which the cells of her monks and the chambers of her nuns have witnessed among those who are anxiously inquiring wherewith they should appear before the Lord and bow themselves before the Most High God. And all this anguish has been occasioned by her devilish cruelty in suppressing the grace of God. She has refused to point the wounded spirit to the Fountain opened in the house of David for sin and for uncleanness; she has refused to proclaim a free and glorious justification through the obedience unto death of the Son of God, to open the doors of the captive and strike the fetters from the hands of the prisoner. Instead of acting as the herald of mercy, she has betrayed the cruelty of a tyrant brooding in vindictive malice over the woes and anguish which, with the scorpion whip of the law, she has wrung from hearts to which the oil of grace should have been imparted, and has rejoiced in thickening the horrors of superstition where she was bound to diffuse the light of the Gospel. Like the ancient Pharisees, she binds heavy burdens upon men and grievous to be borne, and lays them on their shoulders, and will not move them with one of her fingers. She shuts the kingdom of heaven against them neither entering herself nor permitting others to do so. Like ancient Egypt to the Hebrews, she is literally the house of bondage. Some, like Luther, have escaped from her cruelty. The key which opened their prison doors and enabled the soul to laugh at her terrors was justification by grace. This precious truth, for which their hearts had panted in Babylon, was the talisman of joy, of peace, of holiness. Delivered from the curse of the law, the dominion of the Devil and the horrors of conscience, they could serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of their lives. There are others whose apprehensions of sin are less feeble and impressive. Disposed to make a mock of its consequences, they indulge in presumptuous hopes, and treat the salvation of the soul as an easy and comparatively light matter. These Rome flatters with the deceits

of a frivolous and deadly casuistry. Corrupting the first principles of morals, she makes sin to be no more sin, law to be no more law; with elaborate ingenuity she has undertaken to solve the problem, what is the minimum of decency and the maximum of sin with which men can enter into heaven; she has confounded the distinctions of truth and falsehood, of right and wrong, and left nothing certain but her own pretended authority; and all to accommodate easy consciences, to reconcile hopes of heaven with a careless and wicked life.

Such is the working of the system. Theoretically, it makes sanctification impossible; practically, it verifies the truth of the theory.

Extremes meet. An old writer has pithily observed that the least touch of a pencil will translate a laughing into a crying face. In illustration of the proverb, it would not be difficult to prove that the vaunting legalism of Rome really terminates in a filthy and disgusting antinomianism. She degrades the majesty of the Divine law, substitutes for it a fictitious standard of excellence, and represses those emotions which must characterise the heart of every true penitent. Her doctrine of venial sins, which are confessed to be transgressions of the divine commandments, is utterly incompatible with those awful impressions of the malignity of the least departure from rectitude which the holiness of God and the atonement of the Redeemer alike impart. She teaches that men may disregard the authority of their Maker and yet not be deserving of death — that there are some precepts so insignificant, and some offences so trivial and harmless, that a few signs of the cross and muttered incantations, a little holy water, an Ave Maria or a Pater Noster, are abundantly sufficient to expiate them. Is not blasphemy written on the portals of a church which can preach such a doctrine as this? Does she not make the commandments of God of none effect by her traditions?

But the odious tendencies of her doctrine are not only manifested in her slight estimate of some of the commandments — one she has absolutely expunged. The pure and sublime idea which the Scriptures inculcate of a spiritual God, neither possessed of a corporal figure nor capable of being represented by visible symbols, is as much a stranger to the theology of Rome as to the “elegant mythology of Greece.” Hence, we are told that “to represent the persons of the Holy Trinity by certain forms under which, as we read in the Old and the New Testaments, they deigned to appear, is not to be deemed contrary to religion or the law of God.” Accordingly, the second commandment is annulled by the hierarchy (in books of popular devotion it is wholly suppressed), the windows of Papal churches are frequently adorned with images of the Trinity, the

breviaries and mass-books are embellished with engravings which represent God the Father as a venerable old man, the Eternal Son in human form, and the blessed Spirit in the shape of a dove. Sometimes grotesque images, hardly surpassed in the fabulous creations of heathen poets, where centaurs, gorgons, mermaids, with all manner of impossible things, hold undisputed sway, are employed to give an adequate impression of Him who dwells in majesty unapproachable, whom no man hath seen or can see. To picture the Holy Trinity with three noses and four eyes and three faces — and in this form these Divine persons are sometimes submitted to the devout contemplation of Papal idolaters — is to give an idea of God from which an ancient Roman or a modern Hindoo might turn away in disgust. Such gross and extravagant symbols, however carefully explained or allegorically interpreted, involve a degradation of the Supreme Being which it is impossible to reconcile with the sublime announcement of our Saviour that God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. The adoration which is paid to the Deity under any corporeal figure or visible representation cannot be vindicated from the charge of idolatry upon any principles which do not exempt from the same imputation every form, whether ancient or modern, of Pagan superstition. It is quite certain, from the accounts of heathen philosophers and poets, that the images of their gods were regarded simply as visible memorials of invisible deities, as signs by which their affections were excited and through which their worship was directed. The veneration with which they were treated was purely of that relative kind which the Romish doctors impute to the devotees of their own communion. 'Pagan statues and Romish pictures are due to the operation of the same principle — an attempt to accommodate the receding majesty of a spiritual being to human sympathies, and to divest the adoration of an infinite object of some of its awful and mysterious veneration by reducing its grandeur to the feeble apprehension of human capacities. Fallen humanity, having originally apostatized from God, and lost the right as well as the power of intimate communion with the Father of spirits, seeks to gratify its religious aspirations by tangible objects around which its sympathies can readily cling. Unable to soar to the unapproachable light in which Deity dwells in mysterious sanctity, it spends its devotion upon humbler things, to which it imparts such Divine associations as may seem at least to reconcile the worship with the acknowledged supremacy of God. When we cannot rise to God, the religious necessities of our nature will drag Him down to us. In the Papal community the degradation of the Supreme Being seems to have

reached its lowest point of disgusting fetichism in the adoration of the bread and wine of the sacramental feast. I know of nothing in the annals of heathenism that can justly be compared with this stupendous climax of absurdity, impiety, blasphemy and idolatry. The work of the cook and the product of the vintage, bread and wine, the materials of food which pass through the stages of digestion and decay, are placed before us, after having been submitted to the magical process of sacerdotal enchantment, as the eternal God in the person of the incarnate Redeemer.² The eucharistic elements are not memorials of Christ nor visible symbols of his love: they are, after the pretended consecration of the priest, the Son of God himself. They are worshipped and adored, eaten and drunk, received into the stomach and passed into the bowels, as the Creator, Preserver and Saviour of mankind!

The ancient Egyptians, in paying religious veneration to inferior animals and to a certain class of vegetables, regarded them as sacred, as we learn from Herodotus and Cicero, on account of their subservience to purposes of utility. They were considered not as gods themselves, but as

1 "Nor is it of any importance whether they worship simply the idol or God in the idol; it is always idolatry when Divine honours are paid to an idol under any pretence whatsoever. And as God will not be worshipped in a superstitious or idolatrous manner, whatever is conferred on idols is taken from Him. Let this be considered by those who seek such miserable pretexts for the defence of that execrable idolatry with which for many ages true religion has been overwhelmed and subverted. The images, they say, are not considered as gods. Neither were the Jews so thoughtless as not to remember that it was God by whose hand they had been conducted out of Egypt before they made the calf. But when Aaron said that those were the gods by whom they had been liberated from Egypt, they boldly assented: signifying, doubtless, that they would keep in remembrance that God Himself was their Deliverer, while they could see Him going before them in the calf. Nor can we believe the heathen to have been so stupid as to conceive that God was no other than wood and stone. For they changed the images at pleasure, but always retained in their minds the same gods, and there were many images for one god; nor did they imagine to themselves gods in proportion to the multitude of images; besides, they daily consecrated new images, but without supposing that they made new gods. Read the excuses which Augustine (in Psalm cxiii) says were alleged by the idolaters of the age in which he lived. When they were charged with idolatry, the vulgar replied that they worshipped not the visible figure, but the Divinity that invisibly dwelt in it. But they whose religion was, as he expresses himself, more refined, said that they worshipped neither the image nor the Spirit represented by it, but that in the corporeal figure they beheld a sign of that which they ought to worship." Calvin's Inst., Liv. i., cap. xi., 10. Upon this whole subject of the idolatry of the Church of Rome the reader is referred to Archbishop Tenison's Discourse of Idolatry, particularly to chapters x., xi., xii. That the heathens did not regard their images as gods, and that they worshipped them on the same principle vindicated by the Papists, may be seen from Arnobius, Lactantius, Austin and divers of the Fathers. A very interesting discussion of the nature and unlawfulness of image-worship may be found in Taylor's Ductor Dubitantium, book ii., chap. ii., rule 6, 21, ad fin; Works, vol. xii., p. 382, seq. The vain pretexts of the Papists are there so ably discussed that the reader is earnestly requested to pursue it.

2 We submit to the reader the following description of the scene when the bread and wine are about to be destroyed and the person of the Saviour produced. It is taken from Bishop England's preface to his translation of the Roman missal, p. 78:

"We are now arrived at that part which is the most solemn, important and interesting of the entire; everything hitherto had reference remotely or proximately to the awful moment which approaches. For now the true victim is about to be produced. In a well-regulated cathedral this indeed is a moment of splendid, improving and edifying exhibition to the well-instructed Christian. The joyful hosannas of the organ have died away in deep and solemn notes which seem to be gradually lost as they ascend to the throne of God, and solemn silence pervades the church; the celebrant stands bare-headed, about to perform the most awful duty in which a man could possibly be engaged. His assistants in profound expectation await the performance of that duty; taper-bearers line the sides of the sanctuary, and with their lighted lamps await the arrival of their Lord; incense-bearers kneel, ready to envelope the altar in a cloud of perfumes which represents the prayers of the Saints, and at the moment of the consecration, when the celebrant elevates the host and the tinkling of a small bell gives notice of the arrival of the Lamb, every knee is bent, every head is bowed, gratulating music bursts upon the ear, and the lights which surround the throne of Him who comes to save a world are seen dimly blazing through the clouds of perfumed smoke which envelope this mystic place."

instruments of Divine Providence by which the interests of husbandry were promoted and noxious vermin were destroyed. But where in the whole history of mankind, among the darkest tribes of Africa or the benighted inhabitants of the isles of the sea, is another instance to be found of a superstition so degraded or a form of idolatry so horribly revolting as that which is presented in the doctrine of the Mass? The infernal incantation of the witches in Macbeth, chanting their awful dirges over the boiling caldron in which are mingled the elements of death, are to my mind less insupportably disgusting, less terrifically wicked, than those of the priests of Rome pretending to subject the Saviour of the world, in cold-blood cruelty and for purposes of hire, and that in increasing millions of instances, to the utterable agonies of Gethsemane and Calvary.

While she thus depresses the Divine standard of holiness, mutilates the first table of the law, and makes idolatry a part of devotion, she fabricates a standard of her own. She assumes to be a lawgiver, and proclaims her impious precepts upon the pains of the second death. Men may violate the law of God with impunity, but the authority of Rome must be guarded with the awful sanctions of eternity. She has instituted days, and months, and years; she has appointed confessions, penances and ceremonies; she has constructed a vast system of will-worship, and has conceded the palm of distinguished holiness to the sanctimonious hypocrites who must scrupulously comply with her minute and painful observances, although they may be living in flagrant contempt of some of the most palpable injunctions of God.

And what shall be said of the fiction of supererogatory merits, of the competency of one man to satisfy for the sins of another, and of the power of the Church to dispense indulgences for gold? What shall be said of purgatory, private masses, auricular confession and priestly absolution? What are all these but so many proofs of the desperate blindness of Rome in regard to the nature of holiness, the beauty and simplicity of spiritual truth, and the compass, purity and extent of the Divine law — so many monuments of presumptuous confidence in the resources and ability of man, and contempt for the provisions and efficacy of God's grace?

“God never accepts the will for the deed, when the deed may be done; yea, and so far as the deed can be done, the will without it is but a mockery unto God.”

Richard Steele.

Obituary

Mrs Barbara Haringa

Barbara Helen Harvey was born in August 1941. When she was still quite young she was bereaved of her father which sad providence led to the family's removal to Gisborne. This also led to her young widowed mother being able to afford hospitality to church deputies and an open door for the gospel in Gisborne. When the Rev. Finlay MacLeod came to Gisborne in 1948 as deputy, it was in this home that he stayed. It was on this occasion that Barbara and her brother George were baptised. The first public services under the auspices of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland were conducted at this time and took place in the Oddfellows Hall.

There is no evidence of any serious impressions left on her mind as a result of this early exposure to the truth. The change from darkness to light did not occur until many years later when a marked change in her views and conduct became evident. She was received into full communion in October 1963.

By grace she was enabled to witness a good profession. In 1966 she married Jim Haringa and they faithfully brought up the three children the Lord gave them. As a closely knit family they felt it very much when the still young mother became ill and the fatal disease was diagnosed. However, both Barbara and her like-minded husband were enabled to face the trials of this illness in the exercise of faith so that they were both very much upheld. Thomas Manton in a sermon mentioned that death is not a time to get faith but to exercise faith. The exercise of faith was evident in Barbara's illness during which she suffered considerable discomfort and pain. In a diary she wrote: "The Lord doeth all things well. May I be taught patience in all things. How we fall daily. O Lord keep me that I may do all things to thine honour and glory." She knew that she suffered a fatal illness and said she was glad she did not feel rebellious about it. On one occasion, when she had suffered a bad spell of pain, she was speaking with her mother about the sufferings of Christ. She said that it was amazing that the Saviour should suffer such agony for sinners.

When she considered, one day, that all sufferings and pain are the result of sin, she felt comforted from the thought that the sufferings in this world are the only hell a believer will ever have.

She warned her children not to put off seeking the Lord while they have good health as it might be impossible to seek the Lord on a death-bed when there might be pain and other discomforts. She said once to her mother: "What if I had to seek Christ now for the first time; what would

I do?" She often wanted Psalm 25 to be read to her. She called it her precious Psalm 25. A few days before the end came she was able to discuss, with a clear and calm mind, the funeral arrangements. She desired verses 6-12 of Psalm 25 to be sung.

In her Bible she kept a poem that had evidently been made precious to her. The verse of it is as follows:

I need thee precious Jesus, for I am full of sin
My soul is dark and guilty, my heart is dead within
I need the cleansing fountain, where I can always flee
The blood of Christ most precious, the sinner's perfect plea.

These words expressed her innermost desire and felt need of cleansing in the blood of Christ. It was a blessing to those who were in daily contact with her to see her calm resignation and hope of a better life. At last it was her strong desire to be taken from this earthly scene. This occurred peacefully in the early hours of 30th June, 1987 at the relatively young age of 45 years. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." (Rev. 14: 13.)

This we know is the comfort of her husband, children, mother, brothers and sister with whom we sympathise in the loss of a loved one and a useful Christian from the church militant. Nevertheless, our loss is her gain.

J. A. T. van Dorp

Book Reviews

Alexander Peden — The Prophet of the Covenant by John C. Johnstone. 263 pp. £3.95 + 50p postage. Mourne Missionary Trust, 4 Church Road, Carginagh, Kilkeel, Co. Durham, N. Ireland, BT23 4QB.

This is a reprint of a book published in 1902 by Rev. J. C. Johnstone, minister of Dunoon U.F. Church. Mr Johnstone also wrote "The Treasury of the Scottish Covenant" containing a general summary of the history and literature of the Covenanting period. This book on Alexander Peden, one of the noted ministers of Covenanting times, also contains a summary of the suffering times in Scotland when the ministers who preached and the people who attended the preaching of the Word did so at the peril of their lives. Reference is made to many of those who contended for and suffered, some unto death, for the Crown rights of King Jesus. It was a black time in Scotland's history when men were persecuted and hounded to death only for their faithfulness to Christ and His Cause: it was a glorious time, on the other hand, in the history of our land when men were found willing to suffer for His sake. Whatever

keeps in remembrance these events is welcome, and this is what this book aims to do. In view of the fact that the life of Peden in the book is constantly interrupted to bring before the reader some incident of Covenanting history not always directly related to Peden's life, the reader may not find the account as connected as a simple account of his history and life would have been. Nevertheless, as all the matter is directly related to the Covenanting struggle there is much here fitted to convey to the reader the trials and sufferings of those times.

The liberties which the Church in Scotland has enjoyed now for so many years and the privileges so dearly bought, are we fear ready to be lost in our day because of the unfaithfulness of the Church in Scotland to the inheritance which has been handed down. If this book will stir up the people of Scotland, as we approach the end of the twentieth century, to value once more the blessings of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints it will not have been republished in vain.

D. B. M.

The Life and Letters of Benjamin Morgan Palmer by Thomas Cary Johnson. Banner of Truth Trust. 676 pp. £11.95.

Benjamin Morgan Palmer (1818-1902) was one of the greatest preachers of the Southern States of America. He succeeded J. H. Thornwell as pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Columbia, South Carolina and later for 46 years was pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, New Orleans. In these charges he carried on a very effective preaching and pastoral ministry having many souls for his hire. He lived through the period of the American Civil War with all the trauma that that involved both during and after the war, for those who were supporters of the cause of the Southern States. His speeches delivered in connection with this Cause were of the highest order as were his many speeches delivered on a variety of occasions. But it was in the pulpit he excelled and this is brought out forcibly in the book through extracts of his sermons being included in the narrative.

Palmer, like many before and since, had to learn through family afflictions and bereavements what it was to pass through deep waters. The Lord has always had wise ends in view in this for His servants. It is in order that they may learn to comfort others with the same comfort with which they themselves are comforted of God. The outbreak of plague at one period of his ministry showed him to be a true pastor to his flock when he visited the stricken homes, yet was preserved himself from the danger.

For two years he was to act as Professor in Columbia Seminary and his gifts and talents were fully adequate to the task. But it was the pulpit that called him and to New Orleans he went to spend the rest of his life in that most glorious of works — the preaching of the everlasting gospel — the gospel of Jesus Christ. One who heard him preach on the words — “The cup which My Father gave me, shall I not drink it?” — said that it was the most effective eloquence that he had ever known.

Much use is made of Dr. Palmer’s letters throughout the book and these reveal the workings of his heart. Any reader may take up this book and receive some benefit from it but it is to ministers and divinity students that it will be of special interest and to such we are glad to commend it.

D. B. M.

Notes and Comments

Death of former Archbishop of Canterbury

Lord Ramsay, former Archbishop of Canterbury, recently passed away. Raised to the highest office in the Church of England he gave his full support to the ecumenical movement. His visit to the Pope in 1966 helped to pave the way for closer relations between the Church of England and the Church of Rome. It is sad to think that occupying such a place of authority in the Church of England, it is for these things he is remembered and has been acclaimed. For too long has it been the case that the leaders in the larger churches throughout the world have been blind leaders of the blind. What need there is that the Lord would raise up men of true spiritual vision, so that our land might be blessed once again with faithful and godly men in the churches.

Act of Terrorism

World wide attention was focussed in April on the hijacking of the Kuwait Airways aircraft. During the 16-day ordeal the passengers were exposed to death threats though some passengers were released in Iran and in Cyprus. While at Larnaca Airport in Cyprus two Kuwaiti passengers were shot in cold blood. Eventually all the passengers were released in Algeria and the hijackers it would appear were given a safe passage out of the country. The attempt, however, by the hijackers to obtain the release of prisoners from Kuwaiti jails failed.

The countries of the world try to do what they can to prevent these acts of terrorism and attempts at blackmail, but find it difficult to stop them altogether. In this instance it was done by Moslem extremists devoted to

one particular section of the Moslem religion, men who seem willing even to give their lives for their cause. The religion of the false prophet was established by the sword and it would appear that it has not changed its blood-thirsty nature down to the present time. May the day speedily come when the followers of Mohammed will be delivered from the false religion to which they are so devotedly attached. It is to be hoped that those who were responsible for this outrage may yet be brought to justice. If they do escape the judgment of men they will yet have to face the judgment of God.

Aberdeen Consultant's View on Premature Babies

While Mr David Alton's Bill to try to reduce the high incidence of abortion is going through Parliament, Professor Alexander Campbell of Aberdeen University has advocated that for premature babies of less than 750 grammes weight medical intervention should not be continued and the child left to die. He maintained that there were clear cases where withholding or withdrawing life support was justified. Some of those cases arose from instances where attempted termination had gone wrong. Professor Campbell was speaking at a conference on medical ethics.

It does not appear to us that Professor Campbell's utterances on this occasion will go any way to relieve the minds of people regarding the ethical judgments of doctors in these and other cases, but rather increase their anxieties. It is sad to think that the medical profession which was held in so high regard because of devotion to duty and to the preserving of human life, has lost that regard to a considerable extent through the practice of abortion on a large scale. The inhuman destruction of life in the womb is a blot on those who practise it and for which they will have to answer in the great day of judgment. It is to be hoped that Mr David Alton's Bill presently before Parliament will do something to relieve the present situation. (This Bill ran out of time in the face of obstruction on 16th May. Ed.)

National Lottery to Support Hospitals

A proposal has been put forward backed by the National Hospital Trust to run a lottery to support hospitals. So far no support has been given by the Government to such a scheme. It will now be seen whether the Government is to remain firm. To some it appears an easy way to raise money for the support of hospitals.

However, though the cause may be an honourable one, the means to be used in this instance are not so. A lottery appeals to the sinful and covetous nature in man and therefore should be rejected along with all

other forms of gambling. Surely if men genuinely desire the further extension of medical care, then financial provision ought to be made for it either by the Government or in some other legitimate way.

Sabbath Trading and the European Court

B & Q, Britain's largest DIY chain of shops, was recently fined £250 for Sabbath trading. The company's appeal against this fine was adjourned to allow a decision to be made first by the European Court in Luxembourg as to whether the English law on Sabbath trading had been superseded by EEC law. The question was whether the company should be prevented from selling imported EEC goods on a seven-day basis. It is thought that the case will take 18 months to resolve, according to a report in the *Times*. The report indicates that B & Q has 180 stores, 100 of which open on Sabbath, in England and Wales where the Sabbath trading laws apply. This case before the European Court is regarded as a test case. The Company intends to continue to trade seven days a week.

The encroachment on the sanctity of the Lord's day, particularly by the large combines, has become notorious. The danger in this case is that EEC law may overrule the law of the country. If this happens it is a further indication of the price that Britain has had to pay for its accession to the European Community. Loss of national sovereignty and subjection to an alien multinational authority, largely Romanist dominated, will expose Britain more and more to the loss of her dearly bought Protestant privileges and liberties. How true was Rev. Lachlan MacKenzie's statement early in the 19th Century that Britain would never be destroyed until she would destroy herself by departing from her God.

Roman Catholic Schools

Cardinal Basil Hume has entered into the arena of the Educational Reform Bill now before Parliament by supporting the Bishop of London in his attempt to delay abolition of the Inner London Education Authority. The Roman Catholic Church is not happy that parents can apply for grant-maintained status. They wish the bishops to have a veto over the parents' decisions in this matter. A Roman Catholic spokesman said that "Catholic" schools are not just educational projects which happen to have ecclesiastical administrators, but are integral to the life of the Church.

How clear it is that the anti-Christian system of Rome does all in its power to ensure that its children are indoctrinated at an early age with its false beliefs. Would that the Protestant Churches of the land were as anxious too ensure that the children of the nation are taught the pure

doctrines of God's Word. So far as many of these Churches are concerned they have so departed from the truths of God's Word as to have nothing of value to teach the young or the old. Indeed, they have departed so far from the Christian faith as to be ready to be swallowed up in the anti-Christian system of Rome.

Church Notes

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.

Skye: At Portree on 28th June at 11 a.m.

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

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.

Zimbabwe Mission

Miss Etta MacLennan returned to her teaching duties at Ingwenya towards the end of April after a furlough of over three months. Miss

Marion Graham then came home for her long leave which had been delayed earlier. The need for staff at Ingwenya remains. It is to be hoped that the Lord will direct the mind of suitable candidates to this most rewarding work.

Overseas Deputies

Rev. D. Boyd returned to this country as expected on 26th April after a period as Church Deputy to Australia and New Zealand. Rev. Angus MacKay, Lochcarron, was due to leave this country for New Zealand and Australia on 24th May, accompanied by his wife. We trust that Mr MacKay's health will stand up to the strain of these travels and that they will be brought back in safety to this country early in September (D.V.). We pray, too, that the labours of the deputies overseas will be blessed. Rev. Alex Murray, accompanied by his wife and grandchild, expect to visit Canada for three months from June to the end of August (D.V.). Rev. J. A. T. Van Dorp also expects to spend some weeks in Canada on his return journey to New Zealand. We trust that journeying mercies may be granted the deputies and those who accompany them on their long flights by air. We have reason to acknowledge the Lord's goodness in this matter hitherto and trust it may be so too in the future (D.V.).

Acknowledgment of Donations

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

Beauly: From the Estate of the late Mrs M. MacKenzie, Ferry Road, Beauly, per MacLeod & MacCallum, Solicitors, £200 for the general purposes of the congregation.

Dumbarton: Glasgow Friend, £10 (by post); J. C., Glasgow, £20; Anon., Glasgow, £20, both per M. H., all for Communion Expenses; Anon., "Dumbarton Cause", £300 "where most needed" (in plate 10/4/88); Anon., £40 for Foreign Mission and General Building Account (in plate 7/4/88).

Edinburgh: Anon., £50 for Jewish and Foreign Missions (envelope in plate); Anon., £50 for B.T.S.; Mr and Mrs MacM., Arisaig, £20 for Congr. Funds and £25 for Tape Ministry, per Rev. Angus Morrison.

Fort William: Envelope in plate, £10, any useful cause, Psalm 103; Envelope in plate, £5; Mrs S., £30; Envelope in plate, £5.

Greenock: Anon., £200 for F.P. Cause, Greenock, per Mr Kenneth Gillies (in St Jude's collection plate).

South Harris: Anon., £300 for South Harris F.P. Church Bldg. Fund, per St. Jude's Treasurer; Friend, Glasgow — Wall clock for new Church, Leverburgh; N. Tolsta Friend, £5; N. Tolsta Friend, £10; Stornoway Friend, £10; Stornoway Friend, £5, all for Congr. Fund; Mr and Mrs D. MacL., £20 for Leverburgh Home of Rest, per J. Nicolson.

Stornoway: Miss K. A. Macleod, The Cottage, Callanish, Isle of Lewis, £10 for Sust. Fund, per Rev. J. MacLeod.

Vatten: A. M. L. (envelope in plate), £15 for Car Fund.