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The Lord will go before you

God, the God of Israel is a promising God to His people. The Scriptures of truth are full of encouraging, sustaining and comforting promises to His own people. They are left on record in God's Word so that they might derive encouragement and help from them throughout their wilderness journey in this world. They have need of them in the valley of this world, and especially in time of trial and difficulty, or else they would not have been left on record for them in Holy Writ.

All the promises of God's Word belong to His people and they are to lay hold on them by faith. They belong to them in Christ as He has purchased all the blessings of the everlasting covenant for them. "All the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen." In the strength of these promises they shall go for many days. These promises are divinely adapted to suit their case in every time of need. How suitable and how timely they are to their soul when applied by the power of the Holy Ghost.

What encouragement it is to the living soul when going through the wilderness of this world to have the assurance from the Lord Himself: "My Presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest", as the Lord promised Moses. So, too, is that Word given through the prophet Isaiah: "The Lord will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your rereward." This means that they have protection before and behind. The Lord is both leading them in the way they should go and also giving them protection on every hand. It is true that "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them." The angels are messengers from heaven whose special duty it is to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation, yet the Lord Himself, the Angel of the Covenant is with them also.

The Lord went before His people in the wilderness in the pillar of the cloud by day and in the pillar of fire by night to lead them in the way. He found out a way for them — a right way that they might go to a city of habitation. If the Lord did not lead them they would wander in the wilderness in which there is no way. The Lord has a care for His own. He is the good Shepherd who gathers the lambs into His bosom and gently leads those that are with young. He will never overdrive them because of His care for them. So, too, when through their folly they go aside out of the way, He will bring them back again and speak comfortably to them. Yet the desire of the true people of God is to be led by Him and to be taught by Him. He says to them:

“I will instruct thee, and thee teach the way that thou shalt go;
And with mine eye upon thee set, I will direction show.”

Met. Ps. 32: 8

The Lord not only goes before His people, but He is their rereward. Exposed, as we are, to assaults on every hand, how encouraging it ought to be to them that the Lord is protecting them from these dangers by coming behind them as well as before. The Egyptians thought that the children of Israel could not escape out of their land when they were enclosed between the mountains and the sea, but this was because they failed to reckon with the God of Israel, who was their Deliverer. Not only did the Lord go behind them to discomfit their enemies but also opened a way for them through the Red Sea by which way they would escape out of the hands of their enemies.

The Lord is with his people to do them good and to make their way prosperous and he will never leave them nor forsake them — not even in their darkest circumstances. Moses, the man of God, could say in the word of the Lord to Joshua, his successor: “The Lord, He it is that doth go before thee; He will be with thee, He will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.” The Lord also assured Joshua after Moses’ death that He would be with him, whithersoever he went. Such was encouragement indeed in view of the great task that was before him in taking possession of the land of Israel.

Abraham’s servant could not but acknowledge the good hand of the Lord upon him in seeking a wife for Isaac. He had to say: “I being in the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master’s brethren.” So does the Lord still lead His people and His servants. They are to seek direction from His Word, as the Lord directed Joshua and assured him that “then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.”

Sermon

By Rev. John Colquhoun, Glendale, Skye

“For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” Isaiah 55: 10, 11.

Beginning at the 40th chapter of this prophecy the prophet speaks of the advent of John the Baptist and the coming of the Messiah and what the Messiah was to meet with in His humiliation. In the 53rd chapter we have a graphic picture of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that was to follow. “He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.” Part of that glory was to be the calling of the Gentiles, as that is brought before us in the 54th chapter where we read the exhortation given to the Church, “Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes. For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left, and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.” In the chapter which we have read in your hearing there is a wonderful invitation given to the thirsty and to the poor, and a promise to make with them an “everlasting covenant” “even the sure mercies of David.” This invitation is in the ears of all to whom the Word of God comes, but alas, in our day, very few take any notice of it. Nevertheless that Word will bring forth all that God purposed it should bring forth. This is the import of the words chosen at this time as the basis of a few remarks, and from them we shall notice, as enabled, three things. I. The Word spoken of. II. The manner of its going forth. III. What it is to do.

I. The Word spoken of.

In the Bible we have the term “Word” used in a two-fold sense. There is the incarnate Word and the written Word. It is true of the incarnate Word, even the Lord Jesus Christ, that He came forth from God, and had a work to do which was finished on Calvary, which brought forth much fruit, and part of that fruit is the giving of the written Word. Christ is the incarnate Word and came forth from God. He could claim an eternal union with the Father. “I and my Father are one. “Thus all the attributes which belong to the Father belong to Christ also, and He possessed these attributes when He tabernacled in the flesh, for He was

both God and man in two distinct natures, and one Person forever. He undertook a work on behalf of His own people which no mere man could accomplish. It required His Divinity to support his humanity in accomplishing what the Justice of God required, and thus we find a Divine Person, even the Son of God, taking His place as the Substitute of His people, under the terrible stroke of the sword of Divine Justice, and rendering a complete satisfaction to all the attributes of the Godhead, and thus finishing transgression and bringing in an everlasting righteousness.

We have the incarnate Word in His offices as Prophet, Priest, and King. He reveals God, and the will of God, to sinners. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." John 1: 18. He began early in the history of mankind to execute the office of a prophet. Considering the fact that God could not deal with sinful man after the Fall but through a Mediator we are warranted to conclude that it was the Second Person who appeared to Adam and Eve, and acted in His prophetic office by which, in passing a sentence of condemnation upon the Devil, He conveyed to our first parents God's purpose of mercy by intimating that which was to be the most awful conflict which was ever to be waged in this world — a conflict between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, a conflict which was to issue in victory when Christ cried on the Cross, "It is finished." True it is that the conflict between the seed of the woman in the members of Christ's mystical body, and the seed of the serpent in those who walk "according to the course of this world" is still being waged, but through Him who finished the work on Calvary, Christ's members are made "more than conquerors." This He reveals to His own by "His Word and Spirit." By that same Word and Spirit they get glorious views of His Priestly and Kingly offices.

We believe, however, that it is His written word that is more particularly brought before us in our text. That Word is what we commonly call the Bible. It reveals to us all that is necessary for us to know in answer to that all-important question, What is it that saves a sin-ruined soul? It is very much in the nature of man to seek after other revelations. This is clearly brought before us in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. The rich man thought that if one rose from the dead it would turn his brethren from their sins. No doubt such a happening might strike terror into them so that, for the time being they would forsake their outward practices, but it would not touch their hearts. The Rev Archibald Cook, Daviot used to say that if you would dip a sinner in the

lake of hell in the morning for a particular sin of which he was guilty he would be quite ready to commit that same sin before the sun would go down for which he was dipped in the lake of hell in the morning. The terrors of a lost eternity, described by one who had risen from the dead, though he should speak with the greatest elequence which was ever found among men would avail nothing. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." Luke 16: 31.

In the Bible we have God's law set before us as the standard which we must attain to, if we are to have life through our own works, and it is a standard which no sinner can attain to. It only serves to show us our sinful condition for "by the law is the knowledge of sin." It was so with the children of Israel at the giving of the Moral Law on Mount Sinai. They were made conscious of their need of a Mediator between them and the holy God who proclaimed this law. In the same manner when the Word of God comes, accompanied by the power of the Spirit, to the sinner, that sinner is brought face to face with realities of which he was not conscious before. All his false hopes melt away, and the fortifications in which he thought to find shelter are broken down. "Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" Jer. 23: 29.

The Bible has more than terrors for an awakened and wounded soul. There is to be found there a healing balm. Christ, as a crucified, risen, and exalted Saviour, is set before us, and all that He became for His people. "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." Isa. 53: 5. This Saviour is not far off, but near. He is the near kinsman who is able and willing to act the part of a kinsman. He can be touched with a fellow-feeling of our infirmities, for He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." The Word of the Lord reveals that the ignorance and brutishness of those who trust in Him will not keep Him from showing His interest in them for He has "compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way." This puts the Lord's people in a position that is desirable indeed, whatever their outward circumstances may be. This enabled the Apostle Paul to say, "I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content." Phil. 4: 11. The Christian may well afford to act thus when the Word of the Lord says, "Be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Heb. 13: 5.

There are also in the word of the Lord, God's great and precious pro-

mises, none of which will fail. A fellow-creature might promise many things which, through inability or change of circumstances, he might never be able to perform. It is not so with the Lord. He is both able and willing to perform His promises. Micah was confident of this when he said, "Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old." Micah 7: 20. His eye is on His poor ones, and He will perform His promises to them. "He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy." Ps. 72: 12, 13.

This Word goeth out of the mouth of the Lord. Job valued highly the word that goeth out of the mouth of the Lord when he said, "Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food." Job 23: 12. It is so with the Lord's people in every age of time. With them it is not, What saith man? but, What saith the Lord? That Word is for their guidance, their instruction, their comfort, and it is meat and drink to their soul. It is used in their sanctification. In the Saviour's prayer on their behalf, he said, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." John 17: 18, and by way of encouraging them, He says, "Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." The Psalmist, under the inspiration of the Spirit, shows the efficacy of the Word to cleanse, when he says, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word." Ps. 119: 9.

II. I now come to notice something as to the manner of its going forth.

The emblems used are the rain and the snow coming down from heaven. We are here directed to the purity of the Word. We read that "the words of the Lord are pure words: As silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times." Ps. 12: 6. Efforts were made by many to corrupt the Word of God. This was done at times by deliberate attempts to introduce corrupt readings and glosses into the manuscripts, and in later times by showing a preference to these corrupt readings rather than those which bore unmistakeable marks of being genuine. Many of the so-called "assured results" of the Higher Critics are based on these spurious readings, and they have succeeded well in inoculating a generation not well-grounded in the doctrines of God's Word with a poisonous dope which only the saving work of the Spirit can put out. Those who love the Word of God, however, will take up the attitude of the Apostle when he said, "For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of

sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ." II. Cor. 2: 17.

The emblems used here show that the Word of God is irresistible when it comes with power. This evening, as you know, is wet and stormy, and no doubt every one of you would rather that it continued dry because of your crops. Could any of you keep back the rain? Have any of our most clever scientists ever been able to devise means by which the rain and the snow could be held back? No. It is beyond their power or their wisdom to do so. In the same way when the Word that goeth out of the mouth of the Lord comes with power, the most hardened sinner is unable to keep it back. Yea, I may add that the Devil himself cannot do so. Where could you find any one more immersed in superstition and idolatry than Manesseh, or one more mad against the Lord Jesus Christ than Saul of Tarsus, or one more a slave to the Devil than Mary Magdelene, and yet when the Word came from the mouth of the Lord to them, it turned them to be humble followers of the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. They could not resist it, and they were made willing in a day of the power of the Spirit to be saved by Christ, and to give Him the glory of their salvation, setting Him before us "with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness in his heart." Song 3: 11.

This going forth is in accordance with God's sovereignty. When the rain and the snow fall on some parts of the earth, and are withholden from other parts, it does not just happen that it is so. It is God who sends it or withholds it. "Whatever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places. He causes the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain; he bringeth the wind out of his treasures." Ps. 135: 6, 7. Thus also does the Lord with His spiritual bounties, and dispenses them to whom He will. You may find many having the privileges of the gospel, and the gospel is a savour of death unto death of them and one among them plucked out as a brand from the burning, and raised up to be a monument of free and sovereign grace. There were many who were professing religion in the days of the Saviour who were passed by, and the poor illiterate fishermen of Galilee taken and taught by the Spirit of God. The Saviour Himself gives the explanation of this when He says, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight." Matt. 11: 25, 26.

When the Lord visits a place or a people with the gospel, or leaves it

there for a long period without anything to be seen but spiritual barrenness, who can tell what His purpose may be. Among ourselves we have the gospel from our infancy, but it is very little fruit that is to be seen. This ought to cause each of us to have heart-searching in company with the Searcher of hearts. We cannot deny but that you are attentive on the public means of grace, and it may be that the Lord has a gracious purpose towards some of you. In sending the rain and the snow upon the earth He does it that "it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater," and there may be some of you who are ordained from all eternity to be "vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory." The most suitable Scripture exhortation to you is to be found in this chapter; "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Verses 6 and 7.

III. The third matter to which I would seek to draw your attention is, That which the Word going out of the mouth of the Lord will do.

It is to give seed to the sower. The sower is the preacher of the gospel. "Behold, a sower went forth to sow." It is the good seed of the kingdom that he sows, and therefore it is to the Word that goeth forth out of the mouth of the Lord that he must turn. There are many today who profess to preach the gospel, and if you turn to their church advertisements in the Saturday papers, you will find that they discourse on the most trifling subjects which are not remotely connected with the condition and needs of immortal souls, but the sad thing is that the people love to have it so. When the true gospel preacher goes out with his seed basket he takes his seed out of the rich treasures of the Bible, and sows it in handfuls.

One handful which he sows forms the answer to the first question in the Shorter Catechism; "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever." We are to glorify God in all things that we do; "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." I. Cor. 10: 31. The preacher of the Word ought to glorify God by his example and by his doctrine, for he must study to show himself "approved of God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." II. Tim. 2: 15. It is thus that one can follow in the steps of the Apostle Paul when he said, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Gal. 6: 14. When this end of our creation is sought after there is also the enjoying of God. He is

enjoyed in the public and private exercises of His worship, in the Word and in the sacraments, and also in the fellowship which the Lord's people have with each other in Christ.

Another handful which the preacher of the gospel must sow is man's ruin by the Fall. Jacob's sons could say that they were the "sons of one man," and so can we. We are all the children of fallen Adam, and that Fall has ruined us so that our nature is wholly corrupt, as is clearly manifested in our thoughts, words, and actions. Of the whole human race it can be said, "From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores; they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither molified with ointment." Isa 1: 6. Until we realise that this is our condition we can never appreciate God's provision in the gospel. Those preachers who deny the Fall have no gospel to preach, for the gospel is for fallen man, not for good men and women. "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick."

In going out with the good seed of the Word, the preacher must make much of Christ. James Durham, one of the most eminent of the divines of the Second Reformation in Scotland, said that Christ ought to be the text of the sermon, the beginning of the sermon, the body of the sermon, and the conclusion of the sermon. There must, at all times, be a holding forth of a crucified, risen, and exalted Saviour, as God's only remedy to meet with the lost and ruined condition of man, for "neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4: 12. His wonderful love in veiling His Godhead, and coming into this world to suffer and die for sinners, set forth in the gospel is that which draws sinners to Him. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." John 12: 32.

Again, the sower must bring before sinners the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. Alas, there are a great many congregations in Scotland who can say with the men who met the Apostle Paul at Ephesus, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." Acts 19: 2. The preaching where there is nothing said about the work of the Holy Spirit is not the preaching of the gospel. Sinners are being deceived for eternity when they are told that they themselves can believe. Many so-called evangelists, if they get unconverted men by the hundreds to say that they believe, they give glowing reports of the great success of their mission when, sad to say, their poor dupes are still in the gall of bitterness and under the bond of iniquity, without God and without hope in

the world. The result of this is, that in a short while they go back like the dog to his vomit again, and like the sow that is washed to its wallowing in the mire. When the Holy Spirit works, the result will be what Christ says, "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." John 16: 14. It is true of those in whom that work is done that they are among those on whose behalf the Apostle speaks when he says, "But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." Heb. 10: 39.

It gives bread to the eater. Those who come under the power of the gospel are no longer, like the prodigal son, seeking to eat of the husks of the swine. They are feeding by faith upon Christ to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace. They have a Saviour who is very God and very man, thus, though He is the eternal God He can have compassion on His poor people in their infirmities, temptations, and persecutions, and at the same time He makes His grace sufficient for them and His strength perfect in their weakness, carrying them through to the hour of their death, accompanying them in the dark valley of the shadow of death, and bringing them home to glory, giving them in all their difficulties the assurance that "my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." John 6: 55.

It is bread to the eater for the Lord's people that their Savior is not only a Saviour who has suffered, but also a triumphing Saviour. Why is it that death could not hold the Saviour in the grave? It is because that for which He suffered and died no longer existed. He died for the sins of His people, and in making atonement for their sins, He made an end of sin and brought in an everlasting righteousness. Yea, even death, which is the wages of sin, He abolished, and thus, in His atoning death, He satisfied for ever the Justice of God on behalf of the elect, and gave them a right to sing triumphantly, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" 1 Cor. 15: 55. "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." — Verse 57.

As bread gives strength to the weakening body, so the Lord's people are strengthened by experiencing that Christ is a Saviour who can be approached. It is on very rare occasions that poor people are permitted to approach the Sovereign of this realm, and before that takes place many rules and regulations have to be observed, but, in this case, the approach is to be made to One Who is infinitely higher than the Sovereign of Great Britain. It is to be made to the King of kings and Lord of lords, yet we are exhorted to come boldly to Him. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to

help in time of need." Heb. 4: 16. He invites those who labour and are heavy laden, He has compassion on the ignorant and on those who are out of the way, He has made provision for the poor and the needy, and He Himself has become to them a protection from every tempest that may meet with them in the way. By these things He says to His Zion, "I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread." Ps. 132: 15. By this Word which goes out of His mouth he is accomplishing what He has purposed from all eternity concerning a countless number of the race to which we belong. May He bless His Word.

The Free Church Declaratory Act of 1892

Remarks by the late Mr Duncan Crawford, Elder, Oban, and the late Mr John Hamilton, Student, Oban.

To our own loss we are too prone to forget our past history. Extracts from speeches delivered prior to and after the formation of the Church may help to remind us of the subjects then under discussion. The testimony of the Free Presbyterian Church is one that must be maintained in its entirety in the love of the Spirit, if we are to enjoy the favour of heaven. The early years of the Free Presbyterian Church were years of spiritual fervour and love — seasons of close fellowship with the Triune Jehovah — times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

The following remarks by the late Mr Duncan Crawford, a much-respected and talented elder of the Oban congregation, and the late Mr John Hamilton, student, Oban, show clearly our duty as custodiers of the oracles of God. The remarks were made at a meeting of the congregation of Oban when steps were being taken to secure the site upon which the present church buildings are erected.

D. M'K.

(1) Mr Duncan Crawford

I was a little hopeful that something might have been done by either of the parties in the Free Church which would remove the cause of our separation. The decision of last Assembly (1894) has settled that matter as far as I am concerned. It has been said that had the Assembly of 1892 done what the Assembly of 1894 did, there would have been no separation. This is a misrepresentation. Although the Assembly of 1892 had done what the Assembly of 1894 did, that would not have affected our relation to the position we took up. It is said the Church has not gone

further than she did at the time of the passing of the Declaratory Act — the questions and formula not having been altered. Well, there is no great advantage in that. The mere fact of the questions and formula not having been altered removes no difficulty; it only intensifies the immorality of men who answer the questions and sign the formula. The questions have reference to a well-defined system of doctrine agreeable to the Word of God. These questions every minister and elder must answer in the affirmative; but the Declaratory Act is said to be a relieving Act. The Assembly says the Act is not binding upon me, but they allow others to believe and teach the doctrines covered by said Act. The declaration and promises by every office-bearer are definite — no ambiguity about them — and are subscribed to as in the sight of Jehovah. But here comes one forward for licence or ordination: he has not to sign a different formula or answer different questions, but he is entitled “to answer the questions and sign the formula in view of the Declaratory Act,” which relieves him from holding and teaching the whole system of doctrine to which he has subscribed. Could anything be more immoral? Men vowing to God to uphold, teach, maintain, and defend the whole doctrines of the Word of God as laid down in the Confession, and at the same time relieved by the law of the Church from fulfilling that to which they have subscribed! If I am a party to such proceedings, I involve myself in an immoral deed. For the sake of illustration, say that a man promises to pay £20: according to the principles of the Declaratory Act he is justified in paying only £10. The Declaratory Act does not bind me to pay £10 instead of £20, but it gives liberty to those who are disposed to do so. Dr. Rainy at last Assembly said the Act was imposing in this way — that the relief which it gave must be recognised in the Courts of the Church. It is no great relief to me that I am not bound myself to swallow the Act when I must allow others to do it. Suppose one teaches views contrary to those to which he subscribed, I am bound to recognise the relief which the Act gives him. That is done in the Free Church.

In view of that I feel fully convinced that our position as a congregation — maintaining and defending Free Church principles — justifies us in going forward to build a place of worship. I am afraid this generation will see no improvement in the Free Church which will justify us in returning to her. The Free Church has now two doors of admission into her communion. She has two classes of singatories — one believing one set of doctrines, the other believing doctrines vastly different. I, therefore, remain where I am. Year after year the Free Church has been conceding doctrine, principle, and worship. Protesting and dissenting against these

concessions had little effect. She has at last crowned all her declensions by an Act which has entered into her statute book as a binding law and constitution. Faithfulness to our own solemn vows demanded of us that we should go no farther along the course of declension. It is said that men of unsound views entered the Church before the passing of the Declaratory Act. True; but these were men who crept in unawares and on their own responsibility. Now the case is different, for the Church freely admits such men into her communion, and she is therefore responsible for the errors taught within her pale.

We did not separate from our former congregation on account of any personal feeling towards them; not because of any animus or quarrel with the office-bearers; no personal matter entered into it. It was entirely done in the interests of the truth of God.

In going forward to build, our object is not a rival church or body. It is and should be — *first*, God's glory connected with the maintenance of this truth and the full, free, and faithful testimony which He gave to the Free Church 50 years ago; and *second*, the salvation of immortal souls. If these be what animate our whole being, and what we value most, we need have no fear as to our undertaking. We do not mean to compromise a single iota of God's truth for the sake of company, however dear such company may be to us.

(2) Mr John Hamilton

I could not possibly remain in office in the Free Church under the Declaratory Act. To remain in a Church which has minimised the doctrines of the word of God to such an extent as the Free Church has done, is something for which I was not prepared. The great doctrines, which cost our forefathers their heart's blood, are now lightly treated. In the providence of God we have a standard raised in defence of His truth. I have no hesitation in saying that my conscience is at ease as to the step taken by the few in our land in defence of the word of God, and as to the testimony that they have raised. The cause is the Lord's. If we are not faithful to it, the fault is ours. If we are faithful, the Lord will yet acknowledge His own word, and make the little one a thousand. A godly man, once speaking to the "question", said — "I would rather part with all I have in the world, friends and relations, than part with the Bible." What else is the Free Church doing but parting with some portions of the Bible, as if there were some refuse in it to be thrown away. We must have a whole gospel or none at all. "The Scriptures cannot be broken." Some say to us — "You think yourselves better than other people." We think nothing of the kind. Others say — "You think none

faithful but yourselves." Well, we say that we are ashamed of our unfaithfulness; we desire to be even more faithful.

It is said by many that the Declaratory Act is not binding on them, and that for all the time they are to be here, it is hardly worth their while severing their connection with the Free Church. We might all say the same; but, if all acted in like manner, what would be left to rising generations? Are we to leave such doctrines as are covered by the Declaratory Act and cherished within the walls of the Free Church? If so, we leave a legacy brimful of error, for which coming generations will condemn us.

Monuments are raised in memory of noble men. If we are desirous of leaving a monument of lasting benefit behind us, let it be nothing short of the whole doctrines of the word of God. It is the only monument which will be of real benefit to our children and children's children.

The Exercise

by Rev. S. Fraser Tallach M.A.

It is always a matter of interest for us to look back and find out how our present institutions came into being. The following pages deal with the embryonic stages of the church court we now know as the presbytery. Nevertheless we may see even at that stage, fully developed in itself, certain facets of the Reformation, which are of enduring importance. We see the emphasis placed on Scripture as the alone guide of the church; the requirement that true exposition of Scripture be the prime weapon in the minister's armoury, the alone basis for successful preaching; we see the arena created by the church in which aspirants to that office might test their competence to handle the Word of Truth aright.

In 1581 the second Book of discipline (which was ratified that year) states: "Assemblies are of four sortes; for ather ar they of particular kirks and congregations an or ma (more) ather of a province, ather of a haill nation, or of all the divers nations, professing Jesus Christ." The reason for the gap in the order between the kirk session and provincial assembly (synod) has a simple enough explanation. In medieval times, bishops ruled through their diocesan synods. Hence there had been no need of presbyteries. The constitution of this synod which had, under the R.C. Church been composed solely of clergy, was radically changed by the Reformers. An Act of December 1562, two years after the Reformation, enacted that the minister of each parish church "with ane elder or deacon" attend the synod "to consult upon the common affairs of their diocies", but initially there seemed no reason to remould the overall

gradation of courts in any radical way by the addition of an intermediate court.

One meeting there certainly was which gathered clergy and laity from a number of different congregations in one locality, though in function and make-up it was a far cry from the modern presbytery. Yet so important did the early Reformers consider "The Exercise", as it was called, that they devote a whole section to it in the First Book of Discipline, 1560.

"To the end that the Kirk of God may have tryall of men's knowledge, judgment, graces and utterances, as also such that have somewhat profited in God's word may from time to time grow in more full perfection to serve the Kirk, as necessitie shall require, it is more expedient that in every toun where schools and repairs of learned men are, that there be ane certain day every week appointed to that exercise which St. Paul calls prophesying, the order whereof is expressed by him in these words, "Let two or three prophets speak, and let the rest judge". Some points of comparison might be made with our Question Meeting. A text formed the basis for the exhortation, and a number of men, lay or clerical, took part. Any man, in fact, "in whom is supposed to be any gift which might edify the church . . . must be charged by the ministers and elders to joyne themselves with the session and company of interpreters". Here, however, any likeness ends. The aim of the exercise was not to give marks of grace founded upon Scripture. It was, indeed, the reverse. Scripture itself was to be expounded without any application. "The Interpreter in this exercise may not take to himself the liberty of a publick Preacher, but he must bind himself to his text, that he enter not in digression, or in explaining common places (of theology) . . . that the time may be spent in opening the minde of the Holy Ghost in that place." James Melville's diary tells of his open-eyed wonder when the exercise was conducted in Montrose. "The exercise of the ministers was kept weekly then in Montrose and in their assembles ordinarlie; which when I saw I was movit to lyk fellon weill (extremely well) of that calling, but thought it a thing impossible that ever I could haiff the abilitie to stand up and speak when all held their tongue and luiked, and to continue speaking alean (alone) the space of an hour". The speaking before the public audience may well, in fact, have been the last gruelling part of this ordeal. After the exposition, the ministers retired and debated on the merits or demerits of the effort they had just listened to. "So every man must be given his censure". (Here meaning no more than "criticism"). If any faults were found the person was "gently admonished".

The purpose of the exercise was three-fold.

1. It was held to ensure that ministers were thoroughly used to analysing a text. Herein lay the cardinal difference between the Reformed ministry and the Roman Catholic priesthood of previous decades. These had been largely ignorant, not only of the Hebrew and Greek originals, but even of the Bible in their own tongue. No higher acclaim could be given to a minister of the Reformed Church than to say that he was "painful and laborious". The exercise is both an indication of the ideal these men set themselves in striving to be "able ministers of the New Testament, rightly dividing the word of truth", and also an indication of the means by which such traits of laborious and accurate study were developed.

McCrie, in his life of Andrew Melville gives some of the minutes of the meetings for exercise in an appendix.

"April 23rd, 1602. John Milne made the exercise; admonished to study diligentlie and to have a feeling of that which he deliverit."
 "November 26, 1602. Robert Forbes made the exercise wha was admonishit to eschew affectat language and to utter his words with greater force." (Both of these Presbytery of Aberdeen).

"May 8, 1608. Mr James Carmichael, younger, heard privile exercises the second time upon Ephesians 6,12. The brethren praysit God for him, and appoyntit him to exerceis privilie the next in the morning in the galrie, prosecuting the samine text." (Presbytery of Haddington).

The reading of books was urged. If anyone thinks that pay-as-you-earn is a device of modern invention then consider the following enactment of the General Assembly March 1572-3. "That sick ministers as has not wherewith to buy books may have books brought to them by the collector and to allow the prices thereof in their stripend." Another form of raising the wherewithal was resorted to by the Presbytery of Aberdeen. "It was agreit by the haile Presbyterie thair be a collection gatherit amonges ye brethren and of the penalties (fines) to buy commentaries upon the text of the exercises which shall serve to every one of the presbyteris wha has nane in tyme coming.

2. A second function of the exercise was to bring out into the open such as had gifts of expounding the Scriptures so that they might eventually labour in word and doctrine to the benefit of the church. It will be remembered the somewhat extraordinary way in which John Knox was called to the ministry in St. Andrews. Knox did not himself consider he had a call to the ministry. The people asked him to become colleague to John Rough, but he declined. Rough thereupon took the matter into his own hands. He preached a sermon in which he declared that the con-

gregation had powers of election over anyone in whom they perceived gifts suited to the office of the ministry. Rough proceeded to address Knox on behalf of the congregation, charging him not to refuse this holy vocation. Such summary action may seem to rank with the action of Farel in Geneva when he cursed Calvin's future course of study if he did not agree to undertake ministry in that city. The dramatic accompaniments may, indeed, be unique, but the view expressed by Rough that the initiative in determining a call to the ministry lay with the church was a view commonly accepted. "For no man may be permitted as best pleaseth him to live within the Kirk of God, but every man must be constrained by fraternal admonition, and correction to bestow his labours when of the Kirk he is required to the edification of others". (First Book of Discipline).

The exercise provided the ideal proving ground for such as might have this gift since it gave a direct measure of competence, not in the more flowery accomplishments of oratory, but in basic ability to explain Scripture. An extract like the following from the Presbytery of Edinburgh shows that the church was on the look-out for suitable young men. "It is ordainit that Mr Robert Rollock shall mak ane catalogue of the young men whom he thinks meit to exerceis". (November 8, 1597). Four years after he had made his first acquaintance with the exercise, James Melville writes, "In the simmer of the first of these sax years, about the eighteenth year of my age compleit, God opened my mouth ferst in pubbit upon the exerceis with sic commendation out of the mouth of Mr Andro Hay, Rector and Superintendent, namlie, even there in public, in his addition as I was wonderfullie encouragit to go forwart. In the middes of that ouk (week) I dreamed that I had maid the exerceis in Montros, and, being dismissed from the brethren with comfortable commendation, I cam ower to Baldowly to my father and entering in the place, there was nane that knew me; I passed upe to the hall, and enterit in the chalmer at the end thereof, whar I met my father and tauld him whow I haid been occupied, wha took me in his armes, and kissing me, said in my ear, "Jamie, serve God, for thou art behouldin to Him!"

3. A third function was the obvious one of providing a means whereby the public were instructed. As a consequence of the exercise "the simple and such as have somewhat profited shall be encouraged daily to studie, and to proceed in knowledge; the kirk shall be edified. For this exercise must be patent to such as list to heare and learne."

Such was the exercise — a meeting called purely for spiritual edification. It is, perhaps, a great pity that it should have begun to serve a

business function, but as one traces the evolution of this movement, it is quite clear why it took place. With the collapse of the bishop's office, some more flexible instrument than the Synod was required to take over the bishop's unique functions. The organisation of visitation throughout the parishes of the church, for instance, had rested on the bishop's shoulders. Now a court was required to take over this, and similar functions which could meet easily, act from first-hand knowledge of the area concerned, and then with further developments, meet again to consider any future steps. Synods were too cumbersome, too remote and met too infrequently.

For the first decade after 1560, there was no move to bring the exercises within the conciliar structure of the church. In 1573 the Synod of Lothian asked that a copy of the Acts of the General Assembly be given to every exercise. This was but a cloud the size of a man's hand, but it signalled a radical change in function. Soon, matters falling out between Synods and General Assemblies were being noted at every exercise twenty days before the General Assembly, "that the brethren may be ripely advised with the samine, wherethrough many things may be ended which through lack of advertisement suffer delay from Assembly to Assembly."

In 1578 it was decreed that bishops were not to usurp the power of presbyteries (though as noted already, the Second Book of Discipline about this time passes over them in silence).

In 1579 an overture from the Synod of Lothian asked that a general order be taken for erecting of presbyteries "in places where public exercises is used, unto the time the Policie of the Kirk be established by law." The Assembly ruled that until this time the exercise be called a presbytery.

It would, of course, be quite wrong — and the date of the minutes of the exercise meeting given earlier will illustrate this — to think that when presbyteries came in, exercises went out. Presbyteries were acknowledged by the law of the land in 1592, and exercises were still associated with presbytery meetings on into the next century. What with the vexatious turmoil, however, which developed later, leading up to the National Covenant in 1638, and the diminishing role of presbyteries as bishops came again into prominence, exercises fell into abeyance.

Exercises, it may be said, served their purpose. In the years succeeding the Reformation, they, along with the other more stated ordinances of worship, served to fix the minds of the ministry and people on the law and the testimony as the supreme court of appeal. In the succeeding cen-

ture, the strongest efforts of the Episcopalian party were to prove unavailing, and the beginning of the National Covenant tells us why; "We all and every one of us underwritten, protest, that, after long and due examination of our consciences in matters of true and false religion, we are thoroughly resolved in the truth by the Word and Spirit of God."

Doubtless, the exercise had played a large part in bringing the nation to such a clear and unequivocal confession.

Sketch of Life and Times of George Gillespie

by Rev. John Colquhoun

(Continued from page 284)

3. FROM HIS ORDINATION TILL THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY. 1638-1643.

At this time the power of the bishops began to be on the wane and the ministers became more determined that the Church of Scotland would be Presbyterian and not Prelatical. Johnston of Wariston records in his Diary for 11th April 1638. "I heard Mr Andrew Blackhall (Minister of Aberlady) show the duties between a pastor and a people, and very sensibly touch all the corruptions of this time or of any in the presbytery: then I saw him with the whole brethren of the presbytery give imposition of hands, and thereby admission to the ministry to Mr Robert Ker to be conjoint minister with his father in the church of the Pans (Prestonpans); blessed be the name of God for restoring this great liberty to the Church again, whereof they have been robbed by the Prelates these 28 years past; and blessed be the name of God who used the un-ablest, un-worthiest of all His servants to be an instrument in this restoration. *Diary*, I. 338. Again on 12th April he writes, "Afternoon I got a letter from Mr George Gillespie to clear the Presbytery of Kirkcaldy of their legal doubts anent the admission of ministers against Tuesday next." In connection with this matter he has an entry under 17th April as follows:— "On Tuesday 17th April, I wrote over two treatises, — the one dogmatic to be read to the Presbytery, — the other dialectic anent the admission of ministers by Presbyteries; for the which from the bottom of my heart, I thank my God who deigns to use me as the sole principal instrument in His hand for legal recovering of His church's liberties." *Ibid.* 340.

These ordinations gave great offence to the King, and the action of the

Presbytery of Kirkcaldy in ordaining George Gillespie at Wemyss would no doubt give great offence to the Archbishop of St. Andrews who was never consulted in the matter, but the ministers were resolute and they ordained him there on 26th April 1638, as Robert Baillie quaintly puts it, "maugre St. Andrews' Baird." It is a great tribute to the abilities of Gillespie and a testimony to the confidence reposed in him by his brethren that a few months after his ordination we find him preaching before the famous Glasgow Assembly of 1638. His text on the occasion, according to Baillie, was, "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord."

Formation of the Tables: National Covenant Signed.

After the disturbance of St. Giles, which does not, in any way, seem to have been organised, we find resistance to Episcopacy taking on a more definite and organised form. Two petitions were presented to the Privy Council; one from "the men, women, children, servants and indwellers, within the burgh of Edinburgh," and the other from "Noblemen' barons, ministers, burgesses, and commons." The last of these petitions was a formal and constitutional document, the terms of which amounted to a demand for the trial of the bishops in a constituted court of law. They set apart representatives who, as commissioners, were appointed to watch over their affairs in Edinburgh. This body, however, was found to be too unwieldy, and a smaller number were chosen, which were divided into four sections. In one section there were to be as many nobles as cared to attend, a second section of four county gentlemen, a third of four ministers and a fourth of four representatives of burghs. These four sections became known in Scottish History as "The Tables." They soon got plenty of work to do. In reply to the Petitioners King Charles issued a Proclamation to the effect that he himself had ordained the Service Book, and that he would forgive the Petitioners who had framed the petitions "out of preposterous zeal and not out of any disloyalty; that gatherings for that purpose should cease, and that all who had repaired to Stirling, where the Privy Council was, at the time sitting, should leave within six hours under pain of treason. This Proclamation was to be kept secret so that no opportunity would be afforded of making a Protestation against it. However, the matter leaked out and, on the instruction of The Tables, Advocate Johnston of Wariston prepared a Protestation which was read as soon as the Proclamation was read at the Cross of Stirling. Similar action was taken in Edinburgh. Of Protestations of this nature King Hewison gives the following explanation:

A Protest was a formidable legal instrument in use in Scotland for pro-

protecting the subjects of the Crown from the sudden operation of unacceptable statutes. It meant entering an appearance in the highest law-court to ask trial of the legality of any new ordinance. . . . A Protestation is a most ordinary, humble, and legal way of obviating any prejudice that may redound by any other legal act of preserving our right, permitted to the meanest of the subjects, in the highest courts, in assemblies, and Parliaments, wheresoever they are not fully heard, or being heard, are grieved by any iniquity in the sentence; which is granted by the law of nature and nations, and is the perpetual custom of this kingdom, to protest in favour of all parties having interest, and not heard, by an express act *Salvo jure cujuslibet*, Even against the Acts of Parliament. It was also a legal form of appeal to the King himself to see Justice done according to the law." *Covenanters I*. 259, 290-291.

On the point that, in their Protestations, Wariston and those associated with him were acting according to law, and giving the clearest proof of being law-abiding, we have the view of Sheriff Robert Low Orr, K.C., M.A., LL.B. "What was this Protestation about which the supplicants were so punctilious, and which the Privy Council strove so hard to evade? Had it any effect in law or otherwise? It may appear to us a technical and archaic formality, but it was regarded at the time as a highly important State paper. The legal advisers of the supplicants, some of the ablest lawyers in Scotland, were unanimous in their opinion that it should be prepared and presented, and they revised its language with care. . . . This procedure shows the desire to act in a law-abiding spirit and in accordance with the principles and precedents of Scottish Government. It was apparently borrowed from the legal practice of the day, when a litigant who thought he had not received justice 'took protestation for remeid of law,' appealing to the king and parliament for remedy. In effect the Protestors declared that the proceedings complained of were not in accordance with the law of the land and had therefore no legal effect, that they declined to regard them as closing the controversy, and that they appealed, passed the king misinformed by bad advisers to the king as dispenser of justice, and to the law of the land itself. That the Protestation was believed to produce a profound effect on the minds of the people is evident not merely from the supplicants' persistence in making it, but from the nervous anxiety on the other side to evade it. It fortified their position to make it appear that their claim was not something novel or arbitrary but only what the law entitled them to; it took off the weight and edge of the royal proclamation when it was instantly and formally challenged before the world as violating laws which the sovereign

had sworn to uphold." *Alexander Henderson: Churchman and Statesman*, p. 110-112.

We see that their Protestation was an appeal from the king misinformed to the king as dispenser of justice, but the last thing in the world which Charles would admit was that he was misinformed; not only so but he himself was the chief cause of all the trouble, so that their Protestation was, in effect, a declinature of the authority of the King in ecclesiastical matters. This could be nothing else but a virtual declaration of war on the King's policy and, of course, they would have to bear the consequences.

It now became very clear to the Tables that the whole kingdom would require to stand on the defensive and, as a preparatory step, they instructed Alexander Henderson and Johnston of Wariston to prepare a Covenant which was to be subscribed all over the country, binding themselves by the Great Name of the Lord to continue in the profession and obedience of the true religion, to defend the same, resist all contrary errors and corruptions, protesting that they have no intention or desire to dishonour God or do anything to diminish the King's greatness or authority, but on the contrary to stand to the defence of the King's person and authority "in the defence and preservation of the foresaid true religion, liberties and laws of the kingdom." On the 28th February 1638, after prayer by Henderson in Greyfriars Church, the congregation with uplifted hands swore allegiance to the Covenant, and then began to subscribe it. Later on it was carried out to the churchyard where by the aid of torches, it was signed by an immense crowd. Copies were sent all over the country, so that in a short time a great many people had an opportunity of signing it.

In connection with the signing of this National Covenant the exercises of Johnston of Wariston are interesting as he records them in a soliloquy with his own soul:— "After the afternoon sermon I got good in my thanksgiving in my family, then in my private retiring; then in my reading Psalms 84 and 85; then in my public prayer before supper, during the space of one long hour confessing thy sins and the sins of the land at large; praising the Lord for all His favours; and particularly for four, for renewing of His Covenant with this nation, for the powerful and lively manner of renewing it in our congregation, for His providence to my family in calling us upon one day first to His Table where in He gave Himself to us, and then to the oath where we surrendered ourselves to Him, which was as solemn a day of marriage between the Lord and us, *hinc inde*, in the greatest spiritual solemnities, as perhaps will not fall out

in any age again; and for His particular indulgence in employing me, the unworthiest of all His servants, to have been an instrument, adviser, drawer up, and partly the author of it under the Lord, blessed be His name for ever; and praying to the Lord for wisdom, ability, and grace to perform all the conditions of the Covenant on our part, and have our eyes open to see, in the outward works of God's providence and the inward of His indulgence, the Lord's performance of all His conditions thereof." *Diary, I.* 328-329.

On the 27th March the Tables demanded, among other things, a free General Assembly, but it was only when Charles saw that he could not get anything by force that he consented to the calling of an Assembly which he had no intention of making a free Assembly. The story of the Glasgow Assembly is well-known and it is not necessary to repeat it here. At this Assembly which was presided over by Alexander Henderson, and from which the Royal Commissioner had withdrawn when he could not get his own way, the bishops were deposed, Episcopacy overthrown, and Presbyterianism re-established in the Church.

Scotland on the Defensive

King Charles now raised an Army which was to meet him on 1st April 1639 at York. The reason he gave for this action was that the Scots had raised an army to invade England. The Covenanters denied this and hurried to make defensive preparations. They had as their military leader, Alexander Leslie who had served Charles 9th and Gustavus Adolphus, Kings of Sweden. The Scots Army encamped at Duns, where some of the more prominent of the Scottish ministers acted as chaplains. Here negotiations were entered into for a peace, and Charles had the mortifying experience of discovering that those he had to treat within the Scots Army were neither fools nor cowards, but men of integrity who were not afraid to stand firm even in the presence of kings, and so he had to yield and consent to the Treaty of Berwick on 18th June 1639. The King, however, with the unreliableness so characteristic of the Stewarts, had no intention of keeping this Treaty, but looked upon it as a breathing-space to afford him an opportunity of crushing the Scots into submission to his desires.

The General Assembly to which the King agreed at the Treaty of Berwick met on 12th August, when Traquair was Royal Commissioner. Alexander Henderson, as retiring Moderator, preached an appropriate sermon in which he clearly set forth Christ as the Head of the Church, and showed that this was in no way inconsistent with monarchical govern-

ment in the State. Traquair, cunningly tried to retain Henderson's services as Moderator, but, the latter perceived that this was but an attempt to introduce constant Moderators, and so would not agree and David Dickson, minister of Irvine was appointed. Traquair, in order to deceive the Covenanters, agreed to everything that was done at this Assembly, and what was done at previous free Assemblies, and also nullifying what was done at illegal Assemblies. He had, however, gone too far for the liking of the King and only regained the royal favour by treachery and lies. The result was that the King planned another war of extermination. The first step towards this was that the Commissioners sent by the Scottish Parliament to London to testify their loyalty to the King, and to convey a thanksgiving from the General Assembly, were arrested and committed to the Tower on the charge of treason. The result was that the Scots had again to prepare for war and on 17th April 1640 General Leslie's commission was renewed. Again the Scottish Army mustered at Duns, on 31st July 1640, where, among the chaplains are to be found such famous names as Alexander Henderson, Robert Blair, John Livingstone, Robert Baillie, Andrew Cant and George Gillespie. The King's forces were defeated at Newburn Ford on 28th August 1640, and on account of the dissatisfaction of the nation together with a consequent lack of support to the King, Charles was forced to capitulate and the Treaty of London was signed on 10th August 1641. The Scottish chaplains accompanied to London the Commissioners from Scotland who were parties to this Treaty, and the Church of St. Antholin or St. Anthony was placed at their disposal. Here Henderson, Baillie, Blair and Gillespie preached regularly, drawing immense crowds, who were anxious to see and hear men who played such an important part in the endeavour to bring about civil and religious freedom.

Soon afterwards a call to George Gillespie, from the town of Aberdeen, came before the General Assembly, but he could not be prevailed on to accept it, preferring Wemyss to Aberdeen. The following year, 1642, an application was before the General Assembly from Edinburgh to have him translated to one of the charges there. He was accordingly translated to Greyfriars Church and continued to be its minister until he left this world.

In the Assembly of 1641 we find the members occupied with the consideration of a letter from some clergymen from England, who desired a closer alliance with the Presbyterians, and in answering it, the members indicated their desire to have "in both kirks one Confession, one Directory for Public Worship, one Catechism, and one form of Kirk Govern-

ment." This may be looked upon as the first public notice which we have of the aim which forms such a prominent part of the deliberations of the Assembly of Divines which afterwards met at Westminster.

In 1641, while in London, Gillespie published his *Assertion of the Government of the Church of Scotland* to which he added a Postscript in answer to a Treatise lately published against Presbyterian Church Government. This was a reply to Bishop Hall's *Assertion of Episcopacy by Divine Right*. He divides it into two parts. The first part deals with the office of the Ruling Elder, showing the function of ruling elders, and proving that in the Jewish Church they sat in ecclesiastical courts among the priests, and then gives four passages from the New Testament showing that they were recognised in the early Christian Church. He then argues for the office from antiquity, from the consent of Protestant writers, and from the confessions of opponents. In the second part he treats of Church Government; of the eldership of particular congregations, Presbyteries, Provincial and National Synods. He shows that the Church is a kind of republic, that Christ has committed spiritual power and authority to its courts, that the Jews had two ecclesiastical courts, the synagogue and the sanhedrim, the latter having jurisdiction over the former; further, he argues from Acts 15, where we have a synod of Apostles and elders, from geometrical proportions, and from necessity. In his Epistle to the Reader he gives his motive for publishing this Treatise:— "As, in publishing this assertion, I intend to satisfy the scrupulous, and to put in silence the malicious; so also to confirm the consciences of such as are friends and favourers to the right way of church government. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14: 23), saith the Apostle, yea, though it be in a matter otherwise indifferent, how much more is it necessary that we halt not in our judgment concerning the government of the church, but walk straight in the plerophory and full assurance of the same, from the warrants of the word of God — I say again, from the warrants of the word of God — for as it is not my meaning to commend this form, because it is Scotland's so I hope assuredly that my countrymen will not despise God's ordinance, because it is Scotland's practice, but rather follow them in so far as they follow Christ and the Scripture. This, therefore, I pray, that thy love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment, that thou mayest approve the things that are excellent (Phil. 1: 9). "Consider what I say: and the Lord give thee understanding in all things." (II. Tim. 2: 7). Amen.

(To be continued)

Book Reviews

Diary of the Expedition of the Prince of Orange by a Chaplain in the Army. £1.75.

This diary gives an account of the arrival of the Prince of Orange in England in 1688 and of his reception in the land, as well as the subsequent flight of James II. It also records earlier how it came about that the Prince of Orange engaged in this undertaking and of the discouragements, through storms at sea, which he received and which might have deterred a less determined man from venturing any further. The Prince realised, however, that the Protestant religion in Great Britain was at stake and he refused to be deterred in this noble undertaking. Though sometimes written in a rather flowery and pompous style, yet having been written in 1688, it gives some indication to readers of the events as they were occurring daily. The Diary has been reprinted by Focus Christian Ministries Trust, 6 Orchard Road, Lewes, East Sussex. BN7 2HB.

D. B. M.

The Life of Samuel Rutherford by Rev. Andrew Thomson. Free Presbyterian Publications. £3.50.

This account of the life and times of Samuel Rutherford is one of the latest additions to the Free Presbyterian Publications list. The 206 page paperback, which is a reprint of an earlier edition of Rutherford's life is useful in bringing before the minds of people one of the noted ministers of the Scottish Church in the early 17th Century. His famous Letters have made him known worldwide, as well as his other writings, and here in this life by Andrew Thomson we are led through the various vicissitudes of a very varied life. Rutherford had to suffer for the sake of the Master whom he counted it a privilege to serve, and would have suffered death itself for Christ's sake, had he not an earlier call to answer. Rutherford is noted for the intimacy of communion with Christ which he attained and his writings, but especially his Letters bring this out. Extracts from his Letters entitled Honey from the Honeycomb fill the last sixty pages of the book, along with the poem, The Last Words of Samuel Rutherford by Mrs Cousins. Anything of Samuel Rutherford needs no commendation.

D. B. M.

Memoirs of Thomas Boston. Banner of Truth Trust. 516pp. Price £8.95.

This interesting book contains an account of the life of Thomas Boston of Simprin and Ettrick written by himself mostly in diary form. Boston was one of the most eminent of Scottish divines and his writings have been valued by the godly down through the generations since his time. This account of his life, therefore, cannot but be of interest to those who have become acquainted with his other writings. The diary gives an insight into the situation as it was then in the Scottish Church but in particular the difficulties and trials and also the encouragements of the ministry at that time in a country parish as Ettrick where most of Boston's ministry was spent. This edition, a reprint of the 1899 edition, contains an introduction and notes by Rev. George H. Morrison, Dundee.

We are glad to commend this volume to all but especially to ministers and those studying for the ministry who will find much to encourage and strengthen them in that great work to which they are called and of which it is said: "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Psalm 126: 6.

D. B. M.

Mission News

It has been a pleasure for Mission Staff to welcome Dr. Hak, the young Dutch doctor who has gone out to Zimbabwe to work in the Mission Hospital at Mbuma. According to Government regulations, Dr. Hak has to spend three months at Mpilo, the Bulawayo Hospital, two months at a hospital near the Victoria Falls, to study Community Health, and one month in St. Luke's, a small rural hospital. Thereafter, for one year she will be under the supervision of the Provincial Medical Director. Dr. Hak spent her first weekend in Zimbabwe at Bulawayo Communion, and the following week she accompanied the Rev. P. Mzamo to Mbuma a hundred miles to the north-west. On her first morning there Dr. Hak insisted on taking her full share in the work. It was Wednesday, Baby Clinic Day. Over a hundred mothers sat waiting for attention. There was also much activity in the Maternity Ward, and Dr. Hak delivered her first little African baby.

There will be additional work in the hospital when the theatre is back in working order. The X-Ray machine has been lacking an essential part

for two years, and if it is not procurable, another machine will have to be bought.

Friends in Scotland are aware that Mr & Mrs Neil Murray are at present home on leave. They have given talks on their work and shown slides in several congregations. Miss Marion Graham has also been home for several months, but she has had less opportunity to visit the various congregations as she has been spending as much time as possible with her mother in the Belle Vue Nursing Home, Inverness.

Two months ago an amnesty was declared in Zimbabwe for all dissidents who would lay down their arms. The dissidents had refused to acknowledge the Government under Prime Minister Mugabe and had remained at large, pillaging and harrassing the people in outlying areas. No doubt, after many years of wandering at will through the country it was difficult to submit to law and order. However, when the amnesty was declared many laid down their arms to the great relief of those in remote parts. A detachment of police is still on guard at Mbumba.

Old John Mpofu, grandfather of the late Rev. Alfred Mpofu, used to speak of Ingwenya Mission as "Jerusalem wetu", "our Jerusalem". Large crowds used to gather at Communion times. There is always a tendency to look back nostalgically to a previous generation and to think "there were giants in those days".

One of the outstanding men was Mr Patrick Mzamo, father of the Rev. Petros Mzamo of Mbumba. He was one of a group of Christian men who came from the Transkei, South Africa, at the invitation of Cecil Rhodes.

When the Rev. John Tallach and Dr. MacDonald were off on Trek visiting the more distant outstations, Patrick Mzamo often took one of the services. He was an impressive figure, tall and spare, with an arresting eye and manner. The Rev. J. B. Radasi described him as a man "powerful in prayer". He invariably began his first prayer with "Come, thou Holy Spirit! Come!" After the service he retired behind the church to pray for a blessing on the service. He then came forward to speak to the people.

On one sad occasion there was a funeral at Ingwenya. One of the teachers at Ingwenya, Paul Hlazo and his wife had lost a very precious little girl, aged two. She was the only surviving child of a family of four. She was a beautiful child and when she became ill and died, everyone was griefstricken.

A large crowd gathered for the funeral, heathen, non-church-goers and Christians. The heathen were murmuring that the spirits were angry

with the father; even the Christians wondered at the sad loss of so many children. The Rev. John Tallach took the service and he then asked Patrick Mzamo to address the people. In a few words he put to silence the questionings of those present: "When the Lord takes away a heathen man the Angels veil their faces, and say 'Holy! Holy! Holy!'; when the Lord takes away a Christian man the angels veil their faces and say 'Holy! Holy! Holy!'; and when the Lord takes away a child that is as the apple of the parents' eye, the Angels veil their faces and say: 'Holy! Holy! Holy!'"

J. N.

Notes and Comments

Blasphemous Film

The film industry has been noted for its disregard of Biblical moral standards. However, the recent film, "The Last Temptation of Christ", has reached an even lower degree of infamy in its blasphemous portrayal of the Saviour. It would appear that script writers of these films and producers do not care how much they may shock the religious feelings of Christian people so long as the film gives good box-office returns. The storm raised in the United States against this film, and also in this country, is what one would expect where any Christian sentiment is retained. If the Director of Public Prosecutions sees his way to proscribe the film by giving warning of prosecution if the film were shown in this country, this would indeed be timely. Sad to say, the Film Censors have passed the film for showing. How low the nation has fallen when the showing of such a film would even be proposed. However, God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man sows that shall he also reap. The sins of the land are reaching great heights. Where repentance does not follow then fearful judgments at the hand of God must be expected.

Sabbath Postal Deliveries

No area is sacred from the attacks of a godless generation. So far as the Sabbath is concerned large trading businesses are in the vanguard of opposition to the sanctity of God's holy day, and regard the Sabbath as a day on which they may successfully pursue their secular business activities. The latest to join the list of Sabbath-breaking institutions is the Post Office with the proposal to introduce experimental deliveries of mail on Sabbath in the Tyne-Tees area of England. The boldness with which these proposals are put forward and conducted shows what

ignorance prevails in the higher ranks of business management as to the claims of the Sabbath day. It is clear that the nation is rapidly declining into a pagan state. This move by the Post Office ought to be vigorously opposed by all who love the Sabbath day.

Ulster Killings

Following on the murder of eight soldiers in Northern Ireland, the Government has taken further steps to defeat the I.R.A. The Prime Minister indicated her resolve to defeat terrorism. The increased use of the S.A.S. for this purpose is to be welcomed as their clandestine operations do not expose them as sitting targets for the I.R.A. as other military operations do. The men of violence have to be brought down but this is not easy in a country where a section of the population and the Roman Catholic Church are sympathetic to their aims. The Protestant community has suffered much at the hands of the terrorists and it deserves the sympathy of right thinking people everywhere for the murderous attacks it has borne over many years. It is vain to look to man for deliverance in such a situation. It is the Lord alone who can deliver the people of Northern Ireland from the hands of their enemies and give not only temporal deliverance but also spiritual deliverance as well.

Buddhism in Britain

The false religion of Buddhism appears to be increasing its influence in Britain. Recently, Mr David Steele M.P. attended the inauguration of a new Buddhist temple erected at Eskdalemuir. Wearing the uniform of a Privy Councillor he unveiled a plaque commemorating the opening of the temple. While it is clear that M.P.'s tend to be all things to all men, surely the son of a former Church of Scotland Moderator could find better employment than encouraging the false worshippers of Buddha. The Buddhist order has also paid six million pounds for a country mansion in Buckinghamshire to further its cause. May the Lord in His mercy deliver our land from all false religion and from atheism as well.

Amnesty for Religious Prisoners

A Press report states that an official Soviet commission has called for an amnesty for the 200 religious prisoners in the Soviet Union and has petitioned the Praesidium of the Supreme Soviet to this effect. In view of certain changes taking place in Soviet policy, this proposal may have more hope of being entertained than formerly. It would be good if the Soviet state came to see the futility of religious persecution.

Baptism of Polygamists

The Lambeth Conference sanctioned this baptism of polygamists in African countries. In some parts of Africa this was already the practise of the Anglican Church. Certain conditions were laid down by the Conference in order to discourage taking additional wives but polygamists would not be required to put away any of their wives which they had already married before conversion. The reason given was because of the social deprivation those wives would suffer. It is clear that this is contrary to the Saviour's teaching on marriage, but in high Anglican circles Scriptural teaching is so easily set aside.

Church Notes

Committee Meetings (D.V.)

The following Committees will meet at Inverness Church:

Tuesday, 4th October

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

Ingwenya Mission

The Foreign Mission Committee wish it to be known that there is still a shortage of staff at the John Tallach Secondary School at Ingwenya. 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 continue to bear the needs of the mission-field to the Throne of Grace continually. Anyone who is interested in giving a period of service to the Mission as outlined above should contact the Clerk of the Foreign Missions Committee, F.P. Manse, Raasay, IV40 8PB.

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Zimbabwe: At Bulawayo on 11th October at 2 p.m.

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

Church Deputies

Rev. Neil Ross left for Canada on 6th September where he is supplying Chesley for six Sabbaths. Afterwards Rev. A. F. MacKay is expected to give a period of two months supply in the Chesley Congregation. Rev. Angus MacKay completed his period as Deputy to Australia and New Zealand on his return with his wife to this country on 9th September. We pray that the labours of the Deputies may be blessed and that the Lord's protecting care may be over them in all their journeys.

Acknowledgement of Donations

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

Sustentation Fund: A. MacG., £50.

Home Mission Fund: A. MacG., £25.

Foreign Mission Fund: Anon., Canada, \$100.00 for famine relief; A. Forgie, Redding, £20.

College & Library Fund: A. MacG., £25.

Dominions and Overseas Fund: Raasay Friend, £10; Miss J. MacDonald, £20, both for visit to Eastern Europe.

Home of Rest, Inverness: Friend, £10, per Mrs B. MacDonald.

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

Glendale: Glendale Friend £20 where most needed per Rev. D. Nicolson; Envelope in Plate, C.M., Glasgow £5 for Sust. Fund.

Fort William: Mrs S. £10; Friend, Caol £10 for Sust. Fund.

Portree: Friend £20; Friends £10, both for Sust. Fund, both per F.M.; Anon £20 for Foreign Mission; Anon. £60 for T.B.S.; Anon. £100 for Outreach Fund, last three by envelopes in plate.

Raasay: Zimbabwe Mission Meeting (Miss Marion Graham) £211.50 for Zimbabwe Mission; Friend, Raasay £10 for For. Mission; M. D. MacL., Inveranish £20 for Congr. Fund; K.G., Glasgow £10; J. G., Raasay £10; Mr and Mrs MacL., Raasay £10; Anon., £10; Anon., £10; Mrs C. A. MacL., Raasay £10; A. MacL., Glasgow £10; J. N., Raasay £5; M. D. MacL., £15; A. & C. MacL., Raasay £10, last ten for Car Fund.

Stirling: A Friend, North Tolsta £10 for Church Funds per Mrs J. M.

Stornoway: Envelope in plate £20 for Jewish and Foreign Mission Fund; Miss K. A. MacLeod, The Cottage, Callanish, Isle of Lewis £40 for Sustentation Fund per Rev. J. MacLeod.