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A Good Work in the Soul

In writing to the Philippians the Apostle Paul rejoiced in the fellowship in the Gospel which he had experienced with them and then went on to say: "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." The good work of which he speaks can be none other than the work of grace in the soul. What the Apostle was confident of was that that work would never die but be carried on to perfection.

The Lord is the One who begins a good work in the souls of poor sinners in a day of His mercy and grace. If He did not begin the work it would never have been begun. It is not the work of man but of God. It is God by the power and blessing of His Spirit that effects the great work of regeneration in a sin-darkened soul. It is a work that is wrought secretly in the soul by the mighty power of God and has for its end the bringing of a soul out of the darkness of unbelief into the light and liberty of the glorious Gospel of Christ. When the Spirit of God begins a work of awakening in a soul that person comes to know that he or she has to do with an infinitely holy God who is the sin-hating Jehovah. Before that God the sinner is brought in guilty, convicted at the bar of God and at the bar of his or her own conscience. But the Spirit of God does not leave the soul there but brings it to see the wonder and glory of the provision that is to be found in Jesus Christ by His quickening power. The Holy Spirit causes light to break on the sin-darkened soul and by working faith in the soul enables the soul to lay hold upon the provision made in the Gospel in Jesus Christ. The soul is in this way made alive to spiritual and eternal realities. The darkness which so long reigned in the soul is now dispersed and light prevails. The Lord by His Spirit has lit a candle in that soul which shall never go out. The work of grace wherever it is is indestructible. Many fires cannot quench it. The person is a new creation in Christ Jesus and is an heir of everlasting life. God who commanded

the light to shine out of darkness hath shined into that soul giving the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. With that revelation the soul is eternally satisfied. The sinner has discovered for himself or herself that God is a sin pardoning God.

But not only is the work begun, it is also carried on. The carrying on of the work, just like the beginning of it is in God's hands. He it is who undertakes to establish and strengthen the work of grace in the soul, and bring the soul to greater and greater conformity to its glorified Head. The work of sanctification, or of being made holy is carried on by God, the Holy Ghost. How graciously, how tenderly does the Spirit of Grace nurture the work of grace in the soul so that it may bring forth more fruit. It is by applying the Word of God to the soul and conscience that this is done. The Saviour prayed for his disciples: "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth." It is as the Word is applied more and more to the soul, that the soul is conformed more and more to the image of Christ. The experience of the soul under the sanctifying work of the Spirit of God may be far from concluding that it is a work of grace, for along with a progressive knowledge of the Redeemer, goes a progressive increase in the knowledge of what they are in themselves. An increased sense of sin is not inconsistent with progression in holiness. The greatest saints have experienced much of self loathing in the very midst of experiencing an increase of grace. A desire to be done with sinning has often been a sign in many believers that the work begun in them is nearing completion.

But this work, this good work begun in the souls of poor sinners is not only to be carried on but it is to be perfected. Not till that work is perfected in them can the soul leave the body and depart to be with Christ which is far better. In the moment the work is perfected the soul leaves the body to go to more congenial climes. It is unfit any longer for a sinful world but must take its place in the world where the spirits of just men made perfect are found. They have been made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. What an atmosphere prevails there! There perfect holiness is found and the soul has been perfected to inhabit it. It is a place where sorrow is unknown. It is a place where glory, glory dwelleth, for it is Immanuel's Land. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for them that love Him."

The question for each one must be — Has this good work begun in me? Am I an heir of everlasting life? Is the work of grace proceeding apace making me meet for the everlasting inheritance that awaits the children of God in glory?

Sermon

by Rev. J. A. Macdonald

"For ye had compassion on me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and enduring substance." Heb. 10: 34.

The Bible contains many sweet messages for those who are broken in their hearts and grieved in their minds. Indeed such are often assailed by the accuser of the brethren who accuses them night and day, but God is a sun and shield to His own, and sends them this message: "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for he is faithful that promised."

Paul became a good soldier of Jesus Christ notwithstanding how he persecuted the church before his conversion, of which we have a comprehensive account in the Scriptures. Sincere and evangelical repentance was given to him, thus restoring him with the forgiveness of all his sins and making him valiant for the truth. He laboured diligently and faithfully in the church of God to the end of his journey in this world declaring the everlasting gospel to those who sat in darkness and in the valley of death. He preached the gospel in their towns and villages and defended it as well.

In this verse there are three matters to which we would like to draw your attention.

1. Paul's praise of God's people in their compassion for him.
2. Their patience under affliction — they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods.
3. How? "Knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and enduring substance."

1. Oh how the love and sincere sympathy of God's people flowed out towards Paul, the man of God, in his suffering for truth and righteousness' sake. Paul had a sore experience with the thorn in the flesh, II Cor. 12: 7. Thrice he prayed that it be taken away, but the Lord's will was otherwise — for it was to work for his eternal benefit. We see the love of God toward him. Although He left the thorn there He gave him the sweet assurance: "My grace is sufficient for thee". We believe that all the Lord's people know what it is to be assailed by the old adversary, the devil, but this is for their good. We find David speaking thus for himself — and for the church, we believe: "It was very good for me that I was afflicted." Ps. 119: 67.

The Bible tells us of many of Paul's temptations and sorrows, especially when in prison, but again the petitions of his friends went up to heaven

on his behalf, so that we find the prisoner soon set free. We believe, like the Lord's people in our own day, that some days he would be very much cast down in his soul, and would be saying with David: "Oh why art thou cast down my soul?" We believe that a kind word from the lips of a dear friend often gave him an uplift in his soul; yes, even a kind look.

2. Their patience under affliction — they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods.

With us as a church this was very obvious in the case of both Mr MacFarlane and Mr Macdonald who, when they were ousted out of their churches and manses, acted in a manner which caused the world to see how they were leaving all their concerns in the Lord's blessed and noble hands. No one ever heard them complaining. They acquiesced to the will of their Master and would not take as much as a pin which did not belong to them. How contrary to those who grabbed churches, manses, cars etc., in our recent trials. The great day of judgment will rectify the matter.

After their fruitless labours on the Lake of Galilee, when they had toiled all night and had taken nothing, the Saviour found the fishermen of Galilee mending their nets. At His command they immediately launched forth and cast their nets on the right side of the ship and their reward was great. No wonder when He visited them again and commanded them to follow him — they left their nets immediately and joyfully took on His yoke, with full purpose of soul to be faithful to him in the face of all opposition. They took joyfully, or as both the Greek and Gaelic translations would indicate, — they took the yoke with a ready smile, "LUATIGHAIR", knowing in themselves, their conscience bearing witness, that it was the will of the Lord to make them "fishers of men". Would that in our day the Lord would raise young men who would also joyfully and in the spirit of the gospel hear Him calling them to serve Him in this our time of great need!

Daniel in the Old Testament, knowing in his heart and soul that the Holy Spirit had wrought a good work in him, took joyfully his being cast into the lions' den and all the other persecutions which he suffered because of the Lord his God.

Great and many, too, were the afflictions of Job but of this he was sure: "I know that my Redeemer liveth."

The blessed Saviour Himself also found Himself destitute of any friend: "I looked on my right hand, and viewed, but none to know we were." The Scriptures must of necessity be fulfilled: "I have trodden the winepress alone." Christ satisfied the inflexible justice of God, thereby abolishing

death. There is a Friend to whom we may resort at all times, for we have His authority to do so: "Come unto me." Matt. 11: 28. None of his own will be left to go down alone to the cold valley of death. "Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." This reminds me of an incident of which I have previously written but which is worth repeating. When the Rev. Neil Cameron was on his death bed, he was visited by his friend, Dr. Johnston. The doctor saw that the end was near, and he said: "You will soon be with the Lord whom you served so faithfully and well in this world." Mr Cameron's reply was: "I am with Him now." Yes, Christ is the unseen Friend and Comforter in the death chamber of God's dear ones, when soul and body part with one another for a season. Yes, until the dawn of the resurrection morning when the golden trumpet will sound: "Arise my love, my fair one and come away." Happy, happy for Eternity are those who will be enabled to sing: "Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale, yet will I fear none ill."

3. Knowing in yourselves — their spiritual knowledge. The Lord's people have, both in their hearts and consciences, the witness that in the time of sore distress God speaks to them thus: "I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions and as a cloud thy sins." Isaiah 44: 22. This together with many comforting messages from heaven gladdened the hearts of the Lord's people when they were broken in their hearts and grieved in their minds. What Paul said to Philemon is coming very sweetly before my mind: "If he hath wronged thee or oweth thee ought, put that to mine account." Phil. 18. Oh what a wonderful place heaven must be! Happy indeed must they be who gets ashore on Imanuel's Land. 'Some on planks, and some on broken pieces of the ship. The woman who washed the Saviour's feet with her tears, and dried them with the hairs of her head proved beyond all doubt that Christ was her all in all.

"Whom have I in the heavens high
but thee O Lord alone?
and in the earth whom I desire
besides Thee there is none."

Ps. 73: 25

By working faith in His people the Holy Spirit applies to their barren souls the redemption purchased by Christ. David sang: "My lot is fallen to me in pleasant places." Ps. 16: 5. Notwithstanding the many times God delivered David he feared exceedingly that he would fall into the hands of Saul. Such a fear is often active in the hearts of some of us and we need to be kept at all times lest we put a spot on the noble Cause of Christ. Peter having the witness in himself that God wrought a good work in his soul bore witness saying: "Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that

I love thee." I trust that you yourselves are able and willing to give the same testimony in a dark day when the love of many has waxed cold.

Paul must have had wonderful nearness to the Lord when he said: For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." II Cor. 5: 1.

After the Lord has been taking home to glory His own people over thousands of years, we are still encouraged by His own Word to know that "yet there is room".

The Lord our Righteousness

by Robert Gordon *

Jeremiah 23: 5,6

The promise contained in these words must have been a very precious one to Jeremiah himself, as well as to the remnant of Judah and Jerusalem, — the few who had remained steadfast in the covenant of their God amidst the general defection of their brethren. The prophet Jeremiah, like others who had gone before him, was commissioned to warn his countrymen of the judgment that was coming upon them because of their apostasy and ungodliness. But there was this peculiarity in the case of Jeremiah, that the judgments which he foretold were to be executed in his own time, — he was himself to be an eye-witness of all the calamities which he predicted. He warned his countrymen that the then existing king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, would come up against Jerusalem, and would prevail against it, and would take the city, and burn it and the temple with fire, and carry away the people captive to Babylon. And all this the prophet actually saw fulfilled; for we are told that he "abode in the court of the prison," to which he had been committed because of his fidelity in warning his ungodly countrymen, and "was there when Jerusalem was taken."

Jeremiah was thus placed in circumstances peculiarly painful and trying. He was commissioned to announce the coming judgements of God — judgments not only very terrible in themselves, but also very near and certain; for though his warnings were both fitted and designed to awaken his countrymen to a sense of their guilt, and to lead them to repentance, so that the calamities with which they were threatened might be mitigated at least, if not averted, yet it was very plainly intimated to him that his

* Robert Gordon was one of the ablest and best known of the Edinburgh ministers of the Disruption Free Church. This is taken from the final volume of his "Christ in the Old Testament". (4 vols.) Free Presbyterian Publications are considering republishing part of this work.

warnings would be in vain, and that the Lord would certainly bring upon Jerusalem, and upon all her towns, all the evil that He had pronounced against it; because they hardened their necks, that they might not hear His words. We cannot easily conceive, then, a more severe trial than that to which Jeremiah was exposed by being made the bearer of such a message as that with which he was entrusted. To announce the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, and the captivity of Judah, as events that were certainly to take place in the lifetime of the very men whom he addressed, must have exasperated to the highest pitch an ungodly and profligate generation, and awakened against the prophet feelings of the bitterest revenge. And we find, accordingly, that but for the special interposition of God's providence, they would have prevailed against him, and would have taken their revenge on him.

Even this, however, was the lightest part of the prophet's trial. The burden which pressed most heavily upon his spirit was the hopeless apostasy of his brethren, and the inevitable ruin which he foresaw was about to overtake them. The whole tenor of his writings abundantly testifies that he was not more distinguished for piety and godliness, than for the tenderness of heart, and a deep and affectionate concern for the best interests of his countrymen; and that if he shrunk from the discharge of the duty committed to him, it was more from an unwillingness to announce the terrible calamities that were coming on Judah and Jerusalem, than from any dread of the personal danger to which such announcement might expose him. And we find that he did repeatedly seek to make his escape from the painful and depressing duty of uttering warnings which he knew would be disregarded, and of foretelling judgments which he as certainly knew would be inflicted. But he was not permitted to relinquish the work to which he had been called. The Spirit constrained him to speak. "Then I said, I will not make mention of the Lord, nor speak any more in His name: but His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not say." And so he continued, with feelings of profound pity for his infatuated countrymen, to give utterance to the most solemn warnings of coming judgment, till it might be said of the book which bears his name, as it was said of the scroll which in vision was spread before the prophet Ezekiel, "There was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe."

But through the dark cloud that was thus gathering over Judah and Jerusalem, there broke occasionally gleams of sunshine; and to one of the brightest of these the passage before us directs us. The judgments which the prophet foretold were so terrible, and the ruin which awaited Judah

apparently so overwhelming, that Jeremiah himself, as well as the small remnant of the true Israel, — the few hidden ones who constituted, the Church, — might have been ready to despond, and to say, “Hath God forgotten to be gracious?” “Is His mercy clean gone for ever? doth His promise fail for evermore?” But they were not to be left so to despond. Though a small remnant, they were precious in the sight of the Lord; and He would not fail to make Himself known to them as the faithful and the covenant-keeping God. The fewer, indeed, that they were in number, and the more that ungodliness prevailed around them, the more did they stand in need of some new token of the divine favour, a new assurance that God remembered the covenant sworn to Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob.

And it has always been God’s gracious method of dealing with His people, to make seasons of great trial and discouragement to be seasons also of great refreshing, as the history of the Church and the experience of believers do alike testify. So, accordingly, he dealt with the Church in Jeremiah’s day. While the main object of the prophet’s mission was to announce the certain and speedy execution of the divine judgments, and while these judgments formed the burden of his commission, the chief subject of all that he spoke and wrote, he was commissioned also to declare, from time to time, that notwithstanding the calamities which had already overtaken Israel, and were impending over Judah, and notwithstanding the low state to which the true Church would, in consequence of these calamities, be reduced, God would again visit and redeem His people, and raise up an horn of salvation for them in the house of His servant David.

Such, in substance, is the prediction before us. That prediction assumes that all the calamities which the prophet foretold would overtake Judah, — that the true Church, the people of God, would be involved in these calamities, — and that even the royal house of David would itself be brought so low as to be apparently extinct; for the expression, “I will raise unto David a righteous Branch,” conveys, as in other passages in the prophetic writings, the idea of a bud or tender sprout springing from the root of a tree that has been cut down, and is to all appearance dead. This prediction, therefore, gave the Church of that time no ground to expect that the judgments foretold by the prophet would not be executed. On the contrary, it implied that the severest of all the calamities which he predicted would assuredly overtake Judah, and that even the house and the throne of David would, to all appearance, be utterly overthrown, — that house and that kingdom concerning which God had said to His servant, “They

shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever."

But this very intimation of the certain fulfilment of all that Jeremiah foretold, would serve to render the promise we are considering more precious in itself to the people of God, as well as to strengthen their faith in its final accomplishment; for it was an assurance to the Church of that time, and of all subsequent times, that God gave the promise in the perfect foreknowledge of all the disastrous events that were to befall Israel and Judah, — and that in spite of them all, and notwithstanding the low, and apparently hopeless condition to which they might be reduced, He had provided for the due fulfilment of His promise. All this is plainly intimated in the description here given of the Deliverer promised to David, when He is called a "Branch", or, as it is elsewhere expressed, "a rod out of the stem of Jesse", — "a Branch out of his roots", — even "a root out of a dry ground," when it appeared to be utterly lifeless and dried up. And the character of this Branch, this bud or sprout, in the decayed house of David, is delineated in language which must have been peculiarly expressive and encouraging to the Church of that time: "I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper," or act wisely, "and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth."

There is here an obvious contrast between the King thus promised, and all who had ever sat or ever would sit on the throne of David. He was to be righteous, and He was to reign, and act wisely, — and in other words, He was to possess righteousness, power and wisdom, and so execute judgment and justice in the land. How different from all, even the best of the kings who had gone before him! It was the folly and ungodliness of many of these kings that withered their own strength, and brought disaster and ruin upon the people, as the suffering remnant of the Church in Jeremiah's time knew in their bitter experience. And even with regard to the best of them, how often did their sin and folly bring suffering upon themselves and their people! David himself, of whom it is said, in the very words of this passage, that he "executed judgment and justice unto all his people," even David did so sin as to entail upon himself and upon his family very grievous calamities, inasmuch as it was said to him, "The sword shall never depart from thine house;" and when, in the folly and pride of his heart, he numbered the people, his sin was visited with a sore national judgment.

Whatever, therefore, might be the benefits or blessings which the people of Judah derived from the good kings who from time to time ruled over them, still the character of these kings was so defective that their

influence frequently operated for evil as well as for good. No doubt, the prosperity of Judah might, general speaking, be measured by the wisdom and godliness of their kings. Their whole history bears testimony to this fact; and the fact itself, I think, was an intimation to the Church, that the glorious things spoken of Zion should be realised under the government of "a king" who should "reign in righteousness", and who should "be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a convert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

The best of the kings, therefore, from David downward, even in their best estate, and in the wisest and most successful of their measures, were but mere types, faint shadows of Him who was to spring from the decayed root of David's house. And this is here plainly intimated; for it is said, in very unqualified terms, obviously in such a way as could not be said of any preceding reign, "In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely." And if the Church could have doubted that this language foretold a state of peace and prosperity, and safety, immeasurably surpassing all that Israel and Judah had ever experienced, even in the brightest periods of their history, the doubt would have been dispelled by the glorious title here given to the promised King of David's house, "And this is His name whereby He shall be called, JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."

"Let us Hold Fast Our Profession"

by Rev. J. C. Ryle

(Continued from page 147)

III. In the last place, let us consider *what encouragement there is to Christians to hold fast their profession.*

The Apostle St. Paul was singularly fitted, both by grace and nature, to handle this subject. Of all the inspired writers in the New Testament, none seems to have been so thoroughly taught of God to deal with the conflicts of the human heart as St. Paul. None was better acquainted with the dangers, diseases, and remedies of the soul. The proof of this is to be seen in the 7th chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, and the 5th chapter of his Second Epistle to the Corinthians. Those two chapters ought to be frequently studied by every Christian who wishes to understand his own heart.

Now what is the ground of encouragement which St. Paul proposes? He tells us to "hold fast our profession," and not let it go, because "we

have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God."

That word "High Priest" would ring with power in the ears of a Jewish reader, far more than it would in the ears of Gentile Christians. It would stir up in his mind the remembrance of many typical things in the service of the tabernacle and temple. It would make him recollect that the Jewish high priest was a kind of mediator between God and the people; — that he alone went once every year into the Holy of Holies on the day of atonement, and had access through the veil to the mercy-seat; — that he was a kind of daysman between the twelve tribes and God, to lay his hand on both (Job 9: 33): — that he was the chief minister over the house of God, who was intended "to have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that were out of the way" (Heb. 5: 2). All these things would give the Jews some idea of what St. Paul meant when he said, "Let us hold fast," because we have got a great High Priest in heaven. The plain truth is, that the Christian is meant to understand that we have a mighty, living Friend in heaven, who not only died for us, but rose again, and after rising again took His seat at the right hand of God, to be our Advocate and Intercessor with the Father until He comes again. We are meant to understand that Christ not only died for us, but is alive for us, and actively working on our behalf at this very day. In short, the encouragement that St. Paul holds out to believers is, *the living priesthood of Jesus Christ*.

Is not this exactly what he meant when he told the Hebrews that Christ is "able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7: 25)? — Is not this what he meant when he told the Romans, "If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. (Rom. 5: 10)? — Is not this what he meant when he wrote that glorious challenge, "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom. 8: 34)? Here, in one word, is the believer's fountain of consolation. He is not only to look to a Saviour who died as his Substitute, and shed His blood for him, but to a Saviour who also after His resurrection took His seat at God's right hand, and lives there as his constant Intercessor and Priest.

Let us think for a moment what a wonderful and suitable High Priest is the High Priest of our profession, a million times superior to any high priest of the family of Aaron.

Jesus is a High Priest of almighty *power*, for He is very God of very

God, never slumbering, never sleeping, never dying, and eternal. The Jewish high priests were "not suffered to continue by reason of death" (Heb. 7: 23), but Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more. Our great High Priest never grows old, and never dies. (Rom. 6: 9).

Jesus is a High Priest who is *perfect Man* as well as perfect God. He knows what our bodies are, for He had a body Himself, and is acquainted with all its sinless weaknesses and pains. He knows what hunger, and thirst, and suffering are, for He lived for thirty-three years upon earth, and knows the physical nature of an infant, a child, a boy, a young man, and a man of full age. "He Himself hath suffered, being tempted" (Heb. 2: 18).

Jesus is a High Priest of matchless *sympathy*. He can be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Heb. 4: 15). His heart was always overflowing with love, pity, and compassion while He was on earth. He wept at the grave of Lazarus. He wept over unbelieving Jerusalem. He had an ear ready to hear every cry for help, and was ever going about doing good to the sick and the afflicted. One of His last thoughts on the Cross was one of care for His mother, and one of His first messages after His resurrection was one of "peace" to His poor fallen apostles. And He is not changed. He has carried that wonderful heart up to heaven, and is ever watching the weakest lamb in His flock with merciful tenderness.

Jesus is a High Priest of perfect *wisdom*. He knows exactly what each of us is, and what each of us requires. He will not suffer us to be tempted above that which we are able to bear (1 Cor. 10: 13), nor allow us to remain in the furnace of suffering one moment beyond the time that is required for our refining. He will give us strength according to our day, and grace according to our need. He knows the most secret feelings of our hearts, and understands the meaning of our feeblest prayers. He is not like Aaron, and Eli, and Abiathar, and Annas, and Caiaphas, an erring and imperfect high priest in dealing with those who come to Him, and spread out their petitions before Him. He never makes any mistakes.

I challenge every reader of this paper to tell me, if he can, what greater consolation and encouragement the soul of man can have than the possession of such a High Priest as this? We do not think enough of Him in these days. We talk of His death, and His sacrifice, and His blood, and His atonement, and His finished work on the Cross; and no doubt we can never make too much of these glorious subjects. But we err greatly if we stop short here. We ought to look beyond the Cross and the grave, to the life, the priesthood, and the constant intercession of Christ our Lord. Unless we do this we have only a defective view of Christian doctrine. The consequences of neglecting this part of our Lord's offices are very

serious, and have done great harm to the Church and the world.

Young men and women in all our churches, and, generally speaking, all new believers, are taking immense damage for want of right teaching about the priestly office of Christ. They feel within themselves a daily craving after help, and grace, and strength, and guidance in running the race set before them along the narrow way of life. It does not satisfy them to hear that they ought to be always looking back to the Lord Jesus Christ and His atonement. There is some thing within them which whispers that they would like to have a living friend. Then comes the devil, and suggests that they ought to go to earthly priests, and make confessions, and receive absolution, and keep up the habit of doing this continually. They are often far too ready to believe it, and foolishly try to supply the hunger of their souls by extravagantly frequent reception of the Lord's Supper, and submitting to the spiritual directorship of some clergyman. All this is little better than religious opium-eating and dram-drinking. It soothes the heart for a little season, but does no real good, and often results in bringing souls into a state of morbid superstitious bondage. It is not the medicine which Scripture has provided. The truth which all believers, and especially young men and women in these days, have need to be told is the truth of Christ's life in heaven, and priestly intercession for us. We need no earthly confessor, and no earthly priest. There is only one Priest to whom we ought to go with our daily wants, even Jesus the Son of God. It is impossible to find one more mighty, more loving, more wise, more ready to help than He is. It is a wise saying of an old divine, that "the eyes of a believer ought to be fixed on Christ in all his dealings with God. the one eye is to be set on His oblation, and the other on His intercession." Let us never forget this. The true secret of holding fast our profession is to be continually exercising faith in the priestly office of Christ, and making use of it every day.

He that acts on this principle will find it possible to serve God and be a Christian in any position, however hard it may be. He need not suppose for a moment that he cannot have true religion without retiring from the world, and going into a monastery, or living like a hermit in a cave. A young woman must not suppose that she cannot serve God in her own family, because of unconverted parents, brothers, and sisters, and that she must go into some "Religious House," so called, in company with a few like-minded women. All such ideas are senseless and unscriptural; they come from beneath, and not from above. At school or in college, in the army or the navy, in the bank or at the bar, in the merchant's house or on 'Change, it is possible for a man to serve God. As a daughter at

home, or a teacher in a high school, or an assistant in a house of business, a woman can serve God, and must never give way to the cowardly thought that it is impossible. But how is it all to be done? Simply by living the life of faith in the Son of God, by continually looking back to Him on the Cross, and to the fountain of His blood for daily pardon and peace of conscience, and by daily looking up to Him at the right hand of God interceding for us, and daily drawing from Him supplies of grace in this world of need. This is the sum of the whole matter. We have a great High Priest who is passed into the heavens, and through Him it is possible not only to begin, but to "hold fast" our profession.

Letter to his Congregation *

By the Rev. John Livingstone

To the Flock of Jesus Christ in Ancrum, light, life, and love, and the consolation of the Holy Ghost be multiplied. Well-beloved in the Lord — That which our sins, even yours and mine, have been a long time procuring, and which hath been often threatened, but never well believed, is now come, even a separation. How long it may continue, it is in the Lord's hand; but it will be our part to search out and mourn for these sins that have drawn down such a stroke. It is not needful to look much to instruments; I have from my heart forgiven them all, and would wish you to do the like, and pray for them that it be not laid to their charge. But let us look to Him, without whose doing there is no evil in a city; for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up. Let us neither despise His chastening, nor faint when we are rebuked of Him. It may be we shall not suddenly find out every controversy He hath against us; but if there be upright dealing in such things as are obvious, and an impartial dealing for discovering of what is hid, He will reveal even that to us. Neither is there any greater hindrance of repentance than a secure, desperate questioning whether He will accept of us or not. Christ hath been, and will be, in all ages, a stone of stumbling and rock of offence to such as to stumble at the Word, and refuse to receive His rich offers; but to others a foundation and a corner-stone, elect and precious, and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded. We have reason to believe that whatever He doth is only best. God saw all that He had made, and, behold, it was very good. That word will hold through to the world's end.

*This letter was written in 1663 when permission to visit his flock has been refused after sentence of banishment had been passed on him. — Editor.

For my part I bless His name I have great peace in the matter of my suffering. I need not repeat — you know my testimony of the things in controversy. Jesus Christ is a king, and only hath power to appoint the officers and government of His house. It is a fearful thing to violate the oath of God, and fall into the hands of a living God. It could not well have been expected that there having been so fair and so general professions through the land, the Lord would put men to it; and it is like it shall come to every man's door, that when every one, according to their inclinations, have acted their part, and He seems to stand by, He may come at last and act His part, and vindicate His glory and truth.

I have often showed you that it is the greatest difficulty under heaven to believe that there is a God, and a life after this; and have often told you, that for my part, I could never make it the chief part of my work to insist upon the particular debates of the time, as being assured that if a man drink in the knowledge and (the love of) the main foundations of the Christian religion, and have the work of God's Spirit in his heart, to make him walk with God, and make conscience of his ways, such a man (except he be giddy with self-conceit) shall not readily mistake Christ's quarrel, to join either with a profane atheist party, or a fanatic atheist party, but the secret of the Lord will be with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant. And I have thought it not far from a sure argument, that a course is not approved of God, when generally all they that are godly, and all profane men turning penitent, loathe it, and, it may be, cannot tell why; and, generally, all the profane at the first sight, and all that had a profession of piety when they turn loose, embrace it, and it may be (they) cannot tell why. There may be diversity of judgment, and sometimes sharp debates among them that are going to heaven; but certainly one spirit guides the seed of the woman, and another spirit the seed of the serpent; and blessed are they that know their Master's will, and do it; blessed are they that endure to the end.

Both you and I have great cause to bless the Lord. Howbeit, I be the unworthiest of all that ever spoke in His name; yet my labour amongst you hath not been altogether in vain, but some have given evidence of a real work of the Spirit of grace upon their heart and life — of which number some are already in glory, and others wrestling through an evil world; and I trust some that have not yet given great evidence of a real work of the Spirit of God upon their heart, may have the seed of God in them, that they may in due time bud forth, at least at their death. But, ah! what shall be said of them in whom yet an evil spirit of drunkenness, of greed, and falsehood, of malice, of licentiousness, of wilful ignorance

and neglect of prayer, and all the means of salvation, is still reigning and raging, who possibly will now be glad that they get loose reins to run to all wickedness, yea, may be carried on to open apostasy and persecution? These, and all of you, I request, in the bowels of our Lord Jesus Christ, yea, I entreat and charge you, in the name and authority of Him who shall judge the quick and the dead, that ye turn speedily to the Lord, and make conscience of prayer morning and evening, and read, or cause read to you, some of His Word, where you will find all things necessary for faith and conversation. It is true, snares and temptations are many and strong from Satan, from the world, and from the mind and heart within; but faith in God, and diligent seeking of Him, shall overcome them all, Shall not the care of your immortal souls go beyond the love of this life, or anything of this world? Oh! that you would but taste and see the goodness of the Lord, and take an essay for a while of sincere serving Him, and prove Him if he will not open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing. Let me obtain this of you as a recompense of all the labour I have had amongst you, and as an allaying of the sufferings I am put to, that after you read this, you will set some time apart, each of you alone, or in your families, as you have conveniency, to think of these directions which have been formerly given you from the Word of God, and deal earnestly with Him, that you may remember and obey them, and engage your hearts to Him, that in His strength you will walk in His ways; and if any shall stubbornly neglect such a wholesome counsel that comes from an earnest desire of your salvation, I will be forced to bear witness against you; yea, these words you now here read shall bear witness against you in the day of the Lord, that light was holden out to you, and you loved darkness rather than light. But I desire to hope better things of you.

If the Lord see it good, we may see the day that we may meet again, and bless His name solemnly, that although He is angry, His anger is turned away; but if not, the good will of the Lord be done. I think I may say that I could have been well content, although it had been with many discouragements and straits, to have gone on and served you all as I could in the Gospel of Jesus Christ; but the prerogative royal of Jesus Christ, and the peace of a man's own conscience, are not to be violated on any consideration, neither (could) there have been a blessing on aught that is done against these.

I was very desirous, and used means, that I might have come and seen you, and at last, in a private way, bidden you farewell, ere I had gone, but wise Providence hath otherwise ordered it. Yet, howsoever, I carry your names alongst with me in my book, yea, shall carry them in my heart

whithersoever I go; and beg your mutual prayers for me, that I may be kept faithful, and fruitful, and blameless, even to the end, and that, if it be His will, I may be restored to you. In the meantime love and help one another; have a care to breed your children to know the Lord, and to keep themselves from the pollutions of an evil world. I recommend to you above all books (except the blessed Word of God) the Confession of Faith and Larger Catechism: be grounding yourselves, and one another, against the abominations of Popery, in case it should prove the trouble of the time, as I apprehend it may. Let a care be had of the poor and sick; there is left as much in an ordinary way as will suffice for meat and money for a year or more. I cannot insist on the several particulars wherein possibly you would crave advice. The Word is a lamp, and the Spirit of Christ will lead into all truth. The light that comes after unfeigned humiliation and self-denial, and earnest prayer, and search of the Scriptures, is a sure light. I know that my word and write are of small value, yet I could not forbear, but in a few words salute you before I went. And now, dearly-beloved and longed for, farewell. The Lord of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Jesus Christ, after you have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, settle, strengthen you. To Him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen. By your loving servant and pastor in the Lord, John Livingstone.

“The Engineer”

Across the deep chasm which nothing could fill,
Since man was from Paradise driven;
The Great Engineer, with remarkable skill,
Constructed a railway to Heaven.
The span of the bridge is a marvel of strength
And exquisite beauty combined;
It's spacious dimensions in breadth and in length,
The Artist of Heaven designed.

With Love for the base, the foundations are sure.
No force can the structure displace;
Its girders of Mercy will ever endure,
Supported by pillars of Grace.
The rails of true Peace, which were made for this line,
On sleepers of Pardon are laid;
And infinite Wisdom which formed the design.
The cost of the structure defrayed.

The wires of Communion extended with care
From earth to the station above;
The current of Faith from the battery of Prayer,
Can act on the magnet of Love.
With movements produced by a motor Divine
Which matchless perfection displays;
The engine of Truth, as it moves up the line,
The train of salvation conveys.

The tunnel of Death, at the end of this line,
Is sometimes an object of fear;
But signals, reflecting a Victory, shine,
Denoting — "The Passage is clear."
To agents who manage the stations on earth
The Spirit of Life has been given
The chief booking-office is called "The New Birth"
Where tickets are issued for Heaven.

— (John 3: 7)

Twelve Things to Think Upon

I exhort you in the mercies of Christ, set to work for your soul, and let these things bear weight with you, and ponder them seriously:—

1. Weeping and gnashing of teeth in utter darkness, or heaven's joy.
2. Think what you would give for an hour, when you shall lie like dead, cold, blackened clay.
3. There is a sand in your glass yet, and your sun is not yet gone down.
4. Consider what joy and peace are in Christ's service.
5. Think what advantage it will be to have angels, the world, life and death, crosses, yea, and devils, all for you as the king's servants, to do your business.
6. Think to have mercy on your seed and a blessing on your house.
7. To have true honour, and a name on earth that casteth a sweet smell.
8. How will you rejoice when Christ drieth your face, and welcometh you to glory and happiness.
9. Imagine what pain and torture a guilty conscience is; what slavery to carry the devil's load.
10. Sin's joys are but night dreams, thoughts, fancies, imaginations and shadows.
11. What dignity it is to be a son of God.

12. To have dominion and mastery over temptations, over the world and sin.

— *Rutherford*

Romish Trends in the Church of Scotland — Children at Communion

by Rev. D. M. Boyd

The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland is expected to discuss proposals this month for introducing children to the Communion table along with adults. This proposal has been put forth in four slim discussion booklets issued by a Working Party which is to report to the General Assembly. Book 1 (12pp) is named "A General Statement"; Book 2 (12pp) is named "Some Considerations for Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions"; Book 3 (10pp) is named "Some Considerations for Parents"; and Book 4 (12pp) is named "Some Considerations for Leaders and Teachers of the Young". The blurb on the back cover of these booklets states: "These studies arise out of the conviction that it is the right of every baptised person, regardless of age, background or condition, to receive Holy Communion as a primary means of grace."

On this slender information, the result of over a decade of study, the Church of Scotland is expected to overturn more than 300 years' of Presbyterian practice and swing over to a practice which will fit easily into Roman theology and practice when the time is ripe for Roman take-over.

We are not aware of pressure from eight-year-old, or younger, children to go to the Lord's Table neither, if it is so, do these booklets say so. We are told that there is a growing tendency for children to be present at the celebration of Holy Communion, especially when Communion is celebrated frequently. However, we are told that this new step arises from a new understanding about baptism; this retrograde move is therefore theologically inspired and we are entitled to ask what theology is behind it. But this theology is not clearly stated and one must search through brief superficial statements in order to try to understand the basis of this new understanding.

Underlying theology

Booklet 2 gives a brief summary of the basis of the thinking at the heart of the Report to the General Assembly of 1982, on the same subject, and states:

"... admission of children to communion was seen as a logical extension of the Church's theology of Infant Baptism, which affirms that

baptism is the one essential rite for entry into the Church. Consistent with this belief, it is the assertion that all those baptised are entitled — at an appropriate stage of their development — to be admitted to the fellowship of Holy Communion.”

Paedocommunion is therefore due to development in the understanding of baptism. This shows that the two sacraments are linked in this new departure from biblical practice. We are told that baptised children *belong* to the Church and therefore are entitled to Communion. However, there is a complete failure, or an unwillingness, to understand or state the distinction between the Visible and the Invisible Church (see the Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter 25). The above paragraph mentions “entry into the Church,” whereas “entry into the Visible Church” is more accurate and reminds us that such children who are baptised with water still need to be baptised with the Holy Spirit, that is, that they need to be born again. However, the booklets give the impression that the children are already born again, so that we are assured: “Children *do* have faith.”; “(The baptismal service) marks the beginning of the process by which the child’s growth in the faith is nurtured.”; “It is by belonging to the community of faith, sharing in its worship and fellowship and thus experiencing God’s love for themselves that the faith of the children will be encouraged and nurtured.” (Bk 1, p7, p5). Is this thinking undergirded by the theology of baptismal regeneration, such as the Roman Catholics and some Anglicans believe, or by presumptive regeneration, such as some Dutch Reformed and some Church of Scotland ministers believe, or by what theology? The distinction between the Visible and the Invisible Church is blurred by speaking of baptised children as *belonging* to the community of faith, which sits well with the Roman theology of the Church.

One’s concern is only increased by reading such statements as the following:

“Implicit in this reasoning is an understanding of ‘sacrament’ as an act which both sanctifies and enables entirely, through the free grace of Christ. Thus the efficacy of ‘sacrament’ — whether it be baptism or Holy Communion — is not conditional on human merit, maturity or knowledge.

“However, it was recognised that the exercise of this act of grace seeks a response, which is the work of the Holy Spirit.

“Since, in baptism, infants are promised the gift of the Holy Spirit, it is theologically appropriate that children should, at the earliest opportunities, be nurtured by all the means of grace, including the grace

of Christ which comes to us in the celebration of Holy Communion. "Very simply, the view expressed was that the sacraments are for the whole Church, which is complete only as it includes all those who are baptised into the fellowship of the Holy Spirit."

Booklet 2, pp5-6

This does nothing to calm one's fears. Do we detect *ex opere operato* in these words, "which both sanctifies and enables entirely"? Is this the old Roman spectre arising, that "the grace signified in the sacraments is contained in the very nature of the sacraments themselves, so that it is always conferred, *ex opere operato*, upon every receiver of them who does not oppose a positive obstacle thereto"?¹

The picture appears to be as follows: the Holy Spirit is promised to those who are baptised, therefore we should not withhold Holy Communion from any who are baptised. It is neither stated how permanent this participation in the Lord's Supper is to be nor whether any baptised person will be debarred from participation.

However, the impression is created that it is a permanent right which cannot be removed for Bk 2, p8, says, "It would be necessary for communicant transference from one congregation to another to be mandatory on the receiving kirk session, much as the sacrament of baptism is transferable, without question, from one parish to another." Strong language — stronger than the following sentence: "Voters' Roll acceptance would also be strongly encouraged, though admission would remain within the powers of the accepting kirk session as it presently is." Yet the privilege of paedocommunion is more than a right, it is essential. Booklet 1, p5, asks the question: "May it not be that participation in communion is not only the right of the baptised child but also an essential element in the process of nurture?" The question is answered in Booklet 4, p7: "It is essential that Holy Communion should be part of the environment of grace and faith in which the child is raised." Discipline seems not to include debarring from the Lord's Table, contrary to such scriptures as 1 Corinthians 5: 11, although it may involve suspension from the Voters' Roll (a Roll which will include those who make a profession of faith and active commitment; this profession is, significantly, called Confirmation, Bk 1, p10, and Bk 2, p7). Indeed, we are told that this method may improve discipline, and therefore it "might be a far more satisfac-

1. *Outlines of Theology*, A. A. Hodge, Zondervan, 1973, p591. For the text of the Council of Trent, Session 7, Canon 6 and 8, see p600 or *Tracts containing Antidote to the Council of Trent*, John Calvin (Vol 3 of his Tracts), Edinburgh, 1851, in loco. See also Hodge, p.643, and the Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter 27, section 3, concerning the efficacy of the sacraments.

tory situation than exists at present, where discipline is lax — being dependent only on very infrequent attendance at Holy Communion.”

Increased frequency of communion; the participation of children; confirmation; “the host”, though used in an innocuous manner (Bk 3, p8); increasing sacramentarian tone of language; obscuring the difference between the Visible and Invisible Church; playing down the conditions associated with the efficacy of the sacraments (and knocking down straw conditions): all this adds up to something far from Reformed and Presbyterian, and for what purpose?

Worthy receivers

A biblical assessment is supplied by Dr. John Barclay of Glasgow University in a paper on I Corinthians 11: 27-29. Whatever may be said of the exegesis of the passage, the application is poor because no-one, without a case to make out, would think of arguing from this passage to paedocommunion. The relevance of the passage is that, *prima facie* it is against paedocommunion because of the requirement for self-examination. However, no proper attempt is made to handle this. Dr. Barclay finishes by saying, “. . . I doubt that there is much danger of exposing them (children) to the kind of strictures Paul hands out in I Corinthians 11.” This is probably a reference to verses 29 to 32, but the message of these verses is sufficiently weighty for us to require something more than Dr. Barclay’s doubts before we can ignore it. If adult Corinthians were guilty of eating and drinking unworthily to their own judgment, then why may not children do the same?

It would be better that the children were raised as covenant children and the Gospel preached faithfully to them so that they may come to faith in Jesus Christ and manifest repentance toward God through the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit. When they lead a life consistent with godliness as described in the Word of God, then, upon profession of faith and due examination by the Kirk Session, they may freely celebrate the Lord’s Supper according to His commandment. The examination by the Kirk Session is not an inquisitorial determination whether the person is born again, but the Kirk Session examines whether the person’s profession of faith is credible by being consistent with the person’s life and knowledge of scripture. Therefore the Session examines their spiritual experience and scriptural knowledge before opening or shutting the way to the Lord’s Table. The problem is not age, intellectual ability or background, as suggested by these discussion booklets, but whether the communicants are “worthy receivers” (Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter 27, section 3, and chapter 29, section 7), who have an intelligent

faith, a credible profession, and the ability to examine themselves. The worthy receiver partakes of the Lord's Supper, discerning the Lord's body, in a self-examining manner (*outws*: in this manner) (I Corinthians 11: 28-29).

The Working Party envisages that paedocommunion would begin prior to profession of faith (Bk 2, p7; Bk 4 p7). However, how can one honestly say to children, in the words of institution, "This is my body which is broken for you"? One has no warrant to say this to them, especially when the subsequent life of too many of them reveals its falsity only too clearly. Once paedocommunion has been introduced, the next stage will be to remove the anomaly created in their theology by assuming baptismal regeneration, or something akin to it, to account for this paedocommunion prior to profession of faith. They will then be brought nearly into line with the Romanists.

The future

It may be thought that we are reading too much into these discussion booklets. But the booklets admit that they are using theology to address this problem (Bk 2, p7; Bk 3, p6). The booklets "offer theological, biblical and practical insight in support of the basic contention" that every baptised person has the right to receive Holy Communion (blurb on back cover). The theology is not clear, the biblical insight is inadequate and the practice is more akin to Roman practice than Reformed practice. Pre-empting proper discussion on the theology of the subject, the booklets are "focused on the general concerns of church members, the decision-makers in the courts of the Church, parents and Christian educators and youth leaders" (blurb). They are not directed at theologians so that the theology and biblical argument is thin and the underlying principles have to be gleaned from the text.

So what does the future hold? We have a hint in Bk 4, p6, where we are told about the potential of Holy Communion:

"it is potentially a magnificent expression and experience of Christian solidarity with one another and with God, but so often — for young and old alike — a puzzling ritual altogether out of step with the needs, concerns and aspirations of people who seek spiritual encouragement in the sacrament only to leave disappointed and empty. Yet, the potential remains and it is important that we hold before us the vision of what might be."

2. Although it reflects the 19th century American scene, which we would not wholly endorse, it is worth perusing what Hodge says on qualifications for admission to the Lord's Supper, *Outlines of Theology*, A. A. Hodge, Zondervan, 1973, pp644-646.

This goes beyond children. Adults are disappointed and empty with their "out of step ritual". It must be made more magnificent. Does the writer have the magnificent ritual of the Roman mass before his mind's eye? We are told in Bk 1, p9, that:

"the most profound truths of the Christian faith would be communicated in more approachable language and style and this would be appreciated by adults as well as children. Visual impact and symbolism could be used along with verbal communication and would enrich worship."

Did our Reformers not argue against such ideas? Did the priests not defend their images and idols by saying that they were the books of the illiterate? Did our Reformers not reply, "Then, teach them to read!" Now, it appears that the need that children have of visual images in teaching (e.g. progressing from picture books to reading books) is to be used to introduce visual impact and symbolism into Reformed worship and into the Lord's Supper itself! We are warned against being too upset by this: the whole is to be "celebrated with complete seriousness and integrity (as distinct from over-solemnity)".

One wonders what has motivated the Church of Scotland to propose this fundamental change. The subject has been discussed "at grass-roots level, not only in the Church of Scotland but in almost every other Church as well" (Bk 1, p3). But so has ecumenism, and while paedocommunion is covered over with specious theology and pastoral concern, one cannot help thinking that it is ecumenically inspired. Another motivation may arise from the declining number of church attenders, i.e. if communion is made not only a right but also essential, and if it is celebrated more frequently, maybe every week, then attendance may increase: but is this not the Roman scenario? It may be an attempt to hold on to children in the manner that Rome does, by getting an early commitment even although it is not an informed commitment. It appears rather to be because the children are NOT "growing in faith" that the Church of Scotland is trying to capture them by this method. The event is proving that the premise of "faith in children" is wrong.

Book Reviews

The Lives of Robert and James Haldane by Alexander Haldane. Banner of Truth Trust. 701pp. £12.95.

This reprint by the Banner of Truth Trust gives a most interesting account of the lives of Robert and James Haldane, men who towards the

end of the 18th and beginning 19th century exercised considerable influence in the evangelical world. Though belonging to the aristocracy, and men of considerable note, they, after their conversion gave themselves wholly to the advancement of Christ's cause and kingdom in Scotland and further afield. Robert Haldane sold part of his estate to further the interests of the Gospel. Though unable to establish a mission in Bengal in India, yet he was greatly used on the Continent in exposing the hollowness of the religion that was current then in Geneva and elsewhere, and leaving behind him a number of young men who received the Reformed teaching and were influential in the Churches on the Continent in proclaiming the Gospel of Christ. Robert Haldane also took a prominent part in the controversy that arose in the British and Foreign Bible Society over the attempt to include the Apocrypha in the Bibles intended for distribution among Roman Catholics on the Continent. Out of this controversy there came the establishment of the Trinitarian Bible Society in England and the National Bible Society in Scotland. He also took part in other controversies. His ability as an expositor of Scripture is seen in his "Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans."

James Haldane was used greatly in bringing the Gospel to parts of the country where a dead ministry prevailed or where the people were denied the preaching of the Gospel through lack of supply. He made a number of tours throughout Scotland including the Highlands and the Orkney Islands. These preaching tours were owned of the Lord to the ingathering of many souls to His kingdom. Reference is made to certain areas in the North of Scotland as destitute of the preaching of the Gospel, which at that very time had faithful Gospel ministers. This erroneous view may have arisen from the fact that many areas were Gaelic speaking and with the Gaelic-speaking population the English speaking lowlanders would not have the same contact. Eventually James Haldane became pastor of a congregation in Edinburgh which was set up on Congregational and baptist principles.

In summing up the author of the biographies has to say that Robert Haldane's success at Geneva and Montauban, is a landmark in the history of Continental Protestantism, while of James Haldane he declares that it would be difficult to name one, since the days of Whitefield whose preaching was more signally blessed to the conversion of sinners.

There is a printer's error on page 654 where the first two lines should be deleted. This no doubt arises from an earlier edition.

D.B.M.

Valiant for the Truth by J. H. Gosden. Gospel Standard Trust. 352pp. £7.50.

This volume in paperback is a reprint of the biography of Pastor J. K. Popham who was for fifty-five years Pastor of the "Galeed", Brighton Strict Baptist Congregation, for thirty years editor of "The Gospel Standard," and of the "Friendly Companion" for sixteen years. There is an introductory essay by J. R. Broome, while at the end of the book is inserted Mr Popham's first and last sermon, and also some of his letters. Mr Popham died in 1937 in his ninetieth year.

Pastor J. K. Popham was well known to an earlier generation of Free Presbyterians who regarded him as a faithful servant of Christ. Reference is made at the beginning of Chapter 16 to a visit paid to him on his 89th birthday by four Free Presbyterian ministers. This was at the time of Rev. J. P. MacQueen's induction to London. The author in referring to this makes the comment that "his predilection for the godly Scot was proverbial." What may not have been known to the author was that he had some grounds for this. On a visit to the North of Scotland on one occasion when he was in great depths of soul depression he was delivered out of it under the preaching of Rev. J. R. MacKay, then a young man, at a service held in a school at Strathy in Sutherland. At that time he met many of the eminently godly who then inhabited these and other parts of the Highlands of Scotland. He himself preached in Halrkirk F.P. Church and at a later date Rev. Donald Beaton was to preach in his pulpit in Brighton.

This volume covers the whole of Mr Popham's ministry, both in Liverpool, where he first laboured, and in Brighton where he was to exercise a fruitful ministry in the ingathering of souls to Christ's kingdom and in the edification of believers. He became a leader in the denomination to which he belonged. Much of the book is taken up with a record of his own experiences as a Pastor, and of his own soul's experience. His discourses were eminently experimental delineating the experiences of the true children of God. As the title indicates he not only endeavoured in the strength of God's grace to preach the doctrines of God's Word but also was ready to defend the truth when occasion required. Yet he was a man of peace and not of war. His exercises in connection with the ministry and his calls to the Congregations in which he laboured and his continual exercise of soul with regard to those under his care show that he was a true undershepherd of the Great Shepherd of the sheep. He could say with the Apostle: "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." His end was a blessed one. He came to the grave in a full and ripe age assured

in his last days that he was going to be with Christ. His death in 1937 left a great blank in the Gospel Standard Strict Baptist Churches which was afterwards filled to some extent by his son in the faith and biographer Rev. J. H. Gosden and other gracious pastors. Rev. J. K. Popham, as his adherence to the Gospel Standard Churches makes plain, was a baptist in outlook and also adhered to their denial of the free offer of the Gospel, which, they say, is to be proclaimed but not offered. Yet all who believe in the free offer of the Gospel will wholeheartedly agree with his assertion: "To tell all his hearers of God's revelation to and concerning them; to affirm that it is their duty to believe that revelation, to reject it is their sin; to show them the sin of unbelief, is unquestionably the most solemn and even binding duty of an anointed minister."

D.B.M.

Notes and Comments

Blind Leaders of the Blind

The New Zealand Herald newspaper of Saturday, April 6th 1991 tells the story of two bishops, one an Anglican, the other a Roman Catholic, who were to compete against each other in a golf tournament the next day (Sabbath) to raise money for the Auckland Cathedral. Dean Rymer had just retired after 20 years as Anglican Dean of Auckland and Bishop Browne is leader of the Auckland Roman Catholics. The Cathedral project is expected to cost \$18 million and the Dean hopes that the Cathedral will be used by many denominations. If this is the example set by the leaders of the Churches what must the people be like?

Archbishop's Enthronement

The Archbishop of Canterbury's enthronement took place amidst great pageantry and ceremony, far removed from that simplicity of worship set forth in the Scriptures of truth. The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Hume was given the task of reading the portion of Scripture taken from the New Testament during the service. Representatives of many Churches were present. The service was also attended by the Princess of Wales, Princess Margaret, the Lord Chancellor, the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Prime Minister and other Government and opposition leaders. How different will the worship of the Church of England become in better days when it is purged of all the remnants of popery still attaching to it. There will be no need then for an Archbishop of Canterbury or any other bishop of an episcopal sort. So, too, will Christ

then be exalted as Head of the Church, and titular headship of the Church be given to no Queen, King or Prince.

National Shrine to St. Andrew

Suddenly, as Roman Catholicism seeks to get a hold of the minds of the people, we are transported back to the Middle ages with the suggestion from the Roman Catholic Church of a national shrine to St Andrew. The idea would be to make it a major centre of pilgrimage. It is thought that St Mary's Cathedral in Edinburgh might be a suitable centre as it has two supposed relics of St Andrew. The administrator of the Cathedral said it could have a valuable ecumenical function and could play an important part in the revival of national devotion to St Andrew. The relics are what purports to be a large portion of the shoulder blade of St Andrew received by the Cathedral in 1879, and part of the saint's skull given by Pope Paul VI to Cardinal Gordon Gray in 1969. Who can now say that the Romish Church ever changes when place is given to such tomfoolery and these last vestiges of the Dark Ages? Thankfully, even one of the leaders in the Church of Scotland is not enamoured with the proposal.

APC and Billy Graham

Our people may remember the strain caused by some APC ministers, when they were Free Presbyterians in the 1970s, by their opposition to a Synod Resolution calling upon our people not to bypass their own services to attend services organised by other churches. Those who opposed this sensible measure were operating on an unstated principle which has now come to fruition in the APC support of the Billy Graham campaign. It also explains the opposition to a Synod Resolution against interdenominational Campaigns in the 1980s.

The APC Prayer Meeting in Aberdeen on Wednesday, 16th January, 1991, clashed with a Prayer Rally in the Music Hall to pray for Billy Graham's visit to Scotland in 1991. So the APC prayer meeting was moved to Tuesday, 15th January, to make it possible for APCs to attend. The advert for this event reads, "Prayer Rally featuring Billy Graham team member Rev. Cliff Barrows. Music, Message, Inspiration, Prayer. Tickets £1 each." It seems to have escaped the notice of the APC that some evangelical magazines are now alerting their readership to the ecumenical dangers of the Billy Graham campaigns which send Roman Catholic enquirers back to their local Roman Catholic church for follow-up. Our own Church has warned of the unscriptural methods employed, and of

the Arminian doctrine used (it is anybody's guess what theology is now used). However, after sacrificing the internal unity of the Free Presbyterian Church upon such an altar, the APCs involved probably feel that they must now act consistently with their conduct.

Accordingly, a newspaper report now indicates that Alford Place Free Presbyterian Church is to be used in support of the Billy Graham campaign in Aberdeen (the APC recently changed the locks to exclude us from our property which we were using). The *Press and Journal* (16.4.91) reports: "Rallies and seminars are being held throughout Scotland this month as momentum gathers for Billy Graham's visit in May and June. In Aberdeen, praise and prayer meetings are set to take place at the New Marcliffe Hotel and Alford Place Church on April 17 and 18, with Dons player Brian Irvine hosting a youth celebration concert in the Grammar School on April 19."

In the light of these events, it is not out of line that the March 1991 *APC Update* should carry an Arminian-worded article. Under the heading "Jesus died for you", the article begins: "Children, do you know that Jesus died for you? I'm sure you believe that! But do you love Him for what He did for you?"

It may be the same conflict of loyalty in fellowship which led the Aberdeen APC to have a joint New Year's Day service with the Aberdeen Free Church congregation in Bon Accord Free Church, with the hope of a reciprocal visit next New Year. Not to be outdone by his Aberdeen colleague, the Edinburgh APC minister invited Prof Donald Macleod of the Free Church College to preach in Gilmore Place, Edinburgh, on 13th January.

The APC concept of fellowship is worthy of deeper examination. They appear willing to sacrifice internal fellowship for a larger external unspecified fellowship. This schizophrenic regard for others, to the neglect of one's own, manifested itself while they were Free Presbyterians and seems to continue to the present. Much agitation was made while we were one body about the duty of the communion of saints, which was interpreted in the loose APC manner. However their orchestrated schism demonstrated that the APC, when they were still Free Presbyterians, had too little regard for the maintenance of the communion of saints among us. This could be documented at length. They offered no solution to the strain upon the internal fellowship of the Church by this apparent pre-eminent claim upon one's fellowship from unspecified people outwith the Church, until they came up with their own solution in May 1989. The APC have made their choice of fellowship now, although the Free Presbyterian

Church was castigated from within for many years for exercising the same choice in a scriptural manner.

Most treaties on schism point to the importance of maintaining unity through the grace of the Spirit, while the Holy Spirit creates it (Eph. 4: 2-3). The Bible does not speak about halfway fellowship, such as is envisaged in congregationalism and independency, but only full fellowship in the Lord. (The only half-way fellowship is when the church is exercising discipline, 2 Thess. 3: 14-15). As biblical Presbyterians, we recognise fellowship as meaning mutual submission at the personal and ecclesiastical level, under the Presbyterian system, and common fellowship in prayer, the preaching of the Word, the administration of the sacraments (including the fellowship around the Lord's Table, regulated by Presbyterian order). The half-way fellowship mentality has been fostered by the ecumenical movement; it is an interim measure, however, because Rome intends to bring all the Churches under her own jurisdiction.

D.M.B.

Mission News

Miss Marion Graham expects to leave for Zimbabwe on 1st May for another strenuous period in the John Tallach School. She has not travelled far afield owing to the illness of her sister, Jane, and her desire to be with her Mother in the Home in Inverness. The Rev. John MacLeod and Mr and Mrs Neil Murray went to Holland to attend the Mbuma Zending Meeting and to thank the generous friends there for their much appreciated support of the Mission.

Mr David Ndlovu was hoping to visit Binga ten days ago where the people are always pleased and grateful to see our people. We have heard of the deaths of two faithful members of the Ingwenya congregation, MaDlamini, a sister-in-law of the Rev. P. Mzamo, who despite many difficulties was rarely absent from church, and MaMaseko, a gentle little widow who had many sorrows in her life, but was constantly in church until she went to live with a married daughter in Bulawayo, and had become very frail.

Sibusiso Mpofu, widow of Zenzo Mpofu, driver of the Mbuma ambulance, who so sadly lost his life, has returned to Mbuma with her baby, to work in the hospital.

Dr. Stamps, Medical Officer, paid a visit recently to Mbuma. He was welcomed by Lia, the youth Dutch nurse. Dr. Hak was visiting Sikhobokhobo Clinic and Miss Margaret MacAskil was at a Workshop

at Simbo. Miss Jessie Coote was off duty. Dr. Stamps said he wished to see for himself the condition of the Fighting Road, so called because it was constructed by the Army during the War, but became a corrugated nightmare. It is the road used by those travelling to Mbuma. "The hospital is going on as before, never hectic but with a steady flow of patients. We were at Sivalo yesterday. We were very busy, I really enjoy it now, having got to know the people." This is a quotation from a letter of Miss Margaret MacAskill's.

The Rev. P. Mzamo has the added care of Zenka congregation sadly left pastorless since the death of the Rev. B. B. Dube.

J.N.

Church Notes

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

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

Western: At Laide on 11th June at 6 p.m.

Southern: At Edinburgh on 14th June at 6.30 p.m.

Skye: At Portree on 18th June at 11 a.m.

Outer Isles: At Stornoway on 18th June at 12 noon.

Northern: At Dingwall on 25th June at 2 p.m.

Australia and New Zealand: At Gisborne on 25th October at 2.30 p.m.

Dornoch Communion

The Kirk Session decided that there would be no Communion held at Dornoch on the third Sabbath of June.

Edinburgh Induction

At its meeting in Glasgow on Tuesday, 30th April, the Southern Presbytery resolved to meet (D.V.) in Morningside Baptist Church, Morningside Road (near junction of Morningside Road with Colinton Road), Edinburgh on Friday, 14th June, 1991 at 6.30 p.m. Divine Worship will commence at 7 p.m. for the Induction of Rev. D. B. Macleod M.A., as minister of the congregation.

(Rev.) Alex. MacPherson
Clerk of Presbytery

Editor's Address

As from 14th June, 1991 (D.V.), the Editor's address will be: Napier House, 8 Colinton Road, Edinburgh, EH10 5DS.

Acknowledgment of Donations

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

Beauly: Anon., £10 for Sust. Fund (Inverness Postmark).

Bracadale: Friends, Raasay, £20 for Congr. Expenses, per J. C.; Anon., £20, where most needed, per D. J. M.; Anon., £10 towards Manse Repairs, per D. J. M.

Dingwall: Mrs M., Strathpeffer, £10 for Mag. Fd.; Mr and Mrs D. MacL., Strathpeffer, £5 for Church Funds.

Dumbarton: J. C., Glasgow, £20 for Cong. Fund; Anon., £10; Anon., £20; Anon., £20; Anon., £10, all for Comm. Expenses (all in plate); Anon., £80 for Foreign Mission and T.B.S. (in plate).

Edinburgh: Two Skye Friends, £50 for Church and Manse Fund, per D. M. Campbell; E. K., Clwelys, £20 for Congr. Funds, per Mrs Nicolson.

Fort William: Mr and Mrs K., £20 for Comm. Expenses; Anon. (envelope in plate) £20 where most needed, both per J. Mackinnon.

Glasgow: F.P., Beauly, £10 for Congr. Fund; Miss N. H., £5 for Sust. Fund, per Rev. D. M.; Anon., £100 Sponsor a Blind Child; Anon., £20; Anon., £50, both for Jewish and Foreign Mission Fund; Anon., £30 for Welfare of Youth Fund; Anon., £5; Anon., £10; Anon., £10; M. McA., £10; Where most needed, £10 per Rev. D. M.; Matth. 6: 3 (2 donations) £20; J. C., £20, all for Bus Fund; Anon., £5; Anon., £10; Anon., £10; Anon., £10; Anon., £50; Anon., £100, all for T.B.S.

Laide: Bryn Srion Church, Cynheidre, Llaelli, £100 per Rev. N. M. Ross; Mrs M., £10 per K. MacK., Coast for C.D.C.; K. L. MacK., £20 for Laide Building Fund; Friend, Inverness (in collection plate) for C.D.C. £15; Stornoway Friend, £20 per Mrs Ross; Glasgow Friends, £15, both for Communion Expenses; Friends, Kinlochbervie, £200 for Bibles for Russia; E. S., Inverness, £10 for Sust. Fund; Tain Friends, £10 for Communion Expenses; Friend, Aultbea Postmark, £20 for Church Funds; Friend, Gairloch, £10 for Church Funds.

North Harris: M. M. & S. M. L., Cluer, £20 per J. McL.; M. M. Tarbert, £10; Anon., £10, both envelope in plate; Stockinish Friends £10; £10; £5; £5; £2, all per Rev. K. D. MacL.; Anon., £5 (envelope in plate); Friend, Leacklea, £20 (envelope in plate); D. M. L., Grosebay, £10 per J. McL., all for Communion Expense; Anon., £5 for Bus Fund (envelope in plate); Anon., Tarbert, £50 for Sust. Fund; £25 for Home Mission, £25 for Foreign Mission; Friend, Kyleakin, £3 for Church Door Collection, last four per J. McL.

Portree: Anon., £5; Anon., £10; Anon., £4, all for Church Bus., all by envelope in plate; Friends, £20 for Sust. Fund; Anon., £2 for Centenary Fund; Tolsta Friend, £20 for Congr. Purposes, last three per F. M.; Anon., £10; Anon., £20, both for door collection, both by envelope in plate.

Staffin: Envelope in plate, £5 for Car Fund, from Friend of the Cause; Envelope in plate, £20 for Sust. Fund.

Stornoway: M. & C., £100 where most needed; Friend, North Tolsta, £10 for Congr. Funds; Miss K. A. MacLeod, The Cottage, Callanish, £10 for Sust. Fund.