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The Trial of Faith

All who are called by divine grace and who are savingly united to the Lord Jesus Christ are called to a life of faith in the Son of God. It is by faith that the soul of a sinner is united to Jesus Christ and it is by faith that that soul is to live in this world. "The just shall live by faith." "Without faith it is impossible to please God for he that cometh to God must believe that He is and that He is the rewarder of all those who diligently seek Him." Having come to believe on the divine Redeemer the soul is to draw by faith out of the fulness that is in Him. There is a fulness in Christ to meet all His people's needs at all times. The more they are brought by His grace to rest in Him, the more they will receive out of His fulness. In this way they are to go from strength to strength until at last they appear before Him in Zion.

While this is true it does not mean that their path in this world is always to be an easy one. The Lord has warned His people of this: "In this world ye shall have tribulations," and again, "All that will live godly in this present life shall suffer persecution." "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake." There are to be bitter things in the believer's cup as well as sweet things. His people must remember this, lest when difficulties and persecutions arise they become offended. The graces of the believer must be tried, each grace in its own way.

The Apostle Peter in writing to the strangers scattered throughout the provinces of Asia Minor spoke to them of the trial of their faith. It was through many and varied temptations they were tried and through these temptations they were brought into heaviness. It is evident from this that these temptations were not easy to bear. Yet the Apostle shows them that the end that was in view was a God-glorifying one. He does not only speak of the trial of their faith, but of their faith even being tried with fire. What a fierce trial that must have been! Gold must be tried in the fire so that

it may be purified. So their faith must be tried, not to weaken it, but to strengthen it, and to show that it is indeed the faith of God's elect and not a spurious faith which the fiery trial would burn up. The Word of God makes plain that the troubles that afflict the just are many. They are assaulted by the world, the flesh and the devil. They have to contend with inward corruptions as well as outward enemies. They are engaged in a conflict and warfare with many enemies. They are severely tried at times as the Lord sees good for them. Yet it is not their destruction He intends but their good.

How are they to stand up to such trials? We see how Job was tried and how he comforted himself in the midst of it when he said: "He knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." Though he could not understand the way that the Lord was dealing with him, yet he knew that the Lord knew why he was dealing with him in this way. In a time of great trial, David encouraged himself in the Lord his God. So must the soul in the midst of the trial look to the Lord as the One who knows all things and who has promised his people that though their afflictions are many, yet He will bring them out of them all, and bring them to a wealthy place.

What will be the result of all these trials? The Apostle Peter could say to those to whom he was writing that the trial of their faith would be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. In time itself, the Lord's tried ones shall come forth from the fiery trial to praise and to magnify His great and holy name. In eternity, the trials that His people had to pass through in this world will only make their song rise higher. They will then be of those who have come out of great tribulations and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. "Our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." There in everlasting glory "the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

Sermon

by Rev. Charles Calder, Ferintosh
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"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." John 12: 32.

Thirdly, What gives peculiar attraction to the Cross of Christ, and communicates to it the most powerful influence in bringing nigh those that

were far off, is the love therein manifested to the sinful, perishing children of men. Much of the goodness of God may be seen by an enlightened eye in creation, much in His providential care over His creatures; but it is in the Cross of Christ that the glory of divine love has been most eminently displayed, and shines forth with a lustre surpassing all wonder and praise. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends; but Christ hath recommended His love to us, in that, while we were sinners and enemies, He died for us. He hath recommended His love in submitting for *such* not only to the tortures of crucifixion to be lifted up as a spectacle of ignominy and woe on the accursed tree, but in submitting to sufferings of a nature far more exquisite, to the hiding of His Father's face and to the unknown sorrow of soul-suffering, which threw Him into sore amazement and a bloody sweat, which extorted from Him strong crying and tears, and made Him, though silent as a sheep before her shearers, amidst all the cruelties and indignities He met with from men, to pour out, in the anguish of His soul, that bitter complaint, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Oh! what manner of love was this! Oh! the height and depth, the breadth and the length, of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge! If we conceive of Christ lifted up upon the Cross, and addressing us in the pathetic exclamation of the prophet Jeremiah, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by, behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow?" Must we not reply with admiration and gratitude, No, Lord, never was sorrow like unto Thy sorrow; never was love like unto Thy love? And how must admiration of this love be heightened; how powerful must its attractive influence be felt, from the believing contemplation of the holy alacrity with which our blessed Lord, knowing all things that were to come upon Him, went forth to surrender Himself to these tremendous sufferings, and of the wonderful meekness, the patience, the constancy, and the willingness with which He persevered in the dreadful conflict! He failed not, nor was He discouraged till he brought forth judgment unto victory, and, having power over His own life to reserve it, or lay it down when He pleased; yet He did not save Himself, because He would save others; nor did He yield up the ghost till He had drank out the dregs of the cup of wrath, till He could pronounce, "It is finished," — till he had paid His people's full ransom, and obtained for them redemption and everlasting salvation.

Christ is therefore to be held forth in the preaching of the Gospel, as voluntarily submitting to be lifted up upon the Cross; He is to be represented there in His dyed garments and red apparel, wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities; His pierced bleeding heart

panting with desire for the salvation of sinners; His blessed arms extended wide to invite and welcome them into this glorious sanctuary, that by the powerful magnetism of His dying love their hearts may be won to Him, and aliens converted, in the day of His power, into fellow-citizens with the saints, and strangers and foreigners into faithful members of the household of God. Christ is thus to be held forth in the preaching of the glorious Gospel as lifted up upon the Cross, and as addressing perishing sinners in the tender, affectionate strain of Joseph to his brethren: "I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold into Egypt, come near unto me I pray you;" so that, drawn by the cords of this mighty love, and by these bands of a man, His seed, as foretold by Isaiah, may be brought from the east and gathered from the west, that the north may give up, and the south keep not back; that His sons may be brought from far, and His daughters from the ends of the earth; and that they may be seen flying to Him as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows, seeking Jesus who was crucified, and asking the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, "Come and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten." "Thine are we, David, and on thy side thou Son of Jesse." "Hosannah! to the Son of David, blessed be he who came in the name of the Lord to save us, Hosannah! in the highest."

Fourthly, The harmony of the divine attributes, as displayed in the Cross, has a powerful influence in drawing sinners to Christ, and encouraging their approaches to God through Him. To reconcile the seemingly opposite interests of justice and mercy in the salvation of sinners, must, to us, have forever appeared impossible. But in the Cross of Christ, the incomprehensible wisdom of God has revealed a method for the accomplishment of this infinitely important object; a method which excites the wonder and animates the praises of the blest above; a method from which glory arises to God in the highest — peace on earth and good will to the children of men; a method by which the glory of God's justice and holiness is reconciled to the amplest exercise of His mercy and love, in the eternal salvation of the guilty, humbled sinner. It were easy to conceive of God's righteousness declared in the *punishment* of sin; it is the *Cross of Christ* alone that declares His righteousness in the *remission* of sin. It manifests justice in the way of pardoning sin, and mercy in the way of punishing it. In the sufferings of a Surety of such infinite dignity, the justice of God is more awfully displayed than if the whole human race had been doomed to everlasting destruction, and mercy at the same time shines forth in a more amiable way than if justice had been entirely dispensed with, and sin left altogether unpunished. Here, then, spotless justice, inviolable truth,

infinite mercy, and love shine all at once, none of them obscures the other; each gives lustre to the rest, they mingle their beams, and shine forth with united and eternal splendour, as David speaks; "Mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have embraced each other" (Ps. 85: 10). Mercy and peace must have been ever inclined to serve man, but truth exacted the performance of God's threatening, "The soul that sinneth it shall die," and righteousness could not but give to every one his due. God must be true in all His ways, and righteous in all His works.

Now Christ is to be set forth in the preaching of the Gospel as lifted up upon the Cross, satisfying the demands of all these claimants, restoring union between them, and showing, in His death, how God's Word can be true and His work just, and the sinner notwithstanding find mercy and obtain peace. Is the sinner convinced of his obnoxiousness to the stroke of divine justice, how attractive in this view is the Cross of Christ, and with what joy must he welcome the call to repair thither. Contemplating from thence stern justice and soft smiling mercy (as an illustrious writer expresses it) in perfect concord, supporting in full majesty the throne of God; hearing from thence the justice of God calling for grace, mercy and peace to be multiplied to the penitent believer in Jesus, must he not, in holy wonder, cry out, "This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it?" Who is a God like unto Thee that pardoneth iniquity and passeth by the transgressions of the remnant of Thine heritage, who retainest not Thine anger for ever, because Thou delightest in mercy? "Oh! the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God, how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out."

Fifthly. That sinners may be brought to experience the attractive influence of the Cross of Christ it is necessary to represent to them the victory obtained thereby over all the powers of darkness and the enemies of our salvation. It was on the Cross that the seed of the woman bruised the head of the serpent. It was by His death that Christ destroyed him who had the power of death, that is the devil. By the expiation of guilt on the Cross, He disarmed death of his formidable sting, and spoiled the powers of darkness of the trophies they had gained, by drawing man into their own apostacy, and subjecting to themselves this part of God's rational creation. Accordingly, says Christ in the verse preceding our text speaking of the death He was about to accomplish: "Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the Prince of this world be cast out." When He made His soul an offering for sin, and laid down His life on the Cross, as a ransom for many, not only did He overcome the world with all its terrors, but trampled on death and hell, and on sin the author of both;

expelled Satan from the empire which he had so long usurped over the minds of men, and took the prey from the mighty and delivered the lawful captive. It is through manifold tribulations that we must enter into the kingdom of heaven. The enmity betwixt the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent never ceaseth; those whom Christ hath chosen out of the world, the world will hate. Satan desires to have them that he may sift them as wheat, and still goeth about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.

To the soul enlightened to see its danger, and ready to be oppressed with fear and sorrow from such a host of spiritual foes, how attractive must the Cross appear, when Christ, by the preaching of the Gospel, is there represented to the eye of faith, in His dyed garments, and in the greatness of his strength, wresting by his pierced hand the keys of death and of hell from Satan's possession and trampling with his bruised feet all the enemies of God's glory and of our salvation; making a show of them openly, and triumphing over them on the Cross, and by his victory securing victory to all His faithful followers. For they also shall overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the power of His grace, and turn out conquerors at length, and more than conquerors through Him that loved them.

We are therefore, in the preaching of the Gospel, to direct the afflicted in the world, for comfort, to the Cross of Christ, and to bid them possess their souls in patience, whilst they hear His gracious saying, "My kingdom is not of this world." "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer I have overcome the world, and in me ye shall have peace." Those tossed by the tempests of temptation, we are to guide thither for rest, and we bid them dismiss their fears, while they view the glorious captain of their salvation leading captivity captive, and thereby giving them the assured hope, that the God of Peace shall shortly bruise Satan underneath their feet also.

The bowed down under a sense of guilt we are to lead to the same blessed resting place, that they may lift up their heads and behold with joy the Man of God's right hand, who is mighty to save, taking away the sin of the world by the sacrifice of himself, bearing it into a land not inhabited; so that when the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for there shall be none, and when the sins of Judah shall be sought for they shall not be found. It is by exhibiting thus the glorious conquests of the Cross, and proclaiming there liberty for the captives, and comfort to all that mourn, that the outcasts of Israel shall be assembled and brought nigh, and the dispersed of Judah gathered into one; that the weary soul shall be satiated, and the sorrowful soul replenished with joy unspeakable and full of glory. And

in that day as the Prophet Isaiah speaks, "There shall be a Root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious" (Isa. 11: 10).

Lastly. That sinners may be effectually drawn to Christ, we must lay before them the inestimable purchase of the Cross. Of the glorious blessings which Christ hath purchased by his death, and now dispenseth in the most gratuitous manner, little indeed of the value can be conceived or uttered by us. To the redeemed of the Lord they shall be the subject of eternal wonder and praise. The apostle Paul tells us that he made peace by the blood of His Cross, that he submitted to that accursed death, "that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles that we should receive the promise of the spirit through faith;" and that he entered in once by His own blood into the holiest of all, having obtained for us eternal redemption. Christ is therefore in the preaching of the Gospel to be represented as lifted up upon the Cross, purchasing for the rebellious peace and reconciliation with God, the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, and an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. How attractive in this view must the Cross of Christ appear! How suited to man's wretched condition by nature are those blessings for which he there shed His precious blood! and how graciously calculated to satisfy and solace an immortal spirit formed originally for God and eternity. The scriptures of truth represent man by nature as in a state of enmity and rebellion against God: as enemies to God in their minds and by wicked works. The soul convinced of the misery of such a state and trembling under a sense of danger from hearing as from the mount covered with tempest and that burned with fire, that awful denunciation: "Let the potsherds of the earth strive with the potsherds of the earth; but woe to the man that striveth with his Maker." Such we are to direct to Mount Calvary, there to behold the Son of God pouring out His soul unto death; there to hear His blood speaking better things than the blood of Abel; speaking in a voice the sweetest and loudest in the world, louder than the thunder of Sinai; a voice that reacheth heaven and earth, pleading with God in behalf of men, and beseeching men to be reconciled to God; a voice more melodious to the self-condemned penitent than the sound of the jubilee trumpet to the captive and oppressed Israelite of old; a voice that turneth into a heavenly calm the tempest of the troubled soul, that diffuseth into the contrite heart a joy with which strangers shall not intermeddle, and a peace that passeth all understanding.

The Scriptures again represent our condition by nature, as without God in the world, not having the Spirit nor the fruits of the Spirit, without

light, without hope, without joy; like the earth in the beginning, till the Spirit of God moved on the face of the deep; without form and void, and overspread with darkness. The soul brought to feel and lament the misery and wretchedness of such a state we are to direct to the cross of Christ, that he may behold Him there purchasing the gift of the Holy Spirit without measure, and that he may behold Him now, exalted at the right hand of God, in virtue of His obedience unto death; in order that from a throne of grace on high He might breathe on the spiritually dead, and say unto them, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost;" that He might thus form them into living temples, into an habitation of God through the Spirit; and fill them with hope, and light, and joy in believing, that out of His fulness He might communicate to them grace for grace; that unction from the Holy One which teacheth all things, and those consolations of His Spirit which can make His people to rejoice even in the midst of tribulations.

We are all by nature children of wrath, and liable to that eternal death which God in His word has declared to be the just wages of sin. To the soul trembling under that conviction, and crying out with the awakened jailor of old; "What shall I do to be saved?" how reviving the tidings of the gospel, the glorious doctrine of the Cross, when Christ is there represented to the eye of faith, suffering the just for the unjust, that He might bring sinners unto God, not only to deliver them from the wrath that is to come, but likewise to consecrate for them, by the rending of the vail of His flesh, a new and living way into the Holiest of all; to the possession of an inheritance eternal in the heavens. With what holy ardour must such sinners welcome and obey the call to view the blessed and divine Redeemer wearing a crown of thorns to purchase for them a crown of glory! to hear Him saying as from the cross, "I lay down my life for my sheep, I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any be able to pluck them out of my hands. In my Father's house are many mansions, and I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am there ye may be also." Christ is called the Prince of Peace. With reference to Him it was said in prophecy, that the "gathering of the people should be unto Shiloh." When He is represented in the preaching of the gospel as lifted up betwixt heaven and earth, to make peace between both, His precious blood streaming forth, from His sacred mangled body, and the waters of life, oceans of spiritual and eternal blessings, issuing freely from the same source, for the guilty and perishing children of men; it is thus they shall be brought to enlist with joy under the banner of the Cross, and that the children of God, scattered abroad, shall be gathered together into one, and come to be blessed in Him, and to call Him bless-

ed; of whom it was foretold that "in Him all the kindreds of the earth should be blessed."

I shall not trespass on your patience by any application of this subject further than just to observe, that from the faint imperfect view laid before you of the attractive influence of the Cross of Christ, we may learn with what a rich variety of motives the doctrine of the Cross furnishes the minister of the gospel, to urge and encourage sinners to repair to Christ for salvation, the obligation resulting from thence on him to determine, with Paul, on making Christ crucified the chief subject of his discourses. And having the grace given him of God to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, and knowing that, with regard to one and all of those to whom he is sent with the message of salvation, it must prove either the savour of life unto life, or of death unto death; must he not cry out, Who is sufficient for these things? But our sufficiency is of God, who hath committed the treasure of the gospel to earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us; and whose encouraging declaration to His faithful servants is, "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."

(Preached at Contin on 15th August, 1793, at the ordination and admission of Mr Dallas.)

Who Can Harm You?

by **Rev. K. D. MacLeod**

Some thoughts on 1 Peter 3: 13: "And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?"

We live in a world where everyone, to one extent or another, suffers harm and damage; it is a world which, to a tremendous degree, is given over to violence. But even those, who in God's kindness are spared suffering from the actions of criminals and the effects of war, will certainly not have a perfectly smooth passage through life. Yet the greatest harm that can ever befall anyone is not the catastrophe and the suffering that are so common in this world. Greater and more awful by far is what lies before the ungodly in a lost eternity, which is the result of remaining unreconciled to God. We are accordingly told by the Saviour, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Mt 10: 28).

In giving this warning Christ doubtless had in mind times of persecution before His people, and Peter wrote this epistle to those whose troubles certainly included persecution. Peter in effect said, "Do not be afraid of

what man can do, as long as you are followers of what is good." Persecutors may indeed harm the bodies of God's children, but that is not real harm for they cannot damage their souls; their souls are under God's special protection. But what awful suffering God will at last bring on sinners who will not turn to Him! Paul clearly announced man's duty when he said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16: 31).

Those who thus believe will be safe from going, body and soul, into hell to endure the pain which ungodly sinners must experience throughout eternity. Thus it is obvious that sinners are doing tremendous harm to themselves when they reject the gospel, when they refuse to close in with Him who came into the world to die for the ungodly. Even for this life itself sinners are doing themselves harm when they continue in their sins, for "the face of God is against them that do evil" (v12b). Although the ungodly would have as much of the good things of life as those whom Asaph described in Psalm 73, who had "more than heart could wish" (v7), yet they would not have God's blessing with these temporal benefits. Nobody has any real blessing, if everything that they have is for this life and they have nothing of spiritual substance for the next. Those in that sad position must at death pass to their long home of agony and despair.

We are repeatedly commanded in the Bible to fear God. This is not the terror which the wicked will have after death. Hatred to sin is the real expression of the fear of God — "the fear of the Lord is to hate evil" (Pro 8: 13). We can look at the matter from the opposite direction and say, The fear of the Lord is to follow after what is good. To hate evil is something more than to keep away from outward sin. Those who hate evil will indeed strive to keep away from sin, but this fear of God is more than something outward. It goes along with what is outward, but at the same time there is in the soul an inward holy reverence for a great and a glorious God, a God whose law is holy and just and good and who is consistently offended by sin. And there is love in that fear. There is no love in the terror of the wicked, and especially in the terror of the wicked on the day of judgement. But the souls of God's children are open to the law of God, and are all the more desirous of forsaking sin because they love God as a good God; they see that God has given us His law because He is good and gracious.

In this world they will get no further than *following* after good. Attaining to good is only for the world to come; it can only be reached at death. Perfection is out of the question in this world, but it is something that is ahead of every child of God. Where there is the fear of the Lord in

this world, there will be perfect obedience in the next; then there will be a complete capacity to obey God perfectly, however weak and feeble they may be in this world. Believers may feel that their sins are standing against them before a perfect God. But, because they are believers, God has cast behind His back the sins of their unconverted days, and He casts their continuing sins behind His back also, for He imputes none of these sins to their account.

Yet it is the highest description of the child of God in this world — as far as sin is concerned — that he is fleeing from sin. And if we look at the same individual from the opposite point of view — he is following after what is good. Certainly there is sinful imperfection in everything he does in this world, though he will not use this imperfection as a pillow to put under his head. It has been described as the hypocrite's pillow but the child of God's burden. And that great and gracious child of God, the Apostle Paul, was very conscious that his running of the Christian life was only a following after. "Not as though I had already attained", he acknowledged, "either were already perfect, but I follow after" (Phil 3: 12). And, however far anyone today may feel himself behind Paul, who can harm him if he is a follower of that which is good? "I follow after", Paul went on, "if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." He had the resurrection of the dead before him — and by the grace of God he expected to attain to it.

Who then could harm Paul, as one who was following after what is good? No, nothing could harm him, for he had cast in his lot with the great Saviour who was crucified outside the gates of Jerusalem. Christ had revealed Himself to Paul, and Paul had closed in with Him by faith. He was therefore united to Christ. And all those who are followers of that which is good make it clear that they likewise are united to Christ by faith.

Was Paul, to take him again as an example, a sinner who deserved to die eternally? Of course he was but, because Paul was united to Christ by faith, the death which Christ accomplished at Calvary was accounted Paul's death. The wages of Paul's sin, which was eternal death, had been borne by his Saviour. It was thus impossible for Paul to suffer eternally, and he could say, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal 2: 20). the union between Paul and Christ was as close as that. And the union between Christ and all who follow after that which is good is just as close, although they may not have advanced in grace to the same

extent, or be able to give their Master the same degree of service, as Paul did. If they have the same degree of assurance, they too can say with the same confidence, "I am crucified with Christ . . . who loved me and gave Himself for me."

The believer is a new creature, for "if any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor 5: 17). He has been renewed in every part of his soul by the Holy Spirit, but he is by no means perfect. There is much room for growth in grace — much room for his love, his faith and all his other graces to grow. And grow they will until the very moment of death, when the work of God in the soul will be brought to absolute perfection.

Paul could also speak of how Christ "gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works" (Titus 2: 14), which is just to describe God's redeemed ones as enthusiastic followers of that which is good. By way of example we might note how Peter exhorts everyone "that will love life and see good days: Let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile; let him eschew evil and do good; let him seek peace and ensue it" (1 Pet 3: 10f). Truthfulness is called for, but there are many ways of giving one's tongue to evil without directly breaking the Ninth Commandment, which states, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour". Peter thus exhorts all to keep their tongues from what will do evil and from what is in any way polluted, and at the same time to be free from guile — to be simple, honest and straightforward.

To eschew evil and to do good is a complete summary of the life God directs us to live. Job was a man commended by God Himself as someone who eschewed evil. He fled from evil; he had such a hatred to evil that he got as far away from it as he possibly could. He would not loiter near evil, he would not stay as near it as he dared without actually getting involved in it. It is true that there is sin in every soul — the believer's included, but Peter's exhortation is to let the sin in ourselves have as little opportunity as possible to meet with temptation, which can so easily set on fire the evil within. Can we do that in our strength? It is impossible; only by the strength of divine grace can we do so. And those who eschew evil not only seek to flee from outward sins, but from heart sins also, for they have the fear of God in their souls.

Peter, however, acknowledges that such believers may suffer considerably in this world. "But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake", he says, "happy are ye" (v14). What did he mean? Was it not harm to Paul if he should be beheaded? Was it not harm to Peter if he too

should suffer a violent death? Was it not harm to Peter and Paul and multitudes more that they should suffer the hardships of imprisonment? Undoubtedly it was, if we look no further than the thing itself.

But let us read Peter's question in the light of that other truth: "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom 8: 28). Who then is he that can harm those who are followers of that which is good? If they suffer for righteousness' sake the Lord will more than make it up. There may be outward harm, there may be pain and suffering, there may be many difficulties in providence, but if the sufferer is one who hates evil all things will work together for his or her good. Grace will be given, and God's favour will be increasingly shown, to that soul.

To take the extreme case, what was it for Paul to have his life taken violently from him? Where did it take him, but into the immediate presence of the Lord to reign with Him for ever? He knew "that if the early house of this tabernacle were dissolved" there was before him "a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor 5: 1). Could Paul then be harmed when he had borne a good testimony for his Master before Nero? Death could only take him into the house of many mansions. And Paul, gracious man that he was, was encouraged, even when there was such an unnatural death in prospect, by the crown of righteousness that was laid up for him.

If we turn our attention to God's control of providence, what we see is that "the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers" (v12a). That is why no one can harm them. God is watching over them; He recognises their needs and He will supply them all — as He understands them, which is infinitely better than the way they understand their needs. He has promised never to leave or forsake His children. They are His, and they will be His for ever. Accordingly they will at last be brought without spot into the presence of God. So, as Paul sums up his thoughts on the safety of God's children, he puts the matter very positively: "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 8: 38). Who then — on earth or in hell — is able to harm anyone that is united to Christ, when nothing whatever can separate them from the love of God?

We have the promise of God, but it may be another matter to lean on the promise. But how can the distance be bridged which seems to lie between the soul and the promise, except by faith? And where can that faith

come from, but from God Himself? Should God's children then not seek grace to lay hold more and more on this, and on every other, promise. Christ still calls to His children — whatever their trouble and whatever their sorrow — "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Mt 11: 28).

Revivals of Religion in the Isle of Skye

(Continued from Page 326)

For about two years the awakening was general. As already stated, it began in the parish of Kilmuir. Snizort next enjoyed the life-giving influence, then Bracadale, and finally Duirinish — all contiguous parishes. Wherever Donald Munro proceeded, the effects described followed; and for a time it was estimated three or four individuals were savingly converted at every meeting where he presided. Not only so; but when these converts engaged in spiritual exercises throughout the country — for they often came from a distance, and returned to their remote homes laden with the "unsearchable riches of Christ" — great power accompanied their services. It was a "time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord," and by every event connected with it He forcibly announced to all: "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit."

The effects were twofold — of a primary or direct, and of a secondary or indirect character.

The primary effects were the genuine conversion of many sinners to the knowledge and obedience of the truth as it is in Jesus. In such a matter it is difficult, and may be dangerous, to speak to numbers; but it is well known that during the general awakening several hundreds were brought "from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God." The genuineness of their conversion was evidenced by the change of life which accompanied their profession. Persons who had openly served sin with their whole heart did truly abandon it, embraced the cause of godliness, and walked — as those of them who still survive do — so as to "adorn the doctrine of God, their Saviour, by a life and conversation becoming it in all things." Some who had been noted for wickedness became eminent as Christians; and until this day they labour in the vineyard in their various stations as "servants who need not to be ashamed." Those are not, in any case, the results of a vain enthusiasm, any more than the fruits of the day of Pentecost were the effect of "new wine." But "mockers" now judge by the same rule as they did then, being blinded by the same evil influence.

Among the secondary effects may be stated, first, the suppression of the openly sinful practices common in the country. As the image of Dagon fell, mutilated, before the ark of the Lord, so did they before the divine power now present in the district where they had prevailed. Those practices were no longer in repute — discarded and abandoned by such even as were still secretly “joined to their idols.” Whilst the devil was certainly cast out of many “by the finger of God,” so that he shall never return to find a resting-place in them again — he also went out of many more; and for a time the “house was swept and garnished.”

In the next place, a large body was formed whose religion, instead of being a reflection of the image of Christ, was no more than a reflection of that of His people — the work in whom was not of God but of man. They constituted the tares among the wheat — the chaff among the true grain — the growth of the rocky ground contrasted with that of the good soil. They attached themselves to the others — appeared under the same circumstances; and thus, as in all revivals which have occurred in the various periods of the Church’s history, offences in course of time came. These, we believe, were less numerous and momentous than the hatred of enemies represented them, and probably might have been made less of but for the anxiety of the real friends of Christ to vindicate His holy work from the imputation thrown on it from such a cause. They might have remembered that the existence of such offences most truly declared the genuineness of the work of God among them; for where the good seed is made to take root, there the enemy will come and sow the evil.

In the third place, there followed from this awakening that abandonment of ordinances, as administered by the parochial clergy, which at present attracts the eyes of the supreme Church Court to Skye and the adjacent districts. All the professors of religion — both real converts and others — remained devotedly attached to the national establishment, and resisted efforts made to draw them aside, in which mind they continue. But the evident and striking countenance granted to the *meetings* attracted the people to them, and secured their reverence for these services. The churches were, in consequence, very much forsaken. In these circumstances the clergy began to refuse sealing ordinances to those who did not hear them; and, on the other hand, the “professors” lifted their protest against the clergy by refusing to accept ordinances as by them administered — Mr Shaw being the only minister excepted at that time from the application of this rule. Hence — especially from this latter cause — it soon ceased to be matter of reproach to live in the non-enjoyment of the ordinances. More than this, it came to be counted an evidence of seriousness not to

apply to the clergy, or a mark of carelessness and irreligion when application was made. And thus have we, in the bosom of the Church, the anomalous state of things of a large body of professing Christians, distinguished for the fervency of their piety, the purity of their lives, and the warmth of their attachment to her constitution, still maintaining their union with us under the deprivation of ordinances which they earnestly long for — receiving them, when permitted to do so, from ministers whom they approve, and with whom they conceive they can hold Christian communion — and justifying separation, not from the Church, but from her ordinances on the ground of their alleged prostitution by those who ought to be the guardians of their purity! This is not the place to discuss a question beset with many difficulties; but those who seek the true reformation of our national Sion, throughout her whole extent, will do well to pause ere they condemn so many of the “excellent of the earth,” who, under such obloquy, have never let down their solemn protest, raised against abuses which they declare exist — whether more in Skye than elsewhere they know not — nor abandoned their pledged attachment to the Church of their fathers.

A few additional particulars must conclude this narrative. the good work related above was not hindered by any divisions. Enemies attempted to take advantage of the offences alluded to, which, however, but the more closely united the friends of truth; and as all were of one mind on the question regarding the ordinances, neither did this oppose any obstacle to the progress of the Word of Life.

We have stated that the parish of Duirinish was the most lately visited by the divine influence. The awakening there took place a few years after the general revival in the country, and also by means of the meetings already described. The same effects — both as to external appearances and permanent good — followed in the one as in the other; and a great number, for the extent of the population, were turned unto the Lord. The desire to hear and be benefited by the word of salvation equalled now what existed in the earlier revival; and it was often a stirring sight to witness the multitudes assembling during the dark winter evenings — to trace their progress, as they came in all directions across moors and mountains, by the blazing torches which they carried to light their way to the places of meeting. The work of the Lord was precious in those days, and personal inconvenience was little thought of when the hungering soul sought to be satisfied.

The awakening now, as during the period of the great effusion of the Spirit, was principally confined to those not much advanced in life — of

the age of *fifteen*, and under, to *thirty*, both married and unmarried. But there were some striking exceptions to this rule on both occasions. One man, *eighty years of age*, was brought under great concern, lived a few years as a professed Christian, and died, it is believed, in the Lord. A still more wonderful instance of the power of divine grace was afforded in the case of a poor man, residing in the parish of Bracadale, above one hundred years old, who, in the judgment of charity, passed from death to life, having, from being ignorant and unholy, renounced his dependence in a covenant of works, and embraced the faith which purifies the heart and overcomes the world. The conversion of an idiot — or rather half-witted person — who afterwards emigrated with his relations to America, constituted another triumph of that grace which was so bountifully communicated in this hitherto barren wilderness. But time would fail to enumerate all the instances of this kind which occurred — including some of persons little known, during their life, to be more than mere professors, who on their death-bed evinced the reality of the change that had been wrought upon their souls. These are mentioned as illustrative of the sovereignty of God in the communications of His grace, and to encourage all who plead for them to remember that with Him nothing is impossible — that He doth “wonderful things,” and that His “counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.”

In 1823 Mr Shaw died, but the Lord had prepared one to do more than fill his place in the person of Mr Roderick McLeod, who was appointed to succeed him in Bracadale. As a missionary in the neighbourhood, he had for a few years filled the office without possessing the spirit or doing the work of an evangelist; but when thus “far off,” it pleased God to “call him by his grace, and to reveal his Son in him” — so preparing and qualifying him to preach the “glorious Gospel.” With his change of views and practice, as a minister of the New Testament, he adopted the sentiments prevalent among the religious in the country on the question regarding the ordinances. His unflinching adherence to these, and a consequently unusual strictness in the role of admission, soon involved him in troubles in the Church Courts, whilst it endeared him to all those in the country who had turned from their idols to serve the living God. If any one thing could have succeeded in separating for ever from our Church this valuable body of devoted adherents, it would have been the deposition of this estimable man. Let us hope that the days have gone by when such a risk might exist; nay, let us hope that the time has come for the calm discussion of the principle of such vital importance to the interests of true religion, for which he has so long contended.

Under Mr McLeod's ministry the good work was prolonged, and from time to time, through his instrumentality, many were "added to the church of such as should be saved." A door was still kept open for Mr McDonald, of Urquhart, whose apostolic visits continued to be regularly paid, and whose faithful ministrations during the whole progress of the work had been evidently acknowledged. Still more recently another door was opened for him in Snizort, where Mr McLachlan, now of Cawdor, during a short ministerial course, zealously preached the doctrine of the Cross, and did not run in vain.

In 1830 Donald Munro died — a man highly honoured of the Lord, and whose memory will be had in everlasting remembrance. It is impossible to reflect on his career without being impressed with the truth that God is "no respecter of persons," and that the distinctions of which men are apt to make so much are often lightly set by of Him. He can choose His instruments from the most unlikely materials, and in performing His works of wonder, strikingly prove that "the excellency of the power is of himself." He once selected a child of tender years through whom to speak to His people, passing by a regularly appointed and aged servant; and not more forcibly did he then announce than He has done among us by the history of Donald Munro, "Them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed."

This good man's services, although principally confined to Skye, were not exclusively so. He sometimes visited the mainland, especially on sacramental occasions; but wherever he proceeded the same holy influence was made to accompany him, and the Lord honoured him as the means of promoting His cause. A little anecdote, well known, will illustrate his zeal and manner of proceeding during such solemn occasions as we refer to. In this district of the Highlands immense numbers from incredibly remote points assemble to the ordinance of the Supper, where faithful preaching or esteemed ministers are expected. They are usually accommodated at night in barns or large outhouses — the males occupying one department of the building, the females the other. A stranger who had never heard of Donald came to attend on an occasion at Lochcarron, during the ministry of the late Mr Lachlan McKenzie — a man most eminent among his own people in his day and generation. The stranger had his bed allotted him in a large barn, with a multitude accommodated in the same way. During the darkness of the night he was aroused from his slumbers by a voice calling aloud, "Awake, awake!" The summons seemed to be obeyed, as if expected, judging by the movement which he perceived all around him. He then heard, "Let us sing to the praise of God," pro-

nounced by the same voice. Several verses were distinctly enunciated amidst the darkness and the stillness of the night. They were sung, each line being regularly announced, with thrilling effect. Prayer was then offered up, the stranger perceiving all his fellow-lodgers on their knees, and instinctively following their example. This duty ended, a long portion of Scripture was distinctly pronounced. He was amazed; but much more was this the case when he listened to a striking and powerful exposition, with references to other Scriptures in proof or in illustration of doctrine, concluding with an irresistible appeal to the consciences of all who were present. It is not said that the stranger had "come to scoff," but it is to be feared an idle curiosity, which too often guides many to such places, had led him thither. There is reason to believe, however, that he "remained to pray." The Lord had conducted him by a way which he knew not, when He directed his steps to the place to which he had come. He had touched his heart, and from that day forth this wanderer on the mountains of vanity sought Sion with his face thitherward.

It only remains to be added that the meetings are still maintained in Skye, and that they prosper through the blessing of God. Donald Munro has several worthy successors. Places of assembly have been erected, and from time to time the "Good Shepherd," by means of the services there engaged in, brings home some lost sheep, and feeds those who are already in the fold. In any parish in which the privilege of faithful and acceptable preaching in the Church is enjoyed, the meetings are not held on the Sabbath, except in districts so remote as to preclude the possibility of attending there. But in all the parishes which enjoyed the divine influence they are maintained on week-days, the Sabbath being likewise appropriate in cases where the views of the ministers do not accord with those of the large body who adhere to the meetings. The attachment to the Established Church, on the part of this body, remains unaltered, whilst they continue to long for the time when the Lord will again beautify His Sion by reviving His work in midst of the years, and by sending times of refreshing from His presence throughout her whole extent.

The preceding narrative may well encourage all who pray for Jerusalem to continue instant in that duty — to wait patiently for Him who will come and not tarry, and who is to be inquired of to do for Israel the good thing which he has purposed. It forcibly teaches also that we are not to despise the day of small things. To the eye of sense, how hopeless was the cause of religion in Skye when Munro stood there alone, friends as yet being few and opponents many! Yet how striking at last was the testimony given to the persevering faithfulness of that humble man, who went out without

the camp, bearing the reproach of Christ, and though he had little to lose, willingly suffered the loss of what he had, to follow Him. May every one who loves the Lord Jesus hear and obey the commandment, "Go thou and do likewise."

The divine sovereignty, manifested in the work in Skye, ought to give encouragement to those who long for such manifestations of grace as were there afforded. No circumstances can be so hopeless as to justify a cessation of diligence in the use of such means as are ordinarily employed by the eternal Spirit in His work, or to warrant us in saying that His day of power is not to come with its many blessings. On the contrary, there is every thing in the Word, and in His dealings with the Church — as the foregoing narrative illustrates — to animate us in the exercise of increased faith and a more lively hope even as to situations where the darkness is deepest and the "spirit of slumber" the most profound. Let us therefore "gird up the loins of our mind, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Obituary

Mrs Kate Smith, Uig, Lewis

As the Lord often demonstrates His Sovereignty in the methods by which He calls His people effectually at the first, so He reveals it also by the manner in which at the end of life's journey He calls them to be forever with Himself. Some true believers are left for long to suffer pain and weakness, others are called quickly "to be present with the Lord". It was with awesome suddenness that the subject of this brief tribute was called to eternity on August 15, 1990. She was drying some dishes with a neighbour, at the home of her son, when without a word or even a cry she departed this world. A solemn reminder to us all of the words of Scripture, "Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not."

The writer has been unable to discover any details of Kate's early Christian experience but the fruit of her latter life proved the change in her to be a genuine one. She made a public profession of her faith in Christ in June 1962, when she took her place at the Lord's Table for the first time beside her husband, Murdo, who was to become a worthy and respected elder in the Uig congregation. At the time of her death she was the longest in profession of the small band of communicants in Uig who "declare plainly that they seek a country".

One of the clearest features of her life was her obvious relish for the

public Means of Grace and her place was never empty if she could at all be there. For this reason we were all the more conscious that a blank had been made in our midst and that the vacant place would never again be filled by Mrs Smith. Not only did she value the ordinary Means of Grace but she and her husband travelled frequently to Communion Seasons in the Island and beyond, an exercise she continued even after his death till advancing years took their toll.

She loved to be with the Lord's people and her choice of friends displayed, in our judgment, a high level of discernment. She often spoke feelingly of happy times in their home at Valtas when Rev. W. MacLean, Ness, supplied the Uig pulpit during the vacancy. Her frequent referring to this time leads us to conclude that it was then that she first tasted that the "Lord is gracious". Being of a discerning disposition, she gave no place to those who sought to change the foundation or practice of the Church in which she had found the Saviour, in His doctrines in His ordinances and His people.

As we mourn the passing of a lady who was a lover of the Cause, an upholder of our Church's distinctive testimony and an appreciative hearer of the Gospel, we can only pray that the Lord would look on us again in mercy as a congregation and build up the waste places raising up the sons instead of the fathers and the daughters instead of the mothers. Again we express to all Mrs Smith's relatives sincerest sympathy. Our prayer for them is that they would be brought to seek the Lord and to find the salvation that is in Christ for sinners.

D. J. MacD.

Believers' Baptism

The term believers' baptism is generally taken to imply that only persons in possession of saving faith have a right to the sacrament of baptism, and that only infants of such parents (either one or both) have a right to receive the privilege of baptism for their children. Parents, according to this view, who do not profess the hope of having saving faith, are to be denied baptism for their children. In this case, therefore, it is members of the invisible Church, upon their own profession, and not members of the visible Church, who are to be baptised. "The visible Church" as the Westminster Confession of Faith states, "consists of all throughout the world that profess the true religion and their children". "The invisible Church" on the other hand "consists of the whole number of the elect that have been, are, or shall be, gathered into one, under Christ

the head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.” (Ch. 25).

The early Church and all the Reformers without exception, held that the visible Church under both the Old and the New Testament dispensations were one and the same. In the light of that continuity they believed in infant baptism, that as infants were formerly admitted by the sacrament of circumcision into the Old Testament Church, and as no warrant whatsoever could be adduced from the Scriptures to debar them from a privilege they enjoyed for twenty centuries, they admitted them by the sacrament of baptism into the New Testament Church.

“It will not be denied,” wrote the late Rev. William MacIntyre of St. George’s, Sydney, “that God had a Church on earth in the time of Abraham, and His visible Church in all ages is composed of those with whom He has *outwardly* entered into covenant, and whom He has thus brought outwardly into such a relation to Himself that He “is a God unto them”. Now circumcision was the “token” by the application of which Abraham and his seed were outwardly received within the bonds of the covenant which God made with them, that is of the covenant of grace, and thus constituted members of the visible Church as then organised.” (The Token of the Covenant — p6).

That it was on the basis of a profession of the true religion Gentiles were admitted through the ordinance of circumcision into the Old Testament Church, is clear from the command given to Abraham in the day in which the Lord gave him circumcision as the seal of the covenant — that all born in his house and all bought with his money *which were not of his seed* had to be circumcised. In obedience to this command we read, “Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and *all that were bought with his money*, every male among the men of Abraham’s house; and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the self-same day as God had said unto him.” (Gen. 17: 23). Earlier in the Book of Genesis, in chapter 14, we are told that when Abraham heard that his nephew Lot had been captured, he armed 318 of his trained servants born in his own house, and set out for the rescue of Lot. If Abraham could take 318 of his trained servants, and leave a sufficient number to take care of his flocks, what a large household he must have had! Abraham’s 318 trained servants, as Matthew Henry points out, were not only trained to fight, but instructed and catechised in the principles of the true religion. In the Hebrew the word for “trained” means instructed or catechised. It is the same word that is used in the exhortation “train up a child in the way he should go” etc. (Prov. 22: 6). It was his servants, therefore,

instructed in the principles of the true religion, that Abraham circumcised, and thereby openly admitted them into the visible Church, at that time confined to his household. Dr. Gill in his commentary quotes from Maimonides that "if an Israelite receives a grown servant of the heathens, and the servant is not willing to be circumcised, at the end of the whole year seeing he is uncircumcised he is to be sent again to the heathens." "No man" comments Dr. Gill "was to be forced to embrace the true religion, or obliged against his will to submit to its ordinances".

"Baptism is now the solemn admission into the visible Church of Christ. As an ordinance of the visible Church it is also a sign and a seal of the *external* administration of the covenant of grace. There is the *internal* administration of the covenant. The internal administration has respect to believers, who join themselves to the Lord by a free and hearty consent which entitles them to the saving benefits of the covenant. In this internal administration *the Holy Spirit is the seal.*" (Treatise on Baptism by Matthew Henry).

Baptism as a sign and seal of the *external* administration of the covenant of grace belongs to all members of the visible church — "all who profess the true religion with their children". They receive the privilege of baptism on the ground of their professing the true religion, and not on the ground of their professing a hope of regeneration and saving faith which belongs to the *internal* administration of the covenant.

"Baptism is an ordinance of Christ's mediatorial kingdom; therefore all who pertain to the kingdom (the visible Church in the world) are to be baptised. It is the Magna Charta, which every subject may claim the benefit of, unless by any forfeiture, he deprived himself of the privilege of it. It belongs not to the internal but external administration of the kingdom; it is an ordinance of the visible Church, and pertains therefore to those who are visible members of the Church." (Matthew Henry).

Dr. Charles Hodge states that the Churches of the Reformation, the Church of Scotland, the Presbyterian Churches on the Continent of Europe and also most Protestant Churches, as the Church of England and the Congregationalist Churches, acted on the principle that every baptised person not excommunicated being a member of the visible church has a right to have his child baptised. "Infants of such as are members of the visible Church are to be baptised." (Shorter Cat. Q.95). "*Such was the general practice of the Presbyterian Church of America*" writes Dr. Charles Hodge "*until within a comparative recent period of its history.*" (Systematic Theology Vol. 3, p. 569).

Before making his admission Dr. Hodge sets forth the commonly accepted

practice of the above mentioned Churches in Britain, on the Continent and in America, which was founded on the following principle:— (1) That as under the old economy the Temple was one, it had its outer and inner courts, and those who had access to the former were not thereby entitled to the latter; so under the New Testament dispensation the visible Church is one; but it includes two classes of members; baptised professors of the true religion, and those who, giving evidence of regeneration, are admitted to the Lord's Supper. (2) That the qualifications for baptism and for full communion are not identical. Many may properly be admitted to the former, who are not prepared for the latter.

Both Dr. C. Hodge and Dr A. A. Hodge accepted the new view which their Church, the Presbyterian Church of America, had "within a recent period of its history" adopted, that baptism should only be given to the children of parents professing to have saving faith, and therefore entitled to admission to the Lord's Table. Sad to say they also held to the changes made by the Presbyterian Church of America in 1788 in the chapters and sections of the Confession of Faith dealing with the Civil Magistrate, or in other words, the Establishment Principle which maintains the Scriptural view of the universal supremacy of Christ as King of Nations, with the consequent duty of nations as such to honour and serve Him by recognising His Truth and promoting His Cause. Dr. Thomas McCrie in his classic "Statement" on the Establishment Principle first published in April 1807, shows that all the Confessions of all Protestant Churches of the Reformation in Britain and on the Continent, held and maintained the Establishment Principle. "The Establishment Principle" said the eminent Dr. Kennedy of Dingwall, is "not only worth living for, but a principle worth dying for".

In the last century the idea of "believers' baptism" made inroads mainly in the South of Scotland where latitudinarianism in doctrine and practice had thrown open the Table of the Lord to almost all and sundry and denied baptism to parents unless they became communicants. Dr. Kennedy of Dingwall ably opposed and exposed the "believers' baptism" idea and defended in his book "The Days of the Fathers in Ross-shire" the view held not only by the fathers in Ross-shire, but by the worthy fathers in the Church since Reformation times not only in Scotland but also on the Continent. "The Ross-shire fathers held" wrote Dr. Kennedy, "that the two sacraments were in general, seals of the covenant of grace and that as such they were equally valid. But they also held with Mastricht that they did not specially *seal the same measure of privilege*. They held that the qualification for baptism and full communion *are not identical*, that

many may be admitted to the former who are not prepared for the latter." The arguments advanced by Dr. Kennedy and Mastricht are convincing, that it is a great evil to make the Church consist only of communicants and to cast out into the world without any of that watch and care which God intended for them, all those together with their children who do not see their way clear to come to the Lord's Table.

Mastricht from whose writings Dr. Kennedy approvingly quotes, was a Dutch theologian of the 17th century. Mosheim in his "Ecclesiastical History" speaks of Mastricht as being held in the highest reputation for erudition and soundness in the faith, while Principal Cunningham describes his system of theology as eminently distinguished for ability, clearness and accuracy.

A parent seeking baptism for his child is already a member of the visible Church, and as "the infants of such as are members of the visible Church are to be baptised," "on no ground", writes Dr. Kennedy "can the baptism of his child be refused that will not justify the Church in excommunicating or suspending him. The fact of his not being a communicant is held in the South to be a sufficient reason for refusing the baptism of his child. If it be so, it must be a good reason for at least suspending him from the enjoyment of all the privileges of his status as a member of the Church. To refuse baptism is but to take that suspension for granted, when there is no such act of the Church to which to refer. And the strange thing is, that the very man who would be punished, to the extent of disallowing his membership altogether, would be, at the very same time, rewarded with both the Sacraments, if he would take them! The one, which demands the larger exercise of charity in its administration, is refused, but both would be given him at once! He, who is on the eve of being excluded from the pale of the Church, will be welcomed into the full communion of the Church if he will only offer himself to her embrace!

. . . "The Ross-shire fathers had no difficulty in regarding the Sacrament of the Supper, as intended by the Lord specially to seal something other and higher than that which is specially sealed by baptism. They called it, with Mastricht, 'Sacramentum nutritionis', as being intended to be an occasional feast to believers during all their wilderness journey. They beheld in the symbols of Christ's body and blood the clearest and closest manifestation of the glory of the Lord, and in the exercise of those who partake of them the nearest approach to the Lord that can be on the earth. They regarded the guests at the table as having the most conspicuous connection with the cause and glory of Christ.

They saw the Church pointing the eye of the world to a communion

table, to inform them whom she accredited as the true people of God. On all these accounts they felt that they were specially called to guard the passage to the table of the Lord, and to subject to the closest scrutiny all who would approach it. And surely they were right.

“Four most desirable results were secured by the mode of dispensing sealing ordinances, practised in the North, which go far to prove that it was according to the mind, and was crowned with the blessing of the Lord. (1) The Church was preserved from the extreme of exclusiveness, on the one hand, and from that of laxity, on the other. The door of admission was open to all whom ‘piety, charity and prudence’ would admit, and the inner circle was guarded from the profane rush of the crowd. (2) It marked and preserved a distinction, so far as this can be legitimately done, between the approved followers of Christ and all others. This distinction, as an ecclesiastical one, is quite blotted out, when sacraments are administered on the same footing. (3) It kept up, in the consciences of non-communicants, a sense of shortcoming, that would have been quite extinguished under a different system. (4) It always reminded the ministers of the danger of indiscriminate preaching, and secured some consistency between what was faithfully said in the pulpit, and what was done in the session-house. When a minister has always a congregation of communicants before him, he is easily led to address from the pulpit, as it ought to be fitting he should, when standing at the head of the table of the Lord. It is difficult to change one’s form of addressing the same congregation, though standing on one occasion, in the pulpit, and on another, before it.”

W.M.

Book Review

The Saviour of the World by B. B. Warfield, Banner of Truth Trust, 270 pp. £6.95.

The writings of B. B. Warfield, who succeeded A. A. Hodge as professor of theology at Princeton Seminary, have always been highly valued by all who cherish the Reformed faith. He was a doughty champion and defender of the doctrines of the Word of God. Perhaps he is best known for his trenchant ‘exposure of refutation’ of the teaching of the so-called liberal theologians of his generation. Great scholar though he undoubtedly was, there is no display of scholarship in the volume presently under review. The book, which consists of nine sermons which were first preached to students at Princeton is full of sound gospel teaching. If, at times, War-

field delves deeply into difficult themes, the painstaking reader will be richly rewarded as he is taken through a closely reasoned and thoroughly scriptural demolition of some cherished view of the enemies of the Gospel. The following quotation from the sermon entitled 'The Gospel of the Covenant' reflects, in the opinion of the reviewer, the rich fare which is to be found in this volume:— 'Beloved, do not, I beseech you, ground your salvation even on your faith. Ground it only in Jesus Christ who alone is your Saviour. And remember this, — that it is not your faith that saves you but God, and God alone, by whom it is that faith is wrought in your soul, and by whose power it is that you are guarded through your faith unto that salvation which is reserved for you in heaven, and which shall without fail be revealed at the last day.'

The Banner of Truth Trust is to be congratulated once more for making available in our time, works of godly and scholarly men which were owned of God in the past. **D.R.M.**

Notes and Comments

The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Tyneside Riots

The Archbishop of Canterbury was attacked by Government leaders and others when he claimed that social deprivation was the cause of the Tyneside riots. He defended himself by saying that the Gospel is about justice — and justice is about social issues. Had the Archbishop said that social deprivation was one of the causes of much crime and violence in our day he might not have been far wrong but the Tyneside riots fit more into the pattern of mindless violence which should never be condoned or excused in any way. A more obvious reason for the evils of the day must be traced to the failure of the main Churches in the land to set forth the glorious gospel of God's grace through which sinners can be saved. When that gospel was set forth in the time of George Whitefield and others what a change spiritually, morally and socially came upon the land. Let the Archbishop require that only truly sent servants of Jesus Christ be ordained to the office of the ministry and require that they set forth only the gospel of Jesus Christ. Then, and only then, may we look for better things in the nation.

Release of Hostages

It would appear that at last, one by one, the hostages who have been detained in Lebanon, some of them for many years, are being released. It is sad to think of men imprisoned in cramped quarters for so long a

time as pawns in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Israel does not have the inhibitions which Western governments have in the taking of hostages in retaliation, and consequently has been able to provide bargaining counters in the exchange of hostages. It would seem that the Arab leaders have come to see that the continuation of this evil practice does nothing to enhance their prestige in the eyes of the Western nations, or further aid the settlement of the Palestinian problem. We fear that the long standing quarrel between the two peoples is likely to continue until Jew and Arab come to acknowledge the One who is "a Light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of His people Israel."

Day of Prayer at Cheltenham

The parish rector of Cheltenham, Canon Geoffrey Hart, with the support of his Church Council has appointed a special day of prayer in view of the crimewave besetting the town and blighting the area. According to a Press report, he declared that "crime threatens us all, with murders in our streets and violence too common for comfort." In his view the list of moral and social evils in our communities seems endless, and vandalism was common, all pointing to a malaise in our society which goes very deep. His Church is to be open to people of all denominations from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on October 12, with services every two hours.

There is little doubt that over many years the spiritual and moral decline in the nation has been accelerating. Men in high position and low came to the conclusion that religion could be dispensed with and the life of the nation would go on as before. The blame for this decline must lie first of all at the door of Churches which abandoned the gospel. Yet blame also must rest upon Governments which legislated contrary to the standards of the law of God, and on the media which catered for the fallen appetites of men. All this has produced the monster which no one knows how to tame. The action of Canon Hart so far as a day of prayer is concerned is a step in the right direction but the nation may have to sink lower yet before the whole nation is filled with alarm at the deteriorating state of the land and betakes itself to a throne of grace to plead for mercy and for the turning away of the wrath of the Lord from such a nation as this.

The Prime Minister meets 'Gay' Campaigner

The meeting arranged for Sir Ian McKeller, the actor, and campaigner for 'gay' and lesbian rights, at 10 Downing Street is to be deplored. It is reported to have lasted 40 minutes, in which the actor, a member of Stonewall, a homosexual pressure group was given the opportunity to pre-

sent to the Prime Minister his view that society was changing its attitude toward homosexuality and that changes should be made in the criminal law to prevent discrimination against those guilty of unnatural lusts. It is sad to think that the Prime Minister of the country would give any time whatsoever to a campaigner for the rights of sodomists. Britain is already paying a heavy price through the plague of aids for legalising sodomy. As a nation we have defiled our Statute Book with that vile piece of legislation. Not until it is forever removed from the Statute Book, can we, as a nation, expect to enjoy the favour of Heaven.

Alcohol in the Highlands and Islands

A survey by a group at Raigmore Hospital, Inverness showed that a large number of accidents at home and on the road were the result of heavy drinking of alcohol. The Highlands and Islands of Scotland have been plagued with heavy drinking for many years. During that time hundreds have gone to a drunkard's grave and to a lost eternity. Many continue to set aside the warning of Scripture that drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God. How solemn for those who continue in this way to the end! Only the grace of God will truly bring a soul out of the bondage of this and other lusts. There is One who is able to save to the uttermost and He alone can rescue the soul in sin that lies. May the day speedily come when the Highlands and Islands of Scotland will be free from the blight of this and other ruinous evils.

Mission News

Ingwenya Communion was held at the end of September. We have not heard the details yet but rejoiced to hear that there was one male member received.

On Sabbath afternoons there is a gathering of little Primary children. Their mothers bring them. Each Sabbath they have a verse of Scripture to learn and a verse of a psalm. Last Sabbath there were 150 little ones. We hope the Lord will bless them and their teachers. One of the verses they learned recently was from Psalm 119, verse 18.

On the first Thursday of the new term at Ingwenya when the morning Prayer-meeting was held, there were about 800 present, one hundred would be adults and the others young people and little ones. One of the African ministers some years ago said that when he became interested in the truth he found the prayers of the Lord's people even more helpful than the preaching.

At Mbuma the little ones are taught on Saturdays and the nurses and Doctor have great pleasure in meeting them and their mothers and in teaching them Bible verses. At Zenka the Communion was held in August with the Rev. A. B. Ndebele assisting the Rev. P. Mzamo. There were large gatherings but the late minister, the Rev. B. B. Dube was much missed.

It was with pleasure that the Mbuma staff welcomed Miss Anna Zekveld from Chesley, Canada. Her immigration permit arrived just the day before she arrived in Harare. Miss Margaret MacAskill will be leaving on furlough shortly at the same time as Miss Ishbel MacCuish will be returning home after assisting for three months in the John Tallach School.

The motor vehicles on the Mission are giving much trouble despite every effort to maintain them. Spare parts have to be bought in South Africa and tyres are bought in Botswana. One journey recently the driver had three punctures. Tax of 95% is charged on a new car entering the country.

Mr Vermeulen in his last circular letter speaks of a sermon preached by the Rev. P. Mzamo at the Communion at Sengera, the second Communion held in Kenya in connection with the Free Presbyterian Church. There would be about 300 present in the hospital building. Twenty-three communicants sat at the Lord's Table. Mr Mzamo spoke on the three righteousnesses: the original righteousness of Adam which he and we lost, the second was the righteousness of the Law to which we could never attain, and then the precious righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ bestowed on all true believers.

Mr Vermeulen also mentioned an interesting occurrence which took place in Kenya. On his last visit there the Rev. A. B. Ndebele helped to translate some of the psalms into the Kisii dialect. Mr Vermeulen put them on his computer and, after they were sent back for final correction, he had them photocopied in New Zealand, and made into a small psalm book of 25 psalms. He posted them to Kenya in April, and they arrived in August and were received by himself! The Shorter Catechism is being checked and re-checked. Surely an onerous task, but the outcome should be of tremendous value.

J.N.

Church Notes

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Southern: At Glasgow on 5th November at 6 p.m.

Skye: At Portree on 4th February 1992 at 11 a.m.

Northern: At Dingwall on 21st January 1992 at 2 p.m.

Western: At Laide on 10th December at 6 p.m.

Visit by Deputies

Rev. J. MacLeod is presently visiting New Zealand and Australia. He expects to leave in mid-November for Africa where he will visit (D.V.) Kenya, Malawi and Zimbabwe before returning home, the Lord willing, at the end of the year.

Rev. D. Ross and Rev. N. Ross are at present in Russia visiting contacts in Kiev and other places in that part of the Soviet Union.

We would again crave the prayers of the Lord's people for the deputies that they may be upheld in their duties and be brought back in safety to the United Kingdom. We trust that their labours in those lands will prove to the furtherance of Christ's Cause there.

Review of Life of Dr Lloyd-Jones

With regard to the reference to Dr Lloyd-Jones attitude to Pentecostalism and the second blessing in the review of the second volume of Dr D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones life in the May 1991 issue of the Magazine, the Magazine Committee wish to state that the Church holds to the view on this matter expressed in the resolution of Synod passed in May 1986. (See F.P. Mag. Vol. 91. p.202). The Editor regrets that he omitted to make reference to the resolution of Synod in the review.

Theological Conference: It has been decided that the Theological Conference be cancelled for this year.

Acknowledgment of Donations

The General Treasurer, Mr Rod Campbell, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LE acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations.

Sustentation Fund: Miss J. V. S. £100.

Foreign Mission Fund: Anon., £200 for Blind Children, Zimbabwe; Anon., donation from Paintings £120 for Kenya Mission per Rev. D. B. M.

Magazines Free Distribution Fund: J.C. US \$20.

Eastern Europe Fund: Anon., Glasgow £3000; Anon., £10; A Friend per A.G. £50.

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

Beauly: A.F., Seanlios £10 for Foreign Missions.

Bracadale: Friend, Glendale £20; Friend, Portree £5, both for Congr. Expenses, both per J.C.

Breasclete: Friend of the Cause £20, where most needed; Anon., £15 for Comm. Exps.; Anon., £30 for Sust. Fd and £30 for collections.

Daviot-Stratherrick-Tomatin: From Friends, Stockinish £30 for Congr. Purposes; Glasgow Friend £10 for Stratherrick Communion Exps.

Dumbarton: J. C. Glasgow £20 (twice); G.M. £10; J. MacD. £20; Anon., £10 all for Congr. Fds.; Anon., £40 for T.B.S. (in plate).

Fort William: Mrs C. K. £20; A.N. £10, both for Congr. Funds.

Gairloch: Anon., £200; Lochcarron Friend £5; N., Kyle £5 and £10, all per Rev. A.E.W.M.; Mrs C., Inverasdale £521.17, all for Congr. Purposes.

Glasgow: Matth. 6: 3 £10; Anon., £10; Anon., £10; Anon., £22; Anon., £30 all for Bus Fund; Anon., £5; Miss N.H. £5 per Rev. D. M.; both for Sust. Fd.; Anon., £120 (3 donations of £40 each); Anon., £10 both for Foreign Miss.; Anon., £40; Bibles for Europe.

Kinlochbervie: M.C. £10; M.S. £20 for Sust. Fd.; Anon., £150 for Dominions and Overseas Fund.

Laide: C., Skye £100; P.L. £10, both Bibles for Russia; From Thurso £50 for Romania and Eastern Block; Anon., Sutherland Postmark £100, Bibles for Russia; Anon., £3000 for Eastern Europe Mission; Friend, Aultbea Postmark for Church Fds. £20, all per D.A.R.; by Parcel Force, for Eastern European Fund £10 per Mrs C. Ross; Stornoway Friend £40 in Coll. Box, where most needed; Stornoway Friend £10 in Coll. Box, where most needed; Anon., Inverness £10 for Congr. Purposes; Friend, Aultbea Postmark £20 for Ch. Funds per D.A.R. **Leverburgh:** Friend, Leacklee £20 (in plate) for Congr. Fund; Friend, Glen £10 for Sust. Fd per Rev. K. MacLeod; in loving memory of my dear husband £100 for Sust. Fd. and £100 for Home Mission.

North Harris: Friend, Cluer £8 for Bus. Fd., per J. McL.; K.M., Harris House £6 (envelope in plate); Friend, Stockinish £10; Friend, Tarbert £20; Friend, Tarbert £10 all for Church Door Coll.; Friend, Stockinish £10 for Comm. Exps.; last four per Rev. K. MacLeod; M.M., Tarbert £10 for Comm. Exps. (envelope in plate); Friend, Leacklee £50 for Door Coll. (envelope in plate); Anon., £5 for Comm. Exps., £5 for Welfare of Youth (envelope in plate); M.M.L.S.M.L., Cluer £10 for Comm. Exps.; M.McL., Tarbert £10 for Bus. Fd, £10 for Sust. Fd; D. McL., Grosebay £10 for Comm. Exps, last four per J. McL.; M.M., Cluer £10; R.M., Cluer £10, both for Bus. Fd; Friend, Stockinish £10; Friend, Stockinish, £5, both for door coll.; both per R.M.C.; Envelope in plate £30; Friend, Tarbert £5 per A.F.; Friend, Stockinish £5 per R.M.C., last three for Bus. Fd; Friend, Stockinish £10 where most needed per Rev. K. D. McL.

North Uist: Friends, Stockinish £30; Friends, Wick £50; Anon., £10 all for Congr. Purposes; Friend, £5 where most needed, all per Rev. A.M.

Portree: J.N.D. £100 where most needed; Anon., £12 for Manse Exps; Anon., £10; Anon., £10 both for Communion Exps.; Anon., £10; Anon., £5, both for Bus. Fd, all by envelope in plate; Two Friends £30; Tolsta Friend £10; J.M. £10, last three where most needed; Friend £9, for Door Coll; last four per F.M.; F.G. £10 per F.M.; Anon., £6.10 (envelope in plate), both for door coll.; Anon., £4 (envelope in plate); Friend £5 per F.M.; Anon., £5 (envelope in plate); Friend £10 per S.Y.M., last four for Bus. Fd; Two Friends £30; Friend, £10 both per F.M., both for Sust. Fd.

Raasay: Friend, Inverarish £15 for Sust. Fd. (envelope in plate); M.D. £10 per Rev. J. R. T.; envelope in plate £5, both for Car Fund.

Shieldaig: Anon., £12; Anon., £10, both for Comm. Exps.; Anon., £5 where most needed.

Staffin: Anon., £50 where most needed; £10 for Car Fd., envelope per Rev. A.M.C.; Anon., £100 (envelope in plate) for Door Coll.

Stornoway: Friend of the Cause, Breasclete £10; Anon., £5; Friend, North Tolsta £10 per Mr J. MacAskill, both in church plate, both for Comm. Exps.; Friend, Skye £50; Miss K. A. MacLeod, The Cottage, Callanish £10, both per Rev. J. MacLeod.