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The Lord shall guide thee continually

The Lord has left on record in His Word many precious promises. His people have need of them in their wilderness journey through this world. The Lord has left these promises for the strengthening and encouragement of His people. That the Lord will never leave nor forsake His people is a promise to which they have to resort when in a very desolate state. The promise that the Lord shall guide them continually is another promise which is full of comfort to His believing people.

The children of God are prone to wander out of the way. They will turn aside to the right hand and to the left, if they are left to themselves. They cannot keep themselves nor direct their way aright but need to be kept and guided by One who knows their waywardness.

The history of Israel in the wilderness bears sad testimony to the proneness of the Lord's people to wander from the Lord and turn aside out of the way. How often did the children of Israel go astray though they were God's covenant people. They needed to have their way hedged up, they needed to be corrected and to have their feet directed anew into the right way. So it is with His people still. There is in them an evil heart of unbelief against which they are warned. There is in every one of them an old nature that would draw them aside on every occasion from the way in which they should go. Self confidence is of no avail in keeping them in the right way. They need dependence on One who is able to keep them and guide them continually.

The promise which is given in the Word of God to those who look to the Lord for guidance is — "The Lord shall guide thee continually." He who has brought them into the narrow way, out of the broad way which leads to destruction, is to preserve them in that narrow way guiding their steps aright. He led His people in the wilderness in the pillar of cloud by day and by the pillar of fire by night — and He is the same God still. He is to direct all their paths. They are to hear a voice behind them saying, This is the way, walk ye in it.

The Lord will guide His people as a shepherd does his flock for He is the Shepherd of Israel. He leads His people by the still waters. He satisfies their thirst in drought. He will guide them in a right way that they may go to a city of habitation. Job could say, He knows the way that I take. The Lord's eye is ever upon His own. They are precious in His eyes as purchased by Him. They are His by right of conquest, who delivered them out of the hand of the enemy. The path they are treading He has marked out for them so it is well known to Him. When they are passing through great trials and difficulties, still the promise remains sure — "The Lord will guide thee continually." He has engraven His people on the palms of His hands.

The Psalmist in his day had to say:

Thou, with Thy counsel, while I live,
wilt me conduct and guide;
And to Thy glory afterward
receive me to abide."

Ps. 73: 24

From this we see that the Lord is not only leading and guiding his people day by day but is guiding them to a certain destination. He did not bring His people out of the land of Egypt to leave them in the wilderness — though an unbelieving generation perished there — but to bring them into the land of Canaan, the land of promise. So, too, with His people in every generation, the Lord is to bring each one of His people into the inheritance which He has prepared for them. He is guiding them onward to Zion. He is at last to bring them into the haven of rest. They are to sit down there with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. They are to be brought to the heavenly Jerusalem, for it is there that the Lord has been leading and guiding His people. And, when they arrive there at the Father's house of many mansions, they will have to acknowledge to the praise of His glorious grace that He led them by a right way to a city of habitation. From there they shall never go out world without end.

Sermon

by Rev. J. Kennedy, D.D.

"God did tempt Abraham." — Gen. 22: 1.

This is just as true as that God called him, and blessed him, and comforted him. Of course the word "*tempt*" in the text must not be understood in any sense which the New Testament forbids to be associated with the action of God. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of

God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man," is a counsel which must not be forgotten. God tempted no man to do evil, but there is no man to whom He has given grace whom he does not subject to trial; and what the text teaches us is that "God did *try* Abraham" — did subject him to a testing trial of his faith.

In directing your attention to this subject, I propose — I. To consider the circumstances of Abraham when this trial came upon him; II. The connection of God with this trial; and III. Abraham under and after the trial.

I. THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF ABRAHAM WHEN THE TRIAL CAME. "The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, and said unto him, Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee." This call was effectual. Why was it addressed to Abraham? and why did the power of God operate to make it effectual? To these questions no answer can be given except the reason assigned by Christ for the sovereign exercise of divine grace, when He said, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou has hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. EVEN SO, FATHER, FOR SO IT SEEMED GOOD IN THY SIGHT." Why should that idolater have been singled out to be a partaker of faith in Messiah, to be brought nigh through Him unto God, to be the father of the "peculiar people," to be the father according to the flesh of "the man Christ Jesus," to be "a father of many nations," being the father of all, in all nations, who should be partakers of his faith in the promised Messiah? "It seemed good" in the Lord's "sight" thus to distinguish Abraham, and not yet has Abraham found another reason, and another he shall never find, why the Lord thus dealt with *him*.

To Abraham thus effectually and graciously called the Lord gave the promise of Messiah as his seed. That promise Abraham believed, trusting in Him in whom the Lord declared that "all the families of the earth" should "be blessed." And he believed God when He told him that the promised Messiah would, "according to the flesh," be his seed. How wonderful to him this double promise must have appeared. He who was the Lord, the Messiah, his seed! He to be the father of Him whom he knew to be Jehovah, his Saviour!

But many years had passed, and he had no offspring. The prospect of having a son seemed to have been hopelessly clouded. Losing hope Sarai suggested a method of securing, "by her" handmaid, the fulfilment of the promise of a seed. Abraham adopted the suggestion, and an Ishmael,

"the son of the bondwoman," appeared in his household. Sarai, who urged her husband to adopt her proposal, becomes now quite as urgent to remove Hagar from their home. She fled to the wilderness from her offended mistress; but the Lord met her there and sends her back. In course of time, Ishmael is born, and the hope of Abraham seemed to be resting on him, as the prospect of a son by Sarah seemed one that could never be realised. "O that Ishmael might live before Thee" he cried unto the Lord. But the Lord forbids him to expect through the bondwoman's son the fulfilment of the promise, renews His promise of a son by Sarah, and year is added to year, till his life is almost a century. At last there is the miraculous birth of the son of promise, and Abraham and Sarah rejoice in their Isaac. Hagar and her son are cast out, and they see them no more, and with Isaac, and with him alone, is now associated the fulfilment in due time of the great promise of the Lord. Isaac has grown up through infancy and boyhood into a youth, and then it was that "God did tempt Abraham." Just when Abraham's hope was not only set on Isaac as the one medium through whom the promise of Messiah, as his seed, could be fulfilled, but was encouraged by observing him year after year rising to the age and stature of manhood — then it was that this his only son of promise was commanded to be sacrificed. These were the circumstances in which Abraham was placed when his faith was subjected to the test of the trial referred to in the text.

II. GOD'S CONNECTION WITH THIS TRIAL. The text directly traces the trial up to God — "*God did tempt Abraham*" is its declaration. It is too plain a statement to admit of its meaning being mistaken. And why should we desire to make the connection of the trial with God a more remote one? or why should we endeavour to ignore it altogether? or why should we trace to some other source than the divine will the origination of this test?

Enemies of the Bible have attempted to show that to connect this trial with God, as imposing it, is to represent His character in a light which does not admit of its being regarded with respect. And there is a certain class of professed defenders of the Scripture record who do no less harm to the cause of truth, by treating groundless objections with undue respect, and by adopting a course which indicates more fear of differing from the sceptic than of irreverently treating the word of God. A remarkable specimen of such hurtful defence has recently appeared in a production of one of the theological professors of our own church. To him, it is said, it seems to be the right thing to assign to the region of the mythical all in the Old Testament which precedes the call of Abraham, but if he places

Abraham at the head of all historical personages of the Bible, he grossly abuses his character and attainments and misrepresents God's way of dealing with him. According to his account of him, Abraham had scarcely at all risen above the level of the heathenism by which he was surrounded — so very little that he was influenced by the example of the worshippers of Moloch, who "caused their children to pass through the fire." His aspirations and hopes are represented as scarcely if at all rising to what was spiritual in the promise given to him by God, and his conceptions of God not elevated beyond the ideas of His being the Almighty Creator, and of His being the moral governor of man. To him, it is said, appeared in the light of the promise of One in whom "all the families of the earth shall be blessed," only "the humanity of the divine character," and "God's delight in self-sacrifice." Beyond this nothing was clear, it is affirmed, to the mind of Abraham except what suggested possibilities of sacrifice on the part of God, of which, however, no definite instance could he at all realise. And with this man there was not, according to this rationalistic view of his history, any real communication on the part of heaven beyond what might be implied in suggestions which reached him through the measure of natural religion of which he was possessed. And yet this was the man of whom Christ said, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day" — the day of my being in the flesh on the earth as his seed — "and he saw it and was glad." It was not "the humanity of the divine character," *but the humanity in which God was to be manifested that Abraham saw* — Jehovah, as "the man Christ Jesus." And is it to be borne that a man of his vows should thus degrade the revelation of God's grace in Old Testament times, cast suspicion on the truthfulness of Old Testament history, place the conjectures, baseless and ill-designed, of graceless critics, instead of the plain statement of the word of God, within a "Church which" must profess to be "the pillar and ground of the truth," and while occupying a chair of theology, intended for conducting a reverent study of the Scriptures, and for training the rising ministry to preach the doctrines of our Confession, and not the speculations of rationalism? What can the Church intend that ignores such flagrant departures from dutifulness, and that allows her theological halls to become nurseries of unbelief? Her chosen function seems to be to tolerate all conceivable deviation from sound teaching, and to occupy herself in furnishing amusement to carnal worshippers, who are utter strangers to all enjoyment in the spiritual service which God, who is a Spirit, requires.

According to the author to whom I have referred, the trial of Abraham ought not to be associated with God. An influence from hell, brought

to bear on the patriarch through the example of the worshippers of Moloch, in his view, originated the temptation. What matters it to those who choose to make a Bible for themselves instead of receiving in reverent faith that which is given by God, though there is a declaration so express as that which we have in the words "God did tempt Abraham," and though we read that God spake to Abraham regarding the trial, and gave him specific directions as to how he was to act in sacrificing his son. To what do men reduce the authority of the word of God who refuse to receive this account of the origin of the trial? How direct the communication is between God and Abraham — "God did tempt Abraham, *and He said unto him, Abraham; and he said, Behold, here I am.* And He said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." What can be more explicit than such words as these? And if there be aught of respect for the word in the heart of a man, what approach to reasonableness can there be in his representing the action of God in connection with this trial as exhausted in His allowing a temptation to offer his son as a burnt-offering to assail the patriarch, and in preventing the execution of the purpose which, through yielding to a temptation to sin, he had formed? How can this possibly consist with the commendation given from heaven by Jehovah of Abraham's conduct in not withholding his son, his only son? (Gen. 22: 16). And is it not expressly said in the New Testament that it was *by faith* Abraham "offered up Isaac," and how could it be so unless he acted under divine direction? And who that represents the conduct of Abraham as the result of yielding to a temptation to sin can face the questions, "Was not Abraham our father *justified by works, when he had offered his son Isaac upon the altar.* Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and *by works was faith made perfect?*"

And there is not the shadow of a good reason why we should shrink from attaching its manifest meaning to the declaration of the text. "God *did try* Abraham." For what was involved in His doing so? He subjected him to a testing trial in order to its being proved that he both feared and trusted in the Lord. The command to offer up his son as a burnt-offering was a trial both of his fear and of his faith — a test by which to discover whether he was willing at any cost to obey, and would in all circumstances trust in the Lord. And to impose, with that view, such a test as was involved in the command to offer up his son as a burnt-offering was not inconsistent with any attribute rightly assigned to God, or with any revelation given to us of the divine will.

For 1. *There was no attempt in the action of God, bearing upon Abraham, in the least to diminish the patriarch's affection for his son.* On the contrary, pains seemed to have been taken to intensify that affection. In the command to offer up Isaac, God refers to him, in speaking to Abraham, as "thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest." As such he would have Abraham still think of Isaac, and be affected towards him. He will not allow his fatherly love to abate. No such immoral state of feeling will Jehovah tolerate in the breast of Abraham. And all the details of the trial tend to deepen his attachment to the son of his old age, the son of promise. They are to travel three days together on to the place appointed for the sacrifice. He then leaves behind the young men who accompanied them so far, and he and Isaac alone ascend to the summit of Moriah. He has to listen to the touching question of his darling son — "My father; and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" And till "they came to the place which God had told them of," Abraham had to look on his loved one bearing "the wood of the burnt offering," and never did his heart cleave to him with more of a fond father's love than when he thought of how he would soon have to lay him as a victim on that which he now bore as a burden, while there was in his own hand the knife wherewith he was required to slay him, and the fire that was to kindle into flame the wood intended to burn him. In this way of dealing with Abraham, how careful the Lord was that his affection for Isaac should not decline, and that all the details of his service should keep on his heart the words — "TAKE NOW THY SON, THINE ONLY SON ISAAC, WHOM THOU LOVEST."

2. In the command binding Abraham to offer up his son, there was *an assertion of Jehovah's right to be regarded as the supreme object of His creature's love.* Whatever aspect the command to slay Isaac may bear to other minds, to that of Abraham it presented a claim which it became God to press, and which it was an act of dutifulness on his part to yield. Is Jehovah not supreme? Is not the commandment to love Him the first and great commandment of the law? Can we wonder therefore if Abraham is required to prove that he so regards it? It was a trying proof of this which he was required to give, but is there any reason why he should not be subjected to a test so severe? He was not required to hate his son, though he was commanded to offer him up in sacrifice. The terms of the command required him to regard Isaac as his son, his only son, his loved son, and so prescribed the details of the service required, as to secure that his affection was to become more fervent, while Abraham knew that his

Isaac must yet be what, as the son of promise, the Lord intended him to be. There could therefore be nothing before the mind of Abraham, in the aspect which God presented to him in connection with this transaction, that could cause him to regard His character with suspicion, or produce any hesitation whatever as to what it was dutiful to do. All love, besides, must be subordinated to the love of God, and whatever Jehovah demanded as homage to His supremacy, it could be nothing else than his imperative duty to concede.

How many dark clouds are dispelled by the shining of Jehovah's glory into the heart, and how beautiful are the buds of true love to Him when they open up under that light from heaven! It is because of the want of that light that men are able to read the Old Testament history as it is becoming the fashion to read it. Jehovah's greatness hidden from their view, men will labour to remove all impressions of His activity in the course of that providence of whose movements the ancient Scriptures are a record; no necessity for an atoning sacrifice is felt, or is regarded as taught, sin as against God being ignored, or appearing to be but a pardonable offence; not conscious of any felt need of an atonement, they will not allow that the doctrine of substitution and that of atonement for sin by blood were, to any definable extent, learned by the men of pre-Mosaic times; desirous to ignore any aspect of the divine character except that of benignity, they desire to explain away all reference to the absolute sovereignty and the infinite righteousness of God; and they approach such a scene as that of the sacrifice on Mount Moriah with the set purpose to hide from their eyes all that exhibits the glory of divine supremacy, and all that it is intended to prefigure of the great sacrifice on Calvary. How true it is that ignorance of God, and consequently of sin, accounts for all aberrations from the truth, be they nascent or mature. This is the only way of accounting for the attempt to ascribe to some other source than to the will of God the trial of Abraham's faith.

But what objection can be taken against the connection of God with this trial that is not equally valid against the doctrine of Christ, when He said, "If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple." That teaching cannot mean that there is to be any suspension of the binding obligation of a commandment of the moral law. Is there not, however, a commandment requiring us to love our relations in all the connections in which they stand to us? And is there an obligation to hate them imposed by Christ? But there is no inconsistency between the statute of Sinai and the doctrine of Christ. It is not hatred

of our relations that Christ here really requires, but such action, in meeting His supreme claims, *as appears to be expressive of hatred towards our relatives and our life*. It is the duty of fathers and children, husbands and wives, and brethren and sisters to remain, so far as possible, associated together and to be mutually helpful, unless by acting thus they are undutiful to Christ, and neglect His cause. But if we so regard these in our hearts as to be indisposed to subordinate our love to them to love to Christ, then these are idols in the place of our regard which belongs to Christ, and as such are to be hated and sacrificed. Not they, but the idol into which we have fashioned them, are to be hated; and notwithstanding our affection for themselves, all that we enjoy in their aid and intercourse, and all that we owe them, in other circumstances, of kindly assistance — all this must be abandoned and sacrificed when required by the higher claims of Christ, whom, in service and through suffering, we are required implicitly to follow.

There is no force in the objection to this parallel, that in Abraham's case there was the very extreme step, commanded to be taken, of offering up his son as a sacrifice, which involved the taking away of his life, and the turning into ashes his slain body on the altar. But the token of the patriarch's love, required by the command of God, though extreme, is not generically different from that required by Christ from His disciples. And is there really any extremeness attaching to the one that does not attach to the other? I am under the same obligation to preserve my own life which requires me not to take away another's, and if I am required by Christ, for His sake, to hate and sacrifice my own life, is that really less than what was required of Abraham when commanded to sacrifice the life of Isaac? Thus no objection is valid, against the commandment of God to Abraham, that is not of equal force against the claims of Christ as presented to His disciples. But against neither is the objection of any force, for all that, in both the prescribed actions, is demanded is a practical acknowledgment, by the willing endurance of trial in self-sacrifice, of Jehovah's right to our supreme regard.

III. ABRAHAM UNDER, AND AFTER THE TRIAL. When we think of Abraham going *under* the trial we must not think of him as going alone. Never was the Lord nearer him than then. He does not say "I will *send* my third through the fire," but "I will *bring* them through the fire." Nor is it "I will bring them to it, and there leave them," but "I will bring them *through*." Abraham went to meet the trial with the felt weight of the burden which had been laid upon him, and in conscious weakness, but leaning on the Lord's everlasting strength."

Throughout the whole service terminating in the scene on Mount Moriah the Lord was with him. If Abraham gets from the Lord a burden to bear, His gracious presence is with him to sustain him under it. Imagine not that only in seasons of felt comfort is the Lord graciously present with His people. In order that their faith may not fail in seasons of trial, they need more grace than they require to fill the cup of their enjoyment when troubles pass away. The Lord was as surely near him when he started on the journey to Moriah, as when his hand was stayed from smiting his Isaac dead, and he saw the victim provided as a substitute for his beloved.

But in order to appreciate how the Lord was sustaining him, we must consider how the trial bore on him — what were the special feelings in Abraham on which it bore. It is very evident that he shared none of the difficulties of the sapient critics of our day. He had no doubt as to his having a revelation from heaven of the will of God requiring him to act as he did. His fellowship with God was too real to admit of any such difficulty. He knew that the Lord spoke to him, and he knew what He said. He was assured of both the one and the other of these things. Could he have met on his way to Moriah one of these impertinent triflers, who ascribe his journey to a suggestion of evil, neither his hoary head, nor his character as a man of God, would have kept the conceited creature from charging him foolishly. He would have stretched his tiny self to such a height of proud presumption as to look down on the man of God, and he would venture to speak scornfully to him of his professed devotion to the service of God. But in vain would he remonstrate with Abraham. "Get thee behind me, Satan," would have been his fitting reply to the rude impudence of the irreverent meddler, and the patriarch would be quite disposed to leave him "with the ass" at the base of the mountain.

Nor had he any difficulty as to the kind of service he was called to perform, being such as it became God to prescribe. Regarding that matter his mind was free of all doubt — all dubiety as to his duty, and all difficulty in reconciling the prescription of that duty with the character of God were quite away from his heart. Enough to him as to both these it was that God spake to him, and told him distinctly what to do. The command of God lay on his heart and stilled all such misgiving. Well was it for Abraham that such was his state of mind, and much did he owe for this attainment to the rich grace of God. It was not on either of these two accounts that Abraham felt the pressure of his trial.

There were just two ways in which it bore upon him. 1. As it was a test requiring him so to fear God as willingly to sacrifice his son whom he loved, and, 2. As it was a test requiring him to trust in God, and yet

to expect the fulfilment of His promise, even after sacrificing his "only son," through whom alone the promise could be fulfilled. His love to God and his faith in God were thus tested together. And if these were together under trial, how mutually helpful they were! His faith kept his love fervent, and his love preserved him from such suspicions as would weaken his faith.

1. *His fear of God was tested by this trial* He was required to "offer up as a burnt offering" his son at the command of God. The true fear of God could be expressed only in instant willing obedience. But he greatly loved his Isaac, and he was his only son. And he could not complete his sacrifice by a summary act. He must take three days' journey to Moriah, and have all that time his loved one near him, and during part of that time he must be alone with him, his fatherly heart having to endure the sight of him, bearing on his shoulder the fuel, to be used in consuming him on the altar, and to be pierced by the question addressed to him by his darling — "Where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" But he must sacrifice him, for this the Lord requires at his hand, and he goes on with no hesitating step to the place which the Lord had told him of. And at last Isaac is bound, laid on the wood lying on the altar, and the knife is raised to slay him. But enough, his hand is arrested, and Isaac is spared. "Now I know," saith the angel of the Lord, "that *thou fearest God*, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from Me."

And how was it that his love to God thus triumphed over his love to Isaac? Only because the Lord sustained him. A triumph such as this could only be attained through Jehovah's grace. Who can tell what views of His glory He was pleased to give him during those days of trial to keep his soul in a reverent submissive frame of spirit? Who can tell what new glimpses of divine grace were given to him through a believing contemplation of the promise of Messiah? And as the wondrous fulness of grace in that promise was unfolded to his faith, how his "heart did burn within" him, till his love, thus kept fervent, reached the climax of its exercise when Abraham's hand was at last uplifted to slay his son. But Abraham's triumph was due to the grace of Abraham's covenant God — it was the fruit of divine love to him rather than of his love to God — primarily and efficiently it is the fruit of the former, only mediately, though actually it is the fruit of the latter.

2. *His faith in God was tested by this trial.* We must endeavour to appreciate the severity of the test applied to his faith, not that we may admire the steadfastness of Abraham, but that we may be moved to praise "the God of all grace," who so wondrously sustained him.

In giving the promise of Messiah, and of salvation in Him, to Abraham, the Lord shut him up to the coming One, as the only object of his own soul's hope, and declared that only through Isaac could the promise of Messiah, as Abraham's seed "according to the flesh," be fulfilled. How much, therefore, seemed to depend on the life of Isaac! Through him, and through him alone, could the great promise be fulfilled, and all, apart from "the son of promise," miraculously given to him, was removed out of Abraham's sight. And yet he must slay his Isaac! From this sacrifice he must not turn aside. What test of his faith could be severer than this? To see Isaac die, and to have to slay him with his own hand! O, did it not seem as if that would be to part with all hope of salvation for himself, and for all besides, who were included in the promise?

But Abraham's faith failed not, because the Lord sustained it. In view of receiving Isaac as the son of his old age, Abraham "considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb; he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being persuaded that what He had promised he was able also to perform." It was not the grace which was given to him then that bore him through the trial on Mount Moriah. He needed to receive a new communication from the store of all grace, and this was given to him. Utterly unaccountable in any other way is the continued exercise of the patriarch's faith till it attained its triumph. It is because the Spirit of the Lord was keeping his hold fast on the promise, revealing to him more and still more of the glory of Him who gave it, and bringing His omnipotent power to bear on the unbelief of the old heart within him, and against the assaults of the powers of darkness. Who can conceive how much was done in the secrecy of Abraham's soul in order to the triumph of Abraham's faith. And it is because of all this gracious visitation of his soul, that "by faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said — That in Isaac shall thy seed be called; accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure." By a miracle God gave him the son of promise, and Abraham believed that He could restore him after he was slain. He might often have felt impatient because of the long delay in fulfilling the promise of his having Isaac, but he was not now disposed to regret the tarrying, for, as it furnished God with an opportunity of giving him, as from the dead, the remembrance of this was helpful to Abraham under the severer trial which followed. He murmured not, his eye was kept resting on the glorious

faithfulness and power, and he leant on the grace, of his covenant God.

Let us now look at Abraham after the trial. How blessed to him was the result of it. For — (1.) He obtained an attestation from heaven of his fear and of his faith; (2.) He obtained a new revelation of Messiah as the atoning Surety; (3.) He brought back with him alive his only son, whom he loved; and (4.) He held “Jehovah Jireh” in the grasp of his faith, and had Him pledged to care for him alway.

1. He received an attestation from heaven of his fear and of his faith. Who that are true believers would not desire to have this? How many doubts it dispels, how many bonds it breaks, how many weakening fears it dissipates, what freeness in service it secures, what courage in conflict it infuses, what boldness in wrestling with God for the fulfilment of His promise, what brokenness of heart and humility are the fruit of it! O yes, it was much that Abraham received in a God-given attestation of his faith, and it would be much to you, Friend, if you received it.

There is a kind of faith of which no divine attestation is desired by those who have it. Enough to them it is that they themselves are pleased with it. They are conscious of no trials to test it, and the strong carnal thing which is reared on the lap of ease needs not power from above to strengthen it, and no light from heaven can it endure. It is nursed in a perpetual sleep in the dark. But *true* faith is a *tested* faith, and they who have it desire to have help to enable them to exercise it, and an attestation from heaven to persuade them that it is genuine.

2. He obtained a new revelation of Messiah as the atoning substitute of a guilty people. This was given him when, after his hand was arrested so that it should not smite his son, he saw a substitute to take Isaac's place on the altar provided by God and ready to be offered. I pity the men who cannot see in this any typical representation of the Lamb of God. It is rather a strange thing that men should endeavour to uphold their credit as enlightened by proclaiming themselves blind to what was clearly seen by the Church of God in the ages that are gone — who claim to be very advanced because they cannot see what was clear to Abraham, and even to Abel. Of course, they cannot bear to allow that the very earliest of the fathers was more enlightened than their very wise selves. They, therefore, labour to make out that there could be no glimpse of light from Calvary shining in Abraham's view on the top of Mount Moriah. They are not afraid to limit the Holy One of Israel, and to conceive of His Spirit as bound. But if we have an epitome of the whole revelation of redemption given in the first promise in Eden, and if the Spirit was thereafter with the Church in all ages, what can be more unreasonable than to confine

one's conceptions of the Old Testament saints to the crudest ideas of God, and of the scheme and grace of redemption. But, if we be guided by the teaching of Scripture, Abel knew more of the way of salvation through an atoning sacrifice than the most enlightened of all the graceless professors of this nineteenth century, however great their intellect, and however comprehensive and advanced their learning. And must not Abraham on Mount Moriah have seen through the type of the victim substitute for his Isaac, the Lamb of God, because of providing whom "Jehovah Jireh" is the name of God? What a feast to Abraham was this new revelation of Messiah as an Atoner!

3. He brought back with him alive his "only son" whom he loved — the son of promise. How wonderful was this to Abraham. He did expect that God would raise his Isaac from the dead, but he had no reason to hope that He would have stayed his own hand from smiting him. But here he is, untouched by his father's knife, in his place as the son through whom the great promise of Messiah was to be fulfilled. He may enjoy his son now, if he does not cease to lean on "Jehovah Jireh." Let him seek grace to keep him devoted to the fear, and strong in the faith, of his God, and there is no reason why he should not pour out the love of his heart on his Isaac.

4. He leaves Mount Moriah grasping, because grasped by, "Jehovah Jireh." O what on earth can be beyond this! To have God pledged to supply every want, to heal every ailment, to guide through all perplexities and snares, to help in every time of need, and to comfort in every hour of sorrow — graciously, and at all times, to care for one during all his wilderness life, and finally to introduce him in perfect holiness into the rest and blessedness of the eternal home. Leaning on the bosom of "Jehovah Jireh" Abraham was far from being disposed to take exception to the trial through which he had reached it.

APPLICATION. 1. Learn from this text that true faith is sure to be tested faith. And why should it not? Imagine not that trial imposed by God is cruelty either to the child or to the faith which has been begotten in his heart. The truth as to the mind of God in relation to such a trial is just the reverse. He loves the faith, and He loves the believer, and it is because both are precious in His sight that the trial is imposed. He prizes the grace which He has imparted, and delights to exhibit the difference between it and all besides. His people are precious in His sight, and therefore He has a fire for their dross, and as the dross is within them, they themselves must pass through the burning. If they meantime suffer there is an eternal rest before them and very nigh, and it is wise, and ho-

ly, and rich grace to "bring them through the fire," that they may therein be purged from all that would break the Sabbath which awaits them. And He Himself goes with His people into all the trials to which they are subjected. He supplies them with strength to endure when they are called to suffer. In flood and furnace He has promised to be with them, yea, He will never leave nor forsake them. Well then may we look on a trial of faith without any doubt as to the grace and faithfulness of Israel's God.

Friends, if yours is an untested faith, it is because it is not genuine. In one sense it is true that a test shall sooner or later be applied to all faith true and false. But a test imposed by God, as it was imposed on Abraham, only true faith is subjected to. There is nothing in others to be elicited into an exercise that would be evidence of its being of God, and there is nothing in their faith to offend the world and to provoke the rage of hell. Men are allowed to cherish it at their ease, and to pamper it up into a stature and strength that makes it quite independent of aid from heaven.

2. The text teaches us that all love must be subordinated to love to God. This is a frequent lesson in both testaments, and it would be wise to ask grace from God to learn it. How often do our affections to our friends and relatives become snares. How much of the place due to God they take up in our hearts. How often do the bonds which bind us to our families keep us back from a duty to which the Lord calls us. How often in our intercourse with them do we lose all the keenness of our desire for fellowship with God. How often do we go away from them with "a divided heart" to a work to which the Lord is calling us. And how often do we allow our feeling towards them, and their influence over us, to weaken the exercise of our faith in God. But all must be sacrificed, that interferes with unreserved devotion to the doing of the will of God, and that would hamper our movements in a life of faith. At whatever cost this must be done, if we would receive from heaven an attestation of our having in our hearts the true fear of God, and of being genuine in our profession of faith.

3. Learn from this passage that the only way to be truly strong is to have faith in God. There was a time, believer, when you imagined that you could be strong while independent of promised grace. You had your Ishmael then, the son of the bondwoman, your self-righteous hope, and you felt as if you could be independent of what only a miracle could give you — of all the fruit that is produced by New Covenant grace. But you were compelled to "cast out the bondwoman and her son," even when in your case there was no trace of the son of promise. But you attained to faith in Christ and through Him in God, and sweet to your experience

was the fruit of that faith in love and in brokenness of heart. But this you were called to abandon as an object of trust. You had to sacrifice your Isaac, in so far as he interfered with your faith in God. You were required to cease to lean on grace received and to rest on grace provided — to cease trying to “be strong” except “in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” Don’t rebel against the discipline that tends to wean you more and more from all self-confidence, and be more and more dependent on the teaching that can train you to “live by the faith of the Son of God.”

4. Learn from this text that God will never fail under the leanings of faith. No, whatever burdens it brings to lay on the arm of God, with whatever weaknesses, and ailments, and wants, and cares, it comes. The God of Abraham is faithful, gracious, and omnipotent. He cannot lie, He cannot err, He cannot grudge, He cannot weary, He will never cast a poor and needy soul away. And learn to trust Him, and not your own faith — to have such a view of Him as will make you forget whether you have faith or not — and so to fix your thoughts on Him as to have His glory lie between you and an inroad of unbelief. It is by being drawn out to Him, and by being drawn in through the light of His glory shining from the face of Jesus to His infinite grace, that you will leave the weakness arising from pride and unbelief behind you, and you will be “strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.” Be afraid of substituting your own strength for His, and be afraid of not being trustful towards Him; but never fear that He will fail if you lean all your weight upon Him. Rank with “the poor and needy,” who have “no help of man at all,” and leave yourself on Him to sustain and save you, and you will be another witness who can testify that the Lord hateth putting away.

5. Learn from this text that no one need expect an attestation of his fear and faith except when these are revived and exercised. This is clear from the case of Abraham, as well as from much besides that we meet with in Scripture. Many desire to know that they believed, when it would be wiser to be asking grace that they may. Do not expect to enjoy the comfort of assurance while your soul is in a state of spiritual decay. There must be present fruit in order to the Spirit having what He could use as evidence of your having passed from death to life. “Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure” by seeking grace to produce the fruit which evidences the calling of the elect of God.

Assurance is the fruit that grows out of the root of faith.

— Stephen Charnock.

Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress"

by Rev. Donald Beaton

It now remains for us to take up the narrative of Bunyan's life where we left off in last article. After his awakening to a sense of the realities of eternity, he desired to find a preacher who would act to him as a spiritual father; this he found in John Gifford. This man had a remarkable history. At the beginning of the Civil War he was on the side of the King, and had the rank of major in the King's army. In 1648 one more desperate struggle was made to win back the county of Kent for King Charles. The Royalist and Parliamentary forces met at Rochester, but the most desperate part of the fight was at Maidstone. The Parliamentary forces drove the Royalists before them from thicket to thicket until the town was reached. Street by street then was fought for, and what with the groans of the wounded, the warring of the elements — for a storm was raging — and the thundering of artillery, the day came to be remembered as one of the bloodiest in the history of the Civil War. The battle began at seven in the morning, and it was not until ten o'clock next morning that Fairfax, the commander of the Parliamentary forces, was assured of victory. Three hundred of the Royalists were left dead in the streets, and 1,400 surrendered as prisoners. Among these was John Gifford, and from the prominent part he had taken in the rising he was, with some others, judged worthy of death. The night previous to his execution he was visited by his sister, who, finding his guards drunk, advised him to escape. This he managed to do successfully, and after hiding for some time until the search was over, he went to London, whence he came to Bedford, where he practised as a physician. He led an abandoned life, and was much given to drinking and betting. It so happened that on one occasion, after he had lost heavily in some deal, that he felt his enmity rising against God to an extraordinary degree. While in this state of mind, he read a certain book by one Bolton. Something in this book caught his attention, and so wrought on his mind that he fell under an overwhelming sense of sin. He was in this state for over a month, when God was pleased to discover to him that his sins were freely forgiven; and it is left as a testimony concerning him that after this he never lost the light of God's countenance, not for an hour, with the exception only of about two days before he died. Such is a brief history of the man to whose ministrations Bunyan attended.

Matters went on fairly smoothly at the little church of Bedford until the year 1660, when that ever-to-be-lamented event called the happy Restoration ushered in a state of matters the seeds of which England had

to reap with tears. The one man who could guide the ship of state, and stand fearless on the deck amidst the raging waves and contrary winds of a nation's passions and wild desires, was dead, and the man who ascended the English throne, in the person of Charles II, and who was received with the jubilant shouts of the English nation, and, sad to say, the Scottish nation too, was already a perjured wretch, destined to end his days, as he lived them, amid sensuality and vice. The presence of the King in England soon changed matters ecclesiastically. The magistrates at Bedford passed an order for the restoration of the Book of Common Prayer. Bunyan paid no attention to the order, with the result that he found himself charged with "devilishly and perniciously abstaining from coming to church to hear divine service, and for being a common upholder of several unlawful meetings and conventicles, to the great disturbance and distraction of the good subjects of this kingdom, contrary to the laws of our sovereign lord the King." He was ordered to be sent to prison for three months for not attending the parish church. At the end of this time, according to the terms of the Conventicle Act under which he was convicted, an opportunity was given him of recanting his former opinions, failing which he was "to abjure this realm of England, and all other the Queen's Majesty's¹ dominions, for ever." Bunyan, of course, had no thought of recanting, and had to spend twelve long and dreary years in prison. During this long imprisonment two familiar friends beguiled the monotony of the years — his Bible and Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*. This was his library, "The least and the best," says one who visited him in prison, "that ever I saw." It was while in prison he produced many of his works. It was here that the famous *Grace Abounding* was composed. At the end of twelve years Bunyan was released and enjoyed liberty for three years when he was again cast into prison. Dr. Brown, in his *Life of Bunyan*, after a careful study of the subject, gives it as his opinion that it was during this second imprisonment that *The Pilgrim's Progress* was written, and that the prison was the town gaol on Bedford Bridge. The work opens with the striking sentence — "As I walked through the wilderness of this world I lighted upon a certain place where was a den, and I laid me down in that place to sleep; and as I slept I dreamed a dream." The work first saw the light in 1678, but was greatly improved upon in later editions. It attracted attention at once, three editions being called for in one year. In 1683 a serious attempt was made by an unknown author to improve upon *The Pilgrim's Progress*. The writer regarded Bunyan's work as written in too light a vein,

¹ I.e. Queen Elizabeth, in whose reign the Conventicle Act was passed (1593).

and by way of a wholesome counteractive made his own so heavy that it has mercifully passed into well-merited oblivion. Other attempts of the same kind were made to which Bunyan refers at the beginning of his Second Part:

"Some have of late to counterfeit
My *Pilgrim*, to their own my title set;
Yea others, half my name and title too
Have stitched to their own book to make them do;
But yet they by their features do declare
Themselves not mine to be. whosoe'er they are."

This Second Part was published early in 1684. Bunyan has here some of his most beautiful descriptions. The contrast between his description of the Valley of Humiliation in reference to Christian and Christiana is very striking: "To him it was a scene of awful conflict with Apollyon; to her and her companions it was a tranquil dwelling in green pastures and by still waters." Here Mercy found sweet solace to her gentle spirit in the great things done by the King. Mr Fearing, too, found here something congenial to his austere spirit: "Here he would lie down, embrace the ground, and kiss the very flowers that grew in this valley. He would be up every morning by break of day, tracing and walking to and fro in this valley." "It is a valley to the meek and lowly that is ever green and beautiful with lilies. Our Lord Himself had His country house in this valley, and loved much to be there, loved much to walk these meadows, finding the air pleasant." The Second Part is generally recognised as not such a finished production as the First, but it bears the impress of Bunyan's unrivalled genius, and is by no means an unworthy successor to the First Part. As to the originality of this work, there has been a great deal of useless writing. Dr. Brown in his biography has discussed the matter as fully as there is any need for, and he concludes by saying that on this question Bunyan has spoken with unmistakeable plainness:

"Some say *The Pilgrim's Progress* is not mine
Insinuating as if I would shine
In name, and fame, by the work of another."

To this he answers:

"Manner and matter, too, was all mine own,
Nor was it unto any mortal known
Till I had done it. Nor did any then
By books, by writs, by tongues, or hand or pen,
Add five words to it, or wrote half a line
Thereof: the whole and every whit is mine."

Well may Dr. Brown say that a testimony like this from such a man is decisive. As a mere literary production it is one of the great masterpieces of literature. Its perfect spontaneousness, its freedom from signs of toil, its lack of inartistic traces, have made it to be read by men who would spurn its teaching were it presented in another form. Macaulay's essay and Froude's sketch of Bunyan are examples of how men of the world regard this work as one of the treasures of the literary world. But whatever be its place in literature, and that does not so much concern us here, its place as a religious classic is supreme — it stands peerless among the works of men. No book, after the Bible, has had such a circulation. Its remarkable delineation of Christian character appeals to the true child of God, whether he be under the inclement skies of our northern climes or under the clear blue skies of Africa. Its fine balance, lack of exaggeration, and the remarkable power of giving feelings and experiences all the reality and vividness of living persons, appeals alike to the understanding and the imagination with a fascinating power. Innocence, Prudence, Piety, and Discretion cease to be mere abstractions after Bunyan's magic pen has described them. With what masterly but simple touches he makes Pliable, Giant Despair, and Talkative stand out before us, and their characters are forever impressed upon our minds as objects of commiseration, dread, or pity. But after all explanations have been given of the spell that this book has exercised over young and old, learned and unlearned, rich and poor, since it was first published, it may be safely said that, after all, the true explanation of this fascination is its humanness. It describes the struggles of the human heart, its fears, its hopes; it tells of the present condition of things, and points forward to the things that are yet to come. These, after all, are the most momentous questions that are forever rising up before the human mind and crying aloud for solution. And when it is borne in mind that all these questions are dealt with as the Bible deals with them, and that the solutions that Bunyan gives are the solutions that the Bible gave, one can then understand how *The Pilgrim's Progress* has been of such interest to the children of God of every country and time.

One might thus go on speaking of this wonderful book; but this article will not have been written in vain if it sends back some of its readers to the study of a book that they may have read in early years, enjoying its beautiful and homely descriptions while they little understood or appreciated its spiritual meaning. It has been translated into French, German, Gaelic, Dutch, Welsh, Irish, Swedish, Polish, Danish, Icelandic, Norwegian, Finnish, Lettish, Esthonian, Russ, Eskimo, Servian, Bulgarian, Bohemian, Roumanian, Slavonian, Breton, Italian, Spanish,

Modern Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, Syriac, etc., in all, ninety-five languages and dialects. Various attempts have been made to improve it — Armenians would like it to speak their theology, and Ritualists have foolishly attempted to turn the Pilgrim into one deeply concerned for such important questions as the eastern position, etc., but all these have miserably failed.

Perhaps, by way of conclusion, an extract or two may be given as an illustration of Bunyan's style and his power in delineating Christian experience. Here, for instance, is Mr Greatheart's description of Mr Fearing — one of the finest pieces in *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Honest asks Mr Greatheart, "Well, then, pray let us hear a little of him, and how he managed himself under your conduct?" Greatheart replies: "Why he was always afraid that he would come short of whither he had a desire to go. Everything frightened him that he heard anybody speak of, if it had the least appearance of opposition in it. I have heard that he lay roaring at the Slough of Despond for above a month together; nor durst he, for all he saw several go over before him, venture, though they many of them offered to lend him their hands. He would not go back again neither. The Celestial City — he said he should die if he came not to it: and yet he was dejected at every difficulty, and stumbled at every straw that anybody cast in his way. Well, after he had lain at the Slough of Despond a great while, as I have told you, one sunshiny morning, I don't know how, he ventured, and so got over, but when he was over he would scarce believe it. He had, I think, a Slough of Despond in his mind, a slough that he carried everywhere with him, or else he could never have been what he was. So he came up to the gate, you know what I mean, that stands at the head of this way, and there also he stood a good while before he would venture to knock. When the gate was opened, he would give back and give place to others, and say that he was not worthy. For all he got before some to the gate, yet many of them went in before him. There the poor man would stand shaking and shrinking; I dare say it would have pitied one's heart to see him When we went also from the house Beautiful, down the hill, into the Valley of Humiliation, he went down as well as ever I saw a man in my life; for he cared not how mean he was, so he might be happy at last. Yea, I think there was a kind of sympathy between that valley and him; for I never saw him better in all his pilgrimage than when he was in that valley. Here he would lie down, embrace the ground, and kiss the very flowers that grew in this valley (Lam. 3: 27-29). He would now be up every morning by break of day, tracing and walking to and fro in the valley. But when he was at the entrance of the Valley

of the Shadow of Death, I thought I should have lost my man: not for that he had any inclination to go back; that he always abhorred; but he was ready to die for fear. Oh, the hobgoblins will have me, the hobgoblins will have me, cried he; and I could not beat him out on't. He made such a noise, and such an outcry here, that had they but heard him it was enough to encourage them to come and fall upon us. But this I took very great notice of, that this valley was as quiet when we went through it as ever I knew it before or since. I suppose those enemies here had now a special check from our Lord and a command not to meddle until Mr Fearing had passed over it. It would be too tedious to tell you of all, we will therefore only mention a passage or two more. When he was come to Vanity Fair, I thought he would have fought with all the men in the fair. I feared there we should both have been knocked on the head, so hot was he against their fooleries. Upon the Enchanted Ground he was also very wakeful. But when he was come at the river where was no bridge, there again he was in a heavy case. Now, now, he said, he should be drowned forever, and so never see that Face with comfort that he had come so many miles to behold. And here also I took notice of what was very remarkable: the water of that river was lower at this time than ever I saw it in all my life; so we went over at last, not much above wetshod. When he was going up to the gate I began to take leave of him, and to wish him a good reception above. So he said, I shall, I shall; then parted we asunder, and I saw him no more. Then it seems he was well at last, says Honest. Yes, yes, says Greatheart; I never had a doubt of him. He was above many tender of sin: he was so afraid of doing injuries to others that he would deny himself of that which was lawful, because he would not offend." The description of Christian's passing over the river — his fears and his assuring cry at last as he felt the bottom, "Oh, I see Him again!" — and the concluding scene of the Second Part where the other pilgrims pass over to the Celestial City, are scenes as impressive and touching as can be read in our language.

Book Reviews

WHAT IS FAITH?, by J. Gresham Machen, Banner of Truth Trust, £3.95.

This attractively bound Paperback, written by one of the most able theologians and apologists of the century, merits a more extensive Review than that ordinarily given in these pages. It is reproduced in large clear print that reflects credit on the publishers. The book exposes and repudiates

an attitude to religion which is already popular and appears to be gaining in popularity. This champion of the Reformed Faith proves himself to be more than a match for his modern and liberal opponents. The message it proclaims is a timely and much needed one, for an age characterised by laxity and confusion of thought on the nature of true saving faith. Machen proves convincingly from Scripture that faith divorced from knowledge is deficient and suspect. The author does more than anticipate the plausible objections likely to be raised against the treatment of such a subject. Ironically and quite surprisingly, he traces the root of the anti-intellectual tendency to the entire philosophical development of modern times. Modern philosophy, since the days of Kant, and the theology that has been influenced by it, Machen argues, *leads* to a depreciation of reason and an attack on the intellect. What concerns the author most of all is the consequent errors, ignorance and indolence fostered by such a trend in the sphere of Christian religion and the Bible. He states that one chief purpose of the little book, is to defend the primacy of the intellect and in particular to try to break down the false and disastrous opposition which has been set up between knowledge and faith. The author underlines the consequent absence of doctrinal preaching and teaching, as but one product of the modernistic attitude. He also insists that this retrograde tendency is much more widespread and serious than is realised. Christ rather than the creeds — indeed Christ separated from the creeds is the pious slogan, but under honest biblical analysis the piety disappears and the error comes to light. What emerges is a brand of mysticism with its indifference to doctrines and creeds, which the writer roundly exposes and condemns. Both mystics and pragmatists share a common hostility to creeds, definitions and precision of terminology. "Simple trust in Jesus is all we need." How plausible, yet how common. Machen proceeds to warn us solemnly against those who say, "We are preaching the gospel, we are bringing men and women into the church; we have no time for doctrinal controversy; let us alone, let us have peace." In similar vein is the cry, "Let us sink our differences and go on with our work." Have not we ourselves been deafened and alarmed by a more than similar plea? The true character and seriousness of such an attitude is still further highlighted and elucidated by the author. He says, "The peace and work philosophy of religion is nothing less than a religion of optimistic confidence in human nature, mutually exclusive of the approach of those pledged to define and defend historic Christianity." These are sobering and searching words.

The significance of the link between faith and knowledge surfaces again

in the chapter on Faith and the Gospel. It is plausibly suggested by some, that if faith in a doctrine be removed, that faith in a person may remain. The false psychology behind such statements is exposed by Machen, in terms of 1st Corinthians 15: 3-7. Yet another disastrous consequence of the depreciation of sound doctrine is underscored by the writer. He states that "hosts of persons are received into the church on the basis of nothing more than a vague admiration for the moral character of Jesus, or, also, on the basis of a vague purpose of engaging in humanitarian work. One such person in the church he continues, will do more harm to the Cause of Christ than ten such persons outside, and the whole practice ought to be radically changed."

Those who most need to read and ponder the stance taken, and the warnings given in the book, are alas, the most likely to take umbrage at its contents. There can be no doubt that Machen's arguments and caveats will disturb this superficial and hypocritical generation. But what of that? Better criteria should be used to judge of the merits of this book.

We commend this production to our readers for their profit and perusal and urge them not to be prejudiced by the presence of theological and philosophical terminology in exposing God-dishonouring and soul-ruining heresies. I trust all Free Presbyterians know the source of the blasphemous maxim, 'Ignorance is the mother of devotion'; therefore I say — purchase a copy of this book at the modest sum of £3.95. **F.M.**

THE LIFE OF JOHN DUNCAN by A. Moody Stuart. **Banner of Truth Trust.** 226 pp £6.95.

Those familiar with the Life of Rabbi Duncan by David Brown and Rich Gleanings from Rabbi Duncan which have already been reprinted by our Publications Committee will welcome this further reprint — the Life of John Duncan by A. Moody Stuart, now reprinted by the Banner of Truth Trust.

In his younger days John Duncan lapsed into atheism but in the mercy of God was delivered out of it. Relating the deliverance he obtained at that time he acknowledged: "When I was convinced that there was a God, I danced on the Brig o' Dee with delight". It was under Dr Malan of Geneva that he was brought out into the clear light of the gospel. In 1841 Dr Duncan was appointed as missionary to the Jews in Budapest in Hungary. There his labours were owned of the Lord in bringing in Jews who were afterwards useful in the Lord's vineyard, such as Adolph Saphir and Alfred Edersheim. He was recalled to Edinburgh in 1843 to take the Hebrew Chair in the Free Church College. There students for the ministry

were privileged to enjoy the instructions of their spiritually-minded Professor. His ministrations in the pulpit were highly prized by the godly. His interest in the Jews continued throughout his life. Some of his addresses on the Jews given to the General Assembly of the Free Church are included in "Rich Gleanings of Rabbi Duncan". **D.B.M.**

ZWINGLI AND CALVIN; WYCLIFFE AND HUSS; MARTIN LUTHER; JOHN HUSS; by John Broome. Gospel Standard Publications, 7 Brackendale Grove, Harpenden, Herts. AL5 3EL. Price £1.75 each.

These four booklets in the Reformers Series issued by the Gospel Standard Publications give a useful historical outline of the lives and work of the leading Reformers of the Reformation period. They are reprinted from the "Friendly Companion" where they first appeared. They should be of interest to young and old, bringing before the reader the history of these noted divines in small compass. How much do we owe to these men who were instrumental in the Lord's hand in restoring the gospel in its purity to the lands in which they laboured. **D.B.M.**

THE YOUNG SPURGEON by Peter Jeffrey. Evangelical Press. 112 pp. £3.95.

In the preface to this paperback Peter Jeffrey says: "The life of Spurgeon ought to be compulsory reading for all Christians." He goes on to lament that Christians do not read much today. In order to whet the appetites of Christians and encourage them to tackle the two excellent volumes on Spurgeon's Life, The Early Years and the Full Harvest, he has written this short paperback on the early life of Spurgeon. The paperback would be worth buying even to read the account given of Spurgeon's conversion in Chapter 4, and of his Calvinistic beliefs in Chapter 9. There is also much else of interest to the reader. It is to be hoped that the writer's desire will be fulfilled and that many will go on to read the longer accounts given of Spurgeon's life in the two volumes already mentioned and also in the two volumes on the Life and Work of Charles Spurgeon by G. Holden Pike just recently issued by the Banner of Truth Trust.

D.B.M.

Notes and Comments

All Roads lead to Rome

The Archbishop of Canterbury, like a number of his predecessors, has trodden the well-worn road to Rome to pay his respects to the Pope of Rome, the Man of sin and Son of perdition. As chief bishop in the

Anglican Church he would be expected in this ecumenical age to wend his way to the Vatican. Much was said about him as an evangelical at the time of his appointment but his visit to the Vatican gives the lie to that. What need there is that the eyes of the leaders of the Church of England would be opened to see the true nature of the Church of Rome. If this were to take place what a blessing it would be. The day, however, is coming, when the Church of Rome will be exposed, not as a Church of Christ, which it pretends to be, but as the synagogue of Satan. May that time be hastened.

Scottish Independence

Much has been spoken and written about Scottish independence since the General Election. The important matter for us as a Church is not whether certain economic or other advantages might be gained but whether the Protestant Constitution of the land might be maintained. In the present climate of irreligion which is abroad in Scotland, one thing is sure and that is, that the last thing that would be considered in any new national settlement would be the Protestant Constitution. Were Scotland in a spiritually alive state, we have no doubt that Scotland could exist separately or as part of a union of nations as at present. But the fact that it is not so, and that a large population of Irish Roman Catholic immigrants have settled in south west Scotland, make it imperative that no change takes place. While it is true that Romanist leaders have been against independence, yet they would have much to gain by it.

Corporal Punishment

Britain, like many other countries, has introduced a ban on corporal punishment. It was first done away with for criminals who were allowed to inflict whatever pain they wished on their victim while being protected from having any pain inflicted on themselves. This ban on physical punishment has been extended to apply also to children, not merely where children are being physically abused, but where they are being corrected for some wrong-doing. The result in schools could have been predicted — unmanageable classes and unruly ruffians. These ruffians will see to it that they mete out much pain to others but the law now prevents them having a dose of the same administered to themselves. As a consequence we have an unruly society with young and old exposed to vicious attacks from hooligans, a situation that was well contained when corporal punishment was administered. The Word of God still stands: "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes." Prov. 13: 24.

Casualties of the Abortion Act

A House of Commons question asked since the General Election has brought to light the scale of destruction of life since the passing of the Abortion Act in 1967. A junior minister in the Department of Health has disclosed that almost 3.7 million abortions have been carried out in Great Britain since the Act was implemented. Abortion is of course justified when the life of the mother is in danger, and the answer just quoted gave figures for abortions performed "in emergency to save the life of the woman" — 151, a miniscule 0.004% of the total. There may have been other cases when abortion was carried out because of danger to the life of the mother although her life was not in immediate danger, but such cases would not alter the picture significantly. It is a grim picture of large-scale, wanton destruction of life in defiance of the God who has said, "Thou shalt not kill". Further comment is unnecessary. — K. D. M.

Mission News

It was good news to hear that Mr MacDonald C. A. and his wife Dr. Christine MacDonald have been accepted as mission workers for Kenya. There is already a small hospital there in Sengera, Kenya, and we hope that in time it will be in operation, but there is much to be done before then.

In August, if all is well, the Rev. D. B. MacLeod will leave for Kenya and Malawi taking Mr MacDonald with him to introduce him to the congregation in Sengera. Dr. Christine has an examination to sit in September so that she will not be able to go to Zimbabwe until late September or early October. She will then relieve Dr. Hak who goes on furlough in October. There is much work to be done by both young people in language study before they can begin work in Sengera.

The young man from Malawi, Ephraim Tembo, who appeared before the Presbytery at the time of Ingwenya Communion, has been accepted for the ministry but advised to further his academic studies before beginning the usual classes in preparation for the ministry.

A nephew of Mr Dick Vermeulen, Mr John Vermeulen, his wife and family are shortly to proceed D.V. from New Zealand to Zimbabwe, where Mr Vermeulen, a carpenter, will assist Mr David Ndlovu with practical work on the Mission.

We hope that all the new workers and especially the prospective divinity student, will be remembered in the prayers of our people. We see from the Press that there has been some political unrest in Kenya and Malawi, but we hope a solution will be found to ensure a stable government.

Miss Macaulay reports that yellow maize is now available in the stores. Sugar is also for sale but is 80% more expensive than it was previously. Only the well-to-do can purchase at that price. In former days people depended on honey found in the hives of wild bees in old tree trunks. Life was less complicated then.

At the May Communion in Zvishavane there were large congregations. The Rev. P. Mzamo was the visiting minister. The services were much enjoyed. One male member was received. Mr Mazvabo said that the people were greatly affected by the drought, having lost cattle and crops. Mr Mazvabo was organising "work for food". Essential work is being done on the Mission in exchange for food.

The new term has begun in the John Tallach School with the anxieties relating to procuring food and water for almost 500 young people. Miss Graham carries the main burden for this task but her letters do not betray undue anxiety. No doubt she knows where to cast her burden.

No mention has been made of the fact that the older ministers, the Rev. P. Mzamo and the Rev. A. B. Ndebele are in each case carrying on the work of several men, ably supported by the elders. Without a blessing on the preaching of the Word all else is in vain. — J.N.

Eastern Europe Mission

The following extracts are from letters of appreciation from two churches in Ukraine which received a considerable number of Bibles from the Free Presbyterian Church. The first is from a minister in South Ukraine. "It is a long time you have been here, but even after a long period we don't want to forget your love. The 1000 Bibles were a real great gift, which we distributed among the Reformed Congregations in Karpat-Ukraine. It was a joy to know that all these Bibles are lights now in the hands and hearts of many, many Christians in our country. We do believe and hope the Lord will bless you in your helping love, and it will be also a healing power in this country here. God bless you."

The second extract is from a pastor in Kiev. "The Elders' Council of the Gospel Church thank God and Rev. D. Ross, as well as people in the Free Presbyterian Church, for the humanitarian load of food stuffs and second-hand clothes. Especially, the elders thank the above said people for the 2000 copies of Bibles, New Testaments and Gospels. Also for calendars, books and tracts to do evangelism. The clothes were distributed among the members of the Church. The pictures are enclosed. Let God the Almighty bless you all in your life and work."

The Dominions and Overseas Committee has decided that I visit Eastern

Europe again. Along with Mr A. MacRae, Dundee, I hope to visit Hungary, Ukraine, Romania and Czechoslovakia in September and October, God willing. The bulk of our load, will be distributed in The Ukraine.

As on previous occasions we will carry Bibles, reformed literature, medicines, clothing and food. The Trinitarian Bible Society has very kindly given us a grant of 2000 Hungarian Bibles, 1000 of which will go to Ukraine and 1000 to Romania, to the Hungarian speaking peoples in these countries. We will also take 1000 Russian Bibles and a quantity of Romanian and Czechoslovakian Bibles, together with calendars, tracts and booklets in various languages.

For the continuance of this vital work we look forward to the same generous support we have received from our Church people and others. Spreading the Word of God is required by the Great Head of the Church. "The Lord did give the Word: great was the company of those who published it," Psalm 68: 11.

Contributions for this important work should be forwarded to either myself, (Rev. D. A. Ross, Free Presbyterian Manse, Laide, Achnasheen, Ross-shire, IV22 2NB), or to Mr R. A. Campbell, General Treasurer, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LE, and should be specified for "Eastern Europe Mission Fund".

We also desire that this further Mission endeavour of our Church would be remembered by the Lord's people at the Throne of Grace. "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you," 2 Thessalonians 3: 1.

— D.A.R.

Church Notes

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Southern: At Glasgow on 15th September at 6 p.m.

Western: At Laide on 15th September at 6 p.m.

Outer Isles: At Stornoway on 6th October at 1 p.m.

Zimbabwe: At Bulawayo on 13th October at 2 p.m.

Australia and New Zealand: At Gisborne on 23rd October at 2.30 p.m.

Proceedings of Synod

The Synod agreed that the Account of the Synod meetings should be included with the Reports to form the Proceedings of Synod. These will be forwarded to Congregations whenever they are ready and also to individual subscribers. The cost per copy will be £2 (£2.40 post paid). Copies may also be obtained from the Church Bookroom, 133 Woodlands Drive, Glasgow.

FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

CONGREGATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS – 1991

Location	Sustentation Fund	Home Mission Fund	Jewish and Foreign Mission Fund	Aged and Infirm Ministers, etc., Fund	College, Library and Bookroom Fund	Organisation Fund	General Building Fund	Dominions and Overseas Fund	Outreach Fund	Publications Fund	Centenary Fund	Eastern Europe Fund	TOTAL
NORTHERN PRESBYTERY													
Aberdeen	£560.00	£20.00	£25.00	£25.00	£10.00		£15.00	£15.00		£10.00			£680.00
Bonar Bridge)													
Lairg)	2,013.00	210.00	145.00	8.00	56.00	30.00	51.00	100.00		70.00			2,683.00
Dornoch)													
Rogart)								50.00					700.00
Beauly	500.00	50.00	100.00					228.60		4.00			3,465.60
Dingwall	2,592.00	165.00	400.00	4.00	4.00	64.00	4.00						
Fearn)	560.00	42.00	106.00		36.00			41.00		40.00			825.00
Tain)													
Halkirk)													
Strathly)	1,500.00	180.00	170.00		50.00			80.00		90.00			2,070.00
Thurso)													
Wick)													
Inverness	13,787.00	1,980.00	2,765.00		740.25	124.72	550.32	699.91		650.40	500.00		21,797.60
Kinlochbervie	837.50	425.00	390.00		50.00			210.00		50.00			1,962.50
Scourie	507.50	95.00	90.00		30.00			149.50		30.00			902.00
Daviot etc	4,364.00	368.15	590.60		162.00		97.00	263.00		129.00			5,973.75
	£27,221.00	£3,535.15	£4,781.60	£37.00	£1,138.25	£218.72	£717.32	£1,837.01		£1,073.40	£500.00		£41,059.45
SOUTHERN PRESBYTERY													
Dumbarton	2,800.00	217.00	369.00		168.00		85.00	75.00	70.00	75.00			3,859.00
Edinburgh	4,540.00	287.50	338.00		125.00		99.70	283.43	110.20	135.58			5,919.41
Fort William	443.00	60.00	32.00		10.00	10.00	12.00	10.00		10.00			587.00
Glasgow	15,540.00	1,842.00	2,863.00	18.00	856.50		820.00	1,140.00	640.00	810.50		170.00	24,700.00
Dunoon)													
Greenock)	2,315.00	177.00	247.00		58.00		57.00	90.00		67.00		15.00	3,026.00
Kames		50.00	76.00									100.00	226.00
London	6,362.00	423.66	1,083.32		220.67		235.67	471.67	265.17	290.34			9,352.50
Oban	365.00	25.00	40.00		10.00		10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00			480.00
Stirling	290.00	45.00	45.00		20.00		15.00	15.00	20.00	14.00			464.00
Perth	157.00	76.00	75.00		13.00		14.00	35.00	14.00	14.00			398.00
Dundee	972.00	130.00	180.00	25.00	20.00	40.00	53.00	60.00		45.00		20.00	1,545.00
Barnoldswick	1,200.00	300.00	400.00		100.00		300.00	150.00		75.00		150.00	2,675.00
Larne	3,000.00	100.00	200.00		150.00		105.00	150.00	30.00	40.00		30.00	3,805.00
	£37,984.00	£3,733.16	£5,948.32	£43.00	£1,751.17	£50.00	£1,806.37	£2,490.10	£1,159.37	£1,586.42		£485.00	£57,036.91
OUTER ISLES PRESBYTERY													
Achmore)	9,432.20	521.00	1,131.50		296.00	237.00	344.50	490.00		333.50		155.00	12,940.70
Stornoway)													
North Uist	4,230.00	334.50	688.00		42.00		59.00	126.00	34.00	87.50			5,601.00
Breasclete	790.00	207.00	218.00		80.00		70.00	100.00	90.00	81.00			1,636.00
North Tolsta	6,333.75	488.00	533.00		216.50		238.50	251.00	236.50	230.00			8,527.25

North Harris	3,646.00	366.00	274.00	83.50		104.50	110.50	104.50	96.50		4,785.50
South Harris	8,624.70	943.00	946.00	125.00		230.00	374.00	263.00	235.00	165.00	11,905.70
Ness	2,434.00	86.00	76.00	32.00		35.00	37.00	33.00	30.00		2,763.00
Uig	4,088.00	121.00	264.50	94.00		86.00	101.00		84.00		4,838.50
	£39,578.65	£3,066.50	£4,131.00	£969.00	£237.00	£1,167.50	£1,589.50	£761.00	£1,177.50	£320.00	£52,997.65

WESTERN PRESBYTERY

Applecross	1,489.30	130.00	158.00								1,777.30
Gairloch	6,914.00	503.00	473.90	168.00	182.00	213.90	158.00	180.00			8,792.80
Laide	3,391.00	201.00	216.00	78.00	69.00	130.00		80.00		5,751.60	9,916.60
Kyle)											
Plockton)		50.00	43.00	4.00	20.00	30.00	28.00	9.00			184.00
Lochbroom	5,500.00	459.00	512.50	236.00	198.00	253.00		189.00		20.00	7,367.50
Lochcarron	3,000.00	212.00	908.00	72.00	87.00	105.00	89.00	112.00	50.00	250.00	4,885.00
Lochinver	2,450.00	200.00	785.00	114.00	121.00	118.00		104.00			3,892.00
Stoer/Drumbeg	1,683.00	145.00	323.00	73.50	100.00			81.50			2,406.00
Shieldaig	3,007.00	136.00	245.00	30.00	25.00	32.00		40.00			3,515.00
	£27,434.30	£2,036.00	£3,664.40	£775.50	£802.00	£881.90	275.00	£795.50	£50.00	£6,021.60	£42,736.20

SKYE PRESBYTERY

Bracadale	1,064.50	78.00	159.50		46.50		43.50	65.50	30.50	36.00		1,524.00
Strath	1,311.00	143.00	76.00		75.00	37.00	51.00	77.00		72.00		1,842.00
Flashadder	312.00	102.00	103.00					57.00		44.00		618.00
Glendale	2,961.00	196.00	192.00		77.00		81.00	104.00	64.00	82.00		3,757.00
Vatten)												
Watnash)	1,827.50	148.00	163.00		35.00	5.00	62.00	65.00	45.00	33.00		2,383.50
Portree	10,820.00	1,180.00	790.00	250.00	195.00	350.00	150.00	280.00	300.00	180.00	400.00	14,895.00
Raasay	5,000.00	253.00	303.00		113.00		118.00	131.00		111.00		6,029.00
Staffin	3,332.90	232.00	280.50		102.00		75.50	136.00	91.50	105.50		4,355.90
	£26,628.90	£2,332.00	£2,067.00	£250.00	£643.50	£392.00	£581.00	£915.50	£531.00	£663.50	£400.00	£35,404.40

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND PRESBYTERY

Gisborne		325.42		50.00			100.35		16.00		31.34	523.11
Wellington		35.00	35.00	35.00		25.00	46.02					176.02
Auckland		292.89										292.89
Grafton		331.42										549.42
Sydney						21.81	109.05					130.86
Brisbane							137.77					137.77
		£984.73	£35.00	£85.00		£46.81	£611.19		£16.00		£31.34	£1,810.07

CANADIAN PRESBYTERY

Vancouver)												
Toronto)		771.92					975.61				19.51	1,767.04
Chesley)												
		£771.92					£975.61				£19.51	£1,767.04

SUMMARY

Northern Presbytery	£27,221.00	£3,535.15	£4,781.60	£37.00	£1,138.25	£218.72	£717.32	£1,837.01		£1,073.40		
Southern Presbytery	37,984.00	3,733.16	5,948.32	43.00	1,751.17	50.00	1,806.37	2,490.10	1,159.37	1,586.42	£500	£41,059.45
Outer Isles Presbytery	39,578.65	3,066.50	4,131.00		969.00	237.00	1,167.50	1,589.50	761.00	1,177.50		485.00 57,036.91
Western Presbytery	27,434.30	2,036.00	3,664.40		775.50		802.00	881.90	275.00	795.50		320.00 52,997.65
Skye Presbytery	26,628.90	2,332.00	2,067.00	250.00	643.50	392.00	581.00	915.50	531.00	663.50	50.00	6,021.60 42,736.20
Australia/New Zealand Presbytery			984.73	35.00	85.00		46.81	611.19				400.00 35,404.40
Canadian Presbytery			771.92					975.61		16.00		31.34 1,810.07
TOTAL	£158,846.85	£14,702.81	£22,348.97	£365.00	£5,362.42	£897.72	£5,121.00	£9,300.81	£2,726.37	£5,312.32	£550.00	£7,277.45 £232,811.72

Inverness Gaelic Prayer Meeting

The Inverness Kirk Session has decided that the Gaelic Prayer Meeting should be held on the last Wednesday of the month until further notice.

Hugh Gunn,
Session Clerk.

Acknowledgment of Donations

The General Treasurer, Mr R. A. MacDonald acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:-

Foreign Mission Fund: A. G. (Stornoway), £250.

Easter Europe Fund: A. G. (Stornoway), £100.

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

Beaully: Mrs M. M., £20 for Door Collection, per envelope in plate.

Bonar Bridge: From the Estate of the late Mrs Sutherland, Wick, £50 for Bonar, etc., Congregations.

Bracadale-Strath: Anon., £10; Anon., £10; Anon., £10; all per Rev. G. G. H., all for Comm. Exps.

Breasclete: Anon., £20 for Door Coll.; "First Peter chap. I (Gaelic)", £100 for Breasclete Congr. Funds per Rev. J. MacLeod.

Daviot-Stratherrick-Tomatin: A Friend, £50 for Tomatin New Church.

Glasgow: (St. Jude's) Matth. 6: 3, £10; Anon., £10; J. C., £30; Stornoway Friend, £30; "Where most needed", £10; all for Bus Fund; Anon., £20 for Synod Exps.; Anon., £50 for Work in Africa, E. Europe and Russia; Anon., £100 for Sponsor a Blind Child; Anon., £100 for Zimbabwe Famine Relief; Anon., £5 for Sust. Fund; Anon., £10 per Rev. D. M. for Sust. Fund; M. M., £55 for General Bdg. Fund.

Greenock: Anon., £40 for Sust. Fund; Anon., £50 for Congr. Fund, both per Rev. L. M.

Inverness: Anon., £5 for Sust. Fund; M. McPh., £20 for Famine/Blind; A. N., £10 for Bus Maintenance, all per envelopes in plate; W. O. B. Suth., Wick, £50 donation from Mother's legacy for Congr. Funds, per Rev. D. M. B.

Lochbroom: Miss W. S., Wick, £50, "where most needed"; R. B., £15; C. M., £10; C. McK., £7; R. B., £10; C. McK., £5, all for Tape Fund; Mrs M. R., £50 for Sust. Fund, all per Rev. N. M. R.

London: Miss W. S., Wick, £50 for Congr. Fund (per J. W.).

North Harris: Friend, Stockinish, £10, "Where most needed" per D. McD.; Friend, Tarbert, £50 for Sust. Fund, £25 for Home Miss. Fund, £25 for Jewish & Foreign Miss. Fund, all per J. McL.; Anon., £20; M. M., £5, both for Bus Fund; Anon., £10 for Comm. Exp., last three per envelope in plate; Friend, Stockinish, £5 for Door Coll. per R. McC.

North Tolsta: In memory of our beloved parents, £20 for heating; Anon., £300 for Manse Exps., per D. MacK.; Friend of the Cause, Breasclete, £10 for Comm. Exp., In memory of my Mother, £25 for Africa Famine Relief, last two in plate.

Portree: Friend, £500 per N. B.; Friend, £12, both for Sust. Fund; J. M., £10; Tolsta Friend, £10; Tolsta Friend, £10, all for Congr. Purposes; Mrs D. M., £20, last five per Rev. F. M.; Friend, £13.25 per S. Y. M., last two for Door Coll.

Raasay: Friend, Inverarish, £30; J. M. MacL., £20; Envelope in plate, £20, all for Car Fund.

Staffin: Anon., £20 from Friend, Staffin, "towards upkeep of Manse."