

THE
Free Presbyterian Magazine
and Monthly Record

Vol. 97

OCTOBER 1992

No. 10

Africa's Destiny

"Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God." Psalm 68: 31.

The promises of God's Word are sure and shall be fulfilled in the Lord's good time. His purposes are from eternity and cannot be thwarted. To men it may appear that the fulfilment of some of the predictions of Scripture are taking long to be fulfilled. However that is only how it seems to men. We are to remember that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day.

We may take the promise regarding Ethiopia as applicable to Africa as a whole, of which Ethiopia is a part. Long did the nations of Africa lie under the blight of heathenism until the Saviour appeared as a light to lighten the Gentiles as well as the glory of His people Israel. Northern Africa was to receive the gospel as well as the nations of Europe. Christianity for a time took hold of the nations in the north of Africa including the nation of Ethiopia, as well as other lands. With the rise of Mohammedanism and its spread over the nations bordering the Mediterranean the light of Christianity was to be eclipsed and the cruel reign of the religion of the false prophet prevail. The darkness of night descended on that Continent as a result. What of the promise of God's Word — that Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands to God? How long the might was to continue until in the 19th Century the opening up of Africa led to the spread of the Gospel to many parts of that Continent. For a time it appeared as though the fulfilment of the promise had come. But declension set in and in many instances the true gospel ceased to be preached. A man-made religion took its place, Romanism spread abroad and false sects multiplied, bringing their delusions with them and ensnaring the souls of many. A

night of spiritual darkness has again fallen over the Continent of Africa except in those places where the light of the gospel still prevails. Yet the present darkness in Africa is not like the gross darkness which prevails now in many of the countries of Europe where the gospel has been rejected by millions of souls.

In the light of the present situation what hope can there be that light shall yet break in glorious splendour on Africa? To the natural eye it would appear that there is no hope. Things must progressively grow worse until total darkness prevails. Not so to the eye of faith, for the eye of faith looks to the promise and to the certainty of the fulfilment of the promise. The One who cannot lie has declared it, therefore it must surely come to pass that Ethiopia to God shall soon stretch out her hands. But how is it to come about? The Lord gives the answer in His Word — “not by might, nor by power but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” It is not in the power of man to bring about this great change but it is in the power of God to effect it. His glory is bound up with the fulfilment of His promises, therefore none of them shall ever fall to the ground. Consequently this is sure and certain that Ethiopia to God shall soon stretch out her hands.

What a glorious day that shall be when the Spirit shall be poured out from on High and Africa shall receive pentecostal showers of blessing — not the delusions of a false pentecostalism but a true outpouring of the Spirit of God upon the nations of that extensive Continent. How will it be known? The Lord alone will be exalted in that day and sin will hide its face for very shame. Then shall be fulfilled the promise — that men shall be blessed in Him and all nations shall call Him blessed. Christ then shall have dominion in Africa from the east to the west and from the north to the south. The oppression to which the African nations have been subject will be done away with, and Africa will rise to glorious splendour as a jewel in Christ’s crown. He must reign until all His enemies are made His footstool.

In the light of these things, what is to be our response? Pray, pray, pray for Africa, for its peoples, its tribes and nations that light would break on sin-darkened hearts, giving the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Pray, pray, pray for pastors to be raised up, men after God’s own heart who will feed the people with knowledge and understanding. Plead, plead, plead for the fulfilment of the promise that Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands to God. Who can tell but you shall have an answer in peace and see the fulfilment of the promise even in your own day?

Notes of a Sermon

by Rev. Malcolm Gillies

Preached at Ness, 10th October, in connection with the removal of the late Mr Malcolm Macleod, Missionary.

"And he took the mantle of Elijah which fell from him, and smote the waters and said, Where is the Lord God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither, and Elisha went over" (11 Kings 2: 14).

In the chapter of which our text is a part, the purpose of the Lord regarding the translation of Elijah is first brought before us. "The Lord would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind." When the Lord's people have served their generation according to the will of God, and when they are ready to enter into their rest, they will not be left longer in this vale of tears. Elijah had fought a good fight and had finished his course and had kept the faith, and the Lord would not only have him home, but would take him there by translation, so that he should not see death, thus setting His seal of honour on Elijah's person and work. We have further in this chapter the proving of Elisha as the Lord's prophet and successor of Elijah. Has the Lord made known His mind to Elisha regarding his master? Will he lovingly follow him to the end? Is he deeply conscious of his great need of the same anointing that enabled Elijah to serve the Lord whole-heartedly, confronted as he was with Israel's apostacy from the truth? Elijah's last service for the Lord in this world is the confirmation of Elisha as Jehovah's servant in Israel; to try him as it were in a furnace in order that the graces of faith, love, humility and dependence on God might be manifest as in him. Elisha through grace endures every trial and follows Elijah to the last moment, and even fulfils the condition on which he is to have a double portion of Elijah's spirit. He has been proved and will use the office of a prophet, being found blameless. He is now left alone, having seen his Master ascending to heaven. He must now take up the work which Elijah had carried on so long. In the words before us, we are shown how Elisha entered on this work.

In considering these words, as we may be enabled, we shall notice:—

I. That which fell from Elijah.

II. Elisha, who was constrained to take it up.

III. The manner in which he went forward to his life-work.

I. That which fell from Elijah.

Elijah let fall his mantle as he left this world, but he left behind him that which was much more important and useful. He left behind him his noble witness and testimony on the side of the truth of God. From the beginning to the end of his life, he had to testify against personal and

public wickedness. He set his face like a flint against the immorality and idolatry of Israel, and brought the truth of the covenant God of Israel to bear against a people who worshipped Baal, a god who could neither hear nor save.

(1) Elijah was one who declared that he stood before God. We may say that all that he was, and said and performed were based on this truth, that he realised he had to do with God and not with men. It is here that most lose themselves for time and eternity; declensions from personal piety and departures from true doctrine and worship in the church, in every age, have been the fruits of the want of God's fear in the heart. Elijah feared God and, therefore, he would not countenance kings or captains or nations in their rebellion against heaven. He stood before God, as He is Lawgiver and Judge. Elijah knew himself as a sinner, guilty and undone. He realised that God is infinitely holy and just, and that sin will not go unpunished. He knew the terrors of the Lord, and, therefore, he persuaded men. He stood before the Lord God of Israel, the Covenant God by sacrifice, before Israel's God, who can be wrestled with, and from whom an unworthy sinner can obtain the blessing and that favour which is life on the basis of a promised Redeemer. He stood before Him as a servant who owned no master besides. What was the will of Ahab? What though Baal's prophets numbered 400 and he left alone on the Lord's side? The Lord had made known his will. He had given forth commandments that are sure, that stand fast for ever, and that are done in truth and uprightness (Psalm 111: 8). Elijah stood steadfastly in the truth of God's revelation and refused to change his position, or to be influenced by the popular religion of his day.

(2) Elijah left behind him in his testimony that he cleaved to the Church of God as it was set up by God Himself. This Church ceased to exist in Israel, when men resolved that the truth of God should not be the rule of faith and worship, but what seemed expedient to Ahab and Jezebel and what suited the carnal state of that backslidden age. The altar of the God of Israel had been broken down, and Baal's altar set up in its place. Thus the church in Israel, which was formerly founded on the truths of Scripture, came to adopt a new constitution, which was entirely antagonistic to the Word of God.

The true Church of God was carried on in the person of Elijah, who was no innovator, but a restorer of pure doctrine and worship, hateful though it was to that generation. He set himself to build again God's altar, to re-proclaim the whole revelation as to faith and worship and practice. He was no narrow bigot, whose viewpoint was limited to a few. His altar

building was according to the twelve tribes of Israel, to whom were committed the oracles of God that all nations through them might be blessed.

We believe that the history of this period has been given for the warning, the use and the encouragement of the Church to the end of time. The Lord has shown beforehand what must take place in connection with His Cause, and has made amply plain what will in each age be well-pleasing in His sight. What Elijah had to do, others had to do since his time. The Old Testament is full of instances, making plain the duty of the Church to keep hold of truth whatever it might cost. When the Saviour appeared on earth, He solemnly protested against the corruptions of the church among the Jews, declaring that they had made void and transgressed the commandment of God by their traditions. That church persisted in their refusal to return, and the Saviour rejected them as His Church, and left their house desolate. The Church of God was continued, being built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone. Since apostolic times, the Church has been restored and revived by the Most High, raising up witnesses who took their stand on the express commandments of God regarding how He is to be served and worshipped. A few and very often obscure individuals have had to stand out against the great majority to witness to the fact that the Faith was once and for all delivered to the saints, and that departures from that Faith must be opposed at all hazards. Athanasius, Luther, Calvin and Knox are examples of those who overcame by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony, and who loved not their lives unto death.

We are convinced that what Revs Donald Macfarlane and Donald Macdonald, along with the students and the goodly number of pious people, did in 1893 was just what Elijah and the church after him had to do to maintain the truth of God. Malcolm Macleod, your late missionary, was one of those who was like Levi, when men had to make choice whether they would be on the Lord's side or not — "He did not acknowledge his own brethren nor know His own children." Free Presbyterians have been styled seceders from 1893 to the present time, but the question arises — Are they seceders? Was Elijah a seceder? Are men seceders who declare by word and practice that they will have no part in the innovations of the times, but will seek to continue the Church on the well-defined and Scriptural basis on which she was stayed in times of reformation? The scene on Carmel that day made it very evident who they were that had departed from the truth, and also the solitary individual who had the faithfulness and courage given him to stand true to God and His Word.

(3) Elijah left behind him his confession that he was sustained by the

grace and kindness of the Lord at every stage of his life's journey. How clear it is that it was almighty strength that upheld him at Carmel. In himself he was as weak as most men. When he fled before the rage of Jezebel, how tenderly he was nursed by Him who remembers that we are dust. He is fed after a much-needed sleep by angels, and is allowed more rest and then fed again, so that he has no difficulty in going on for forty days and nights till he reaches the Mount of God. He is given there a clear revelation of the presence of the Lord, and taught as to His mode of reviving His cause in the world. Instead of being cast off as unprofitable, the Lord commands him to perform other prophetic duties, to appoint two kings, Hazael and Jehu and also Elisha as prophet in his place, when he would be taken to his eternal rest. Thus Elijah went on till he finished his work, his whole life, an illustration of the Scripture — "My grace is sufficient for thee, and my strength is made perfect in weakness."

What was true about Elijah, has been fulfilled in all those who, in spite of the darkness of the times, have, like Caleb, followed the Lord wholly. A great number who formed our Church at her beginning have now departed to be with Christ, and we have now to number with these your late beloved missionary. All these and Malcolm Macleod, not the least among them, kept their consciences clean as to their public duty to the Lord's Cause; they were enabled by grace to adhere to the path of duty; they had a goodly measure of the Lord's presence and comfort in their souls from time to time; and they passed out of time to eternity in peace, with the good hope of being forever with the Lord. If such a witness was inevitable over 30 years ago, it is much more needed now that the Spirit that was upon Elijah would come upon many in this generation. The day is getting much darker, and God and His truth in Law and Gospel are being more and more ignored. If the cause of Christ is to prosper again in this land, it will be brought about by the outpouring of the Spirit of grace and supplications. Men will then cease being stout-hearted, self-sufficient and wise in their own conceits, and will become "as doves of the valleys, each one mourning for his own iniquity."

II. Elisha, who was constrained to take up the work of Elijah.

It is quite evident that Elijah, when he was crying out that he was left alone, had no knowledge that the Lord had 7000 in Israel to witness for Him, and that He was secretly preparing Elisha to step into the breach, when Elijah would be taken to heaven. The Lord knoweth them that are His, and He can point them out and bring them forth in His own good time and way.

(1) Our first sight of Elisha is in connection with the prophecy that went

before on him — “And the Lord said unto him, ‘Go, return on thy way and anoint Hazael to be king over Syria; and Jehu, the son of Nimshi, shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha, the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah, shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay” (1 Kings 25: 15-17).

Without doubt, this prophecy regarding these three persons has reference to the sore chastisements that would come on Israel for their sins. Hazael and Jehu were the instruments of vengeance to Israel, but it cannot be said that Elisha was like Elijah in the direct using of the sword and fire against God’s enemies. His mission was that of healing and peace; more of the still, small voice than of the whirlwind. I was directed to consider this prophecy in the light of the present condition of God’s Cause in our midst. Hazael was an idolater, a man of the world lying in open sin, and illustrative of that spirit of ungodliness and vanity and indifference which is characteristic of these times. They are few in this generation that have not fallen under the sword of Hazael, that is, who are not destroyed by openly defying the authority of God in His holy law and in the claim of His Gospel. Some escape this snare, only to fall under the sword of a Jehu-like spirit. Jehu came forth as a great professor of the true religion, full of zeal in which there was not a whit of self-knowledge. His cry to Jehonadab, the son of Rechab, and to all Israel was — “Come with me and see my zeal for the Lord.” Many in our midst have escaped irreligion only to fall under the power of a form of godliness, which has not as its basis the work of the Holy Spirit in quickening the dead to the glory of sovereign grace. I am led to understand that even in Lewis there are some who have come to deny such fundamental doctrines as that God elected from all eternity all that shall be saved, and that it is wrong to preach that God will punish unrepentant sinners in hell for ever. Let these doctrines and others cognate to them be left out of the preaching, and Lewis will be filled from end to end with professors of religion which may have plenty of false zeal, but who will be found among God’s enemies at last, as sure as Jehu was.

The Lord has put the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God into the hands of His people, and especially into the hands of His sent messengers, that they might use it for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. This was the sword that Elisha wielded in his day, and it was the means of slaying a few to sin and self-righteousness, and of bringing them alive to faith and hope as to salvation through grace. The arrows

of the Word of the Great King are sharp in the hearts of His enemies, and therefore the people fall under Him. If sinners are to be saved, the commandment will come, sin will revive, and they will die to every false refuge. It is then that the Gospel will become gospel to men, quickening them to a lively hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. What need there is in our day that through the mercy of God sinners would escape the destruction and corruption that is in the world through lust; that they would be delivered from a form of godliness that denies the power thereof, and that as lost sinners, they would be united to Him who came "that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly."

(2) The day came upon Elisha when the mantle of Elijah was cast over him, and that caused him much searching of heart. He understood in some measure that he would have to be responsible to God for His public Cause on earth, and might say with Paul — "And who is sufficient for these things?" Elijah's command — "Go back again: for what have I done unto thee?" had the effect only of thrusting forth Elisha to be a "partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel according to the power of God." He left all and ministered to Elijah, and in that school he was fitted and prepared by God for the ministry which the Lord designed for him.

(3) The Lord revealed Elijah's removal to the sons of the prophets, but steadfast and close cleaving to the Cause as upheld and represented in Elijah was not given to them, but only to Elisha. There are some who can speak the truth about the state of the Cause, but they are not honoured to act according to the truths they speak. No wonder though these should find death in their pot of pottage. But Elisha's heart is rent as well as his garments, by the removal of Elijah, which has left the church without one to guide her or plead her cause. Dire necessity, the fruit of God's call to himself and that "it is the time of Jacob's trouble," force him to stand in the breach in the dark day. The dealings of the Lord tend only to humble Elisha in the dust, and in taking up Elijah's work, he can say with the Apostle — "I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me: yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel" (1 Cor. 9: 16). The Word of God makes it amply plain that it is such men as Elisha, wrought upon and prepared by grace, that God uses to carry on the affairs of His Church in every age of time.

III. The manner in which he went forward in his life-work.

He took up the mantle of Elijah which fell from him. That mantle was to him the symbol of what Elijah was and what he performed as the Lord's prophet, and in dependence on grace, he could not refuse the duties and

responsibilities that lay before him. With fear and trembling he began to go forward in the same spirit of faith and power, determined to follow in the steps of Elijah, because he was convinced that these steps were in accordance with the truth and will of God. Jordan's waters were before him as they were before his great predecessor. Difficulties innumerable were to beset him, but his faith assured him that ways would be opened through these difficulties. "Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are and he prayed earnestly" (James 5: 17). Elisha also will do nothing without prayer. His cry — "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" — accompanies his endeavours to carry out the will of God, and by prayer and action he is successful in every undertaking. "He smote the waters and they parted hither and thither and Elisha went over." This was only the first step in a career of usefulness, wherein the power and grace of God were made manifest in Israel and beyond Israel.

We read how, when complete ruin faced the widow of the prophet, that by the word of Elisha her little store of oil was so increased that her poverty in vessels to hold her riches became the most evident part of her straitness. Thus when God turns back the captivity of Zion, complaints and fear are turned to joy and thankfulness. Then there was the Shunammite, who by the Word of the Lord in the mouth of Elisha was given a son, and when bereft of him, had him restored by the prayers of the prophet. When God grants a living ministry, a new creation will be wrought in the hearts of sinners, and though these may have their lifeless seasons, by the same ministry they will experience revivings. Time would fail to recount the marvellous works of God through Elisha. There was Naaman, leprous and yet unwilling to submit to the only way by which he could be cleansed. Through the kindness and forbearance of God he receives at least a bodily cleansing. In Samaria, at a time of siege and famine, such a deliverance was brought about, in fulfilment of the word of Elisha that the four lepers outside the city had to give up their cry of "Unclean, unclean", for a time, and to say to one another, "This is a day of good tidings." Nothing would do but that they would become messengers to the king's household — "We came to the camp of the Syrians, and, behold there was no man there, neither voice of man, but horses tied and asses tied and the tents as they were" (II Kings 7: 10).

My friends, we have now come to the end of this very solemn communion season, made more solemn by our having to place the dust of our late missionary in the grave at its commencement. Malcolm Macleod has been taken up to his rest, but the message of this text is that the God he served still lives and reigns. May He speedily raise up another as He

did in the case of Elijah, to carry on His own work. We appeal to all, and especially to the young, to lay to heart the words and example Malcolm Macleod set before them. Cleave to the testimony raised by him and others in defence of God's truth, and be not deceived by those whose cry is that there is no difference between our standing and that of others. There was never greater need than there is now that the witness raised over 30 years ago be maintained. We are living in days in which the seeds of infidelity and carnal views of doctrine are bringing forth fruit an hundred fold, sixty fold and thirty fold. Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, and we are certified from this portion of God's Word and from the Bible as a whole that the Lord will give the strength and encouragement necessary to those who will cleave to Himself and to His truth.

The Furnace of Divine Wrath

by John Owen

"And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, son of man, the house of Israel is to me become dross: all they are brass, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midst of the furnace; they are even the dross of silver. Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Because ye are all become dross, behold, therefore I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. As they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you in mine anger and in my fury, and I will leave you there, and melt you. Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof. As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the Lord have poured out my fury upon you." — Ezek. 22: 17-22.

I shall not insist upon the particular opening of these words, but only take some observations from them:—

First, This is a very instructive similtude this of silver and dross; therefore it is often made use of by the Holy Ghost: Isa. 1: 21, 22, "How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers. Thy silver is become dross." "Thy silver is become dross;" — this is God's expression of the condition of an apostate people. "Thy silver is become dross." He uses it again, Jer. 6: 29, 30, "The bellows are burned, the lead is consumed of the fire; the founder melteth in vain: for the wicked are not plucked away. Reprobate silver," refuse silver, drossy silver, "shall men call them." And so here, in this place of the prophet, "Thy silver is become dross."

Secondly, There are two sorts of things that are called the dross of silver. The first is the scoria, that which remains after the furnace, and which manifests, the whole not being departed, the whole to be dross; that is, to be refuse and reprobate silver, — that is, the dross after a trial. There is, secondly, a dross that is called so, which is nothing but the ore the

silver is mixed withal before a trial. That is the dross here mentioned, — brass, tin, iron, lead; such things as are mixed with the silver before the trial. When God promises a purification, “I will take away all thy tin,” saith he. Now, whenever a nation is thus dross, there is yet some good silver in it. When there is nothing but refuse silver *after* a trial, then is all thrown away; but when there is a multitude of dross *before* a trial, there is always some good silver, or else no trial would be made. God is not an unskilful founder, to make a trial when there is no silver in the material. So here, in the text, “As silver is melted in the furnace;” — “as silver.”

Thirdly, When the dross is greatly increased, and the silver will not be otherwise separated from it, both dross and silver must into the same furnace. That is the case here; and you will excuse me if I judge it to be the case with ourselves. Both dross and silver must go into the same furnace; for we must observe, — 1. That the furnace belongs to God’s covenant. There is nothing in the furnace but that the best silver may be brought into it; and it needs to be brought into it, if it be but a furnace. In the day that God made a covenant with Abraham, Gen. 15: 17, “it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between the pieces of his sacrifice.” There the furnace is dedicated, God’s furnace in those words, for the use of the church. If it be but a furnace, it is in the covenant for the use of the church: for, — 2. God hath an oven as well as a furnace; but the oven belongs not to the church at all; Mal. 4: 1, “Behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.” When was this? Why, first, Christ came as “a refiner and purifier of silver,” chap. 3: 3; and they are not purified by Christ. And “the day cometh that shall burn as an oven;” that was the day when Jerusalem was burned, and all that wicked, apostate church was consumed. God left them neither root nor branch, when eleven hundred thousand of them were destroyed in that city. That was God’s oven, which burned up that wicked, apostate church. Truly, brethren, if we had complied with Christ as a refiner, in the day of his refining, we might have prevented the day of the coming of his oven. However, that is not the thing here threatened; but it is a furnace in common for the silver and for the dross, — the same furnace.

Why then, observe, that when God brings both silver and dross, both good and bad, into the same furnace, it is the highest token of God’s

displeasure. So it is here in the text, 'Ye shall know that I do it in my fury, and in mine anger, and in my displeasure.' There is nothing more to be trembled at than when all must go into the same furnace. 'I will gather the silver, and the brass, and the iron, and the lead, and the tin together, and they shall go into the same furnace.' God sometimes makes a distinction; as Isa. 31: 9, "Saith the LORD, whose fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem." The "fire" there is the fire of a fining-pot; the "furnace" is a burning furnace. There is such a time, there may be, there hath been such a time, when God will bring his own Zion only to the fining-pot, and they shall not be in the furnace with wicked ones. I am afraid the cleansing of the churches is beyond the fining-pot; however, here in my text they are put into the same furnace.

When is a people so overgrown with dross as that it is necessary the good and the bad should go into the same furnace?

I shall name but two plain things:—

1. When the generality of a people are openly wicked and profane. You will see in the following verses of this chapter the reason given why God will put them all into the furnace. And why is it? Because the prophets were wicked, and the priests were wicked, and the princes were wicked, and the people were wicked. He distributes them all into several parts, — prophets, priests, princes, people; and they are all wicked, and therefore they must into the furnace, saith he. Isaiah also speaks of setting up a furnace, chap. 1. Why will God set up such a dreadful furnace? Why, saith he, verses, 5, 6, it is because "the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." When there is an universal corruption of the ways and walkings of all sorts of men, and of the whole body of the people, then God sets up his furnace.

2. You may add hereunto, that the dross doth so cleave unto the silver that there is no other way of separating them, but they must all into the same furnace. When all endeavours fail, warnings fail, chastisements fail, preaching of the word fails, and the silver is not separated from the dross; when men can scarce, profesors can scarce, bear to be warned; when they can think of others' sins, but will not think of their own; when they will do nothing towards reformation, but say they shall have peace, — let what will come, one way or other they shall have peace; — there is no way but we must all into the same furnace; nothing else will do.

This is all that I shall observe from the words; only I would make a little use of them in one or two words. And I will say concerning them,

as the apostle Paul doth in another case, "This speak I, not the Lord;" that is, not that he spake any thing against the mind of the Lord, but it was that which he had not an immediate revelation about. 'Though', saith he, 'I judge I have the Spirit of God to guide me according to rule in this matter, yet I have not an especial revelation about it; "This speak I, not the Lord"'. But when he comes in with that for which he hath a special revelation, then, "This the Lord commandeth, not I." So, truly, I will say two things, whereof one is, 'I say, and not the Lord;' and it is only this, that it is my judgment we are all going into the same furnace. Let men please and flatter themselves as they will, crying, 'The church, the church; The temple of the Lord; Peace, peace;' my judgment is, we are all going into the same furnace with all the brass, and tin, and lead, and iron, in the nation, — going into the same furnace. And do I say so *now*? do I think so *now*? Nay, I have been speaking of it to this congregation for some years, that we are all going into the same furnace. But this I can say, 'I speak from the Lord, the Lord speaketh, and not I,' that things are so stated in the rule, so stated in providence, that it is your duty and mine to prepare for the furnace, a fiery furnace, a smoking furnace, that I am afraid God will cast this whole nation into; for, —

First, Neither you nor I can tell what to say as to the sins of the nation of all sorts of persons, — our priests, prophets, princes, people. Nor you nor I can tell what to say unto the deadness and slowness of all sorts of professors, — of me, and you, and of all sorts of professors, — to come to such a reformation as may be preventive of a furnace; nay, to come to such a reformation as may give us faith to plead for an interest in the fining-pot and not in the furnace. I know what the general hopes of men plead and speak. Well, bring forth your reasons, plead them before God this day, if you can, if you have any thing to plead but sovereign grace and mercy.

And (as for) the utter impossibility that appears by any other way to separate the silver from the dross, to separate us from the world, the plague, the fire, have not done it; signs in the heavens above and in the earth beneath have not done it; the sincere preaching of the gospel, though in weakness, hath not done it; entreaties, beggings, exhortations, have not done it; our prayers have not done it: we cleave unto the world still.

I will not insist upon particulars now; I have showed you enough formerly. So that I know nothing that can be a plea why we should not all into the same furnace. And, —

Secondly, God hath called out his workmen to set up a furnace. The workmen that God calls out in the world are not to make the fining-pot,

but men that work in mortar and brick, fit to build a great furnace. And there are all sorts of them; — the Lord help us! God employs his workmen to build the furnace; — some by violence, some by treachery, some by folly; but all prepare a furnace. We may see them at work and hear them working every day, to prepare for this nation a furnace of God's wrath and displeasure.

Now, brethren, this I say, this saith the Lord, when God's workmen are setting up a furnace it is certainly our duty to be building an ark. The persons that were employed about Noah's ark (it is but another kind of allusion) were God's workmen to bring on a destruction that destroyed the old world, the world that repented not at the preaching of Noah. God called out his workmen; but Noah, moved with fear, built an ark. I have observed that the spirits of men do work towards and hearken after every thing that may keep them from fear: generally they do so; and oftentimes most weak and trivial things will put off our fear. But, saith He, "Noah, moved with fear," upon the warning of God that there would come a deluge that would destroy like this furnace, "built an ark." He was moved with fear, and he built an ark. I have often wondered at that word, Ezek. 21: 9-13. God threatens "a sword, a sword sharpened, and also furbished: it is sharpened to make a sore slaughter; it is furbished that it may glitter: should we then make mirth? He hath given it to be furbished, that it may be handled: this sword is sharpened, and it is furbished, to give it into the hand of the slayer. Smite therefore upon thy thigh." Why? "Because it is a trial," saith he, "and what if the sword condemn even the rod?" — all other meaner afflictions? After having spoken such a great and dreadful word of the sword being furbished and given into the hand of the slayer, "It is a trial," saith he. The meaning is this: Here the people themselves had thoughts of a thousand ways of escaping the sword; and that it should not be a trouble, a trial, unto them, they would bear it this way and that way. Truly, I am ashamed of myself and most of the people of God with whom I converse, to see that we have such thoughts; — that when God's sword is furbished, there is not a trial in it, — that we shall be dealt well enough withal. But prepare yourselves; a trial it will be, a trial that will try all your carnal confidences, and consume them. It will try your profession of what sort it is; and if it be found false, will consume it also. It is to try all your graces to the utmost, — all your faith, all your trust, all your self-resignation, all your readiness to leave the things of the world and to part with them. It will be a trial, friends. Think what you will, it will be a trial. "Because it is a trial," saith He. It is strange there should be such stupidity upon us, that when the sword is furbished

and made bright for the slaughter, and given into the hands of the slayer, we should not so much as think that it will be a trial, but make mirth. The reason is this, plainly, Because we have escaped former trials in the plague, and fire, and in the wrath of man. But saith the prophet, "This shall condemn every rod," — go beyond all those rods we have undergone, and despise them. You think it is a rod; but do not mistake; it shall condemn every rod, despise them, and will be a trial. You have had no trial; neither your confidence nor your grace has been tried: but this will be a trial. I do not believe these things are a vain divination.

Then what is our duty, if this be the posture of things with us? Why, that which we are come together for this day; which is to cry to God for mercy, in this day of darkness, of gloominess, this day of anguish, —

1. For the whole nation. Let us pray to God that, if it be his holy will, however he shall deal with the nation, he would call in the workmen that seem to be employed about building the furnaces; for their faces are filled with dread and terror, and it argues dreadful work when God employs such workmen: beg of God to divert them, otherwise to employ them; beg of God to take them off, — that fierce, cruel men may not have the execution of God's judgments upon this poor land, — that God would take us yet into his own hands, — that men whose hearts are like the nethermost millstone, that grind with blood and revenge, may not have the trial of the land.

2. We may hope yet that the decree is not gone forth, and we may beg that God would not use these workmen. Now, if we should beg of God that he would yet cause the furnace to pass away, if we find it coming, and if we find our hearts enlarged to pray, and God bowing down his ear to hear, let us continue to ask further, not only that such and such may not be employed to fire the poor nation, but that God would even cause the furnace to pass away. Abraham began to pray to God: 'O Lord,' saith he, 'if there be fifty righteous in Sodom, wilt thou spare?' 'I will,' saith God, 'if there be fifty.' 'Lord', saith he, 'if there be forty-five, wilt thou spare?' 'I will for forty-five', saith God. 'Yet let me add, suppose there be forty?' 'I will spare for forty's sake.' Abraham found the infinite condescension of God to his prayer, and he asks no more by fives, but by tens: 'Wilt thou if there be thirty, twenty, ten, there?', Faith grew upon the Lord. If we find God answers our supplications for the removal of the workmen that are employed, that God would employ them elsewhere, and we have asked salvation in that, and a disappointment of others in their counsels, and find the Lord coming down, let faith come to ask by tens and tens, to bring it to the lowest degree. The utmost condescension

of grace and mercy that will bear a consistency with the essential holiness and righteousness of God may be drawn out by faith and prayer. Then cry mightily unto the Lord, that, if it be his will, the furnace may depart from the nation.

3. If it be so determined that the furnace must be set up, and that we must all into the furnace, beg of God that we may have the lamp that belongs unto the covenant as well as the furnace. The furnace was all horror and smoke; but the lamp had a light in it. I take it from that of Abraham. When the furnace was a dark smoking furnace, yet there was a lamp, a burning, shining light, that passed between the pieces of the sacrifice. That the dark, smoking furnace may not deprive us of the light of God's countenance in Christ, to support us in it and under it, beg of God that though we go into the furnace, yet we may have the lamp to direct us, to give us light in that horror of darkness, and in the smoking furnace.

Lastly, Who knows but that God may yet, by prayer, by the preaching of the word, by continual warnings, before the day comes, before the decree brings forth, before it be too late, make such a separation (for this is as far as ever I can go), that his people shall be put into the fining-pot, and not into the same furnace? Cry for that! It is your mercy to be in Zion's fining-pot rather than in the consuming furnace.

And, then, tremble to think that there seems to me no dispensation remaining but the oven, but that which shall consume, and leave neither root nor branch.

The substance of all is, brethren, that there is a woeful and a wicked corruption and profaneness of life grown upon the generality of the nation, — that there is such an adherence to the world and the ways of the world among professors, that former means have not separated them from the world (for this separation from the world in outward worship, if it be all, signifies nothing), — that we seem all to be ready, unless God relieve in infinite mercy, to be brought into the same furnace; which is under a testimony of God's displeasure: 'Ye shall know that I have done it in anger, when I have brought you into the same furnace.' It is a great pledge of God's displeasure with us. Yet there is left room for faith and prayer to plead with God in all the particulars mentioned; — to deliver us from the hands of blood-thirsty men; to divert the judgment ('I repented me of the evil,' saith God); yea, to remove the furnace; yea, to make us meet for the fining-pot, or, however, to enjoy the lamp when we are in the furnace, — to enjoy light, direction, guidance, when we are in all confusion of darkness and in the smoking of the furnace.

The Millennium

by Rev. Lachlan MacKenzie

He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.
Psalm 72: 8.

Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee. — Isaiah 60: 9.

It is piously believed by Christians of all denominations that the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. The providence of God, however, has laid many and almost insurmountable difficulties between the promise and the event: one of them is the delay in accomplishing the promise: and the natural slowness of the human heart to believe makes us ready to stagger at the promise through unbelief. Many good men have supposed that the glorious things which were told of the latter days apply only to a future state of happiness; but then, when they examine them attentively, they find that they cannot be meant of Heaven; thus, for instance, they believe that such a promise as this, "for brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver," as meant of the glorious state of the Church, signifies only spiritual things. But if Solomon made silver as plentiful in Jerusalem as the stones, what should hinder us to understand them in the literal meaning? Others again suppose, a the time is at such a distance, that they have no connection with it; that it is much better for them to secure their own happiness than to be meditating upon the happiness of others. But a Christian ought to consider the rendering of such reasonings; for are we not bound to pray for the success of the Gospel, and that the dominions of the Mediator's Kingdom may be enlarged? Have we not promises to that effect, and is it not our duty to plead and believe them? If we are members of the Church, we are to plead for the accomplishment of these general promises: and if these general promises fail, what ground have we to believe that the particular promises we plead respecting ourselves will ever be performed? No Christian should say that he has no connection with the future state of the Church upon earth and the future success of the Gospel.

Will any Christian be willing to lose the half of his own prayers, or will he be willing to think that all the prayers of the Church, from the commencement of Christianity, should fall to the ground? No man will say that these prayers have been answered. The Jews, Mahometans, and Pagans remain still in a state of unbelief. We pray for their conversion; and if any man who does so says that he has no connection with their

conversion, why does he pray for such an event? Nay more, when a person prays and believes, it is natural for him to look after his prayers. We do not pray to a dead God, but to the living God of Israel. The long delay is the cause of such unbelief. But let us remember that the Church was 4000 years praying for the appearance of the Messiah. We have not been praying the half of that time for the conversion of the Jews and the fulness of the Gentiles. If these events were to take place within the space of six or seven years, we would begin earnestly and joyfully to pray, and no man would say he has no connection with them; and yet many who are on the earth will not live till then. Let us consider, however, that a thousand years with the Lord are but as one day. One of the promises we are bound to believe is, "that the Saviour will rule from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." We need not spend time in proving that this Psalm in its utmost meaning cannot be applied to Solomon, as our Lord was the lineal heir of David and Solomon. It is natural to speak of Judea as the centre of his dominions, for the law shall go forth of Zion and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem; and it was said to him, "I will give thee for a light to the Gentiles, and thou mayest be my salvation to the ends of the earth." And as the heavenly Jerusalem is the place of the general assembly and Church of the first born, we believe, likewise, that Jerusalem in Judea shall in the latter days be an emblem of Heaven. It shall be a Heaven upon earth, "shall be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of her God." That these words and other promises to this purpose apply to the Jews when converted to Christianity is clear from this, that they cannot apply to the Gentile Church but in a spiritual way; but when applied to them, the promises answer in a spiritual and temporal point of view. The next chapter obviously points to the Jews, and gives us an account of the great event that precedes their re-establishment in their own land. Their prayer from the 15th verse plainly proves that it is meant of the Jewish Church after their conversion; and if the many promises in the prophecies of Isaiah do not peculiarly belong to the Jews, I do not see how they can be explained. That they belong to the Church is true: but that they have not their full accomplishment till Jews and Gentiles unite, and the Church be complete, is equally true; and when this happens, "Christ will be as a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of His people Israel." We cannot say that this is yet accomplished. When it will the Jewish Church will be peculiarly glorious, "and the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee"; "Thy gates shall be open continually, that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that

their Kings may be brought." Jerusalem, for her local situation, is peculiarly fitted to be the mistress of the new world. It shall be the virgin of Messiah. The Gentile Church shall willingly yield her the superiority: and in order to facilitate the intercourse between the Churches, may we not suppose a communication between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, in order to make a passage shorter for deputies from the remotest parts of Asia to the general assembly of the Universal Church met in Jerusalem? We know that such a scheme has been in contemplation, merely for the purpose of commerce. The advantages of such a communication are obvious. In these days of universal fervour, the jealousy of a single Power would not hinder other Powers from executing a scheme so universally beneficial. (Ninety years after these words were spoken the Suez Canal was built.)

When we consider the great improvements mankind have made in mechanics, we need not doubt but such a scheme will be practicable, however difficult; and as it will be useful in a spiritual and temporal point of view, it is likely the Kingdom of the Messiah shall extend from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea, and by the Red Sea to the ocean, to facilitate the intercourse between the Jewish and the Gentile Church, both in a spiritual and commercial point of view. The Jews are always great traders, but they shall then convert their gain to the promoting the interests of religion and holiness. About 400 years ago who would believe that the Forth and Clyde would be joined together, or that a New World would be discovered? The secular powers shall not then have any separate interest from the interests of religion: as the Gospel is a religion of universal goodwill, they shall join in every undertaking that shall promote such an end. Theirs shall not be little national interests and national prejudices; universal love shall banish all such notions. The spirit of the Church shall be the spirit of the State, and they shall blend their interests to promote the triumphal and spiritual interests of mankind — they shall not have a variety of opinions in religious matters; being carried down by a long and pleasant stream-tide of evangelical truth, they shall join in one opinion. Trade and agriculture shall flourish — they shall have no restraint upon the one, or embargo upon the other. Opinions which in our day would appear fanciful shall then be the opinion of the times. Though they will not have their goods in common, they shall have a common interest. Nations and individuals shall then be influenced by the glory of God, and the temporal as well as the spiritual good of the whole Church. In regard to trade, the question will not then be, what shall be for the interest of such a particular kingdom or country, but what shall be for the good of mankind

in general? The landlords shall not oppress tenants, nor will one neighbour overreach or covet what belongs to another. To form an idea of the reign of the Messiah from sea to sea, let us suppose that all the Kings and great men will be ruled by the spirit of David and Jehosaphat, all the landlords by the spirit of the centurion, and the merchants and traders by the spirit of Matthew after his conversion; and if we suppose the great body of the common people to be actuated by the spirit that was in the primitive Christians, we form a true notion of the Millennium, and we may expect this from the Spirit of God and the power of His grace. He is as able to convert kingdoms and nations as to convert individuals, and He will do so when His own time comes. He shall rule from sea to sea; His hereditary Kingdom of Judah and Israel shall be the centre of His dominions, and to Him shall the gathering of the people be." The Church of Judah shall be so eminent for holiness, and there will be such a downpouring of the Spirit upon them, that the fame of it shall spread far and near; and as the Queen of Sheba came from the utmost corners of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, it is likely that Christians from all parts of the earth shall go to their solemnities, and get such refreshment to their souls as they will not forget all their days. The Spirit shall seal them to the day of redemption, and they shall return to their own country rejoicing, and they shall confess that God was there in truth; and though all nations cannot go up literally to keep the feast of tabernacles, they may live in communion with them truly. "The Isles shall wait upon me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring my sons from far, their silver and gold with them, unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the holy one of Israel, because he hath glorified thee." The Gentiles, in a spiritual sense, as well as Jews, from all corners, may be reckoned her sons, as they shall acknowledge Jerusalem to be the mother of all Churches. And as Jerusalem shall be eminently holy, beyond the most holy Church on earth, it shall be visited by all the nations upon earth; the gates of it shall not be shut day nor night. The nations shall see in the light of it, and bring glory and honour to it. "Instead of brass there shall be gold, and for iron silver." "The Kings of Tarshish and the Isles shall bring presents, the Kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. All Kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall fear him." And how shall they fear him but by submitting to his religion and yielding to his spiritual government? As all nations upon earth shall be actuated by one spirit and one religion and one common interest, we may naturally suppose that they will have one place as the centre of union. Scripture points out Jerusalem as such a place, as she will be a type of Heaven. We may believe that here the General

Assembly of all the Church will meet, and we may believe that all will contribute to make this way by sea and land as easy as possible: therefore, that the Mediterranean and the Red Sea shall be joined for this purpose. He shall likewise “rule from the river to the ends of the earth”. The Euphrates shall not be the utmost boundary of his dominions, but he shall have the utmost parts of the earth for his possessions, and though the Jews shall be his people in a most peculiar manner, the Gentiles shall get a large, free, and full offer of his grace — “Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.” And when all these glorious events take place the earth may rejoice, for the Lord God Almighty shall reign. God alone shall be exalted in that day. The reign of grace shall continue without interruption for a thousand years, and hosannahs and hallelujahs resound from Pole to Pole.

The Trinitarian Bible Society

Extracts from the General Secretary's Report

Mr President, Members and Friends of the Trinitarian Bible Society. In presenting the 161st Annual Report, we would like to acknowledge the Society's duty to ascribe all praise and honour to the Triune God, Who in His matchless grace and infinite wisdom has been pleased to reveal Himself to sinful mankind in the Sacred Scriptures. This Divine Revelation is the glorious Gospel of the Blessed God, the knowledge of which is able to make men wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. The Word of God, futhermore, is the Sword of the Spirit by which the Most High effectually accomplishes the purposes of His Divine Will in the salvation of sinners and the furtherance of His Kingdom here in this world.

In dependence upon the Lord for His gracious provision, enabling and blessing, the Society has, during the last year, continued to seek the glory of God and the salvation of sinners by circulating Protestant or uncorrupted versions of the Word of God among all nations. Whilst the Society has not been immune to the effects of the economic recession faced in the United Kingdom and elsewhere, we acknowledge that the good hand of the Lord has been upon the Society enabling us to supply many thousands of copies of the Holy Scriptures to individuals and Christian workers in different parts of the world. The total quantity of Scriptures distributed during the financial year has not been quite as high as in the previous year but we have much cause to believe that the Scriptures

circulated have been, and will yet be, of great spiritual benefit to the many who have received them.

Circulation

During the last financial year the Society has been instrumental in distributing over 540,000 Bibles, 180,000 New Testaments and approximately 3 million other Scripture items. In addition, over 3 million New Testaments have been distributed (mainly in Brazil) under royalty agreements, making a total of over 6.8 million published items distributed in the year.

Income and Expenditure

In the goodness of the Lord the Society's income during the year amounted to nearly £1.68 million, £350,000 of which came from the gifts and subscriptions of members and friends of the Society in different parts of the world. The Society's expenditure totalled almost £1.71 million, of which the cost of Scriptures sold and granted was £1.14 million, resulting in a deficit at the end of the year of a little over £29,000. On 31st March the value of the Scriptures held by the Society was £869,000.

Scriptures in the English Language

It is the Society's policy only to circulate the Authorised Version of the Bible in English and during the course of the year distribution of Scriptures in the English language have included 162,000 Bibles and 1,800,000 New Testaments and other smaller Scripture items. Sales of the Authorised Version here in the United Kingdom remain remarkably healthy notwithstanding the sustained competition of the modern versions and the considerable expenditure involved in the marketing of these versions. Also, it is encouraging to note that large quantities of the Society's English Scriptures continue to be despatched for circulation in Africa, India and other parts of the English-speaking world.

Scriptures for Eastern Europe

As in the previous few years, the Society has used a considerable proportion of its funds to supply Scriptures in the Russian language for distribution in Russia and other Russian-speaking areas of the former Soviet Union. Distribution has included 274,000 Bibles, 91,000 New Testaments and Psalms and 380,000 other Scripture items. In addition, Bibles in Czech and Hungarian, New Testaments in Polish and "Words of Life" calendars in Romanian, Bulgarian and Hungarian were supplied

to help meet the challenge of the great spiritual need that exists in the countries of Eastern Europe.

Scriptures for the Rest of the World

In addition to the English Scriptures and the Scriptures supplied to Eastern Europe, the Society has supplied copies of the Bible and/or New Testament in Arabic, Dutch, French, Gio, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, Kanarese, Kaowlu, Kisanga, Lisu, Maltese, Portugese, Spanish and Telugu and Gospels and other Scripture items in these and a further 17 languages. The prayers of the Society's supporters are earnestly requested that the translators, revisers and editors of the many translation projects in which the Society has an interest will be granted all needed grace and wisdom faithfully to continue in their work.

The Society's Staff

The Committee takes this opportunity of expressing its thanks to the Society's staff for their untiring labours in the cause of the Gospel. During the year two new members of staff were appointed to the Editorial Department, George and Debra Anderson, who for the previous year had been employed by the Society as Editorial Consultants whilst living in the United States. They arrived in the United Kingdom in July 1991 with their son Daniel, to assume their new responsibilities of overseeing the Editorial Department and the various translation projects in hand. The Society now has a well qualified and very able editorial team which under the blessing of the Lord, will be able to add significantly to the Society's work in the years to come.

The Society's Fellow Helpers

The Committee values the prayerful, financial and practical support of all its many friends and supporters throughout the world and extends its thanks to all who in various ways have helped the Society during the year. The Society is represented internationally through its associated Societies and overseas auxiliaries in Canada, the United States, Brazil, Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands and elsewhere, and in the United Kingdom through its local auxiliaries, supporting churches and by those who address meetings on its behalf. It is the Committee's desire that during the coming years many more of the Lord's people in different parts of the world, especially among the younger generations, will be brought to appreciate the importance of the Society's distinctive position. For the continued expansion of the work more supporters are needed to become

prayerfully involved in promoting the circulation of faithful translations of the Word of God. The Society's thanks are also due to former members of the General Committee of office-bearers of the auxiliaries at home and overseas who through age and for other reasons will not in the future be as actively or publicly engaged in the work as they have been in the past. We pray that the Lord will graciously raise up others to take their place.

“Brethren, pray for us”

We continue to live in a spiritually very needy world, with untold millions around us — both in the United Kingdom and abroad — living in darkness. The god of this world has blinded the minds of so many. Nevertheless, we look forward to the future with confidence, believing the promise of God's Word: “My word . . . shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” Several translation projects are nearing completion (including the Portugese Bible and the Simte Bible) and we would value the continued prayers of our supporters that the final stages of production may be accomplished without undue difficulty. Please also pray that the Lord's blessing will rest upon these copies of the Scriptures as they are distributed.

Considerable expenditure is incurred as each translation project reaches completion, and we trust that the Lord will provide the necessary resources for the future expansion of the work. Although the level of sales continues to be very depressed owing to the worldwide economic recession, we are thankful that our charitable income has been well maintained, and indeed has increased considerably in the first two months of the new financial year. We pray that this support will continue to be maintained, so that the proclamation of the glorious Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ may be furthered by the distribution of His written Word, sinners brought to a personal knowledge of the Saviour, and His people edified and built up in Him. May God thus be pleased to continue His blessings to this Society and His Name shall have all the praise!

Visit to Kenya and Malawi

by Rev. D. B. Macleod

On Monday 3rd August, accompanied by my wife and Mr Donald MacDonald, I set out for a visit to Kenya and Malawi. Rev. A. Ndebele joined us two days later for the Kenyan visit. Although the time was short yet it gave us time to visit several of the stations and deal with some pressing

problems. It also gave an opportunity to assess the situation in both countries.

In Kenya they look forward to having Mr and Mrs MacDonald settled among them and we are sure they will get a warm welcome when they go to start work in the Kisii Province of the country. There is a population in that part of the country of 2 or 3 millions who speak the Kisii language. That there is much work to be done is known to all who have visited the Mission there. Not only have preaching stations been established but also schools have been erected in several places. In these schools several hundred pupils receive primary education and are taught Scripture and Catechism. The schools and churches have been erected, mostly by the labour of the people, but also with some assistance from the Church at home. Before long, with the arrival of a doctor, medical work will begin at the main station at Sengera, and at clinics in other places. Above everything else it is the gospel that is needed most of all. Those who are at present endeavouring to minister to the spiritual needs of their fellow-countrymen have need themselves of further instruction in the things of God. For this work ministers of the gospel are needed in both lands. May we plead for such to be raised up and sent forth. It may seem impossible to us in our present situation as a Church, but with God nothing shall be impossible.

It is heartening to see the efforts that have been made by the people in both countries to build churches and schools. In Malawi we again visited the Mozambique refugee camp where a Free Presbyterian Church was erected and services begun some years ago. There we discovered that some of the refugees had moved to another camp a long distance away. We were able to visit them and found a second Free Presbyterian Church erected there among the refugees. This had been done solely by their own efforts. To give some idea of the extensiveness of the work in Malawi the stations furthest apart are more than six hours drive from each other. The number of the people attending Free Presbyterian places of worship amount to 2000. Mr Ephraim Tembo who was recently received as a student of the Church, has no less than 12 places to look after and the total number of people under his care amount to 1,111. Truly the harvest is great but the labourers are few.

After four weeks of intensive work and almost constant travelling we left Nairobi on the morning of the 28th August and returned to Edinburgh that evening. We left Mr Donald MacDonald in Nairobi ready to begin his language study. His wife was to join him before the end of August. We have reason to acknowledge the Lord's goodness to us during the time

we spent in Africa. It is our prayer and desire that the Lord will be pleased to bless the work in both countries and that labourers will be raised up by the Lord to work in that part of His vineyard.

Mission News

Rev and Mrs D. B. MacLeod have arrived back to a warm welcome in Edinburgh, after Mr MacLeod's period of deputation work in Kenya and Malawi. No doubt an official report will be given by Mr MacLeod, but it has been interesting to hear of the first impressions made on Mr Donald MacDonald, our new missionary, as they flew towards Kenya. I quote the following:—

“Our flight was long and tiring, but rather exciting. I looked out of the window as tea was being served, and realised that we were passing over the Sahara Desert. Through the clouds I could see the orange colour of the sand a great distance below. I had left a wet East Kilbride that morning and I was now passing over that huge expanse of parched desert that we have all heard so much about. Even at the speed we were doing it took hours to pass over it. That was my first glimpse of Africa and I cannot tell you how exciting it was, and my thoughts began to turn to the people I was going to see and to work amongst.

The plane was packed with tourists, businessmen, and the biggest collection of missionaries I have ever seen. There were all types there: Presbyterians, Anglicans, Baptists, Methodists, Pentecostals, Mennonites, and of course, large numbers of Roman Catholics: Americans, French, German, Dutch, English and among them all three Free Presbyterians from Scotland. Sadly, although there were so many, it was hard to believe that the majority were going out with the true Gospel, although I am sure some were, and many were going out with the false doctrines of Rome. In the face of this, how pressing is the need for true believers to go forth into all the world with the good news of salvation, not by works which so many preach, but by free and sovereign grace.

I would ask for the prayers of all the friends in all parts of the world, that our efforts would be blessed, and that the Lord would pave the way for us, as our God and guide, and that He would be pleased to send forth His Spirit to work mightily here, and in all the world. Pray also for labourers sent by Himself, for the fields are already white to harvest. Many souls are dying every day in all countries, going out into darkness, into eternal night, never having heard of a Saviour who came to seek and to

save the lost. This should move us to do what we can for those who are still on Mercy's ground."

While the Rev. and Mrs D. B. MacLeod and Donald MacDonald went on to Malawi after completing their work in Kenya the Rev. A. B. Ndebele, who had been with them in Kenya, returned to Zimbabwe. We sympathise with Rev. and Mrs Ndebele in the loss they have suffered in the recent death of a daughter.

The Theological Conference took place in Bulawayo during August. There was not as many teachers present as usual, as they were gathering statistics for the Census, by Government orders, but there was quite a large contingent from New Canaan for the first time, and everyone was pleased. The following papers were read:— "Repentance unto Life" by the Rev. P. Mzamo; "Discipline" by the Rev. A. B. Ndebele; "Singing in the Church" by Mr Neil Murray; "Christian Reading" by Mr James Mpofu, Technical Teacher at the John Tallach School; "It is a Matter of Opinion" Discussion. It proved to be an interesting and successful Conference.

In a letter from Miss Marion Graham she says there is food to be had for which all are thankful, but prices have soared. A bag of maize which cost 20 dollars last September costs 99 dollars at present. A loaf of bread which previously cost 60 cents now costs one dollar 63 cents. People used to grow all they required in the way of food, with the exception of tea and sugar, but now they have to buy everything. School fees have naturally had to be raised, which makes another problem for anxious parents.

With regard to the boarding school Miss Graham says they do not really know how much water they have, but they will ration strictly and pray that the Lord will provide enough until the pupils go home and the time for the rains comes.

Mrs Neil Murray has arrived in Edinburgh to spend some time with her mother, Mrs Turner who has been ill. Miss Etta MacLennan hopes to come to Scotland for three months that is, from October until January. We look forward to seeing her, DV. J.N.

Notes and Comments

Muslim Schools

There are already twenty-one private Islamic schools in this country. They do not receive State aid. However, pressure is being brought to bear on the Government by the Muslim Community to give them voluntary aided status. A Muslim primary school in North London has made

application for State Aid and this is being considered by Government ministers. There are 4000 voluntary schools, Anglican, Roman Catholic, Methodist and Jewish, which receive State Aid, in England and Wales. It is to be hoped that the Government will stand firm and not extend this concession any further. The effect would be to increase the number of Islamic schools and so divide the community even further. Muslim leaders contend that the teaching of moral values has disappeared from state schools. It is sad to think that their contention is to a large extent correct but the inculcation of Islamic moral values is not the answer to the problem. Only the restoration of the teaching of Christian moral values in our schools will bring the nation to a better outlook.

The Plague of AIDS

The Government has campaigned widely to try to prevent the spread of AIDS. Yet in all the publicity it has given to the danger of AIDS it has failed to make plain that "the basic problem is promiscuity, and more specifically homosexual promiscuity", as pointed out in July in a leader in the Daily Express. The leader went on to state: "The White Paper published by Health Secretary Virginia Bottomley shows that the Government and its health advisers are still shying away from bluntly making this last point (i.e. homosexual promiscuity). Instead it is left to consultants in the field, presumably less fearful of offending the homosexual lobby." The leader concluded that nothing can decrease the incidence of AIDS and other sexual diseases so much as fidelity, restraint and good old-fashioned morality. With this conclusion we wholeheartedly agree. In addition, the statute on the Law Book of the land legalising sodomy should be repealed and this evil made a criminal offence again.

Murders in Strathclyde

Forty-seven murders took place in the Strathclyde Region in the first six months of this year, more than in the whole of 1990, and double the number for the same period in 1991. The removal of the death penalty many years ago has produced higher and higher murder figures. Before that time, the number of murders over the whole nation for one year was in single figures. Much is made of instances of individuals being executed wrongly. We know, however, that when the death penalty was in operation every effort was made to prevent such a thing happening by requiring that the evidence against them was overwhelming. There is little thought given in our day to the multitude of victims of murder or of the Biblical requirement that "whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed". Only a return to Scriptural principles will wipe away the guilt of the nation in permitting the shedding of innocent blood.

The Lord Chancellor and R.C. Judges

Peterborough in the Daily Telegraph has commented on the Lord Chancellor's invitation to Roman Catholic Judges to the traditional Westminster Abbey service at the start of the legal year in October, and to the Lord Chancellor's Breakfast held after the service. With Cardinal Hume's approval the R.C. Judges will attend the service, holding their own Red Mass the previous day. A spokesman said the service would remain a Church of England affair. A Protestant spokesman stated that any attempt to accommodate the Roman Catholics by changing the service would be quite wrong. He also commented that the danger with ecumenical services is that they tend to be reciprocated. Well it would be for the R.C. Judges, and for the other Judges as well, if they heard a sound exposition of Scriptural doctrine. We fear that in the present climate of the Church of England, they will hear little, if anything, that will offend or enlighten them.

Church Notes

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Canadian: At Inverness on 5th October at 9 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.

Skye: At Portree on 27th October at 11 a.m.

Northern: At Dingwall on 10th November at 2 p.m.

Southern: At Glasgow on 17th November at 6 p.m.

Committee Meetings (D.V.)

The Church Committee Meetings will be held in Inverness on Tuesday 6th October. The list appeared in the September issue.

Correction

In the table of Congregational Contributions for 1991, published in July, an entry for Sustentation Fund of £1,147.00 should be inserted against Kyle/Plockton congregation.

R. A. Campbell, General Treasurer.

Works of John Owen

Readers may take note that the volume of Owen's Works, Volume XVIII, Gould Edition, which was reviewed in the September Magazine is numbered Volume XVII in the Banner of Truth edition.

Induction of the Rev. Neil M. Ross, B.A., to the Dingwall and Beaully Congregation

On Tuesday, 11th August, 1992, the Northern Presbytery met in Dingwall Free Presbyterian Church for the induction of the Rev. Neil MacKenzie Ross to the pastoral charge of the Dingwall and Beaully congregation. A large congregation from various parts of the mainland and islands filled the Church to capacity. Ministers present from other Presbyteries of the Church were associated with the Presbytery, namely, the Revs Fraser Macdonald, Angus Mackay, John MacDonald, Donald A. Ross, James R. Tallach, George G. Hutton, and Kenneth D. Macleod. The Moderator, the Rev. John L. Goldby, conducted public worship, preaching an informative and earnest sermon from Numbers, chapter 17, verse 8, concerning the budding of Aaron's rod.

Public worship being ended, the Clerk read the Narrative of the proceedings in the Call to Mr Ross. The Moderator addressed to Mr Ross the questions appointed to be put to Ministers on their induction to a pastoral charge, and he, having returned satisfactory answers to the same, signed the Formula in the presence of the Congregation. The Moderator engaged in solemn prayer and did, in the name of the Presbytery, and by the authority of the Divine Head of the Church, induct Mr Ross as Minister of the pastoral charge of the Dingwall and Beaully Congregation. Thereafter the Moderator and members of the Court gave Mr Ross the right hand of fellowship.

Thereafter Mr Ross was suitably addressed by the Rev. Angus F. MacKay and the Congregation by the Rev. Donald M. Boyd. The Clerk read letters from the Rev. Donald B. Macleod, the former minister of the Congregation who was deputizing in Kenya, and the Rev. Donald MacLean, and he conveyed the good wishes of the Rev. Lachlan MacLeod. The following ministers conveyed the good wishes of their Presbyteries — the Rev. Angus Mackay from the Western Presbytery, the Rev. Fraser Macdonald from the Skye Presbytery, and the Rev. John Macdonald from the Outer Isles Presbytery. After the benediction, the Congregation made a plentiful provision of tea and refreshments available in the Dingwall Primary School for the many visitors.

Mr Ross is a native of the Black Isle and was educated in Ferintosh School and Dingwall Academy. Before gaining his B.A. degree and entering the ministry, he was in local government as an architectural technician. As well as being Convener of the Sabbath Observance Committee, Mr Ross is the Editor of *The Young People's Magazine*, and as Clerk of the

Welfare of Youth Committee he is responsible for organising the Youth Conference.

The Call was signed by 18 Communicants and the Concurrence in the Call by 50 adherents. The Congregation, which numbers more than one hundred people including children, is greatly favoured in obtaining an active pastor and it is the Presbytery's hope and prayer that he will be kept and that his ministry will be greatly blessed among them.

Rev. D. M. Boyd
Clerk of Presbytery

Ingwenya Mission Appeal

WANTED URGENTLY

Teachers for John Tallach Secondary School

Qualifications: University degree with teaching subjects suitable for school level, and/or Teacher Training Diploma.

Contract: 2 years.

Mission teachers from overseas **may** be asked to (1) take Bible and/or English as well as their own subjects. (2) Assist with extra-mural activities, e.g. Sabbath School, dispensary.

Reasonable accommodation with water and electricity is provided.

Applicants should apply as soon as possible. It takes 3-6 months to get a work permit.

London Communion Services

The services at the London Communion are as follows (D.V.):— Thursday, 15th October 7 p.m.; Friday, 16th October, 7 p.m.; Saturday, 17th October, 3 p.m. and 5.30 p.m. (Prayer Meeting); Sabbath, 18th October, 11 a.m. and 6.30 p.m.; Monday, 19th October, 7 p.m. The Interim-Moderator Rev. L. MacLeod will be assisted by Rev. J. Goldby.

Acknowledgement of Donations

The General Treasurer, Mr Rod Campbell, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:—

Jewish and Foreign Mission Fund: Anon., £20 for help for Mission Work.

African Famine Relief: Miss J. N. £30; Friends of Shialdaig, Torridon and London £800.

Eastern Europe Fund: J.W.S., Dearness £10; Anon., £10; Friend, Raasay £200.

Italian Mission: L.S., London £169; Collection, Fornaci di Barga £150.

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

Bonar Bridge: N.M., Lairg £40 for Sust. Fd.

Bracadale-Strath: Friend, Raasay £5, where most needed per Rev. G. G. H.; Inverness Postmark £20 for Comm. Exps. per J.C.; C.F. £20 for Congr. Fd.

Breasclete: Anon., £3 for Sust. Fd.; Anon., £40 for Collections; Friend of the Cause £10 for Sust. Fd. and £10 for Home Mission; P. J. MacL. £50 for Sust. Fd.

Daviot-Stratherrick-Tomatin: A Friend, Glasgow £10 for Stratherrick Comm. Exps.

Glasgow (St. Jude's): Friend, Raasay £5 for Congr. Fd per Rev. D. M.; Anon., £10; Matt. 6: 3 (2 donations) £25; J.C. £30, all for Bus. Fd.; Anon., £5 for Sust. Fd.; Anon., £40 for African Famine Relief; Anon., £10 for New Caanan mission; Anon., £10; Anon., £10; Anon., £20; Anon., £20; Anon., £40, all for Foreign Miss. Fd.; Anon., £60; Anon., £200; Interested £60, all for Eastern Europe Fund; B.R. £10 for Sponsor a Blind Child.

Glendale: Miss J. F. £1500 for Door Coll. per Rev. G.G.H.; Anon., £200 for Comm. Exps. (envelope in plate); Anon., £100 for Comm. Exps. (envelope in plate).

Greenock: Lochcarron Friend £20; Lochcarron Friend, £10, both per Rev. L. MacLeod.

Inverness: Anon., £20; Anon., £30; Anon., £20; Anon., £45, all for Sust. Fd.; Anon., £20; Anon., £10 for Comm. Exps. — all per envelopes in plate.

North Uist: Anon., £150; Anon., £50; Glasgow Friend £50, all for Car Fd.

Portree: J.N.D. £100, where most needed; Anon., £60 wherever needed; Anon., £40 for Bus. Fd.; Anon., £15; Anon., £8.50; Anon., £8; Anon., £15; Anon., £7, all for Door Coll.; J.M.M. £10 for Comm. Exps.; Mrs D. N. £20 for Door Coll.; Two Friends £20 for Sust. Fd, last two per S.Y.M.

Raasay: Portree Friend £7 for Comm. Exps; A Friend of the Cause £10 for Sust. Fd. per M. D. Mackay; Anon., Inverarish £25; Envelope in plate £20; Wellwisher, Inverarish, £20; Envelope in plate £5, last four for Car Fd.

Shialdaig: Mr and Mrs R. C. £50, where most needed per D. MacCuish; Expenses Refunder £15; Anon., £10 for Sust. Fd.

Staffin: Envelope in plate £70 for Door Coll.

Stornoway: Miss K. A. Macleod, The Cottage, Callanish £40 for Sust. Fd.; Anon., £50 (five donations of £10) for Sabbath School.