

THE
Free Presbyterian Magazine
 AND
 MONTHLY RECORD

(Issued by a Committee of the Free Presbyterian Synod.)

"Thou hast given a banner to them that fear Thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth."—Ps. ix. 4.

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“Salvation is of the Lord.”

THESE words occur in one of the most remarkable prayers recorded in the Old Testament—the prayer of Jonah in the fish's belly (Jonah ii. 9). It was the cry of one that was in more senses than one in deep waters to Jehovah. It was its affliction that wrung from him the cry that reached Jehovah's ears and to which He gave a speedy answer. Jonah has disobeyed his God and his trouble came upon him for his disobedience. The prayer, as left on record by the Holy Spirit, reveals the desperate plight of the prophet. He went down to the mountains, the earth with her bars was about him for ever. Hope was almost gone but in his extremity he would look again toward His holy temple where Jehovah promised to meet His people over the mercy-seat. When his soul fainted within him he remembered Jehovah, the God of salvation and his cry came in unto God into His holy Temple. The words in the primary sense as used by Jonah describe his personal experience and the acknowledgment that “salvation is of the Lord,” as used in the prayer, has reference to Jonah's extraordinary deliverance out of the depths from which he cried to his God but it is not straining the words beyond what they can bear if we consider the words as the experience of many a sinner who was taken out of greater depths than those to which Jonah sank and whose deliverance was a greater salvation than that of Jonah's. Let us briefly notice, (1) Jonah's desperate condition; (2) His cry of distress; (3) His wonderful deliverance, and (4) His acknowledgment that it was from the Lord.

We are told that he went down to the bottom of the waters—these were not shallow waters out of which by some effort of his own he might save himself. Into these depths there was no outstretched human arm that could reach, no human could see his desperate plight and no human ear to hear his cry. What was he to do? Well, he did the very thing he ought to have done. He cried to Jehovah, the God of salvation—the God whose arm could reach him, whose eye could see him and whose ear could hear his cry. Of old, those who found themselves in great trouble were counselled to call upon God in the day of trouble and the assurance was given them that He would answer them and they on their part would glorify God. It is not only that Jonah was in great depths but he felt himself as in a prison house with no prospect as far as human hope was concerned from which he could not get out—the earth with her bars was about him.

His state was hopeless as far as human deliverance was concerned—but not so far as divine power was concerned—for out of these depths and out of that prison house Jonah was to be taken by a Hand that is strong in might and which has to its credit the deliverance of a multitude which no man can number. Is it, therefore, any wonder that Jonah was forced to acknowledge that his deliverance or salvation was of the Lord.

In the greater salvation which is so often referred to in Scripture, there is surely more reason, if we may put it this way, that every saved sinner may assuredly say that salvation is of the Lord. In the planning of this salvation He had no counsellor, in its carrying-out there was none of the people with Him. In its application, human power had no part or lot—it was the work of the divine Spirit and where is the saved sinner who ever looked into the depths from which he was taken and looked at the prison house in which he was held will ever take credit to himself that his salvation is due to his own special efforts or the efforts of his fellow-men. Surely he will ungrudgingly place the crown of this salvation on Christ's head, who is worthy to wear it. None of the ransomed throng when they sing the song that has no ending will ever mar the melody of that song by a jarring note. All the glory will be given to the Lamb that redeemed them and washed them in His own blood. How great were the depths from which the ransomed were delivered, none but the One who saved them can tell. We get a faint impression of what it must have been from the language of the sweet Psalmist of Israel, who was a prophet, when he says in such solemn words: "Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink; let me be delivered from them that hate me and out of the deep waters. Let not the water-flood overflow me neither let the deep swallow me up and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me" (Psalm lxi. 1-5).

When this song of the ransomed will be sung by thousand times ten thousands and thousands of thousands, what a noble song it will be. May it be the happy lot of the writer and his readers to be numbered among those who can truthfully say: "Salvation is of the Lord," for they shall stand among the ransomed and sing the song they sing!

Notes of a Sermon.

Preached by the late Rev. M. GILLIES, Stornoway, at Dingwall, on Friday, 5th November, 1937 (Communion).

"The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned. The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting."—(Isaiah chap. l. v. 4, 5 and 6.)

In endeavouring to consider these words let us notice three things:—

I. The person who is the concern of the Lord Jehovah, a person upon whom His eyes are, and to whom His heart goes out, and the person is him that is weary, whoever he is. He is the object of the Lord's concern.

II. Let us notice what the Lord Jehovah was providing for this person, and what the Lord Jehovah was providing for this person was One that would speak a word in season to him—One that would just come and touch his grief, to meet his grief and to give him ease and comfort in his grief. The Lord Jehovah would have One that would speak a word in season, One with the tongue of the learned, or, as the word could be translated, One with the tongue of a disciple. One that has been taught Himself, and in that way He is able to speak this word in season to him that is weary.

III. The Person whom the Lord Jehovah found. He says: "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary; he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned. The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting."

First, there is an individual brought before us here and the Holy Ghost declares that he is the concern, in love, and in mercy, and in kindness, and in pity, and in grace, of the Lord Jehovah. The eyes of the Lord are upon him for good. The eye of the Lord is on him in loving kindness and in tender mercies. The Lord declares in many places of the Word that there are many individuals in whom He has no delight—in the 10th chapter of Hebrews: "but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." He has no delight in man's legs, nor in horses' strength. The Lord has no delight in the supposed strength of the creature. He has no delight in the supposed self-sufficiency of the creature—no delight in him that goes on frowardly in the way of his own heart. "Surely God shall wound the head of those that are his foes, the hairy scalp of him that still on in his trespass goes." He says: "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus; Thou hast chastised me and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God." The Lord says: "Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him, I will surely have mercy upon him." That is the person in whom God delights. He says: "Surely I will have mercy on him," and that is the person that we have brought before us here—he that is weary and a sinner has good right to be weary. There is no sinner on the face of the earth that has not got every reason to be weary, but they are not weary. It says further on in this prophecy—"Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way; yet saidst thou not, there is no hope." The way of the sinner is a hard way, a great way, yes, it is an unspeakably difficult way, it is an impossible way. He will not get on with it. How great is the way of the sinner? It is as great as this—he walks in opposition to the moral government and to the gracious government of God. There is not a sinner that does not make that his way. He is going to walk in open defiance to the moral government of Jehovah, and to the gracious saving government of God. That is a great way. No wonder although the sinner is weary in it, and yet he pursues in it. He does not realise from what his weariness comes. He does not realise where the dissatisfaction really is. He is blinded by Satan and his own wicked heart. Oh my friends, how terribly great, how

impossibly great in defiance is the way of the sinner! That is the path upon which every Adam's child walks as he is by nature. He walks in this terrible way of opposition to God. God says: "Thou shalt not," and the sinner just tramples that under his feet. Then as to God's gracious government, this is the way of salvation. It is the way by which you can escape hell, and be delivered from your sinnership, from all the miseries that you have brought upon yourself, and the sinner just tramples it under his feet and walks contrary to God, morally and evangelically. He is wearied in it. But now I come to speak about this person—who is he? He is the person here spoken of—he is one that sees that all is vanity, and he has given up the ghost regarding the way in which he walked and he has become so wearied of the greatness of his way that he has said: "There is no hope and the life that I am leading is going straight to hell. Yes, I am going straight to the bottomless pit." The end of these things is death. Yes, it is because the Holy Spirit has made the Word effectual. It is quite easy, in a way anyway, for one to know whether the Word is effectual in his case or not. You see, as long as a sinner can contradict the Most High and just ignore God's precepts, he need not think that the Word is effectual. The Word is effectual in the day that the sinner stops. See how effectual the Lord Jesus' Word was to Saul of Tarsus. He said: "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks," and that meant that it was impossible for him. He would make nothing of it but ruin himself for eternity. The weary is one who has said that there is no hope regarding how he lived since he was born into this world—without God and Christ. That man will be a weary man who sees that he has only earned the wages of sin which is death, and that he has brought himself by sin under the dreadful displeasure of God. Ah, friends, it is a mercy from heaven when a sinner comes to see this, that if he goes on as he is going that he shall be lost as sure as Satan, whatever kind of life he is living. Every godless, graceless life is of that nature. If the sinner continues in it he must be lost. But I notice secondly about him that is weary, that a sense of his great sinfulness makes him weary. When the Spirit of God convinces one of his sin and of his misery he becomes weary. That is a terrible burden: "Because gone up above mine head my great transgressions be, and as a weighty burden they too heavy are for me." That is a weary, weary soul. Ah, friends, there is no burden so heavy as sin. How it crushed the humanity of the Second Person of the adorable Trinity when the weight of sin was put on Him! How it crushed Him when it caused His body to be sweating blood in the garden of Gethsemane! There is no burden so heavy as the burden of guilt and sin when that lies upon the conscience of man, when the understanding is opened to receive (as we were hearing already today), the light of God's truth regarding man's relation to God, man's sinnership, man under the law. What a burden of guilt comes to light upon the soul and how the conscience crushed under that burden declares that he is a lost creature, a cursed creature, a creature upon whom the wrath of God must abide for ever and ever. That is a weary soul—a soul with a burden of sin on it, that will take the soul down to Tophet. That is a weary soul, and see you, not only sin as to its condemning power but sin as to its defilement. Oh how weary the soul of man comes to be under a knowledge, under a personal experience of the defilement of sin. How it has defiled all the faculties

and how man is polluted in the very well-springs of his nature and in all his faculties by sinning against God, and how not only is the creature under the curse, but he is become loathsome—become altogether separate from everything of the nature of holiness and purity, and become defiled and polluted, and that by his own sin. That will weary one. But I notice this, that the weakness, the impotency of a sinner under a sense of his sin and misery causes him to be weary. You see we can do nothing to remove our guilt or to cleanse ourselves from sin. We can sin and commit plenty of it, but oh, friends, there is the guilt and there is the defilement attached to the guilt of sin, and we cannot move a hair to remove that guilt. We cannot do the least to remove the least of the least of the defilement of sin. We are utterly undone and ruined in the matter of sin as to its penalty and pollution. What we need is a Saviour. Our own condition is an utterly undone condition, and that will make one weary. Oh how weary the soul of man will find itself to be when it is confronted with the consequences of the fall in Adam and with one's own actual transgressions, and that he cannot in the slightest degree remove the awful consequences or meet with them in any way to take them away. He cannot do the slightest to remove sin as to its penalty or pollution. That is a weary soul. Nor change his misery into joy, but the Lord can do it—the creature can never do it. His cry is: "Thou art angry with me," and it is righteous that the Lord should be angry with one, but in the matter of the anger being turned away and comfort given in the place of misery, that is impossible to the creature—he has nothing but weariness and vexation of spirit, and utter helplessness so far as he himself is concerned. But then again, this makes one weary: "Have I got an interest in Christ? Will I have an interest in Him?" Doubts and fears wear out the soul, make it weary: "Will grace be bestowed on me?" "Turn thou me," said Ephraim, "and I shall be turned." The difficulties of the creature, as it is confronted even with God's provision in grace; his condition as it is confronted with the fullness of the gospel, weary him out. Then there is the condition of a soul in whom faith hath been wrought. There is weariness of soul here: "Will I get Christ or have I got Him?" The sinner, confronted with a provision which is fitted to meet with his need and ease as a sinner, but whose soul is clouded with doubts and fears, temptations, darknesses and many unpromising personal experiences, and doubts and fears even regarding his interest in Christ, is weary and faint. Then there are the many sorrows—"The heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with its joy." This is good news indeed that such a miserable creature is the concern of the Lord Jehovah. It is good news indeed that He from His high throne looks down on the earth—He views from heaven on high to hear the prisoner groaning and to free him that is doomed to die. That is good news. He looks down but He has no delight in the giddy crowd. He has no delight in the worshippers of mammon, nor in those that spend their time giving ease and comfort to their fallen nature, but He looks down from His high throne in heaven to listen to the poor sinner that is groaning for his sins and for his misery, and for his inability, for his fear that he shall come short of the grace of God, and that he shall not be found in Christ and without his own righteousness. His bowels are moved for such a person, and He says: "Surely, I will have mercy upon him."

There is no creature under heaven that is more afraid that God never loves him, and never looks down upon him, than this person. You find Zion saying: "The Lord hath forsaken me and my Lord hath forgotten me," which is the very opposite to the truth. You see, we are very apt to gauge everything according to our own miserable standard, and because we *feel* in a certain way, we consider that that is to be the criterion—the standard is what we think when saying that the Lord had forsaken her, and her Lord had forgotten her, when the very opposite was the truth. "Can a woman forget her suckling child that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me." You are weary of sin and the devil and an evil heart, and your distance from Christ, and with all your fears and doubts you are commanded by the Word of God to exercise faith on this truth that your condition is the concern of the Lord Jehovah, in His love and in His pity and in His kindness. That is what you are called upon to believe—exercise faith upon that instead of giving place to unbelief, that He has forsaken you and forgotten you, and that it looks very like it that you do not belong to the children at all. Instead of giving place to unbelief, you are called upon by the revelation given of Himself in His love to the Church, to believe that your condition is one which God makes His chief concern to relieve in the world.

We come in the second place to notice what the Lord Jehovah would provide for this weary soul, and what He has provided for him. Well, we said already that He was providing this for the weary soul—One that would have the tongue of the learned—One that would have the disciple's tongue, so that He would know how to speak a word in season to this poor soul that is weary. He would provide such a Comforter as that—not a miserable comforter, but a reasonable Comforter, a real Friend in need, a real Brother, that would love at all times, a real Friend that would love at all times, and a real Brother that would be born for adversity. A Brother is born for adversity who is to meet the need of the poor, weary, tempted, tried soul. He is born for that. The Lord God was providing One with the tongue of the learned so that such a One would speak in season to him that is weary. Yes. You find most people think that it is the easiest thing in the world to comfort the distressed. Yes, most people think that. Some people lay themselves out to comfort the distressed. The Lord Himself provides such, but it is not everyone that can comfort the distressed.

You see, you may have the best intentions out, and you may, with your best intentions endeavour to comfort someone in distress, and perhaps your comfort is only galling to them—only pouring vinegar on an open sore. Say that there was a family there bereaved of a dearly loved one, I might go to that home and with a good will endeavour to comfort them in their sore bereavement, and I might just be pouring vitriol into their hearts through my ignorance and inexperience. It takes a real comforter to comfort him that is weary. You see, in connection with the Gospel, the great majority of people think it is an easy matter to preach the Gospel, that it is an easy matter to deal with souls. Yes, it is an easy matter to ruin souls. There has been plenty of that work done. These revivals that men get up, it is to be feared that terrible havoc has been made upon

the souls of men, and that by those, who according to their own light wanted to do good, but instead of doing good, through their inexperience they are doing evil. Oh friends, it is another matter altogether to deal with souls on the way to eternity. It is no easy matter to deal with a weary soul—a soul that has wearied itself out by walking contrary to God morally and also graciously, walking contrary to God in His moral government and in His gracious government. It is another thing altogether to deal with such a soul. It is not every novice, as the Apostle said to Timothy—"Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil." The men that the Lord used were men that realised their weakness in some measure, and felt the greatness of the work—"Who is sufficient for these things." These were the men whom God used, not the man that would go out and do wonders. The only wonders they would do is harm unless the Lord accompanied them. Say, that there was a person in Dingwall who took ill and was rushed to hospital to-night and would think of allowing a rustic from the country come and operate on him—men would say: "That man is finished if the rustic will be allowed to touch him." It is a solemn thing to deal with souls on the way to eternity, and it is a most solemn thing to deal with a soul whom the Holy Ghost has brought alive and quickened to his sense of his need of a Saviour. Oh how solemn it is! How essential it is that one be taught himself in order to deal with such a creature. Oh friends, man is quite insufficient, and that in the affairs of the soul and eternity—man apart from the grace of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He is quite insufficient to meet the need of the weary soul. It is not so simple a matter as some think to deal with souls for eternity, and it is not so easy as some think to take the lambs and the sheep of Christ out of the ditches and out of the hedges in which they are entangled. It is not every novice that can do that. It is just the Holy Spirit using the instrumentality of a messenger to deliver God's people out of the snares of the devil, and out of their doubts and their fears. It is not every novice that will strengthen the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees, and say to him that is of a feeble heart: "Be strong, fear not." No. But ah, dear friends, this work is beyond the skill of man, and especially of the man who thinks he can do something, but the Lord Jehovah will not leave the weary soul without a word in season. He will see to it that the weary soul will get a word in season—a word that will just fit into his case and that will be the means of deliverance so that the weak will say: "I am strong."

That is the will of Jehovah, that He shall provide One with the tongue of the learned, or the tongue of a disciple that will know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary. It is His will to provide such a One, and He has provided One who is pre-eminent in this, and who speaks here, and it is through the grace of the One who speaks here that any of His sent messengers or people have the tongue of a disciple to speak a word in season. It is through the pre-eminence of Christ that His people will also be used for this very purpose. Why, dear friends, are the public means of grace set up? Why have we communion seasons? It is for this, that the Lord Jesus, through His sent messengers, and through His people, might with the tongue of the learned—of a disciple—speak a word in season to the weary soul, and many a weary soul got in the

means of grace a word in season—came in, may be, to the public means in bonds and fetters, and went out rejoicing. Yes, the Lord set up the means for that very purpose, in order to strengthen the heart of the weary. He will satiate the weary soul.

But now I come in the last place to notice the Person whom the Lord has provided for this purpose. He has the tongue of the learned that He might know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary. Oh, friends, He who speaks here is the Messiah Himself, the Son of God. Yes, the Lord Jesus, the Saviour of sinners. It is He who speaks here. He who is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His Person; who has the same glory and power as the Father. Yes, "I and the Father are one," He says. He is the Person who speaks here, and is set before us as the Father's Servant in this wonderful prophecy and in these chapters. The Son of God and co-equal with the Father—He became the Father's servant, and that for the salvation of the Church, and although He is God yet He appears before us here as the servant, and although He knows all things as God, He is here as the Father's Servant, in obedience to the Father. He is further brought before us here as receiving a word from the Father's mouth, and conveying it in this way to the weary soul. It is a mystery, of course. We must not allow our minds to think that God the Father spoke to God the Son as an earthly father may give knowledge to an earthly son. We must not allow our minds work like that. We have here the mystery of the Covenant of Grace. We have here the Father taking the position of giving to the Son the message that the Son will give to the weary soul, and you find Him speak like that in the days of His flesh: "I can of mine own self do nothing." He is the Son, co-equal with the Father, but He is the servant and takes up that place: "Behold my servant." He says here that the Lord gave Him the tongue of the learned or the tongue of a disciple. He gave Him this—that He would receive doctrine, words, and a message, and the Lord opened His ear to hear as the learned. Oh, dear friends, we have here another view of the love of the Father to the Church, and the love of the Son to the Church, when the Father is brought before us as opening the ear of His Son to give a message in love to the poor soul down in the world, opening His ear and putting words into His mouth. The authoritative message is put into His mouth. The tongue of the learned is given to Him so that He might give His Father's message to the weary soul—yes, what He learned of the Father that He might give it to them down in the world. There is mystery here but there is grace here. What infinite grace is beneath, and above, and on every side of this—how that the Lord God opened the ear of His Son and gave to Him the tongue of the learned so that He would speak a word in season to the weary soul, and there is not one of them to whom He does not give His Father's word.

What did the poor man get that had the palsy, and was carried to the Saviour in the days of His flesh? He got the Father's word by the mouth of Christ: "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." Yes, the word that the Father gave to the Son as His servant to give to the weary soul, and the weary soul got that word, and that is what you get in the day of your weariness, when you had nothing but your sinfulness and

your unworthiness, and your inability—when you had no faith or repentance, or new obedience, or anything that was right—that was the word that you got from the mouth of Him who has the tongue of the learned, and knows how to speak a word in season to the weary. See how He who has the tongue of the learned dealt with the woman of Samaria—how He gave to that woman of such an evil reputation: “I that speak unto thee am He,” and you all know how wisely He spoke to her. “If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.” He then went on until He said: “I that speak unto thee am he.” He gave her the Father’s word—the word that He got from the Father to give to her, and that is what the Lord’s people get—that is what they get in every age and generation of time. That is what they get in the day in which their bonds are loosed—in the day in which He takes the sackcloth off them, and gives them gladness. They thus get what the Father gave to the Son for them. It is a wonderful matter—a sublime matter—you get the word out of the fullness of grace that is in God through the eternal Son in human nature as the Saviour of sinners. That is how you get it, and when He speaks to your weary soul going through time it is the same thing. You had your days of difficulties, trials and temptations, and you know this, that when He speaks a word in season it fits into your case just as well as a glove will fit the hand, even so the word of Him who has the tongue of the learned meets the case of the needy soul. The Lord’s people know that (at least some of them may be afraid that they do not know it) the Lord Jesus has the tongue of the learned, and He knows how to speak a word in season to him that is weary. Well, He was in that school, and oh, what a wonderful school this was, when God the Father was giving to God the Son the word for the Church—giving to Him the words of comfort and peace and life, the word that would lift them out of the mire and bring them into life and liberty. That was a wonderful thing. This school the Saviour uses wherever He has sent messengers—He brings them to tuition. That is a wonderful word of the Apostle John: “I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it.” There was John, and he was writing to the Church who knew the truth of the gospel, and because they knew the truth of the gospel he was writing to them the truths of the gospel. The Son of God knew all as God. The Father gave His word to the servant who delivered it to those who know the truth—those He deals with on this wise, some more and some less. He will open their ears time after time, morning by morning, and give them the word, treasuring up in their minds the knowledge of the gospel, the knowledge of the grace of God, the knowledge of the doctrines of grace and the knowledge of the ways the Lord has with His people. He will teach them in this school, and that is the place where we all need to be until the day break—disciples sitting down wishing to be taught—wishing that He would open our ears to hear as disciples, day by day, that He may use us for the comfort of His people, as it says elsewhere: “Who comforteth us in all our tribulations, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.”

The Lord brings some of His people through great temptations and trials, having this end in view, that they would be able to deal with the trials and temptations of others, so that they can deal with and handle the cases and conditions of others, and apply the Word by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. All this comes from the Master. It comes from the Master of Assemblies that there should be such to whom He gives the ear of a disciple so that they might speak a word in season to the weary. But there is another thing in this school—the Head had it, and so had the members—the discipline. We do not like the discipline. His ear was opened morning by morning. He was led in the way of obedience, which meant suffering: “I was not rebellious, neither turned away back.” “I was commanded to walk in the path of obedience—I was commanded to obey the truth and maintain it.” “Oh well, they will be wanting your back and they will be wanting your cheeks, your hands and your feet to put spikes through them.” Oh well, I was not rebellious, neither turned away back.” “I just gave my back to the smiters, let them smite. I gave my cheeks to them that plucked off my hair, and I gave my face to shame and spitting.” “It came to me in the way of adherence to truth and obedience, and so I submitted. Yes, I hid not my face from shame and spitting.” That was the Head, and so He can speak a word in season to the weary soul. “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” What a word in season!

The Saviour, who was crucified between the malefactors, can speak to a poor soul who has to suffer from the devil and from his own heart and from the world, because he wants to walk in the truth. What a word the Lord Jesus, who suffered so much Himself, can speak to such a soul. Dear friends, the Lord permits discipline in the teaching of those whom He uses as under-shepherds, to speak a word in season to him that is weary. We do not like suffering, and we are very apt to take it as a bad omen that we have to suffer. Foolish, foolish, it is not a bad omen. Persecution, the spite and malice of men, is not a bad token on the Church of God, but a good token. That is what the Lord had suffered and that because He would not deviate from the truth. If He would deviate from the truth the devil would give Him all the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them—if He would just bow His head before him for this once, and Satan being unsuccessful here, prepared enemies innumerable, scourges and a crown of thorns. The devil prepared it all, and He just gave Himself over to them, willingly and submissively gave His back to the smiters and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, so that He would keep the commandment that the Father gave Him: “Let them do what they please, but I shall continue in the commandment which I received from my Father,” and that is the duty of the Church. All that Christ minded was this, that He would keep to the commandment that the Father gave Him. He minded nothing else but this, that He would keep to the commandment that the Father gave Him. That is the duty of the Church. The Lord will use you if He will give you the tongue of a disciple that you will know how to speak a word in season to the weary—you must be like your Master. You have got to submit to discipline, to open your ear, and while the Lord Himself will open your ear to hear as the learned, He will put before you that you must suffer, but never mind, He will use you

to speak a word in season to the weary, and that is worth anything that you will have to endure in this world for the sake of Christ.

Ah, dear friends, I am keeping you too long. You see here how the Lord promised to meet the weary, to meet the poor and needy. He will provide drink for the thirsty soul: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God." Have you a hope yourself to-night that you are the concern of the Lord Jehovah, and to whom He will send a word in season? Have you a hope that you belong to them, or are you wearying yourself out, fighting against God and destroying your soul? "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?"

Letter by Rev. John Tallach.

INGWENYA Mission, Bembesi, July 23rd, 1946.—My dear Mr. McLeod, Many thanks for your letter of the 21st June. There are some things in your letter which I fear must await my arrival at home for explanation. We have just returned from a long visit to Shangani and I think you should regard this letter as some kind of supplementary report.

General.—Dr. McDonald, Mr. E. Radasi and myself went. As holidays were on at Ingwenya we were able to take Miss Nicolson and Miss McKay with us. We left them at Zenka while we went on to see schools in Lupami and Gwampa.

Inkai.—Communion was held. There were two tables, about fifty communicants. About a third, mainly from Zenka, were not present. The Kirk-Session meeting had forward proposal for the election of office-bearers at Shangani. These were five deacons to be elected to eldership and two others to the deaconate. We found that, according to our custom, all these will require to have instruction in the Confession and Questions before ordination. We found also that since Mr. Radasi and Mr. Fraser will soon be in Shangani (D.V.), it would be easier for these men to attend classes at Shangani than at Ingwenya and agreed to leave their election until either Mr. Radasi or Mr. Fraser is settled. This will eventually mean eight elders and four deacons at Shangani as distinct from Ingwenya.

Schools Visited. Inkuba.—46 children, all first year. Teacher, Leggie, Std. 6. A good girl who has taught for us for years. She made ant-heap blackboards. Building ample in room. Children quite well advanced. They could sing from memory Psalms vi., c., xxiii. After school, "service," children and 20 adults. One of our Ingwenya members, Mafa, going there to settle, was introduced to people; he will take services. His wife, a P.L. teacher, will teach either here or in school further on. One heathen most helpful, Gumede to name. Mr. Radasi addressed children.

Zenka.—Paul Hlazo has done well here for the short time he has been. Good school room, ground well laid out, must be the finest layout of any kraal school in the whole reserve. Found he had built two huts for himself. That huts for Mr. Radasi were well advanced, expect to be ready for occupation by end of August. Built by community, no cost except nails and timber for doors and windows. The whole spirit of this community altered. Used to be most depressing, and only one man, a good man, used to take any interest. Now there is no doubt the school and the services have become a centre of general interest. I lay the credit for this great change to Paul Hlazo under the Lord.

An adult school is in full progress, over 40 on roll. One of the most moving sights I have ever seen. Women with babies on their backs attend and learn to read and write, a number of men too. Great opportunity for the Gospel. Opportunity taken hold of by preachers and teachers. Fixed on site at Zenka for Mr. Fraser's temporal home. Bricks being made. Building we expect to be finished by November.

Lutsha.—Quite a good building. Teacher Roy, from Ingwenya, doing quite well (20 miles from Zenka). Children made good start. Much Bible taught and number of Psalms memorised.

Mapakama.—Good qualified teacher here.

Bengamine.—Building poor. People here seem fairly low down in every way. Met a number of them and had talks with them on things spiritual and temporal. Mr. Radasi addressed the children.

Petani.—A good large building and a large number of children. Very promising. Service held after school, 15 adults. Mr. Radasi addressed.

Majaha.—Teacher, Josuah. Over 50 children, clean and tidy. Splendid blackboards made of ant-heap. A good strong building in a fine site. Children addressed by Mr. Radasi.

Back to Zenka. Service held Thursday morning conducted by myself. Told people Mr. Radasi returning to be their native pastor. Then back to Inkai and from there to Sesemba. Isaiah Nyati there, old elder. I forgot to count him with elders already noted; this will make eight elders after ordination. Good building, very well-made forms, standard quite good. Mr. Radasi addressed children. Back to Inkai and Ingwenya. Over all there are five new applications from chiefs and others for new work. Not enough petrol to visit them. Left with Paul Hlazo to write letters to all these giving them encouragement and promising that if they build schools we will (D.V.) open them next year. (Left out one school in above report—Katasa, which was addressed by Mr. Radasi.)

These new schools are:—One just beyond Mapakama, on the Lupani Valley; one just across the valley east of Mapakama; one further up the Shangani; one beyond Sesemba, and one eight miles north of Inkai on the main road. There may be more, but the Committee can count on our opening 5-6 schools more next February (D.V.). This will make our number next year 18 in Shangani. I shall try to make it 20 if possible, or even more, as with Mr. Fraser's return there will not be the same strain on us here to visit them from Ingwenya. The carrying of petrol is one of our difficulties. We were covered with kindness even although the people have had but very poor harvests. There were two sheep and two fowls killed; monkey nuts, pumpkins, water melons and eggs in plenty.

Mr. Edwin Radasi.—His addresses to the children and people were of a kind most suitable to the stage in which these people are. His personal contacts, too, were all on the side of presenting the Gospel. I hope he will long be spared to serve these people. He seeks, too, to interpret for them the work and mission of white missionaries and, in general, I feel that he is shaping to become a valuable asset to our work. I approached him on the question of buying a cycle, and he said that one congregation at home had given him money to buy one, but that he thought that with other money given him by friends he would put the cycle money together with these sums and buy a car. Cycling is heavy work in Shangani; not

only are the distances long but there is much sand on the roads. Both the Doctor and I thought that if he wished to buy a car it would help his work much. The great need in Shangani is preachers. We have the men there, but they are so far from the places needing them. A car could ensure, by taking them along each Friday or Saturday, a much more regular supply. Mr. Radasi speaks of using the car in this way of helping out the supply question. In speaking of this together, Doctor MacDonald, Miss Nicolson and I thought that if this was brought before your notice you might wish to contribute something towards his petrol. As soon as his hut is ready I am sending up a 44-gallon drum of petrol to Zenka. His cousin, who is teacher in one of our schools down here is to go with him as housekeeper and, of course, she will teach at Zenka. She will be a great help in this way as she is a member of the church and a qualified teacher. I hope to visit Shangani in September. Mr. Stewart, inspector, is up there at present. If I find on his return that he is satisfied I shall make formal application for Paul to be deputy superintendent of Shangani schools; and if things still go on well, I shall later apply for him to become Native superintendent. Paul has a way of getting natives to help with buildings, etc., in a way we have not, and a way very few of his own people have with natives. In short, I cannot but feel encouraged in every way that your resolution to go on with the Shangani project is something that is under the Lord's blessing and guidance. I thoroughly believe that the prayers of our home people have been answered. The way things have opened up and are now opening up has all the marks of His hands who is excellent in counsel. *Much hard work awaits us, and many worries and burdens, but already one can see an altered tone in the people. A friendliness and readiness to listen and a willingness to confess their need of our help.

So far as a good site for a new main station is concerned, we had a good look round everywhere. We would fix on Petanis as the best. You may, if you have opportunity, pass this to Mr. Fraser. The site is high, the view one of beauty; plenty of water near surface; a new bus route from Bulawayo through Lonely to the East and North passes by the school, and it takes one nearer by 25 miles the centre of the work. This, however, is only a suggestion. When we open the new school just north of Mapakama, we will be up against the R.C. stations. We will look to your prayers, and we hope that if He himself is willing, the time of Mr. Fraser's arrival is not too far off.

We are all well at Ingwenya. I have contacted two of the farmers I referred to in my report with a view to opening new schools and new work. Evidge will be closed, as the people are being sent to Shangani but we hope to open four new schools under Ingwenya by next year (see report—schools on farms other than squatters).

Kind regards and many thanks for all the kind things said in your last letter. We are unprofitable servants and the sense of that unprofitableness is a growing one. I forgot to mention that at all those places visited were those who came and asked and received medicines for minor troubles, such as bad stomachs and headaches from the doctor.—Yours sincerely,
John Tallach.

Arrival of Mr. Alexander MacPherson at Ingwenya. We have been informed that Mr. MacPherson, Glasgow, arrived safely.—*Editor.*

The Night Watches.

"I meditate on thee in the night watches."

"They shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels" (Mal. iii. 17).

"My Jewels!" (my peculiar treasure). Of what favoured created beings does Jehovah thus speak? Is it of seraphs?—of angels? Methinks at such a title even *they* would take the dust of abasement, and veiling their faces, cry, "Unclean! unclean!" But, marvel of marvels! It is redeemed sinners of the earth—the fallen children of men, once rude unshapely stones, lying in "the horrible pit and miry clay," amid the rubbish of corruption, who are thus sought out by grace, purchased by love, destined through eternity to be set as *jewels* in the crown of the eternal God.

"The Lord's portion is His people!" There is a surprising revelation of love here! Great, unspeakably great, is the privilege of the believer, to be able to look up to the everlasting Jehovah and say: "Thou art *my* portion, O Lord!" But what is this in comparison with the response of Omnipotence to the child of dust, "*Thou art Mine!*"

My soul! hast thou learnt to lisp thy part in this wondrous interchange of covenant love, "My beloved is mine and I am His"? What an array of wondrous titles belong to the saints of God, and given, too, by God himself in His own Word! "He calls them sons as often as sinners!" Brethren! Princes! Friends! Heirs! Jewels! Portion! "Mine!"

And when is the time when they become thus dear to Him? Sinner! when thou didst weep at the cross of Jesus, and joined thyself in covenant with God, thou becamest His *Jewel*! Nay, "He has loved thee with an everlasting love!" True, thou art not yet set in His crown; thou art yet undergoing the process of polishing. Affliction is preparing thee; trial is needed to remove all the roughness and inequalities of nature and make thee meet for thy Master's use. But, blessed thought! He that hath wrought us (literally, *chiselled* or *polished* us) for the self-same thing is God! Yes, God himself, the possessor, who prized that earthly jewel so much as to give in exchange for it Heaven's "Pearl of great price!" He has the polishing in His own hand. He will not deal too rashly or roughly!

And where meanwhile is the casket in which these jewels are kept till the coronation-day arrives, when the crown of His church triumphant (every saint a gem) will be placed on the head of Jesus? It is He their Purchaser, their Proprietor, who preserves them. They are "kept by the power of God." Our great High Priest, the true Aaron, has them set in His breastplate, He bears them on His heart on His every approach to the throne. They are the precious stones set in gold upon the ephod, and though the sins of His people, and the designs of Satan combine in doing what they can to erase and destroy them, He declares that none shall ever pluck them out of His hand or from His heart.

A jewel in Immanuel's crown!—Not only raised from the dunghill to be set among princes, but to gem through eternity the forehead that was once wreathed with thorns! Shall I?—*can* I?—murmur at any way my Saviour sees meet to polish and prepare me for such an honour as this?

Let me sink down on my nightly pillow over-powered with the thought; and as I hear my covenant God whispering in my ear the astounding accents, "*Thou art mine!*" I may well reply, "I will both lay me down in peace and sleep; for Thou Lord only makest me dwell in safety."

Sidelights on the Religious and Church Life in the Western Highlands (1639-1661).*

(Continued from Vol. LI., page 171.)

Permanent Clerk Appointed to Synod.—"Because that the provincial books are yearly to be presented in order to be reviewed by the General Assembly, and that it is fit they should be written in a good legible hand, and that heretofore the clerk was changeable because it was troublesome for one minister to be clerk without any benefit, therefore the assembly has made choice of Mr. James Campbell, Minister of Kilfinan, because of his good and legible hand, to be clerk to the provincial constantly in time coming, allowing him that which was allotted formerly to the constant clerk of the provincial, to wit, two marks by each brother within the province. Wherefore, he shall be astricted to give an extract of all the acts of each provincial to each Moderator or Clerk of each Presbytery within the province, which charge the said Mr. James has embraced, and has given the undertaking usual in such cases. And to this effect, Mr. Dugald Darroch, who was clerk to the two last assemblies is appointed to draw up all the acts in *mundo* and deliver to him the book complete under his hand." (I. 75).

7th October, 1643.—"Referred to the Presbytery of Kintyre to take order with John and James Hamilton for their barbarous misbehaviour in raising of dead corpses out of the grave, and that they employ the baillie of Arran for their assistance for correcting them according to the injunction of the Presbytery." (I. 80.)

"James Mackirdy, minister of Kilmory in Arran, being found by the visitors unfit for discharging of any part of the spiritual function of the ministry, as their report at more length purports, is ordered to be deposed, but in consideration of his old age the two parts of his present stipend, which is thirty bolls of victual, reserved for himself and his glebe and manse till the glebe be provided, and his place to be supplied by the Presbytery as it is in the minute." (I. 80.)

"The assembly considering how prejudicial the long vacancy of the kirk of Iona and Kilviceun may be to the state of the kirks in these bounds, it is thought fit that the same should be planted by the transportation of Mr. Martin MacGillvery hither, and, lest that any should complain of wrong, it is appointed that his parishioners be warned to compear before the Presbytery at Pennigown the first of November to see if they have any reasons to give against the lawfulness of his transportation, which if they have not, then they are to go on to give him actual transportation, and invest him in the benefice, and withal it is recommended to them to modify Mr. John MacLachlan's charges for serving so long at Iona." (I. 82-83.)

*Extracts from the Records of the Synod of Argyll.

2nd May, 1644. *Military Service*.—"In respect that notwithstanding of the general course that is taken for advancing a regiment to Colonel Erskine by the ministers of the kingdom, and that every minister should furnish a man to that effect in all military equipage, and yet that so many within this province have been negligent of that duty, therefore, it is appointed that they use all diligence that their man be in readiness to go with their commissioner to the General Assembly for the several Presbyteries to Edinburgh, that the said commissioner may try out a way how they may be conveyed to their colours." (I. 88.)

(*To be continued.*)

The late Mrs. MacIennan, Geocrab, Harris.

THE subject of this obituary notice was one of the oldest and most respected of our members. She had been professing since early girlhood in the Free Church. Born at Lickisto, 80 years ago, she early made choice of Christ, and was beyond many in zeal for the Cause of God. She told the writer that it was in the secret reading of the Bible she enjoyed more of her Maker's presence than anywhere else. This did not make her lax about the public means, for she travelled great distances on foot to hear the Word of God proclaimed at Tarbert and at Strond. She was also well known at Uist and in Lewis, where she attended communions. She was one of the women who helped to build Stockinish Meeting-house for Mr. Donald Stewart, the Evangelist. They carried sand from the shore.

In those days, labour was given free for the Cause of Christ. There was little money, but more contentedness and thankfulness than now. Being wholly dependent on the land for their livelihood, people had to go as far as the Sound of Harris for seaweed in the spring. At that busy season she took with her some of the divines to read in the boat, so that she would not be occupied by the things of time only. She told the writer she would prefer to be working than to be talking about the work. What she wanted to talk about was spiritual things. She often felt bored by people who had no interest in religion, but would wax eloquent about tweeds and coupons. She believed in putting the Cause before everything else. For instance, when her family were infants, she used to leave them on the care of God and go to church. When she came back they were safe.

Sixteen miles in a day on foot was common-place in her life, and even as long as she could she was to be seen in Kintail and Finsbay and Geocrab. On one occasion she went to Strond, and then to Northton for a meeting, and back to Geocrab the same night. There were no roads as at present, only tracks through the moor and mountainside. Having the talent of a very musical voice, she often beguiled the time by singing the spiritual songs of Peter Grant, Dr. Macdonald, Ferintosh, and others of that kind as well as psalms. She had no patience with those who never open their mouths in the praise of God. On one occasion some one was remarking on the wind not very reverently, she thought, so she immediately asked who created the wind. The most common-place events in nature did not escape her notice. She always remarked on God's work around her.

Being one of the old class of Christians she saw God in everything. She liked to watch the day closing and the evening coming before lighting the lamps. Although she was unable to read or speak English, and couldn't appreciate an English service, still one couldn't say she was ignorant or uncultured. She had an innate dignity, and did not want to owe any man anything. If she got a present she was sure to send a present in return. When she was young she served in the Manse at Manish, when the Reverend Mr. Davidson was there. She had a very high regard for him. We happened to read the chapter about the Crucifixion in one of the gospels, referring to the inscription on the Cross in Latin and Greek and Hebrew. When worship was finished, she said she learnt to count in Latin. This seemed to be incredible, till she explained that one of the daughters of the Manse was an accomplished linguist and had taught her. She counted correctly from unum to decem, which was very surprising in one who always lamented that she could not understand English, and wished there was more Gaelic in the Magazine. Before 1872 there were no schools nor schoolmasters except the Gaelic schoolmasters and the Free Church Schools, so that there was a high percentage of illiteracy. The local doctor and minister and schoolmaster, if he existed, were often the only ones who could write a letter, so that their standard of education was far above that of the rest in the parish, and they were respected more so than to-day when almost everyone can read and write. Life was hard in those days when there were no roads or vehicles. The boll of meal had to be carried from Tarbert. Mrs. MacIenman was one of those who collected for the box for the ministers at Communion, when they had to be out in the open-air. It is still in use. May the Lord comfort and guide those she has left behind. "So man lieth down and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep."—*D. McA.*

The late Mrs. Ewen Morison, Glen, South Harris.

Two of our oldest members have been taken away almost simultaneously, which provides food for thought to the most careless among us. It is a sign of the Lord's anger when He takes away His own from the evil to come. As long as Lot was in Sodom, the fire and brimstone could not come down, but whenever he was safely outside the city, the judgment came. There were two men who kept up the Cause at Northton, the husband of Mrs. Morison, and Malcolm Mackinnon. The latter was more gifted, but neither of them could read the Word of God.

The late Mr. Murdo Martin used to read for them. Malcolm was one day speaking to the Question about attendance on the public means of grace. He said he met some villagers on the road. They asked him where he was going. He replied that he was on his way to the prayer-meeting. They remarked that they didn't know there was a prayer-meeting. He was illustrating the indifference of many.

Mrs. Morison lived for 95 years. She had an excellent memory, and could entertain her visitors with many an anecdote and reminiscence. When Rev. E. Radasi called on her, he was surprised to hear her conversing fluently in English. It seems that she washed the saints' feet, and entertained strangers, as well as bringing up children. The venerable Ewen

Mackenzie was a frequent visitor at her home on his peregrinations. It was an honour for any house to have such a guest. He was revered as being no ordinary Christian. Roderick Ferguson, Tarbert, who is still spared to the church on earth, said he never met a more godly man. He lived alone at Northton in fellowship and communion with the Most High. Several attempts were made to print an account of his life, but these were not successful as the events narrated were almost incredible.

Although he was such an outstanding man he never took up much time in public prayer. His private devotions would be longer. Mrs. Morison became dull of hearing latterly, but retained her memory till the end of her earthly journey.

She died peacefully. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. Yea, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours and their works do follow them." If the Lord takes away all His saints, and none are raised up from among the young, the time will come when there shall be none to commemorate the death of Christ and His dying love. In that case a communion cannot be held, and Satan can then rejoice that the field is his. The heathen song and dance will replace the solemn assembly.
—D. McA.

Literary Notice.

The Free Offer of the Gospel, by Rev. John Colquhoun, Glendale, Skye.

To be had from the author; price 6d., post free 7d.

In this pamphlet, Mr. Colquhoun points out the Westminster Confession teaching on this subject and refers to the Scripture doctrines on which the Westminster Divines based their teaching. We need scarcely remind our readers that every office-bearer of the Free Presbyterian Church as accepted that teaching as the confession of his faith. Mr. Colquhoun also makes appeal to distinguished divines, such as Dr. Owen, Boston and the Erskines, who held the doctrine. Among the outstanding highly-honoured Scottish divines, the doctrine was held without exception. But, as Mr. Colquhoun is careful to point out, they were true Calvinists and their teaching was as wide as the poles asunder from Arminianism.

Church Notes.

Communion.—June—First Sabbath, Applecross, Tarbert (Harris) and Coigach; second, Shieldaig; third, Uig (Lewis), Helmsdale, Lochcarron, Glendale and Dornoch; fourth, Gairloch; fifth, Inverness. *July*—First Sabbath, Raasay, Lairg, Beaulie; second, Tain, Staffin, Tomatin; third, Daviot, Halkirk, Flashadder, Rogart; fourth, Plockton, Bracadale, North Uist, Achmore. *August*—Second Sabbath, Stratherrick; fourth, Thurso.

South African Mission.—The following are the dates of the Communion—Last Sabbath of March, June, September and December.

Note.—Notice of any additions to, or alterations of, the above dates should be sent to the Editor.

Student Received.—The Outer Isles Presbytery at its meeting on 15th April, at Tarbert, received Mr. Angus Mackay as a student studying with a view to the ministry of the Free Presbyterian Church.—D. R. MacDonald, Clerk of Presbytery.

Acknowledgment of Donations.

Mr. J. Grant, 4 Millburn Road, Inverness, General Treasurer, thankfully acknowledges the following donations:—

Sustentation Fund.—Friend of the Cause, per Mr. Robert Watt, £5; Mr. R. McC., Millport, Buteshire, £2 2/6; Mrs. A. M., 4 Bundaloch, Dornie, £1; Mr. D. McK., Corrary, Glenelg, £1; Anon., Aberdeen postmark, 12/6; Mr. Coll. N., 1311 Lincoln Street, Berkely, California, £1; Miss I. C., Aricharnoch, 15/6; Interested Friend, Elgin, £1; A Friend, Glasgow, £2; Friend, o/a Glendale, per Rev. J. Colquhoun, £4; Mrs. F. J. S., Tara, Ontario, £3; F.P., Leverburgh, £3; Mr. A. C., Broallan, Beaully, £1; A Friend, Applecross, £1; Mrs. M. C., Colbost, Dunvegan, £1 2/6; Miss J. M., 60 Palmerston Place, Edinburgh, 10/-; An Islander, o/a Edinburgh Congregation, £6.

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