

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. lx. 4.

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God's Mercy Never Ends.

OUR period of sojourning on this earth is measured by days, months and years; and as another year draws to an end the fleeting nature of time, the brevity of man's days and the temporary character of many things are emphasised thereby, especially in the minds of those who are taught of God. Childhood and youth and the vigour and strength of manhood swiftly fade into the past and give place to old age and the limitations connected therewith; "and if by reason of strength they be four-score years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow . . ." (Ps. xc, 10). Ultimately the shadows of death draw near and man's life on earth is soon at an end, inasmuch as, "his days are as grass, as a flower of the field," and "the wind passeth over it and it is gone," (Ps. ciii, 15, 16). And by reason of this unspeakably solemn and appointed visitation upon man, "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh" (Eccles. i, 4); life-long friendships end; the most intimate relationships are disannulled; the lawful and beneficial activities of many in the society of men cease; the voice of the preacher, which once sounded out the precious tidings of the Redeemer's love for the ungodly is silenced; and much more indeed comes to an end periodically in the process of a year. Then we ourselves personally shall also, sooner or later, come to the end, not of another year, but of life's journey, for truly here we have no continuing city. On parting with time, the impenitent and unbelieving sinner shall discover that the end has come upon all the worldly and carnal sources wherein alone he sought a short-lived happiness and satisfaction.

But what of those who have been led of the Spirit of God in their soul's experience, to come sin-burdened to the wounds of a crucified Saviour for divine and saving mercy and have been enabled by a living faith to taste of that mercy, in the forgiveness of their sins and the bestowal upon them of the blessed hope of eternal life in Christ Jesus? *God's mercy never ends* with respect to all such; and great and glorious are the words of the psalmist relevant to this question: "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him," (Ps. ciii, 17). This sovereign, free and plenteous mercy, this covenant pity and compassion, embraces the pardoned sinner as the everlasting God Himself, Whose mercy it is, embraces the forgiven. Christ declares, "My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand" (John x, 29).

How wonderfully satisfying God's mercy must indeed be in the experience of His children, when they obtain clear and sober views of the "glories" of earth, described by Solomon as nothing but vanity and vexation of spirit; and are on the other hand quickened and enlightened to pray, "O! satisfy us early with thy mercy that we may be glad and rejoice all our days" (Ps. xc, 14). Surely here there is a source where the needy soul may find continued happiness. *God's mercy shines* even while the poor believer may be walking in darkness and through tribulation, spiritually or in providence, and while tried and tempted that days of consolation will never return. One glimpse of that mercy in Jesus, given by the aid of the Holy Spirit through the Truth of God, will lift his heart as nothing else can. Jonah said out of the depths, "I will look again towards thy holy temple," (Jonah ii, 4), and then there followed "Salvation is of the Lord," (Jonah ii, 9). God's mercy did not end for Jonah, wayward as he had been. *The promise of God speaks sweetly of His mercy*, when He declares how He has bound Himself to the believer, in these words, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. xiii, 5). The friendship, favour and fellowship of others may end and be lost for one reason or another. But God's mercy never ends as it flows out to them that fear Him, in divine and unfailing friendship, which brings to them, as their state requires, strength, comfort, correction, keeping, etc., and the supplying of every real need according to his riches in Christ Jesus, during the whole of their lifetime. And finally, they have held out to them, in the Scriptures, *the prospect that God's mercy shall continue to surround them*, until they be delivered from all their trials and are led safely through the valley of the shadow of death into the realms of glory, where God's delight in mercy shall be revealed to them through the exalted Lamb, and experienced in an indescribable manner and in a full and perfect measure, this to never end, but to be upon them to everlasting ages.

"Come Unto Me."

Farewell Sermon preached by Rev. CHRISTOPHER MUNRO,
at Tobermory, 1st January, 1864.

"Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." (Matt. xi. 28-30).

THE Apostle John, at the conclusion of his history of Christ, says that if all that Christ did and spoke were committed to writing, even the world itself could not contain the number of books that should be written. But he remarks that the things written by himself as well as by others were written that men might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing in Him, they might have life through His name. For to believe the truth of all that is recorded concerning Christ, must lead to the conclusion that He is the Son of God. This passage contains a statement which clearly proves the justness of the claims He made to this relation and title. The statement of the text contains an invitation,

a promise to those who comply with it, and a duty which is imposed upon them. These three elements, if duly considered, afford a clear proof of Christ's Divinity, and therefore must lead to the reception of Him by faith.

First, let us consider the invitation. It runs in these terms, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden." Here are set forth claims of the highest nature. We hear one inviting all the weary and heavy laden among men to come unto Him, in order to find relief. It is not an individual here and there that is invited, but all, of every nation, of every rank, from the highest to the lowest, all who are weary and heavy laden, which, of course, includes all mankind; for all men are in sore travail, burdened and weary, one in this way, and another in that way. One is heavy laden with the cares that attend a post of high responsibility and the anxieties connected with the attempt to discharge its duties. Another is weary in the paths of ambition and vainglory, kept in the fire by struggling to obtain a name and fame among men, and continually suffering chagrin and disappointment. A third is weary in the paths of pleasure and self-gratification; he tastes a short-lived pleasure, and then is oppressed with languor and self-accusation, and he sighs after some relief which he knows not how or where to find. A fourth is weary and heavy laden with the toils and cares of this life; he eats his bread with the sweat of his brow, and is constantly followed by the fear of want, like a spectre which one imagines to tread on his heels. Others, again, are weary with troubles and afflictions of various kinds; for no sooner are they relieved from one trial than another overtakes them, like one tossed on the stormy billows. Some find themselves in darkness and ignorance regarding spiritual and Divine matters, their consciences burdened with a sense of sin and guilt; there is a wound at the heart that continually runs, and for which no balm can be found either to soothe or heal. This sore within frequently extorts the secret cry, "Wherewith shall I come before God the Lord?" One labouring under this burden cannot find relief in anything he does himself in order to obtain rest. Another is burdened with ignorance and pressed with the question, "What is truth?" and finding himself at sea without compass or star to guide him, and without sight of land, he knows not which course to take, and is unable to say where he is. In such circumstances there is a deep-felt need of help, and the soul is stirred to its greatest depths, and the mind is ill at ease and tossed about. No human art can tranquillise or satisfy this need. Let the wisest of men endeavour to chase away this darkness, and his efforts produce no more result than would the emission of a few sparks in the dark chaotic night, or in the darkness which brooded over the deep before God said, "Let there be light."

Still further some are labouring under the burden of the body of death of which the Apostle Paul complained when he exclaimed, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" and which he had in view when he said, "In this tabernacle we groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon;" "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better." These classes of burdened ones include all mankind, whether they may be the slaves of the world or the votaries of ambition and pleasure; whether the self-righteous and

hypocritical, who labour in the fire to save themselves, or the deluded and superstitious fanatic, who pursues idle dreams; whether the anxious inquirer, who feels the burden of the guilt of innumerable sins, or the believer, who feels the bondage of corruption, and is pained with the desire to be free from it and to depart to be with Christ. To all these the invitation is addressed.

And who is He who calls all these poor, distressed, and afflicted ones unto Him—men whose wants are so numerous, whose misery is so deep, and whose desires are so earnest and vehement? Were one to appear in our own country, and to issue an invitation to all the poor, the sick, the maimed, and afflicted, who form so large a portion of the people, and were he to promise that on their coming to him he would supply their every want, would clothe them and keep them comfortable, would heal all their diseases and remove all their griefs and sorrows, he would be regarded either as an insane man and deceiver, or as one who had unheard-of resources at his command, and as one of uncommon benevolence. But in our text there are claims of a far higher nature set forth. Here is One who without ostentation or imposture invites all men to come to Him; here we see One who was as a root out of a dry ground, who had no form or comeliness, but was a Man of sorrow and acquainted with grief, who had not where to lay His head, who wore no earthly crown, who wielded no earthly sceptre, who had no exchequer full of gold and silver, who was followed by no conquering army, yet He was a King, though His kingdom was not of this world. He did not invite men in order to bestow wealth on the covetous, or to confer honour on the ambitious, or earthly rewards on the mercenary; His promise refers to far better and more enduring blessings. That His claims are not pretences is abundantly evident; they have been put to the test by many and found to be well grounded.

In the second place, let us consider the promise given, or the good that is here held forth to men, namely, rest. Men are represented as weary and heavy laden. Whilst one is fresh and vigorous he feels not the fatigue of a journey, nor the weight of a burden; but when one pursues a journey for a long time, and carries a heavy burden, how desirable then does rest become! The Israelites were sorely oppressed in Egypt, and groaned by reason of their heavy burdens; they longed for deliverance. How highly valued would rest be by them; but who could give them rest as long as Pharaoh held them in his power? Rest is relief from heavy burdens and refreshment from weariness. The rest promised by Christ is analogous to this, and those dissatisfied with earthly things find in Him a good portion that shall not be taken from them. Those who once pursued pleasure, and to whom carnal pleasure is now turned into gall, find in Him true pleasures which last for ever. Those who feel the burden of ignorance find in Him the truth that, like the sun in the firmament, dispels the darkness of their souls. Those burdened with guilt find a free, full and lasting pardon. Those who seek an object to fill their hearts and satisfy their desires, find in Him a Friend who can supply their every need, and who will never leave them nor forsake them. Those who are heavy laden with a body of sin receive a promise of assistance and help from One who offers to bear their burden, and who will at last relieve them from it. And those who groan here receive an assurance that a house, a home on high,

is prepared for them, where the inhabitants shall not say, "I am sick." All this is received by faith; by faith they are justified, so as to have peace with God and they rejoice in the hope of the Glory of God. Believing, they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. They live, and walk, and stand fast by faith, and learn to wait with patience for the day of their eternal salvation. That this is true is abundantly testified by Scripture and by the experience of God's children. Moses believed in it and experienced it when it was said to him, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest;" and David also, when he said, "Return now unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee;" and Solomon, who enjoyed all that the world can afford, and who said of it all, "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity," found the ways of Wisdom to be ways of peace and true happiness. The language of the Church in all ages is found in the declaration, "He is all my Salvation and all my Desire." Paul, who knew the terrors of the Lord, and who believed that it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, found peace with God in Christ, a peace that passeth all understanding. And saints for ever shall ascribe their salvation, their pardon, and peace, and their entrance into the Holy of holies above, to their being washed in His blood, who here invites sinners of every character to come unto Him. This is a true and faithful saying, that Christ is able to give them this rest. We have stated some of the testimony given us in the Word in confirmation of it; and could we inquire of those now before the throne of the Lamb whether it is true or not, they would all with one voice declare it to be the truth of Him who sits on the throne in heaven, and of whose truth one jot or tittle shall not fall to the ground. He, then, that believeth shall know it to be the truth of God, and shall know that it never faileth.

In the third place, let us consider the duty imposed on all who come to Him, or who believe in Him. It is to take His yoke and to bear His burden. These are figurative expressions, and used to illustrate spiritual things. A yoke, as you know, was in ancient time a part of the harness by which beasts of burden, such as the ox, were attached to the harrow. It was early spoken of as the badge of servitude, whether of a compulsory or of a voluntary nature. To bear the yoke meant submission to a superior power and readiness to serve that power. If we regard it as indicating the bond that ties one to a certain master, and to his service, and not the service itself, then it denotes the conditions of submission, the willing surrender that one makes of himself, and his obligations to continue in the service. The yoke of Christ may, according to this meaning, be said to be His authority, His supreme and eternal right to the obedience of all rational creatures, which He claims, in all that He teaches and commands. On the part of the believer the yoke may be said to be the love of Christ: "If ye love Me, keep My commandments;" "The love of Christ, constraineth us." It draws and binds to Christ, so that the language of such a soul is, "Who can separate us from the love of Christ? Nothing present, nor to come." And is not this an easy yoke? Is it not agreeable and pleasant? If the love of a fellow-creature be effectual when it occupies the thoughts and affections, how much more effectual must be the love of Christ when one apprehends something of its height and depth, of its breadth and

length! Christ's "burden" is to do what He commands; this may be hard to flesh and blood but not to the new man. To deny oneself is hard, to cut off the right hand, or right foot, or pluck out the right eye, is hard for one ignorant of Christ, but not for the believer, who has felt the love of Christ. To crucify the flesh, to bear the cross, and to do all things for Christ is nothing more, than He is worthy of. In keeping His commandments there is a great reward, a good, happy, and eternal reward.

Consider, then, who are called and invited; consider under what view they are regarded; and consider who it is that calls, what He promises to fulfil, and is able to fulfil. Could anyone but He who is God over all, give such an invitation and hold forth such promises? This passage then points out the error in which too many Gospel hearers pass their time,—I mean those whose consciences are naturally enlightened, and who know the letter of the Word; who know what is commanded and what is forbidden, and yet they uniformly fail in obeying Jesus from the heart. All their attempts and exertions to do what is right, and to avoid what is wrong, are made without coming first to Jesus Himself and learning of Him; they know Him not, they are blind to His glory, a veil covers their faces, so that they never enter into the meaning of such statements as "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us;" "God commendeth His love to us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us;" "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ;" "Christ crucified is the power of God unto salvation;" "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." Have you come to Him? Have you taken His yoke upon you? Do you bear His burden and feel that you can do nothing. Cast that burden upon Himself, who says to another who came to Him, "My grace is sufficient for you; My strength shall be made perfect in your weakness." Follow Him and be not ashamed of Him, or of His truth, or of His cause, or of His people. Be not ashamed to be known as His; and when others declare openly that they will not obey Him, let all know, by your willing obedience, and not by mere words, that you find His yoke easy and His burden light. You have not yet come to Jesus and taken Him as your Saviour, let me once more invite you to come to Him and to forsake your evil doings and thoughts. Seek the Lord while He may be found, pray that He may make known to you His name, His glory, His love, and His power to save. He Himself invites you and promises you rest. Come, then, and make no delay. Too long many have delayed already; come, all ye careless and prayerless ones; come, all ye open transgressors, foolish and vain; come, ye who are satisfied with a name, ye waverers who at times are ready to say, "I am almost persuaded to be a Christian." Oh! come to a decision ere it be too late. Come, ye who are in vain pursuing happiness in ways in which it is not to be found. Rest assured that this call is to you; that you are welcome if you come; that you will find real rest, real peace, and joy in Christ.

With these observations on this blessed portion of truth, I finish the work of my ministry among you, leaving the result in the Lord's hand, and praying that He may give you a pastor who shall feed you with knowledge and understanding, and to whom many who are yet Christless among you shall be a crown of righteousness in the day of the Lord.

The Two Magnitudes.

By Rev. JOHN COLQUHOUN, Glendale.

ON one occasion, when the great Dr. Thomas Chalmers was confronted by an opponent with statements he made in a pamphlet which he had written in his younger days before the Lord dealt savingly with his soul, he frankly acknowledged that he had been the writer of these statements, and after stating the occasion on which they were written, he said, "Alas! Sir, so I thought in my ignorance and pride. I have now no reserve in saying that the sentiment was wrong, and that, in the utterance of it, I penned what was most outrageously wrong. Strangely blinded that I was! What, Sir, is the object of mathematical science? Magnitude and the proportions of magnitude. But *then*, Sir, I had forgotten *two magnitudes*—I thought not of the littleness of time—I recklessly thought not of the greatness of eternity." This, alas! is the case with the great majority of our race, and they never make the discovery which Dr. Chalmers made until it is too late.

That time is short is clearly taught in Scripture. Moses, in the ninetyeth psalm says, "The days of our years are three-score years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be four-score years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." Seventy or eighty years is but a brief space of time from God's point of view, with whom a thousand "are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night," and although that number of years may be long in our estimation when we look forward to them, yet they are but as a bubble on the bosom of the broad ocean in contrast to eternity. The Holy Spirit inspired men, who learned by experience the brevity of time, to write concerning it in the Scriptures, and in doing so they have used various similitudes. In one place it is said, "Behold, thou hast made my days as an hand-breadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee," (Ps. xxxix, 5). An hand-breadth is but a very short measure, yet it clearly demonstrates the brevity of time. If we look upon the four fingers which form the breadth of the hand as representing four-score years, and consider that, with some, a fourth of that time is gone already, with others the half, and with others again three-fourths, while with the remaining few the whole is almost out of sight, we have an apt illustration of a human life in order to show that our "age is as nothing."

Again, Moses says that "we spend our years as a tale that is told," and Job says, "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle." A tale when being told may be so interesting that both the one who tells it and those who hear it may be so oblivious to everything around them that these things are completely forgotten. In such cases the tale comes to an end all too soon, and, perhaps, unexpectedly, and no one has anything of it, but that they heard it and do remember some of its details. While listening to it other things were neglected, and now these things must be overtaken, but with many, who discover that they have neglected what should have been their chief concern, they shall find, the next moment after making this discovery, that in their case "there should be time no longer." Thus our years pass unknown to us. A human being, young in years, will be eagerly looking forward to coming years of maturity,

and imagines that the years are longer than they should be, but the older one grows, the shorter the years seem to get, until one feels that he is almost out of sight.

We ought, however, to lay to heart that God has a definite purpose in giving us this hand-breadth of time in this world. He has a purpose to save sinners and has made a great and glorious Provision for that end, and is pleased to wait in order to be gracious to poor sinners. Therefore He is giving us time in the world in order to close in with this Provision. No sinner can say that he is lost for lack of time, for with many God has delayed the fatal stroke for many a year, and thus He has been clearly revealing that He has no delight in their death. Thus He manifests His long-suffering and gracious loving kindness, not only in "not willing that any should perish," but in giving them renewed opportunities of closing in with His offers of salvation, over a great number of years.

These years that God has given us in the world are, too often, misspent, with no thought of the end for which they were given. Other things claim the attention of men and women, and, very often, things that will not profit for time itself, much less for eternity. It is right and proper for us to be diligent in our lawful calling, and we ought to make provision to the best of our ability for those who depend on us, but we ought to realise that the end of our creation is something infinitely higher, even to glorify God and to enjoy Him. In making provision for temporal wants we often forget the value of our souls, not remembering that the Lord Jesus asks the question, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark viii, 36). Let us always bear in mind that the riches of the whole world are wholly inadequate to redeem one soul, and that nothing in this world, or out of it, can do that, except what God Himself has provided. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot," (I Peter i, 18, 19).

Again, these years which were given us for our good for eternity, are spent in something that is worse than useless. Night after night for years on end, millions of human beings spend precious time in the vanities of this world, as if they were bent on drowning any thoughts about eternity, or the solemn fact that they shall have to render an account to God for the time He gave them in this world. The promiscuous dance with all its attendant evils is regarded with pleasure. The mad whirl of vain pleasure is eagerly pursued, and the talents and abilities which God has given for better ends are laid on the altar of the god of this world, and his devotees are promised much which they will never receive, but he carefully keeps from their view what they will actually receive: that is, the wages of sin, which is death.

The mis-spending of time is often a fertile source of regret when one comes to the end of life's journey. While some are so irresponsible that, if they were to get some more years in the world, they are bent on spending them in the same way as the years that are gone, yet, there are others who are brought to mourn with a bitter mourning over their mis-spent years. They realise that the pleasures of the world which they

were so eagerly pursuing, and which they often thought were within their grasp, were but empty shadows, and that what they were promised did not come to pass. They look back on a life of sin and have to confess that their days were consumed in vanity, and their years in trouble, in serving the world, the devil and the flesh. They find it now too late to begin to make resolutions, for the soul, whether prepared or not, must obey the summons to quit the clay tabernacle and take its flight to the world of spirits. This is a solemn warning, to those who are yet in health and strength, to remember the injunction of the Holy Ghost, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest," (Eccles. ix, 10).

The other magnitude of which Dr. Chalmers spoke was the greatness of eternity. If we ask ourselves the question, "What is eternity?" we cannot give a better answer than that given by a schoolboy in answer to this question in an examination paper, when he gave the reply, "Eternity is the age of God." This ought to awaken very solemn thoughts in our hearts, for this eternity, which is co-existent with God, presents to our view but two places—heaven and hell—and but two classes of people who are respectively to occupy these places.

At the moment when the Lord's people shall enter heaven they are, what they were never before, perfectly holy. They had many a panting after holiness in this world, but they found sin always present with them, but now sin is forever excluded, and in their worship in heaven, which will partake of the nature of praise and obedience, springing from perfect love, there shall not be the least taint of sin. They shall see Christ's face, and shall be ravished with the matchless beauty and transcendent excellence which they shall see in Him. While they are in this world, when faith is in exercise they are enabled to say, "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness," but they have only a very dark view of it in comparison with how they shall view matters in heaven, for their very life there consists in beholding Christ's face and enjoying His favour, for "in his favour is life." They shall drink eternally of pleasures that shall never know abatement or end, for "in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore," (Ps. xvi, 11).

When confronted with thoughts of eternity we have also to think of the eternity of the lost. They are lost beyond recovery, and part of their torment is that they are separated from God, finally and forever, and from His goodness and mercy, love and compassion, and from all hope of obtaining happiness. They shall also experience the gnawings of the worm that dieth not and the torments of the fire that shall never be quenched. The place of their torment was not prepared for human beings but for the devil and his angels, but the lost shall have to experience the torments of that place, world without end. The Lord Jesus Himself in describing the fearful condition of the lost in hell gives a vivid picture of it in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus; showing that there is not so much diminishing of torment as the comfort of one drop of cold water to cool the tongue. This, be it remembered, is not the only place where the Saviour of sinners refers to the fearful torments of men in a lost eternity.

In the parable of the good seed and the tares He tells us that "so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth," (Matt. xiii, 40-42). Again, He tells us of the guest without the wedding garment that the command was, "Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth," (Matt. xxii, 13).

The happiness of the Lord's people and the misery of the lost are alike eternal. The meaning of eternity, however, is infinitely beyond the comprehension of finite beings such as we are. Eternity cannot be measured in days, weeks and years, so that, though we would take the longest stretch of years imaginable, and multiply them by billions of billions, we would not have the faintest conception of what eternity is, for it baffles all our calculations. In this connection, therefore, we cannot do better than close this article with a quotation from the learned and saintly Thomas Boston. "When you are abroad in the fields, and behold the piles of grass on the earth, which no man can reckon; think with yourselves, that, were as many thousands of years to come as there are piles of grass on the ground, even those would have an end at length, but eternity will have none. When you look to a mountain, imagine in your hearts how long it would be, ere that mountain should be removed, by a little bird coming once every thousand years, and carrying away but one grain of the dust thereof at once: the mountain would at length be removed that way, and brought to an end; but eternity will never end. Suppose this with respect to all the mountains of the earth, nay, with respect to the whole globe of the earth: the grains of dust, whereof the whole earth is made up, are not infinite, and therefore the last grain would, at long-run, come to be carried away, in the way supposed; but when that slowest work would be brought to an end, eternity would be, in effect, but beginning" (*Human Nature in its Fourfold State*, by Thomas Boston).

Controversy: A Duty and Privilege.

By the late Dr. J. C. RYLE, of Liverpool.

CONTROVERSY in religion is a hateful thing. It is hard enough to fight the devil, the world and the flesh, without private differences in our own camp. But there is one thing which is even worse than controversy, that is false doctrine tolerated, allowed and permitted without protest or molestation. It was controversy that won the battle of the Protestant Reformation. If the views that some men hold were correct, it is plain we never ought to have had a Reformation at all! For the sake of peace and appeasement we ought to have gone on worshipping the Virgin, and bowing down to images and relics to this very day! Away with such trifling. There are times when controversy is not only a duty, but a privilege and a benefit. Give me the mighty thunderstorm rather than the pestilential malaria. The one walks in darkness and poisons us in silence, and we are never safe. The other frightens and alarms us for a little season. But it is soon over, and it clears the air. It is a plain Scriptural duty to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints," (Jude iii).

Lamps in the Vale.

“And they feared as they entered into the cloud” (Luke ix, 34).

TRANSITIONS in Christian experience are so rapid that the depths are never far from the heights. Who has not found a Communion Sabbath which marked a “height” rapidly descend into a “deep” on the following Monday? So the disciples found it on the Mount—as they enter the cloud, the happy desire which sprang to Peter’s lips soon freezes into fear.

Clouds. There are troubles of which we have no warning—they just spring on us. On the other hand, there are those which gather at such a distance that we are able to view them with some detachment. They have taken no definite shape and as yet are only in the region of things vaguely possible; consequently our prayerful attention to them is at most, general and undefined. But when the cloud takes shape and its implications begin to dawn on us we begin to fear, and this fear increases as we observe that the line of our lot lies directly under its approach. We are brought into contact with something which affects us profoundly, and over which we have no control. Our efforts to hold it off, or to grasp and contain it, prove futile and the resulting sense of weakness and frustration issues in fear—great fear. The coming cloud must carry one hundred possibilities, and to our tense imagination, every such possibility begets fear.

Our Reactions. We seek escape, and to this end we direct our prayers. It is here that a new fear lays hold on us—prayer seems to fail us. While we pray, the cloud continues to descend; continues to deepen; continues to gather us more closely to itself. Faith begins to panic and then to retreat. True, we make strenuous efforts to retain faith on the field, but our inability to do so adds to our confusion and dread. In this conflict there is no handicap so serious as a retreating faith.

We begin to complain. We feel that we have been specially selected for this peculiar trial and, self pity so fills us that we readily mistake our repining cries for the prayers of the New Heart. Meanwhile, the cloud as if possessing a Will of its own, and as if deliberately blind to our prayers and fears, continues to descend on us.

We change our prayer. “Lord, let this become no heavier, let me not know the fullness of grief it carries, command that it should come no nearer.” So we order our petitions. But the Sovereignty of the cloud continues and its disturbing intention is forced upon us. We must experience to the full whatever horrors of darkness upheave within its forbidding breast.

We retire within ourselves. In our confusion, we shut the Lord out and with Him all our comfort and strength. With steps weighted down with one doubt after another, we descend into a deeper and deeper misery. His faithfulness, his loving kindness, his ability to rule in our affairs are all things doubtful now. There is hardly one attribute of our glorious Lord we do not question. “If thou hadst been here; we trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel; fails His mercy evermore?” We have cut ourselves off from Heaven and now have become a prey to Hell. Only too well does our enemy see our disadvantage, and punctual to the moment does he make use of it. A child of God is tempted to deny his Lord, and Satan is to provide the words of that denial. “Does God

really hear prayer? Did God ever answer your prayers? Where is your God now gone?" So cleverly does the Old Serpent set these questions that for the moment you are not sure who it is that asks them, and in the confusion, you rashly imagine that the words are God's and that the voice is your own. "There is no hope for you in God," he urges. And how well does he know where to place the emphasis. "*For you*," he repeats, and as one forsaken, you find yourself replying, "It seems indeed that there is no help for me in God." Then the emphasis is changed. "No help for you *in God*," and if no help in God then there is help nowhere. For a soul under the handicap of a cloud and fighting for its very life—its faith—no news could be worse. You feel you are alone.

The cloud separates. Effectively, the cloud hides both friend and enemy; recognition of faces is impossible. Guilt past and present rises up before you. You feel guilty of deserting God as you feel yourself deserted. Who can live in the cold of this desolating isolation? Oh, the loneliness of a soul thus separated from its Lord. Yet, take courage—a voice of glorious assurance is on the way, and when it speaks its message will be for you; yes, for you alone.

The cloud remains, but into fear, isolation and torpidity, comes the voice. "This is my Beloved Son, hear ye him." With what sweet authority it commands attention. What does God say about His Son and you? He speaks of recovery through your hearing from Him. Listen: "If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Away in that cloudless land where truth and mercy melt in everlasting embrace "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." He has gone from your sight, but not from your interests—no, not for a moment. There, employed on your behalf, the Father is well pleased with both the Pleader and his plea. Rest in this. The lands of cloud, and of sunshine, are both of Him who is your advocate; and all is well everywhere. Your justification and your right to adoption in Christ's name, are things which cannot be hid from the Father's sight.

Deep unto deep doth call, and cloud calleth to cloud. "Hear ye him." "Darkness was over all the land until the ninth hour." "This is the hour of the powers of Darkness." From the darkness of the Father's holy and loving decision, from that darkness of your own sin's making, from that darkness of the Son's merciful choosing, comes a voice—a voice awful in its unfathomable isolation: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" It is the voice of the beloved Son, in whom He is well pleased. Hear ye him, yes, hear him well, for that same cloud that hid the Father's face was none other than the darkness of your sin's sure wage. Hear the testimony that comes from the cloud—that cloud was the frown of a Just God upon *you*. He, the Son, has occupied the cloud for you, and well do the words testify that it is He who turns the shadow of death into the morning.

There on the cross, your darkness was occupied by Him who clothes himself with light as with a garment, and the infinite glory of His brightness has dispelled forever the deep cloud of your sin's earning. Hear ye him, who as the Sun of Righteousness, now rises with His people into a cloudless and everlasting justification. Hear ye him: "There is now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the

flesh but after the spirit." Hear ye the glorious attestation put in his mouth and your ears by the Judge: "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more . . . I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions." Hear ye him: "The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sin."

He is with you now. To purchase a sure state of redemption and you in it, is indeed something to rejoice in, but His love has gone further. The protecting arm flung over you in redemption is directed by love, and love yearns for its object. He shuts you securely in the dark and then comes in to abide with you. "Certainly I will be with you." Hear ye him: "Darkness hideth not from him." It is not your sight of Him, but His sight of you that is the important thing. However dense the cloud and however much hidden from you, the Father beholds Him with you. There is no cloud on His glorious sufficiency as He is enthroned in glory and the Father sees no cloud on that same sufficiency as it with you on earth anywhere. All the sufficiency of His Saviourhood is with you. The cloud has changed your *sense* of things, but that is all. His love, sufficiency and presence remain unchanged. "Hear ye him."

There is no cloud on that work attested by the Father, as completed, no cloud on that frank face that forgives all, no cloud on the promise that He will see you again and that your heart will rejoice. There is a land which is eternally cloudless because it is curseless. The Beloved has gone in to possess this good land for us. He is our trustee and our title in Him is without a cloud. More than that, it is with ineffable delight that the Father recognises our title in Him. Everywhere, on cloudy hill-top or deepest vale, wherever the Son as Saviour makes Himself known, the Father is well pleased with Him. The ordination of the cloud includes His reservation of a place for Himself in it with you. You may have to go down deep before you contact the everlasting arms, but God's "underneath" is always at a level lower than any cloud. Under all clouds is the covenant ordered in all things and sure, and the impossibility where-with your God cannot lie, marks the same impossibility by which He is bound not to forsake you. His covenant includes your cloud and your Saviour in it with you, and at its centre, the darkest cloud is bright through the presence of your covenanted Saviour. "Hear ye him."—*Penuel.*

The helmet is of continual use. We shall need it as long as our war with sin and Satan lasts. The Christian is not beneath Hope, so long as above ground; nor above Hope so long as he is beneath heaven. Indeed, when once he enters the gates of that glorious city, then farewell Hope, and welcome Love, for ever. He may say with the holy martyr: "Armour becomes earth, but robes heaven." Hope goes into the field, and waits on the Christian till the last battle be fought, and the field cleared; and then Faith and Hope together carry him in the chariot of the promise to heaven's door, where they deliver up his soul into the hands of Love and Joy, which stand ready to conduct him into the blissful presence of God.—*William Gurnall.*

The Rose of Sharon.*

By the late Rev. D. MACDONALD, Shieldaig.

THE rose does not send forth its fragrance merely when it is growing, it sends it forth specially when it is bruised; then its perfume fills the air. And so, when Christ in His humiliation went forward to atone for the sins of His people, and was bruised in soul and body in their room and stead, the sweet odour that arose from that bruising filled the heart of Jehovah with indescribable satisfaction and delight. Spices were laid on the Old Testament sacrifices, so that when the sacrifice was burned on the altar the odour of the spices filled the air. When the fire of Divine wrath kindled by Divine Justice took hold of the blessed Sacrifice on Calvary, the spices of holiness, of love and of submission, that dwelt in the holy soul of the ever-blessed Victim, sent forth such a fragrance as that it reached the very Throne of God. Jehovah inhaled that fragrance and was satisfied, yea, Jehovah feasted with joy on that sweet fragrance! The holy angels who ever worship and adore, felt that fragrance and sought "to look into" whence it arose. The saints in glory who had been redeemed and saved in virtue of that coming Sacrifice were refreshed by that sweet odour. A wave of wonder and praise filled their glorified spirits. And the Church of God on earth when it is under a gale of the Spirit, it too apprehends something of that fragrance. Yes, friends, the Spirit of God sometimes has wafted something of this sweet odour to poor longing souls in seeking access to the Lord; yea, has wafted to some souls in Scotland even in our day, a savour of that very fragrance that arose from Calvary to the heart of God! Oh! did a breathing of it ever pass through your soul?

The late Mr. William Bruce, Elder, Bruandale.

IN many parts of the visible Church of Christ Jesus in this dark day, those who fear, love and serve Him sincerely are few in number—indeed a little flock. To them the Saviour's precious and sweet words are addressed, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," and they are given the fullness of the blessing of the Kingdom when the gates of death are opened unto them to enter the glory of heaven.

We have good reason to believe that Mr. Bruce inherited this divine promise when he died on Wednesday, the 13th day of July, 1949, at the ripe age of 81 years. He was born in the district of Thrumster, several miles south of Wick, Caithness, on 13th June, 1868; and lived all his days in his native county. He resided at Bruandale for many years, where he died.

Mr. Bruce as a Christian was one who manifested that he relied by a living faith on the glorious Redeemer and His atoning blood for the salvation and comfort of his guilty soul. He walked according to the doctrine of the Gospel of His Lord and Master; and was indeed faithful and most consistent in his attachment to the testimony for Truth on the part of the Free Presbyterian Church. In his private life and as father of a family, he ruled his own house according to the principles and counsels of

* Extract from a Sermon.

God's Word applicable to parents and family life. The Bible and sound profitable literature were given their own proper places, he himself being a constant and highly intelligent reader. He had a special regard for the Sabbath Day. From our personal knowledge of him as a friend, he was amiable and constant, and during eighteen years of friendship, we cannot recall one instance of anything savouring of unfriendly feeling. Our departed friend was ordained an elder by his former pastor, Rev. Donald Beaton, to whom he was deeply attached. This took place on the 1st of June, 1925, so that he held the office for 25 years. He was capable and most useful in the discharge of his duties, and evidenced a wide and spiritual knowledge of the Scriptures when conducting services in the absence of the minister, services which were always most acceptable to the people. Of course during his latter years he was not fit for such public duties.

The ways of Zion do mourn because of the removal of such men from the earth. May the Lord therefore stir up His people to be more zealous for His glory and the prosperity of the Gospel, and awaken and convert sinners among us to stand in the breaches made by death. We extend our sincere sympathy to Mrs. Bruce, the widow, and each member of the family and other relatives. We commend them to God and the Word of His grace.—*R.R.S.*

The Pilgrim's Rest.

Why should pilgrims yield to fear,
They who know the Saviour's love,
They who feel His presence near,
And His watchful kindness prove?

Earth to them is not a home,
Cares and thorns beset their way;
But a happier land they seek,
One of bright unclouded day.

Soon its shores their souls will gain,
Soon from sin they will be freed;
Feel no longer care or pain,
Trouble, conflict, want or need.

Every fear will then be o'er,
Every sorrow then will cease;
Sin and suffering known no more,
Pilgrims! ye will rest in peace.

Hush ye then each anxious thought,
Quell each fearful, trembling sigh;
Fix your hopes on Canaan's joys,
Joys which only bloom on high.

To your Saviour's mercy cling,
On His promises depend,
Till in Canaan's rest ye sing,
Anthems which shall never end.

Anon.

Searmon.

Leis an Urr. TOMAS HALIBURTON

(Air a leantainn bho t.d. 137.)

5. Tha sinn ag ràdh, uime sin, thugaibh an aire; faicibh nach tig sibh dlùth do Bhòrd an Tighearn: oir, mar is beo an Tighearn, ma thig, tuitidh mallachd an Tighearn oirbh: ithidh sibh agus òlaidh sibh breitheanas dhuibh fein, do bhrìgh nach eil sibh a deanamh aithne air corp an Tighearn. Cha'n fhaic daoine dall so, agus mar sin tha sibhse. Na beanaibh, uime sin, tha sinn a guidhe oirbh, ris na nithibh naomh so; oir earson a bheannadh sibh riutha chum 'ur leoin?

6. Nach faca sibh riamh Iosa? An sin cha'n fhaca sibh riamh sealladh a b' fhiach fhaicinn; cha'n fhaca sibh riamh nì a dh' aotromaicheadh 'ur 'n eallach de chiont', agus ged nach eil sibh a faireachadh a chudthrom an tràth-so, a bheir fodha sibh ann an ifrinn mar a toir esan dhibh e. Cha'n fhac sibh nì rachadh eadar sibh agus fearg, fearg Dhe, a tha ullamh gu briseadh a mach na lasair n'ur n'aghaidh, agus 'ur losgadh anns an ifrinn is iochdraich': Cha'n fhac sibh aon is urrainn 'ur saoradh a mach a laimh an diabhuil, a tha riaghladh ann an cloinn na h-easùhlachd, na 's urrainn a bhi ceannsachadh na'n ana-miannaibh ceannairceach a tha cogadh an aghaidh 'ur n'anamaibh; a dh'aon fhocal, cha'n fhac sibh aon a tha comasach 'ur n'anamaibh a shaoradh; agus ciod a bhuannachd a th'ann do dhuine ged a choisneadh e'n saoghal agus anam a chall? An urrainn sibh saoghal a ghiullain leibh do'n uaigh? An toir saoghal comhfhurtachd dhuibh ann an ifrinn? An ceannaich saoghal neamh? An urrainn saoghal anam a shaoradh bho shlabhruidhean tiugh dorchadais leis am bi peacaich air an ceangal gu sìorruidh? Cha'n urrainn. Tha saorsa an anama priseil sguridh e'm feasd. Cha'n urrainn uile ainglean neamh, a h-uile naomh a tha shuas, na nùle saoghal, aon anam a tha aon uair caillte a thoirt air àis.

7. Nach faca sibh riamh Iosa? An sin cha'n fhac sibh riamh neach a tha gu neo-chriochnach cho maith fhaicinn. Ciod e, an abair sibh, esan mu'n bheil thu labhairt cho mòr? Am bheil sibh a cheart da-rìreadh ann a bhi cur na ceisd? Na nach eil? Mur eil, tha e neo-fheumail 'ur freagairt, ach ma tha, O nach robh teanga dhaoine agus aingeal agam gu bhì'g ìnnseadh dhuibh co e. O gu'n tugadh Dia dhomh mo mhiann. Gu'n cuireadh e'm farsuinneachd mo chridhe teann gu bhi gabhail beachd ceart agus mòr air Crìosd iongantach. O gu'm fuasgladh e teanga cheangailt' agus gu'm fosgladh e bilean dùinnt'. An sin labhruinn agus dh'ìnn sinn mu Iosa Crìosd; agus mu'r a b'urrainn mi innse ciod e, gidheadh dh'ìnn sinn, ann an tomhas, na shasuicheadh neach a bhitheadh ann am fìrinn ga iarruidh, agus bheirinn orra-san a tha fanoid a bhi da-rìreadh. Am bheil sibh a feorach ciod e, agus co e, Iosa? Tha mi'g ràdh ribh gu'r e Iongantach is ainm dha. Is e dealradh glòir an Athar e, agus fìor ìomhaigh a phearsa, àilleagan sìorruidh a bhroillich: 's e Mac an duine e, 'ur bràthair as sine; cnàimh dhe 'ur cnàimh agus feoil dhe 'ur feoil: is e Imanuel, Dia maille rùnn: Dia air fhoillseachadh anns an fheoil, air fhìreannachd anns an Spiorad, air fhaicinn le ainglean, air creidsinn ann anns an t-saoghal, agus air a ghabhail suas gu glòir. Is e an talamh

air a thoirt suas gu neamh, agus neamh air a thoirt a nuas chùm na talamhuinn: is e an duine sin is e companach Tighearn nan sluagh: is e Dia e an cruth seirbhiseach: is e an Amen agus an fhianuis dhileas, fàidh mòr agus comhairlich iongantach no h-eaglais: is e àrd-bhuachail nan caorach: is e fear-treorachaidh nan dall, agus prionnsa nan searmon-aichean: is e àrd-shagart glòrmhor ar n-aidmheil, an Tighearn ar fireantachd-ne, an lagh air a choimhlionadh, mallachd an lagh, iobairt-reitich air son peacaidhean an t-saoghail, Uan Dhé, firinn nan uile iobairtean, caithir nan gràs, a chathair-thròcair fhior, agus fear-tagraidh glòrmhor na h-eaglais: Is e Rìgh Shìoin, ceannard ar slàinte, ceann na h-eaglais, Slànuighear pheacach chailte, uachdaran rìghrean na talamhuinn, bàs a bhàis, fear-buaidh an t-saoghail, an diabhuil agus na feola, Fear-saoraidh thràillean Shàtain, fear-tabhairt lagha na h-eaglais, am prionnsa a tha air àrdachadh gu bhli toirt tiodhlacan do cheannaireich, aithreachas agus maitheanas do pheacaich. Ciod tuilleadh a their mi uime? Is e an t-Athair sìorruidh, an Dia cumhachdach, Prionnsa na sìth, miann nan uile chinneach, oighre nan uile nithean, tiodhlac do-labhairt Dhé, grian na fireantachd, an aiseirigh agus a bheatha, Iongantas nan aingeal, cuis-eagail nan diabhul, solus an t-saoghail, lòchran neamh, agus na sholus siùbhlaidh na h-uile chinneach a bhitheas air an saoradh, agus bithidh e na òran sìorruidh do uile shaor-dhaoine an Tighearn. Is e so esan, O pheacaichibh dhall, a roghnaich sibh an saoghal air thoiseach air, agus bhur 'n ana-miannaibh salach agus an diabhul. Is e so esan a tha sùil agaibh ri e thighinn a nuas a lìonadh an tighe so le a ghlòir, agus aoidheachd a thoirt dha chairdean aig a chuir rioghail. Ach co ghiùllaineas a theachd? An dàna leibh-se a thruaghanaibh a dheanamh? An dàna leibh amhare air 's an aghaidh?

8. Anns an ait mu dheireadh, tha sinn ag radh ribh, am bheil sibh fhathasd gun mhiann agaibh fhaicinn a tighinn a "leumnaich air na beanntaibh, a toirt sìthidh air na tulaichibh," a tha eadar Dia agus sibh? An sin tha sinn ag ràdh ribh nach urrainn sinn innse, 's nach urrainn sibhse innse, nach dean an Crìosd neo-fhaicsinneach so a lamh chumhachdach a thogail, agus buille neo-fhaicsinneach a thoirt dhuibh a sgriosas sibh gu sìorruidh: faodaidh e ràdh ribh, "Coidlibh air adhart"; agus an sin, ged a shearmonaicheadh ainglean dhuibh, ged a bhitheadh na bagraidhean a tàirneanachadh fearg gu uamhas cuid eil, ged a bhitheadh an tìr 's am bheil 'ur còmhnuidh, air chrith le feirg Dhé; seadh, ged a bhitheadh uile sgreadan agus ghlaodh na tha damnaicht' mu'n cuairt oirbh, cha dùisg sibh gu bràth gus an dùisg lasraichean ifrinn sibh. Ma tha sibh na'r dùisg agus gu bheil miannaibh air bith agaibh, an sin, thugaibh aire dha ciod e sin.

(Ri leantainn.)

Christian minister, let thy reproof be as sharp as thou wilt, thy spirit must be meek; thou must not denounce wrath in wrath, lest sinners think thou wishest their misery; but rather with tenderness, that they may see it is no pleasing work.—*Gurnall*.

Notes and Comments.

The National Financial Crisis.

During the month of October, members of the Government and others in authority, warned the nation of the seriousness of the financial and economic state of affairs, inasmuch as the nation was not paying its way. The problem really presented was how to avoid complete national bankruptcy and a much lower standard of living than at present, for all classes. Mr. Attlee, the Prime Minister, after consultation with the rest of the Cabinet, made a declaration in Parliament, on the 24th of October, announcing proposals to help cure the situation, by putting in force national economies, in varied directions, to the amount of £250 million. In a radio speech he charged some workers with only doing the minimum, not caring and absenting themselves unnecessarily from duty. He said to the nation: "We have a great opportunity to set things right. Let us seize it." Throughout all the reports from Parliament of these momentous happenings, we have read not even a hint respecting the downward trend of the people of Britain in transgression of the Law of God and disregard for the Lord Jesus Christ and His Word and Gospel. It is evident that we are completely ignoring God and His claims upon us, and are increasingly provoking the Majesty of heaven to anger. Our failure to recognise the financial crisis as a heavy, sharp rod to punish us, means that this rod in God's holy hand may become heavier still. Indeed it has been predicted by some politicians and writers that the financial crisis in its full severity, is yet to come. God is judge of men and nations, and is not to be mocked. May we learn righteousness as a people and that speedily, and turn to God "to set things right."

Aberdeen Minister and Ignorance of the Scriptures.

The Rev. J. R. Dey, convener of the Home Mission Committee of the Church of Scotland Presbytery of Aberdeen, is reported in the press on 2nd November as saying: "Ministers are no longer justified in assuming that people know the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes and familiar parables. What could they do about this? The key to the problem lay very largely in the homes of the people. Parents must no longer seek to evade their responsibility for the religious training of their children by leaving it to the teachers in the day or Sunday school." These words are indeed true and disclose what prevails throughout Scotland, largely as a fruit of unfaithfulness and worldliness on the part of many professed ministers of the Gospel and thousands of men and women who are members in full communion in churches. Are those who receive baptism for their children required to solemnly promise to read the Bible in their homes and with their families? Do ministers, office-bearers and members throughout the Church of Scotland, as professing Christians, hold daily family worship in their homes, consisting principally of reading the Scriptures and prayer? There were over one million and a quarter *communicants* in the Church of Scotland during 1947. Truly a large percentage of Scotland's population! It is surely not unjust or rash to infer, that if all these were familiar with the daily reading of the Bible in their homes, as they ought to be, then the Rev. J. R. Dey, of Aberdeen, and others would have less cause for the aforesaid sad and serious complaints and strictures in relation to Scotland's present irreligion.

Church Buildings and Exemption from Rates.

Under an Act of Parliament, Church buildings and Church halls are exempt from payment of local rates, so long as the buildings are used for public worship and the halls, in addition, for charitable or educational purposes. Under the Act, Church buildings cannot be used for organ recitals, concerts, presentation of dramatic performances, including Nativity plays, or displays of films, etc., if exemption from payment of local rates is desired. This has been pointed out to the Edinburgh Presbytery of the Church of Scotland in a letter from the Town Clerk. He further reminds the Presbytery that, "For some time there has been a growing tendency by congregations to use their Church buildings for purposes other than public worship." This, the Town Clerk declared, is contrary to the regulations governing the Churches' exemption from payment of local rates. From the press report of this business, at the beginning of November, it appeared that certain members of the above Presbytery were not prepared to agree with the Town Clerk or the Act of Parliament, on the interpretation of the law as to when Church activities were "public worship" or not. Our view of the Act of Parliament in its application here is, that it has administered a sound and much-needed rebuke to the widespread embracing of carnal and worldly activities within the Church of Scotland. What have concerts, yea dances and card-playing, and dramatic plays to do with the worship of God, the *preaching* of the Gospel of Christ Jesus, the conversion of sinners and the comforting of believing and godly persons? Well, when Church buildings are used for these worldly purposes, let them be rated, and congregations made to pay, as others who use their buildings for similar purposes without the covering of a dead, useless religion.

The Death of Pastor J. Fraanje, Holland.

Our readers who read in a recent issue of our magazine, the "Address by a Dutch Pastor," will, we believe, regret the passing away of this pious man and faithful minister of the Gospel of Christ, Pastor J. Fraanje. In a letter to Mr. R. R. Sinclair, London, his son, Joost Fraanje, tells that his father died on the 3rd of September last, and further writes, "Then he was saved from all diseases and pain and delivered from sins and miseries and is allowed to glorify his King and Lord for ever in Eternity . . . So the prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended. These words from Psalm lxxii, 20, he read for us some weeks before he died." We sympathise with our Dutch friends, although we have not met them in person. Their loss is our loss in Scotland, when God's redeemed and praying people are removed from the Church on earth.

"Prayer is the arrow; love the bow that sends it forth; and faith the hand that draws the bow; but when the bow is not strong, or the hand feeble that draws it, the arrow must needs fall short of the mark."—*Job Tookie, an English Dissenter, 1616-1670.*

Church Notes.

Communions.

December—First Sabbath, London. *January*—Fifth Sabbath, Inverness. *February*—First Sabbath, Dingwall; third, Stornoway; fourth, N. Uist. *March*—Second Sabbath, Ness and Portree; third, Finsbay; fourth, Kinlochbervie and N. Tolsta. *April*—First Sabbath, Stoer, Portnalong and Breaslete; second, Fort William and London; third, Greenock; fourth, Glasgow; fifth, Wick.

London F.P. Communion Services.

The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, London Congregation, Eccleston Hall, Eccleston Street, Buckingham Palace Road, London, S.W.1. In connection with the dispensation of the Lord's Supper on Sabbath, 4th December, the following services have been arranged (D.V.) to be conducted by the Rev. James MacLeod, Greenock, and the Rev. D. J. Matheson, Glasgow:—Thursday, 1st December, 7 p.m.; Friday, 2nd December, 3.30 p.m. (Gaelic), 7 p.m. (Fellowship Meeting); Saturday, 3rd December, 3.30 p.m. and 6.30 p.m. (Prayer Meeting); Sabbath, 4th December, 11 a.m., 3.30 p.m. (Gaelic), and 7 p.m.; Monday, 5th December, 3.30 p.m. (Gaelic), and 7 p.m.

Services are held every Sabbath at 11 a.m., 3.45 p.m. (Gaelic), and 7 p.m. Weekly Prayer Meeting, Wednesday, 7 p.m.

Congregational Financial Statements.

Congregational Treasurers are reminded that their Financial Statements for the year ending 31st December, 1949, after being audited, are due to be sent to respective Presbyteries, through the Clerks, for examination.

Deacons' Court and Kirk Session Records.

Deacons' Court and Kirk Session Records from each Congregation should be presented to the Presbytery concerned for examination at the beginning of 1950, preferably at the same time as Financial Statements.

Magazine Subscription Form.

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When God afflicts His saints, it is to try their "precious faith." Afflictions are His spade and mattock, by which He digs into His people's hearts to find out the gold of faith.—*Gurnall*.

Acknowledgment of Donations.

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