

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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No. 6

A Strong Tower.

"THE name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it and is safe." How thoroughly would the significance of this passage be understood and appreciated by men and women of Old Testament times. In the warlike conditions then prevailing each village required its strong tower, to the safety of which all the inhabitants fled on the first approach of danger. The godly man has his refuge also. In times of spiritual danger he turns to the name of the Lord. This is his strong tower. Its gates stand open to receive him, and as he enters they close behind him. Its walls encircle him and he abides in safety. When faith is in lively exercise such running is easy, for by faith alone is it possible. Faith is that which knows the name of the Lord, and, knowing it, trusts in it; for "they that know Thy name, they will put their trust in Thee." To run is the function of faith in times of spiritual danger; not to run anywhere, but to the safety of the Tower. This running to safety is not cowardice; it is such running as alone fits for facing the danger and triumphing over it. Many shun godliness because they think it will make cowards of them. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. Where in the annals of any country is there such a list of heroes at all comparable with the 11th chapter of Hebrews?

These were men of faith and women of faith. Their courage was the courage of faith, and "by it they subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions." They believed in God: His name was their strong tower, having run into it they were safe—safe even when they were being stoned, sawn asunder, tempted, slain with the sword. That which provides security in such circumstances is surely a strong tower, and the name of the Lord is just such a tower. As a name distinguishes between different persons, so His name distinguishes Him from all false gods and He appears revealed as the One Living and True God. By His name He makes himself known among men, for the name of God is a revelation *by Himself of Himself*, and in it He shows forth His being,

character, perfections, acts, relationships, and glory. Who other than Himself could know what He is, or by searching find Him out? In the name of God lies the safety of His people, and when he gives peace who shall then make trouble? For the name of God is a tower, strong with the infinite strength of Jehovah.

That name he has written across the vast expanse of Creation, and in the marvellous works of Providence. There His Eternal Power and Godhead are written in characters sufficiently clear to leave atheism and idolatry utterly without excuse. But as the *high and strong tower of His people's salvation* it is in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments that it has pleased the Lord to write His name. The whole Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, is a progressive filling in of the name of the Lord—a name which in its fullness is made up of many precious names, each one contributing its own measure to the making known of the Infinite and Eternal One who is far beyond and above all measure. For us this name is none other than "Our Lord Jesus Christ," "the Word made flesh and dwelling among us," "God manifest in the flesh." And this is the righteous man's strong tower.

But who is this righteous man? Who is this highly privileged one? How comes he by such a title and character? Why, in the first instance, it comes to him in the very act of running into the name of the Lord as his high tower. He runs because he has *no* righteousness, and he runs unto the name of the Lord *in order to get* righteousness. As a guilty, lost sinner, utterly devoid of righteousness, he runs unto the name of the Lord—the "Lord our Righteousness," for "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth"; and running unto Him is believing on Him, and being found in Him, not having our own righteousness but being clothed upon with His righteousness which is the "Righteousness of God." He runs because he must, constraint and dire necessity are laid upon him; he flees from the wrath to come, from those sins that search him out, from the accusations of a guilty conscience, from the awful curse of a holy law, from the wrath of an offended God. In the gospel of the free grace of God he finds an open door, and above it an invitation beckoning him on and assuring him of welcome, "Come unto me, I will give you rest," "And him that cometh I will in no wise cast out," and entering in he finds forgiveness, peace, security; for in Christ Jesus the name of the Lord is a strong tower, "and there is therefore now no condemnation."

But the righteous man has a further cause for fear and concern. There is that of grace in him that hates sin, that hates his own sin and sinfulness, that hates the body of sin and death which is his natural fallen self. He becomes increasingly aware of its presence and workings as his knowledge of himself increases—pride, unbelief,

hypocrisy, deceit, worldliness—an evil heart of unbelief, desperately wicked, the whole bent of which is to depart from the Living God. And whither shall he flee from this further terror? How shall he escape *from himself*? Shall he go to Church? Shall he go to his Bible? Shall he go to prayer? By all means, but still he cannot escape from *himself*; and this evil heart of his turns worship into hypocrisy, prayer into formality and unbelief seals his Bible and he cannot get in it what he would. Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death—this body of death which is myself? Is there no escape from the wretchedness, the fears, the anxiety? Oh, yes, there is. “I thank God through our Lord Jesus Christ,” for the name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth out of self, away from self, into it, *and is safe*, for Christ is not only the justification of all who believe in Him, but he is also their sanctification, for this is His name, “Who of God is made unto us sanctification,” and I suppose this is in part what Paul means when he says, “I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

By some mysterious yet most effective way the high tower has come to be within himself, separating by all the power of the cross between his soul—his real self, Christ in him, his life—and this body of corruption within him, which is his natural self, and from which he seeks to flee. There is no absolute and complete sanctification in this life, and as long as a particle of sinful self remains there must be the constant exercise of running out of self into Christ by way of the cross which will keep the true believer active to the end of his days, then “the souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves until the resurrection.”

The Paths of Righteousness.

“He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.”
—(Ps. xxiii: 3.)

Preached at Winnipeg, Canada, on Sabbath morning, February 10, 1952

By REV. A. F. MACKAY.

THIS psalm was evidently composed by David at a time when the thoughts and pastoral scenes described in the psalm were fresh in his mind, perhaps in his youth while he tended the flocks of his father. The psalmist had many opportunities of observing the ways of the sheep under his care, and it was natural for the “Sweet Psalmist of Israel” to think of the Lord’s care of himself and to express his thankfulness to Him for tending his wants and watching over his ways. He says, “The Lord is my shepherd”

—the Lord, the Shepherd of Israel, who bears this relationship to His own people of a shepherd to his flock. As a shepherd tends his flock, waters, feeds, pastures and preserves them, so the Lord takes upon His own care the lambs and sheep of His flock.

First of all he alludes to the provision that the shepherd makes for the flock—"I shall not want; he makes me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters." The shepherd, in putting forth his flock to the hillside in the very early morning, went before them, and when the sun rose at midday, brought them back into a place of shade and pasture, where they might lie down during the heat of the day in cool pastures to rest and quench their thirst from the still waters or sheep pools. The Lord provides likewise for His people. They will never want, for the provision God has made is rich and abundant and suitable. There are the green pastures, the wide fields and rich feeding places of His own Word. "Tell me," says the Church, "where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon," and the answer the Shepherd gives is, "Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents." He leads them by the still waters of His promises in the Word of Life where they may refresh themselves, for the Lord takes upon His care those who belong to His flock and tends each one of them. He waters and refreshes them with His own presence. "He restoreth my soul." The flock exposed to the heat of the sun need protection. God refreshes and restores the parched souls of His people. "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake." The shepherd brought forth his flock by the well-known paths which led to the pastures, and those paths were well-worn and well-defined and familiar so that the flock might not wander or be cut down by foxes or fall by the wayside. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." The Lord will lead him in a sure path. He will keep him in the time of danger, even in the valley of the shadow of death. He will fear no evil for He is with him. His presence will go with him. His rod of defence and His staff of protection will be given him. They who belong to the flock of Christ are delivered from all fears—from the fear of death, the fear of judgment, the fear of reprobation, because the presence of God surrounds them, promising them defence from all enemies and deliverance from all evils.

The psalmist then speaks of the shepherd providing defence for his flock even in the very presence of their enemies as he leads them into the pastures. The shepherd preserves his flock from their natural enemies by surrounding them with his own protecting care, so that the wolf or fox will not break through to destroy them. They will be pastured beside quiet resting places even in the presence of their enemies. "Thou anointest my head with oil." Here is evidently an allusion to the healing of bruises or sores upon the head. The inward work of the Spirit will make the face to shine as with fresh oil and do good like a medicine. "My cup runneth over." The psalmist had experienced much of the Lord's goodness in protecting him from his enemies. How often he was surrounded by enemies and how often the Lord's presence was with him and preserved him and blessed him, healing his diseases and strengthening

him in his weakness. The Lord's goodness was poured out upon him until he was weighed down with a sense of the richness and greatness of the divine goodness towards him.

The psalm concludes with a firm and confident hope for the future. "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." As the Lord has been with His people in the past, He will be with them in the future. The world has not this promise, but those who belong to the flock of Christ have received at some time in their lives some special marks of the Lord's kindness to them and these indicate that the Lord will keep them as long as they are here, and receive them into His kingdom and presence at last. He will follow them with goodness and mercy all their days and at last they will have their dwelling in the house of God.

Let us turn now for a short time to the words of the third verse of this psalm: "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake." There are three things I would like to notice as we meditate with the Lord's help upon these words: The Person spoken of in the psalm; the guidance given the flock; and the purpose the shepherd has in view.

1. The shepherd to whom the psalmist refers in these words is the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ stands in this relationship to his people—that of the shepherd to the flock. The Lord is spoken of in the Old Testament as the Shepherd of Israel. The Lord Jesus Christ has taken up this name and declared that he is the Shepherd and his people the flock. In the 10th chapter of the Gospel according to John we have a clear New Testament commentary upon this psalm. There the Saviour speaks of himself as the shepherd, not an hireling to whom the sheep will not listen, but the true shepherd who stays by his flock, leads them and preserves them. The Lord Jesus Christ is the good shepherd who blesses His people, and under His protecting care the psalmist felt secure and safe, for he was under His staff and preserved by His rod, and His presence delivered him from every fear. The psalmist could claim that the Lord was his shepherd.

Christ has a special right and claim to those who are His sheep. They are His because He has redeemed them. Not only do the sheep confess that He is their Lord, that He is their shepherd, but they regard Him as their saviour and He looks upon them and says, "They are mine." They are the people of His pasture, the sheep of His hand, the right He exercises over them being that of redemption. "I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." Those who belong to the flock of Christ have been redeemed from their sins and have been made His by the love and mercy and pity He showed them when, by His almighty power, He delivered them from destruction. He bought them at a great price—the price of His own sufferings and blood, the price of redemption—and they became His. Over them He claims the right of possession. "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price." They are, however, not entirely His in this life. To some extent they continue to give service to sin, for corruption is still strong within them, but they have been delivered from the ruling power of sin and will yet finally be saved. They are the sheep of Christ, for they have tokens and indications of the grace of Christ within them that they belong to Him. They may take to

themselves these marks and tokens by which the Lord's people are distinguished in scripture, and with boldness and confidence may claim Christ as their saviour and confess that they are His sheep.

He guides them. Christ Himself says, "My sheep hear My voice and they follow Me." They hear the voice of the Shepherd and follow his guidance. They pasture in the fields He has appointed them. They are fed with food convenient for them. Their thirst is satisfied with the waters from the fountain. "He that drinketh of the water that I shall give him will never thirst." This, said the Shepherd, in speaking of the Spirit that He would pour out upon them—the Spirit who would be within them a fountain, a spring of living water flowing out unto eternal life.

He cleanses them daily from iniquity and however sin may cleave to them, they have a hunger and thirst for righteousness for which the Lord calls them blessed, and promises that they will be filled. They cannot, my friends, enjoy fully in this life what they seek. They cannot be satisfied in this world, but they have the hunger and thirst that will one day be fully satisfied in the presence of Christ in heaven. They complain that the cause is indwelling sin. Often they feel that they can see nothing in themselves to lead them to think that they are Christ's, but when Christ himself appears and says to them: "Fear not for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine"—then they can rejoice in Him.

He protects them from their enemies. He will hedge them round as a vineyard that is fenced, as a garden enclosed, or a fountain sealed. They are prepared and made meet for the master's use, not for the service of this world. As they become His servants, He preserves and watches over them in time of danger. How often did the Lord do this for David. Though an army of thousands sought his life, David was safe in their very midst. Not only so, but King Saul was shamed into confessing, "Is that thy voice, my son David? I have sinned; return my son David; for I will no more do thee harm."

But lastly, just as He has redeemed them from sin and made them His people, He acts towards them the part of the good shepherd. He makes provision for their needs. Not only does He redeem them from sin, from the dominion of lust and corruption, but He meets all their needs in this life—temporal and spiritual. The covenant provision He has made for them will satisfy them. He gives them a spiritual foretaste of the blessings of heaven till they say that they are abundantly satisfied with the goodness of His house.

2. This is the good shepherd of the sheep, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the psalmist says of Him, "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness."

Let us notice that these are the paths—the Lord's paths—in which the divine righteousness is revealed and made known. All the ways of the Lord are uprightness and truth, the paths which He treads Himself. The ways of the Lord are from everlasting, for the counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations. The changeless and unchanging ways of Jehovah are revealed to us in the word of truth, in the revelation He has given of Himself. "I know the way that I take."

He knows the paths that He treads, the ways that He takes, and these we can be assured are paths of righteousness, those ways in which the Lord is to be found, the paths that He pursues which are revealed to us in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. We need the unction from the Holy One to discern these paths for His ways are past finding out. Clouds and darkness are round about Him, yet righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne. Although we are ignorant of Him and cannot understand His ways, yet He is light and in Him is no darkness at all. No evil can come from His presence. No sin is tolerated in His sight. He is the glorious God who inhabits eternity itself. He is to-day the same unchanging God He has been from the beginning of the creation and no change can overtake Him. He is still the same God pursuing the same paths of righteousness from which He will never turn aside, nor will He depart from the holiness of His judgments. How great therefore is our need to ponder our steps, for the just God will weigh the path of the just. He will give His enemies the wages of sin, but to the righteous the expected reward. The ways of the Lord are revealed in His own Word. Here is the perfect standard of righteousness by which our thoughts and words and characters will be judged. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." His word is a bright light that shines in darkness, revealing the righteousness and justice and truth and holiness of Jehovah, and exposing our sin and shortcomings as well.

From these righteous ways of Jehovah we have been closed out by sin. Yet Christ in mercy and grace has reopened these paths in which to lead His people. Let us notice that although God is a God of uprightness, of justice, of righteousness, and holiness, yet He has revealed Himself as the God of all grace in whom compassions flow, who will have mercy upon the unworthy. But still He is, above all, righteous and just and no blessing, my friends, can come to us, no gift can be bestowed upon us, no mercy shown us but as they are consistent with the righteousness of God. He is righteous in all that He does, in all the ways that He takes, and He is righteous when He shows mercy and does saving good to poor, perishing sinners. This is the mystery of the Lord's ways to us—that God, the glorious God of eternity, can forgive sin and be just when He justifies the ungodly. Although He is the God who is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look upon iniquity, yet at the same time He is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is He who sent forth His only begotten son in His own great name to save. Christ came into this world to seek and to save that which was lost. He came as the Messenger of the Covenant and the Servant of Jehovah, and in suffering and laying down His life, He did so in accordance with the just and upright ways of God, that the righteousness of God might be revealed in the Gospel even more clearly than in the law. He is still the same God of infinite righteousness and justice, even while He is showing mercy to the unrighteous and forgiving sin and receiving the unworthy and the undone. That is the hope of the gospel. That is the only way in which we can expect forgiveness and acceptance. God will never change, but He has revealed that He does not need to change in order to forgive sin and to receive poor, perishing sinners into His favour and presence and fellowship. He has not changed, but He has condescended to show mercy and

to bestow grace upon sinners, and He has done this in His dear Son. Christ has suffered at the hands of divine justice in order that He might open once again these paths of righteousness in which to guide His people into the favour of God and into the rest that remaineth to the people of God. He has opened these paths, my friends, by his sufferings and death in order that the Lord's mercy and favour may be shown to us. Christ has made it possible for His people to walk once more in these paths of righteousness.

These paths, as revealed in the gospel, are well appointed, clearly defined, and safe. Let us notice that Christ brings His people into these paths by the work of His Spirit in their souls. "Ye were as sheep going astray but are now returned unto the shepherd and bishop of your souls." When Christ looked upon the Israelites who came to hear His words, and saw them steeped in ignorance and wandering and straying under the doctrine of the Scribes and Pharisees, He pitied them; when He saw them falling by the wayside, scattered as sheep having no shepherd, without any to pity them or have compassion upon them, or bring them refreshment, or provide for their needs, or bless them, He longed to gather them to Himself. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!" Christ, in the gospel, will gather together in one the children of God who are scattered abroad. The great mark and the essential mark of those in whom Christ has begun a gracious work is that they believe in Him. To those who receive Him will He give power to become the sons of God, even to those who believe on His name. All that have learned of the Father will come to Christ, and none of these who come to him will He cast out. A sight of Christ bearing away the sins of the world, and especially a faith's view of our own interest in Him and in His redeeming work, will persuade us to forsake all, to deny ourselves and take up the cross and follow Him. All that the Father gave Him will come to Him and these He will guide in the ways of holiness till He bring them to the heavenly country. Oh, that we could claim the right to be numbered among the pilgrims and strangers who are following the good shepherd in the path that leads to the city!

In these paths of righteousness the sheep need the guidance of Christ. They cannot follow these paths of themselves. They rely upon the guidance of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Great Prophet of the Church, and this guidance the shepherd provides by putting His fear within them that they may not depart from His ways, and by the indwelling of His Spirit. From the moment they are brought under His care, from the time they enter these paths of righteousness, Christ will lead them and guide them until He brings them at last into the Father's house above. He will never leave them nor forsake them. They need this guidance. They need a guide who is infinite in wisdom, almighty in power and unsearchable in His love. He has infinite wisdom; he knows sin; he knows the wiles of the devil; He knows the saving purpose of God; He knows the weakness and inconsistency of the human heart; He knows the ways of the world and He applies his wide knowledge to the preservation and guidance of His people. He is the God of almighty power. All the fullness of the

Godhead dwells bodily in Christ. In their weakness He makes them strong; in their defencelessness he surrounds them with His own presence; in their helplessness He bestows His grace upon them; in their nakedness He clothes them with His righteousness; in their thirst He waters them. He is able to subdue them to Himself and make them submissive to His gracious will. He has unsearchable love. He showed this when He laid down His life for His people. His mercy is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him. "Blessed be the Lord; for He hath shewed me His marvellous kindness in a strong city." This is the guide they need. This is the promise: "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake," and this is the experience the psalmist enjoyed. He could say that the Lord guided him along this path all his life.

3. In the last place, there is the purpose for which Christ will guide His people in the paths of righteousness—for His name's sake. That is to say, it is not primarily for their sakes that Christ guides His flocks in these paths, but for His own name's sake. The glory of the divine name, the glory of God, will be seen in the final salvation of the Lord's people. Now in all that the Lord does He has His own glory in view; in the good of the church, and in the salvation of His people; it is His own glory He has in view, the display of the divine attributes, the revelation of His being and ways. God will be glorified in all His dealings with His creatures, in their salvation or their destruction. There are countless multitudes who will go down to an undone eternity because they will not consent to the Lord having all the praise of their salvation. In the destruction of these enemies the Lord will be exalted, but in the salvation of His people He will be especially glorified. In this He delights. The flock of Christ will be to the praise of the glory of His grace throughout eternity.

Actually the whole work of Christ in saving His people, in guiding them in the paths of righteousness, and finally delivering them, will glorify the name of God. "I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do." That is the objective work of the atonement, but Christ still has to finish the work of sanctifying His people in heart and life, and when this work is finished they will stand as lasting monuments of the grace and righteousness and goodness of God. It will be seen then how Christ exercised over them His wisdom and power and love.

As the Shepherd leads His flock in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake, His sheep are brought to seek the glory of God in their own salvation—not perhaps so much at first, but they will do so more and more as they become more perfectly acquainted with divine things. The more they are changed into the image of Christ, the more they tend to seek the glory of the divine name in all that they do. They love the name of God. As they feel their own weakness, their sin and corruption within, and are emptied of everything that savours of the creature, so they are filled with zeal for the glory of God and love to His name. When Christ redeemed them, He made of them a peculiar people zealous of good works. Their good works are intended not to justify themselves, but, as seen in the light of God's Word, to glorify the Father's name Who is in heaven. What gives them infinite rejoicing and gladness is to see the name of Christ magnified, although their own name should be written in the dust.

The Lord's name is made great in the salvation wrought by Christ. The praise of the believer in heaven will be "unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." The praises of Him who loved them and washed them from their sins in His own blood—that is the purpose that moved the Father to send His Son into the world; the end Christ had in view in submitting to the divine will; and the Spirit in sanctifying the believer; and this is the end the believer sets before him through life—the glory of the divine name.

In conclusion, there are two or three remarks that might be made upon these words.

These paths are made pleasant to believers because they are the paths of righteousness. God was just when He forgave them their sins and God remains just and upright in all His dealings with them through life. They know that they do not receive what they deserve, but they also know that what they do receive is according to the infinite righteousness and justice of God, and that God will save them from all their sins without casting a stain upon His great name. They have been saved from sin that they might become the servants of righteousness and followers of the Lamb. They have cast all their care upon Him for He careth for them. Do you belong to the flock of Christ? Can you say that you have been delivered from your sins, that you are walking in these ways of righteousness and that Christ is leading you through life? Ah, friend, if you are still doing your own will, following your own counsels, living to yourself, then you are none of Christ's. You will surely be cast off at last if you persist in following your own ways. All that are Christ's are found in these paths, in the paths laid down and appointed in the scriptures. They will never be found following the ways of the world, enjoying the pleasures of life, or the companionship of the ungodly. He will be to them a leader in a plain path.

These paths are pleasant to the believer because in them they meet with Christ. As their saviour, He has redeemed them from sin and undertaken to preserve and guide them through life. Christ's presence is given to them in these paths and His presence makes pleasant to them the love and ways of God. In them they seek the presence and fellowship of the Father, and enjoy fellowship and communion with the saviour. He will lead them into living fountains of water. He has promised to wipe away the tears from their eyes and remove their reproach from off the face of the earth. He will do all this for them because He has set his love upon them and chosen them to be with himself at last. His presence is promised to them only in these paths of righteousness. What can we say, then, of the man of the world? What can we say even of those who profess the name of Christ, and maintain they are free to go where they please, to mingle with the world, its pleasures, its ways? We can say with conviction that they have not the presence of the Lord. His presence is not given to those who walk in the ways of the world, but only to those who walk in these ways of righteousness and peace. Let us put away our sins, cleanse ourselves of all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and perfect holiness in the fear of God, and then Christ's presence will be given to us.

Lastly, these ways are pleasant to the believer because in them he beholds the glory of the divine name. This is a worthy end to seek. It is the end God had in view in creating the world; He had this end before Him in sending His son into the world to redeem the world; and the Spirit in His work seeks the divine glory in all He does. It is the end the believer sets before him—that God might be magnified in life or death. That is a worthy end. We seek our own honour, our own glory. That is the end the creature has in view when left to himself. He cannot rise above the creature but seeks only his own honour and happiness and comfort. He is self-centred, wrapped up in himself. He can think of nothing but as it refers to himself. We need to be emptied of this self-centred spirit, and have everything that belongs to the flesh taken away in order that we may seek the glory of the divine name in all things. This is a worthy end, the most honourable, the highest that we can pursue in this life. “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.” Some may say, “If that is the case, then it is not a life that can bring us much happiness or enjoyment,” but it is only by the transforming of our minds that we can prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

May the Lord grant that we may, each one of us, entrust ourselves to the care of the good shepherd, that we may follow Him in these pleasant paths and at last meet together with Christ in the Father’s house.

Sermon.

Preached at Inkai (Shangani Reserve), 1st June, 1952.

By MR. A. MACPHERSON.

“And a man shall be a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.” (Isaiah, 32 and 2.)

COMING along the road from Zenka I noticed as I passed the airstrip, that the white cloth sleeve which shows the airmen which way the wind is blowing was hanging limply down, indicating that there was little or no wind. This is a calm day, but there are other days when the wind blows very strongly and you have seen it do damage to the roofs of houses and other things. At the same time we seldom experience in this country those wild storms which last for hours or days at a time and cause great damage to property or even loss of life. The wind has great power, and when it does blow in such a manner, wise people take shelter in some safe place. There is also another sort of wind which is even more dangerous and which is of the same type as the small whirlwind which passed the school just before the service began. You noticed how it swept along, whirling round and round and lifting high into the air all sorts of light objects such as loose grasses and fallen leaves, and even such big things as withered mealie leaves. In other parts of the world, notably America, such whirlwinds assume monster proportions, and beginning far out in the ocean rush towards the land and do untold damage to whatever towns and villages they pass through. These tornadoes, as they are called, are

greatly dreaded and people who live in these parts of America where they are common build underground rooms to their houses, where they can shelter when warning of the approaching storm is given; there they are safe even when their houses above ground are being torn to pieces by the furious whirlwind.

So you see there is meaning in the mention of a hiding place from the wind, such as we have in our text. The wind is capable of destroying men's lives, and men are compelled to seek hiding places at such times, but whoever heard of a man being a safe and suitable hiding-place? Yet our text does say that a man shall be a hiding-place from the wind, and even from the tempest. This Book of Isaiah is full of these figurative references. The great prophet made good use of the realm of nature to picture forth the person and work of the glorious Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the One who is here described as a hiding-place. He is the same who is described in the previous verse as a King reigning in righteousness. We feel no surprise that God should often be described in Scripture as a shield and shelter for His people; and any surprise we may feel at the thought of a man performing these services should disappear when we remember that this is no mere man that is spoken of, but He who from eternity has been the equal of God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, and who, even when He in love to poor sinners became man, is described as the brightness of God's glory and the express image of his person.

It is then the Divine Redeemer who is a hiding-place for sinful men, and that from even greater storms than the whirlwind. Do any of you know what it is to see and dread the approaching storm of God's wrath? Normally we live our lives in this world trying to keep at arms' length all fearful thoughts of God; and too often we succeed. Why, when there is a Gospel service in Inkai to-day do so many people remain at home? One reason, I may tell you, is that they are afraid of coming face to face with God's claims upon them and His calls to them to repent and forsake their sins, and receive Christ's great salvation. Men by nature want to have nothing to do with these things. Their consciousness may give warning of judgment to come. An occasional contact with the same truth revealed in the Word of God may bring a clear view of the black storm clouds piling up on the horizon of their lives but they turn their backs on these warnings and try to ignore them. Is not such conduct like that of a man who sees the tornado approaching yet walks before it heedlessly until with a roar it catches him up and tosses him around, finally casting his poor body lifeless back to the ground.

There are others also, perhaps some of you here, who have become accustomed to storm warnings from the preachers in this place, but because it has not yet broken upon you, you continue on sinful and Christ-resisting courses. You have, of course, never taken these warnings seriously, and let me tell you, you never will until either you are caught up in the storm of God's judgment—which God forbid—or the Holy Spirit brings a sense of that impending judgment into your souls. My dear friends, you will have no doubts about the need of a hiding-place if and when the Holy Spirit shows you how your sins have been against the holy and majestic being who made you, and not merely against your fellows. When there

is brought before you a sense of God's indignation, when you see how His justice cannot tolerate such breakings of His law as you have engaged in, and worse still, such rejections of His great salvation as you have persisted in, some of you for years, I tell you what God's Word tells you, that you ought to be afraid, for "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God." This applies to you all, to everyone present who has not yet received the forgiveness of sins through Christ. There are hanging over you black clouds of judgment. They speak of the approaching storm of wrath which will break over your defenceless souls unless you seek shelter and safety in the one place where it is to be found.

"A man shall be a hiding place." Have you not seen a hen in a summer thunder shower gather her chickens to her and under her outspread wings, and then afterwards, how the chickens would emerge, dry and unscathed from beneath their soaked and bedraggled mother? Did not the Saviour speak of salvation to sinners of Jerusalem in just such terms, so expressive of the compassionate longing of His infinite heart? "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" What is it that we see in the awful happenings at Calvary but the blessed Redeemer stretched out between earth and heaven, covering with His broken and bleeding body the multitude of His redeemed ones? Earth never saw such a storm as that which broke in fury over the Man who was God's Fellow. The sins of His people were there laid to His charge, and He who had no sin was dealt with as if He had committed them all. The death which would have inevitably overtaken each one, gathered around that lone figure on the cross, and beat Him and tore at Him and well-nigh swallowed Him up. But justice was there dealing not with a mere man, but with the Infinite One, with God in human nature, a man indeed but still God and judgment at last came to an end. Death came to an end, swallowed up in victory. The last wave of the storm rushed over Him and He again lifted up His head, crying triumphantly, "I will declare Thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee, and all the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord and all kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee."

Thus, my friends, is this Man Christ Jesus a hiding-place from the storm of God's wrath. He offers Himself as such to you and to me. To the ends of the earth, to you in Africa here also, the glad news of this safe hiding-place is come—and will you wilfully remain outside? All power is given to Christ not only to save poor sinners from God's wrath and curse, but to keep them safely under the protection of His work and intercession, and it is no momentary or temporary deliverance that He offers, but safety to all eternity. Will you not come, ye fearful ones? Why stand ye outside in the gathering storm?

Having, in the first place, spoken of the manner in which Christ the MAN is a safe hiding-place for those in fear of God's judgment upon sin, we now come secondly to consider how He is "as rivers of water in a dry place." There is a craving in men's souls for what will satisfy them and give peace and happiness; and fallen man seeks to satisfy that craving with earthly things. If we were beasts merely, like the oxen and goats out there, such things would satisfy us, but we are not beasts entirely,

although we often act like them. We demand more than food and drink and clothing and shelter and sensual enjoyment. We may take our fill of these things and remain still unsatisfied.

I have met old men among you who professed to be quite uninterested in the Christian religion. I remember one such whom we spoke to as he sat outside his hut in the evening watching the children bringing home the cattle. "This religion of yours is alright for the children," he said. "I have no objection to your teaching them, but as for me, I am too old to change my ways." One would have thought from this that he was content with things as they were but he wasn't. The rest of his conversation was taken up with complaints about his poor health. His limbs were weak and his joints ached. His eyes were dim, he was hard of hearing and his few remaining teeth and poor digestion allowed him little pleasure in eating. He thought and spoke longingly of the days of his healthy manhood but all that was gone. He had taken all that he could out of life in the circumstances in which he was placed but he was still dissatisfied. Thirsting all his life for living water and yet to his very last days rejecting the great river of the water of life and taking such drops of comfort as he could from the broken cisterns of this world. Young friends, I specially ask you if you will not learn from such cases as his? Why waste time seeking satisfaction of soul in wealth, pleasure, places of honour and power among your fellows, or in learning and worldly wisdom, or in the outward form of religion. These even if attained to in great measure will profit you nothing. There is only one thing that will satiate the deep craving of your soul and that is a true spiritual association and communion with Christ.

Having found Him you will go no further, for your soul will have returned into its quiet rest in Him who made it for His glory. The Christian is happiest when he feels most of the presence of the Saviour and he would not exchange that for anything in the world. That largely accounts for the contented attitude of the true believer. He is satisfied with whatever the Lord will give him of this world's good and when he basks in the light of God's countenance, he is gladder than any of the wealthy among men.

Be it noted also that this provision for the satisfaction of thirsty longing souls is unlimited, as denoted by the term "rivers of water." If you go to the river for water to drink, it makes no difference to its level whether you dip in your bucket, once or one hundred times. Those big tanks which you have at some of your boreholes in this reserve hold a huge quantity of water and if you were allowed one for your own use entirely you might think that you would never exhaust its contents. But before many weeks had passed, you would see that the water level was falling and the time would come when it would all be finished. Not so a river. Your big tank could be filled over and over again from the river and still the water would come in abundance. Well, friends, the soul-satisfying water of life springs from the infinite and eternal love of God to sinners and how can it be anything else but limitless? Thus a man shall be "as rivers of water in a dry place."

Now in the third and last place, Christ affords rest and refreshment to the weary. The man Christ Jesus is "as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." In this country, although at times it is so hot and dry yet there are so many trees that we need never lack shade in which to rest awhile. There are, however, other countries even more hot and dry and barren, and the only shade which travellers may find is given by huge rocks which lift themselves above the ground. Such great rocks are apt representations of the Saviour. Steadfast and unbroken they stand through the ages, a permanent shade for weary travellers of our race. Oh, what weariness the burden of sin's guilt will produce in a sinner! Christ it is, as we have seen in the first head, who gives rest from that burden when He shows us it taken away by His own atoning death. He not only does this but also by His Spirit begins the great work of sanctification, that is, the cleansing of our souls, of minds, affections and wills. God's people like Paul often cry out in weariness, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" and it is Christ who answers that weary cry by giving them an increased knowledge of and hatred of sin and love of and desires after holiness, and always they may get rest of soul from the various truths which give the assurance that He shall yet "present them faultless before His Father with exceeding joy."

The Saviour also gives rest to those weary of persecution. This is the lot of many of the Lord's people, indeed it will be strange if anyone makes a sound profession of Christ without persecution arising. Yourselves know well how the good man who used to live and work among you, was treated by some of the heathen people of this place on account of his religion and such feeling and behaviour does cause a great weariness in the soul of the believer.

Again, bodily afflictions such as some have, cause them to feel very tired. To be quite blind and to have to be led about all the time, to be frequently sick with fever as some are, to be hungry and in want of even the necessities of life, to wonder how to provide for your children; all these things cause real faintness of heart and weariness of spirit, but Christ can by His own blessed presence and comfort give refreshment and fresh courage. There are other sources of soul weariness, such as the opposition of Satan, but suffice is to say that for them all, Christ provides shade like unto "a great rock in a weary land."

It is time to stop now, and I would only appeal to you all who have never discovered what great things Christ can do for you, to make trial for yourselves. The only requisite or condition is that you should feel your need of His sheltering power, His soul-satisfying love and His blessed rest and refreshment. May the Holy Spirit so work in you a consciousness of your great need that you would come to Him and find what great rest He gives.

* * *

Note.—It will be understood that the above sermon was preached through an interpreter, and was worded and phrased more simply, but the substance was as above.

“Lamps in the Vale.”

“Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” (Esther, chap. iv, verse 14.)

In this verse we find five interesting points presented to us—the claims of God’s sovereignty in Esther’s position and in her gifts; and leading from these we have a revelation of His plan for her, and His call upon her service. Finally we shall look for the encouragement which is given to all who, like Esther, are exercised about their position and success in life. In this paper we shall deal with the first two points—God’s claim on Esther’s position, and on her gifts. If the Lord wills we shall consider the other three points in another paper.

The Lord’s sovereign claim on Esther’s position. “Who knows?” Through this question the Lord opens up His claim upon Esther’s position. Our Saviour, who died and rose again, and is now enthroned in glory, has been invested by the Father with a sovereignty which, as Mediator, He actively applies in all spheres of existence, and in the exercise of which He dwells in, and acts “through and over all,” “everything that being hath His kingdom doth command.” All is controlled by His will. In almighty power He resides in all parts of His kingdom, and there is nothing in existence too complex or too difficult for Him to control and direct. Whatever the variety, whatever the number of all events in all time and in eternity residing as they do in His eternal NOW, they are found in His hands in the completeness of a single purpose. He gathers, He writes, He directs all towards a single end—the glory of the Father through the Church of His redemption. With this end in view He has devoted the glory of His throne, the sufficiency of His saviourhood, the majesty of His sovereignty, and the sacredness of His Person towards the church’s preservation and increase. It was in this supremacy, riding in the heavens for the help of His people, that the Lord moved in upon Esther’s lot in Shushan. He moved in upon her with the disturbing question, “Who knows?” A question weighted by many serious possibilities for Esther and her future. By this question Esther, her throne and her people’s future were bound up in one, and it was by the sovereign hands of Israel’s King they were so bound.

The question brings to light the Lord’s hand in Esther’s promotion, for without doubt, the steps which led to her queenship were of the Lord’s planning and making. Up until now Esther might have regarded her “coming to the kingdom” as something given her solely for her own pleasure, but this question brings to light that, long before her coming, the Lord had planned the deliverance of His people through the throne which He had gifted to her. Here indeed was a challenge—a challenge to search into her success for some reason hitherto overlooked or forgotten or hidden. A challenge to revise her former conclusions, however dearly she may have held them. A challenge to the flesh, ugly and untoward as death itself, but a challenge given with such frankness that any demur of disobedience would be as the sin of rebellion. An arresting hand was laid upon her shoulder, a Master’s voice broke in upon the complacency of her thinking and planning, “Who knows?” Answer that, answer it now, answer it impartially.

Whatever position we occupy in Providence, this question has a message for us all. It is true that in spiritual matters the flesh likes nothing better than to deal in vague generalities, and when it suits us we regard Providence in as indefinite and in as impersonal a light as possible. When our estate yields comfort and ease, we are ready to say that Providence is favourable to us, but when that same Providence looks in upon our lot and claims *all* for His own use we are ready to complain—“Not all, surely.” The uncompromising nature of the claim, “Who knows?”—who knows, but the whole reason why I have given you to possess what you have, is to be found, not in your selfish enjoyment of it, but that I should make use of it for My own ends, rubs very roughly against the tender skin of our ease-loving souls. How closely does this question cut into our most cherished hopes of continued ease.

We can neither evade the question itself nor the solemn responsibility it places upon us. In our efforts to escape from it, we may have recourse to deceits of various kinds. One of the most frequent takes the form of putting God’s Providences into two separate compartments—ordinary and extraordinary—but this question will not permit us to do that. It no more makes place for secondary causes than it does for a secondary God. The fairly normal steps which led to Esther’s crown, by easy strides, merges into the abnormal situation of making that crown a means of Israel’s safety. The hand which set Esther up, the hand which produces our own successes, follows right through with the most commanding proprietorship. Here is nothing indefinite, nothing impersonal, nothing ambiguous. “For such a time as this” is clearly stamped on His gifts as they come to our hands. We may be blind to the writing. If so, then, this question comes to us as eye salve. Let us apply it. We cannot then fail to see clearly the relationship which *all along* existed between God’s gifts and His right to use them.

This question brings to light two relationships, and the first speaks of Esther and her God. It also speaks to all who profess the Gospel. Many natural men profess some kind of loyalty to the Gospel, and consequently they make some kind of response to God’s claims on their lot. But what kind of response is it? I fear that in this serious matter many adopt no standard higher than they adopt for worldly affairs. There may be exceptions, but in general the language of the unrenewed heart is, “What I have, I keep; what I have made for myself I have every right to enjoy. I cannot be expected to forego the fruits of my own industry.” “Who knows . . .?” “Yes,” says the man of the world, “I know, all things come to me and I come to them, and they are for myself and for my disposal according to my own pleasure.” Thus, within its lot, the unrenewed heart claims that sovereignty which belongs to Christ alone. “Our tongues are ours, yes, and our position; our success and our attainments. All are ours, and who is Lord over us?”

We must notice, however, that although a line in this direction is strongly held, such men are not without misgivings. There continue to be voices of conscience, and there is a certain amount of discomfort. The man fears that he may lose his self-respect. In fact, he is so keen in looking at himself in a favourable light, that he is willing to make some compromise between God and his conscience. He is ready to yield *some*

measure of obedience to Christ. He stipulates, however, obedience must be on his own terms; but when these are examined they are found to come far short of yielding the whole position as claimed by the Lord. Under such circumstances how do these men proceed?

First, they find it necessary to establish themselves firmly in their own esteem; and this they proceed to do. They strongly and continuously affirm to themselves that in no circumstances are they under any obligation to yield anything. When they have told themselves this often enough, and strongly enough, they feel that they are secure and beyond reproach and that they are due some measure of appreciation should they show *some* interest. From this favoured position, with great deliberation, they proceed to draw a well-defined line around their throne, and they then make sure that nothing which does not meet their approval shall be permitted to cross over it. Nothing must cross which possibly may disturb throne or crown, peace or prestige. After their own fashion they are now ready to co-operate, and they send across this line such tokens of interest as they choose. This they do in that calculating, deliberate, patronising, restrained and correct manner so well known in worldly affairs. They will profess an interest in Christianity, but anything approaching a close identity with the person of Christ, anything approaching pain, sacrifice, feeling or emotion is ruled out as unnecessary and unbecoming in such a person. Such a reaction as Esther's agonising, "If I perish, I perish," must never disturb the dignified calm wherewith they have surrounded themselves.

So they proceed to hand across to the Lord their precious tokens, a well-calculated gift of money to-day, occasional thought another day, and a condescending inquiry from time to time. The limit of their giving is a token interest, but woe unto them, for a mere token interest Christ will receive at no man's hand. Christ has set his gauge, and this is it, "If any man will come after me and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple." The gauge of Ananias was, "hold back a portion"; that of Demas, "this present world"; of Judas, "Why was not this ointment sold?" There are gauges of many modern men professing Christianity. "For such a time as this is always our own time," says the worldly professor, but Christ will dispute His sovereignty with no man and His claims He will make lighter for none. If in this supreme test men make Dives and Demas their standard "for such a time," they cannot complain if, in eternity, they are made to lie down in torment with them.

So far as the Lord's blood-bought, blood-sprinkled, Christ-conscious people are concerned, the matter can never be thus. We recognise that the voice which in sovereign love bespoke eternal life into us is the same which asks, "Who knows whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this." The time such as this, of His choice was the time of Calvary's shame and agony, and it is from this awful quarter that every soul having the hearing of heaven will hear the question. The love which reaches up to heaven to prepare a plan for us is the same as reaches down and now lays firm fingers on our lot. He lays hold on our dearest and most cherished things, our throne, our safety, our

comforts, our all; and with the explanation, "For such a time as this," He offers to us a partnership of the highest co-operation: "Take now Thy son; yes, My gift; yes, your hope; yes, your crown, your pleasure, your prospects; yea, your all; and without reservation cast the whole into intimate partnership with the afflictions of Joseph." A new view is presented, a revolutionary issue brought to view; the answer to the question is weighty with sore possibilities for you: but this you will find, no other interpretation on your success can ever so heartily commend itself to your conscience; or be so satisfying to your heart, and so completely win the approval of heaven. In asking you this arresting question the Lord but seeks a further blessing for you.

The other relationship I have thought of is Esther's tie to her own people. Historically her relationship was with Abraham, Isaac, Moses and the other great men and women of Israel's covenant. The children of this privileged connection were now in danger, and in the circumstances Esther's duty was clear. If she claimed relationship with historical Israel, then nothing could excuse her should she withhold help from them in trouble. Her high position relieved her of no obligation. It was rather the reverse; for surely Abraham's children should be the special care of Abraham's daughter, Esther, the Queen. It is on this point that many are tried, and many fail. Men who have been successful in life very often profess great attachment to the Church of the past while remaining cold and aloof to the struggling Church of the present. "We be Abraham's children, we be the descendants of the martyrs, the covenanters, reformers and contenders for religious liberty. These are our springs and our heroes, and we are proud to be associated with them. So too with dates, battles and movements which form the background of their Church history.

They are not only acquainted with these, but profess great interest in them, and after a fashion glory in the great past; but when, under manifold temptations, the Church which is the spiritual descendant of this past glory has become small, obscure, despised and poor, the matter is looked on very differently. How does the man "who has got on well" look in the Church in the "day of small things"? Not in a light which brings him much credit, I fear. Of course, he still professes some kind of love; but when the question, "For such a time as this?" is presented to him, how much of that professed love is shown? How near to the deeper issues of his Church does his love carry him? Often no nearer than a cold nod of recognition and a good deal of cruel and misinformed criticism. In the hands of the Church of his day the cause of Christ has become unpopular, and any deep identity with this cause is equally unpopular.

The time of a Church's unpopularity for the sake of righteousness is "such a time as this," but these time-serving Christians profess not to recognise such a time. They see just what they wish to see: rottenness is soundness to them, and so they trail on after an unsound Church, calling as of old, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we," and so, unless the mercy of God prevent, they shall go thus, until God's judgment seat comes into view. Then these dreamers will know that they have arrived before the Person who will not call their light anything but

darkness. Yes, and they will recognise Him who approached them with an honourable and profitable proposal concerning "such a time as this." Then shall they see to their great sorrow that in refusing to honour Christ in His cause on earth, they had refused to crown their own souls for eternity.

"For such a time as this" was Esther called, and what a time it was! Already the storm clouds were gathered, and even now, in anticipation, Esther's ears might hear the anguish of fathers, mothers, sons and daughters, husbands and wives, as a whole nation went down under the hatred of a well planned persecution. Already the scene of pain, ignominy and death must have come before her eyes. In her privileged position, the question did not permit of any sharp dividing line between Esther the Queen and Esther the Jewess. The Lord would not permit any such division. Situations may be different, people may be separated in many ways, but the Lord is one; and under His oneness Esther, her queenship and her people were to be seen as a whole. And is it not so with ourselves? In present-day speech there is no such person as a doctor, a teacher, a nurse, a businessman, a justice of the peace, a general, a soldier, or one of any other kind of occupation *and* a Christian. No, not a king *and* a Christian, but *a Christian king*.

The occupation of the position occupied is saturated to the full with the Divine element contained in the name Christian. The saviourhood of Christ on the one hand, and the state of being saved on the other, have between them obliterated all boundaries. Our whole lot, persons, time and eternity have been invaded, yea, overrun by the sovereign grace of God. It is either to that completeness or else there has been contact nowhere. "Whose I am and whom I serve; ye are not your own. Ye are bought with a price."

The relationship of the true Christian to the Providence of God is in the wounds of Christ, which in turn must be a relationship in the wounds of His body the Church. Esther could lay aside a crown, but the blood of the Israelite was in her veins, and the God of Abraham was in her conscience. Her inheritance among her people was something which no crown could buy. Her identity with them was stronger than death. No interest in a Church's past can stand for identity with the struggling Church of the present. When this question, "Who knows whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" is faced frankly, the only true answer is found in Esther's agonising dilemma: "If I perish, I perish; if I remain here to help I perish; if I go yonder among my people, I perish also." Oh, Christ honouring dilemma, so often met with by people gripped in the hold of this question. If we choose not to be found in the wounds of the Church, we should closely search as to whether we have ever been chosen in the wounds of her Head. Let us be assured of this. God having laid this question at our feet, He will take no return of it. There it must remain until that solemn day when those who were not ashamed of Paul's chains shall have Paul's reward; and when every unworthy excuse made by time-serving Christians will be dammed for ever.

If, however, we shall find grace to come under the yoke of Christ, things will be different. The question "Who knows?" is simple and almost mild in its nature. There is nothing domineering or commandeering about

it. It no more than suggests a review of Esther's position, and quietly warns her that failing help from her, then help will arise from another quarter. Esther is given the liberty to choose. Yet when the Lord carries this question into the depths of the soul, it becomes weighted with divine authority, and brings about the most revolutionary changes. As quietly and unobserved the mustard seed falls into the soft, moist earth, so does His voice fall into the deep places of the soul. The conscience, however, no sooner closes over it than the little seed sown so quietly becomes a disruptive force. To all death-dealing agents the germinating seed becomes a challenge, and to the last will wage war on them. His voice challenges the soul to answer and to act. "Who knows . . .?" A quietly spoken sentence about mission work, a view of children's lovely faces, a casual observation about some phase of the Lord's work, and many such voices in normal conversation have dropped as seed, and found a lodgment in the ears of the soul; yes, and these souls have never been the same again. The question brought an answer which has swept into view a set of new conditions, new ends, new horizons, unexpected ventures, unlooked for burdens, yes, even threatening dangers.

If the Lord wills that you should hear his voice in this question you will be unable to close your ears to the hearing of it. Clamorous, urgent, insistent, hour by hour, day and night, with gathering force and authority it echoes its tremendous implications from conscience to reason, then from reason to heart, then back again to conscience. "Who knows . . .?" "Who knows . . .?" "Thou art come." "Thou art come." "To the kingdom," "To the kingdom." "For such a time as this?" You can no more silence that voice than bid the sun to return to the place of his rising. The same voice commands, both your soul and the sun. True, upon His entry into the streets of thy soul He shall not strive nor cry, but having purposed that you should hear Him speak, His slightest whisper becomes as the voice that breaks the cedars in Lebanon and makes the wilderness all to quake. In this question your Lord towers over you with the immense and solemn authority of the Judgment Day; and as your Heavenly Bridegroom He dwells in and whispers from the secret places of your soul. Yes, the whispers of yearning love intermingle with the strong voices of authority, and those whose ears have become accustomed to His voice will readily recognise them. "Who knows . . .?" It is the voice of my beloved. "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."

Let it be in fear and anguish, let it be from the midst of most lively apprehensions of death itself; yet answer thou as becometh an Esther of the New Covenant. Answer as many others have done—"Give grace and command what Thou wilt," and as surely as this is your response, so sure shall you have His reply—"My grace is sufficient for thee." Yes, and from the many who before you have trod this difficult and dangerous path, take this as your sure encouragement, "And everyone who hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for My name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold and shall inherit life everlasting." That is exactly to the letter as they have found it. Be assured, that is exactly as you will find it too.

At the risk of a little overlapping I should like to glance at the *possession of gifts and talents in light of this question*. "Who knows

...?" It may be heaven's plan to secure in you certain gifts against "such a time as this." As a daughter of Abraham, Esther was bound to Abraham's God by covenant ties. Her privileges and gifts were many and precious. "Who were Israelites, to whom pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises of the Fathers, of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all God blessed for ever." Israel was a redeemed people, near to God, and the bond of redemption was in the blood, shed and sprinkled. For "nearly all things under the law were purified with blood." The blood extended not only to purification, but also to the abdication of persons and possessions. By its shedding the blood secures all covenant blessings and gifts. In its sprinkling it sets these apart to Him who shed His blood.

Thus the gifts of God's people can never be regarded as common things. At no time are their talents at a level lower than the claims of the Lamb upon the Throne. Through Him these gifts are designed for ends high and holy. Esther possessed beauty, wisdom, courage, resource, ability, riches, power and many other gifts. She might have been prone to regard them as given to her for her own use only, but this question would not permit her so to do. A firm yet tender hand laid hold on Esther's all, raised her gifts to the throne which provided them, and with finality informed her, "It was for such a time as this that these were given to you. Any lower use for them brings the condemnation of Heaven on them."

How do we as Christians regard our gifts and talents! Do we regard them as hereditary or acquired or simply as things which grew up with us? In whatever light we regard them, this question directs us to God's view of things. According to him, these things have come to us in the direct line of our redemption. For us they were included within the covenant by Him who is our Covenant Head, and they have already been dedicated to His service by His sprinkled blood. Here in this question there is a call to each of us. Each gift has a need in His cause facing it, and this question "Who knows ...?" is designed to introduce the need to the gift. What activity in Christian service appears before you as a need? According to the gift possessed by you, what is the special appeal addressed to such a gift? Is it as a Sabbath School teacher? as a lay-preacher? or as a visitor? or a treasurer? or precentor? or any other help that the need is presented to you? Is it at home or abroad? If such a need faces the appropriate gift in you then be assured that the Lord of both need and gift is facing you in this question "Who knows ...?"

Under the ceremonial law the temple service was a unity; what began at the altar of burnt offering went on until the holy of holies was reached. There was no breach anywhere. So too in the connection between the two altars of burnt offering and incense. This second was dedicated by blood taken from the former, and it was fire from the consumed sacrifice which, when applied, liberated the odours of the incense. No altar of incense to be used without springling from the altar of sacrifice, no odour liberated except by fire taken from the same source. It is here that many make a mistake; we tarry too long at the altar of sacrifice. It is good and safe to be there; good to know justification through the blood, but we must go further on unto perfection. Let us not omit the blood-bought

and blood-dedicated gifts to be offered at the altar of incense. Calvary is not only the incentive but the obligation for gift rendering. We must seek to find "such a time as this" where Nicodemus, Joseph and the good women of the burial found it—somewhere within that sacred spot bounded by Gethsemane, Calvary and the empty tomb.

There is the birth-place of our Christian gifts; there too were they dedicated and there too must we find place for their exercise. In this question the Lord points to the gifts, and to those places which proclaim the deeper issues of his cause. And thus He speaks to you, believer. There now, over there with your gifts, "for such a time as this."

—Penuel.

Aonadh ri Crìosd.

LEIS AN URRA IAIN MAC A' CHOMBAICHI, D.D., *Lite*.

(*Air a leantuinn bho t.d. 136.*)

9. Bho'n chuspair a tha fo'r comhair, faodaidh sinn a bhi faotainn chomharraidhean air son dearbhaidh. Am bheil sibh gu beo air bhur n'aonadh ri Crìosd, no nach eil? 'S e so ceisd a tha cudthromach anns an t-seadh is àirde. Ma tha sibh air bhur n'aonadh derris, tha bhur eridhe, tre naomhachadh an Spioraid, a ghnàth a tionndadh an aghaidh gach seorsa peacaidh: tha sibh air bhur dealachadh ris a pheacadh tre bhròn, agus bho'n fhein tre ioraslachadh. Tha'n t-aonadh eadar bhur eridhe agus peacadh aithnichte air a bhriseadh. A ris, ma tha so mar so, thainig sibh gu toileach a dh'ionnsuidh an Tighearn Iosa, agus tha bhur eridhe ag earbsa ann air son a shlàinte mhór uile. 'N uair a tha eridhe na bean-phòsda aig an fhear-phòsda is e pòsadh ceart a th'ann. Ma tha sibhse, mar sin, gu suilbhear ga'r toirt fein thairis do'n Tighearn Iosa, agus ag ràdh, "Is e so Fear mo Ghràidh, agus is e so mo Charaid," is e deadh fhianuis a th'ann gu'n d'rinn se e fein thairis dhuibhse, agus nach fhàg agus nach treig e sibh am feasd. Am bheil sibh aig amaibh fo eagal gu'n bheil sibh a dh'easbhuidh aonaidh ri Iosa Crìosd? Air barrantas tairgse an t'oisgeil, thigibh as ùr ga ionnsuidh, agus gu h-iorasal earbaibh gu'n aom e sibh ris fein, agus gu'n leig e stigh sibh a dh'ionnsuidh co-chomuinn ris na fhìreantachd agus na shlàinte. Am bheil sibh a gràdhachadh agus a leantuinn as deigh naomhachd, araon ann an eridhe agus ann am beatha, agus fadachd oirbh air son gu'm bitheadh e air a thoirt gu ionlanachd? Ann am focal, cha'n urrain dhuibh tlachd a ghabhail ann an ceangal no ann an comhfhurtachd air bith eil, am feadh 's a tha sibh a meas nach eil Crìosd air aonadh ribh? Agus an e 'ur mianm a ghnàth agus 'ur 'n oidhearp a bhi dlùth-leantuinn ris ann an àmhghair agus ann an geur-leannmuinn, cho math ri ann an soirbheachadh. Ma tha e mar sin, is comharradh e gu'm bheil sibh air 'ur 'n aonadh ris, agus gu'm bheil sibh na'r fìor chreidmhiach.

10. Bitheadh impidh air a chur oirbh, (1) Gàirdeachas a dheanamh 's an Tighearn Iosa. Beachdaichibh ciod e am freunh do'n chraoibh; ciod e caraid do charaid; ciod e fear-pòsda da bhean-phòsda; agus ciod e athair d'a leanaoh gràdlach; mar sin tha Iosa dhuibhse, a chreidmhiach. (2) Creidimh gu làitheil le earbsa mhuinghineach ann. Tha sibh air 'ur 'n

aonadh ris mar tha gheug ris an fhreumh. Tha a gheug a taiceachadh air agus a tarruig a bearthachadh uile bho'n stoc. (3) Oidhearpaichibh as deigh inntinn neamhaidh. Tha sibh air bhuir 'n aonadh ri Crìosd a tha air àrdachadh os ceann na'n uile neamh, agus air eirigh maille ris; iarraibh, uime sin, na nithean a tha shuas. (4) Bithibh gle fhaicealach nach geill sibh do mhiann peacach air bith. Tha sibh air bhuir 'n aonadh ris an Tighearn Iosa air a leithid de dhòigh agus gu'r aon Spiorad ris sibh. Na tugaibh fàsagadh na'r eridheachadh do spiorad neo-ghlan maille ri Spiorad Chrìosd. (5) Bithibh air bhuir sgeadachadh le ioraslachd. Tha sibh da'rìreadh ann an deagh-ghean mór agus air 'ur 'n àrdachadh, ach euimhnichibh nach sibhse a tha giùllain an fhreumh ach am freumh sibhse. (6) Deanamh dìchioll air a bhi ni's mothla agus ni's mothla 'ur 'n aonadh na'r measg fein. Oidhearpaichibh a bhi gleidheadh aonachd an Spioraid ann an ceangall na sìthe. "Is aon chorp agus aon Spiorad a tha ann, amhail mar an ceudna a ghairmeadh sibh ann an aon mhuighin 'ur gairm." Bithibh mar a bha na ceud Chrìosduidhean, a dh'aon chridhe agus a dh'aon slighe. (7) Fàsaibh ann an gràdh brathaireil," oir is buill sibh da cheile; "agus cha'n urrain neach gràdh a bhi aige do'n cheann agus fuath do na buill.

Anns an àite mu dheireadh, bitheadh ìmpidh air a chur oirbh, sibhse nach eil air bhuir 'n aonadh ris an Tighearn Iosa, am feadh 's a tha sibh a buannachadh na'r coigreach air, nach urrain beatha spioradail a bhi agaibh, no fìor naomhachd; agus as eugmhais naomhachd cha'n fhaic neach air bith an Tighearn. An tì aig am bheil am Mac tha beatha aig', agus an tì aig nach eil Mac Dhé cha'n eil beatha aig. Cia mar is urrain comhfhurtachd spioradail a bhi agaibh am feadh 's a tha sibh dealaicht' bho Shòlas Israel; na solus spioradail 'n uair nach eil sibh air 'ur 'n aonadh ri Solus an t-saoghail? Cia mar is urrain sìth ri Dia a bhi agaibh 'n uair a tha sibh na'r coigreach air Prionnsa na Sìthe; na beatha, 'n uair a tha sibh dealaicht' ris an Aiseirigh agus a Bheatha? O creidibh cur an ceill agus tairgseachan an t-soisgeil ghlòrmhor, le co-chur dhoibh ribh fein, agus earbaibh gu tur anns an Tighearn Iosa air son slàinte ionlan. Ann an so tha Slànuihear freagarach, co-cheangal air a dheagh òrduchadh, agus coibhrionn chinnteach dhuibh. Ann an so tha geallaidhean luachmhor gu sibh a ghabhail riuth', agus fireantachd a tha gu neo-chrìochnach airidh gu sibh a dhùnadh rithe. Tha iad so uile air an tairgse dha na h-uile aon agaibh; chum 's gu'm bitheadh barrantas aig gach aon agaibh, gu bhi 'g earbsa ann an Iosa agus na fhìreantachd, agus a bhi taiceachadh air a gheallaidhdhean, air a leithid de dhòigh, agus gu'm bitheadh aonadh agus co-chomunn agaibh ris, ann an uile shaoibhreas a ghràis agus a ghlòir.—*Eadar-theangaicht' le Iain Mac a' Chombaich, Gleann-dail.*

Notes and Comments.

The Edinburgh Festival.

Edinburgh is having its annual three weeks of Music and Drama. The Festival seems to have come to stay. Whatever pleasure this may give the Civic Authorities it will be cause of sincere regret to all who truly fear the Lord. Judging by press reports, Festival time transforms parts of the city into a veritable "Vanity Fair." Two considerations only seem

to matter—how to attract the largest possible number of visitors, and having attracted them, how to please them. The visitor is everything—English, Continental or American; and except as he contributes to the general success of the enterprise, the citizen of Edinburgh is for the time being quite over-shadowed. To ensure success no price seems too much to pay. In the frenzied efforts to please, Edinburgh itself goes Continental and God, the Bible, conscience, the hallowed associations of an Edinburgh of other and better days are thrust aside without compunction. The consequent desecration of the Lord's Day is specially to be deplored. What with military tattoos, the playing of bands, so called sacred concerts, and crowds of people searching for entertainment, the Lord's Day has ceased to be typical of the Scottish Sabbath sanctified to holy uses and approaches nearer than ever before to the "Continental Sunday." There are doubtless many in Edinburgh and elsewhere who view these things with profound grief of heart, and in the highest and best sense these citizens of Edinburgh are the city's truest well-wishers; but the utter disregard paid to the outraged feelings of the godly is as much a symptom of these evil days as it was when righteous Lot was vexed with the ungodliness of Sodom. We are told that the Festival is a great success. When success is judged by earthly standards that may be so, but when weighed in the "balances of the sanctuary," who can estimate the price paid. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul," and what shall it profit a city, even should the whole world of art, music and drama sit at its feet, if that city has lost its soul? One of the most deplorable features of the whole proceedings is the manner in which the sacred (so called) is mixed up with the profane; indeed, the Festival was opened on a Sabbath by a service of dedication (whatever that means) in St. Giles' Cathedral. By such means the devil first blinds the judgment and deadens the conscience, then unlimited scope is left for indulgence in all kinds of pleasure without scruple. Some forms of sin are highly intellectual, accomplished and respectable, but it is sin none the less—hateful to God and death to the souls of men.

The Exmoor Floods.

News of the devastating floods in North Devon on the night of the 15th August has aroused widespread sympathy throughout the country for the people of the affected area, and to appeals for help the response, both in money and kind, has been most gratifying. The villages of Lynton and Lynmouth in the valley of the Lyn appear to have suffered the most extensive damage. There has been considerable loss of life and property, as many as 30 being reported drowned. One local councillor, Mr. Tom Floyd, lost his wife, son and daughter, his son-in-law and two grandchildren; among the others were three Boy Scouts who were camping nearby, and others on holiday. We often hear the climate of Britain maligned, but we should be thankful, disasters of this kind and magnitude are not common. On that account the voice that speaks to the country from Lynmouth is weighted with all the greater solemnity. Who in looking forward to holidays thinks of disaster and death? Who in the course of preparing for holidays—and how absorbing these preparations can be—ever thinks of preparing for death? Who in preparing to receive and entertain visitors ever thinks of preparing to entertain this most

certain of all visitors, Death? On the other hand how consoling it is for those who are by grace strangers and pilgrims on this earth, whose citizenship is in heaven, to reflect on the indestructible bond securing for them a heavenly inheritance, so that whatever the form of death, and however unexpected, it immediately effects an entrance into their eternal inheritance. To the thief on the cross, death assumed an awful form, yet Jesus assures him, "To-day," the very day of his death, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

Eva Peron.

The Roman Catholic Church has nothing to learn in the effective use of propaganda. No opportunity is lost which can be turned to account. When Eva Peron, the late wife of the President of Argentine, died, her death provided an opportunity of which full advantage was taken. It appears that at the various public services, attended by great crowds of people, and during the lying in state, the scenes of religious excitement and fervour exceeded all description. We learn that even in London a service of requiem mass was said for the soul of the Senora, and at this service the Queen of Great Britain was represented.

Eva Peron rose from lowly parentage by way of the stage to be first lady in the Argentine Republic. Among her own people she wielded a magnetic influence. Her hatred of and contempt for Britain she never attempted to hide. That the Queen of Great Britain was represented at a service of mass said for the soul of this woman will be an occasion for profound grief of heart to every loyal Protestant in Britain.

Church Notes.

Communion.

October—First Sabbath, Tolsta and Lochcarron; second, Gairloch and Ness; third, Applecross; fourth, Greenock, Lochinver and Wick. *November*—First Sabbath, Oban and Raasay; second, Glasgow and Halkirk; third, Edinburgh, Dornoch and Uig. *December*—First Sabbath, London.

Any correction to above dates to be sent at once to the Editor.

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, 7th December, 1952, the following services have been arranged (D.V.), to be conducted by the Rev. William MacLean, M.A., Ness, Lewis, and the Rev. Donald MacLean, Portree, Skye:—Thursday, 4th December, 7 p.m.; Friday, 5th December, 4 p.m. (Gaelic), and 7 p.m. (Fellowship Meeting); Saturday, 6th December, 3.30 p.m. and 6.30 p.m. (Prayer Meeting); Sabbath, 7th December, 11 a.m., 3.30 p.m. (Gaelic) (with a corresponding English service in downstairs Hall simultaneously), and 7 p.m.; Monday, 8th December, 4 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.

Editor's Health.

Our readers will be glad to learn that the Rev. R. R. Sinclair is now completely restored to his normal health, and will resume the editorship of the Magazine after this month's issue. Any articles for the Magazine should be sent to Wick. We take this opportunity of expressing our sense of thankfulness to the Lord for Mr. Sinclair's recovery.

Ordination and Induction at North Tolsta.

On 27th August last the Outer Isles Presbytery met in the Church at North Tolsta to ordain the Rev. Fraser MacDonald, M.A., to the office of the Ministry and to induct him to the pastoral charge there. The Moderator pro. tem., Rev. J. A. MacDonald, presided and preached an appropriate sermon from Acts xx, 27, "For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." The usual questions were put to the pastor-elect who, having answered these satisfactorily and signed the Formula in the presence of the Congregation, was then ordained and inducted to the pastoral charge. He was then suitably addressed by Rev. D. MacLean, the Clerk pro. tem.; Mr. MacDonald exhorted the Congregation.

The Call, which was unanimous, was signed by 19 communicants and 206 adherents. The North Tolsta Congregation was raised to a sanctioned charge in 1946. They have built a neatly constructed Manse and extended and improved their Church, which was packed to capacity on the day of the Induction, many having travelled long distances to be present. Now that they have obtained a minister, we hope they may experience times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord and a seed thus raised from their midst to do God service.—D. M., *Clerk of Outer Isles pro. tem.*

To Conveners of Standing Committees.

A note of any items intended to be included on the Agenda of the meeting of the Synod in November should be forwarded to me at an early date.—D. M., *Clerk of Synod pro. tem.*

Acknowledgment of Donations.

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

Sustentation Fund—G. B., £1; Mr. A. C., 24 High Road, Stevenston, £1; Mr. D. McL., 20 Main Street, Dechmont, 10/-.

Aged and Infirm Ministers' and Widows' and Orphans' Fund—A Friend, Broadford, Skye, £1; Vancouver Congregation per Mr. D. A. Macaskill, Treasurer, £45.

Dominions and Colonial Missions—Mr. Ian F. Beaton, Matiere, King Country, N. Zealand, £52 8/-; Rev. A. F. Mackay—Expenses to Winnipeg refunded, £15.

Publication Fund—Vatten Congregation, o/a Trinitarian Bible Society, £8; Free Presbyterian, Shieldaig, o/a Trinitarian Bible Society, £1.

Synod Proceedings Fund—Mrs. M. A., Inverkirkraig, per Rev. A. Macaskill, 8/6; Mr. C. McL., 2 Cruimer, per Rev. A. Macaskill, 8/6; Mrs. C. M., Larriehmore, Birnam, Dunkeld, 14/-.

Jewish and Foreign Missions—Mr. Ian F. Beaton, Matiere, New Zealand, £25; Miss MacTaggart, Chesley, Canada, per Rev. A. F. Mackay, £73; "Dresser Tin," from Misses McLean, Cairnglass, £3 10/-; Raasay Sabbath School per Mrs. D. Matheson, £12; Friend, Broadford, Skye, £1; Mr. J. P. D., Firrhill, Colington Road, Edinburgh, 10/-; Miss M. McK., 80 Birch Road, Parkhall, Dalmeir, 8/6.

The following lists sent in for publication:—

Bayhead Church and Manse Repairs Fund—Collected from Leaklee, Collam, Cluer and Stockinish, per Mr. Ed. Morrison, the sum of £9 18/6; Friend, N. Tolsta, 10/-.

Beaully Congregational Funds—Mr. J. Mackenzie, Treasurer, acknowledges with sincere thanks the sum of £2 10/- o/a Sustentation Fund and £2 10/- o/a Home Mission Fund from Miss M. V. F., Kirkintilloch.

Dornoch Church Building Fund—Rev. F. MacLeod acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:—Mrs. M., Bracklock, £1; Mr. N. S., Dunoon, £1; Two Friends, Perth, £3; A School Girl, B.C. Brora, 10/-; Mrs. H. Gisborne, £2; Miss M. M., Rogart, £3; Miss M., Strone, Harris, £1; Miss F., Rogart, £5; To the Memory of Charles Sutherland, £2; J. M., Rogart, £1; J. M., Drumbeg, £2; Friend, Dornoch, £5; Anon, Lochcarron, 10/-; Two Friends, Slumbay, Lochcarron, £2; A Friend, Ross-shire, per General Treasurer, £2; A Friend, Kishorn, £1; Mr. and Mrs. M., Kishorn, £2; Mrs. N. and A. M., Kilchoan, £2; Mrs. R., Inverness, £3; W. M., Inverness, £1; Mr. D. M., Diabaig, £1; A Friend, Ullapool, £1, both per Mr. R. Ross; Friends, Foindie, Seourie, £3; An Old Woman's Mite, 5/-; Mrs. J. S., Rogart, £1; A Friend, Glasgow, £1; Mr. and Mrs. B. G., London, £2 2/-; Miss M. and Miss J. T., Dumbarton, £2.

Edinburgh Manse Purchase Fund—The Treasurer gratefully acknowledges the following:—A. M., £1; Friend of the Cause, Edinburgh, £3, both per Mr. P. Anderson.

Glendale Congregational Funds—The Treasurer gratefully acknowledges the following donations:—Friend, Skinidin, £1, o/a S. African Mission, and 5/- from A. McL., Skinidin, o/a Home Mission Fund per Mr. D. Mackay.

Halkirk Congregation—Rev. W. Grant gratefully acknowledges £3 from Mrs. T. and Miss B., Halkirk, o/a Foreign Missions Fund, £1 from Tain Friend and £1 from Daviot for purposes stated.

London Congregational Funds—Rev. J. P. Macqueen acknowledges with sincere thanks £1 from Mrs. A. W., late of Winnipeg, £2 from Mr. M. McG., Hurstville, Australia, and £2 from A Skye Friend; C. M. K., Wye, Kent, £7; also from C. M. K., Wye, £5, o/a Sustentation Fund.

Ness Manse Purchase Fund—Mr. D. Mackay, Treasurer, 72 Cross, Skigersta Road, acknowledges with grateful thanks the sum of £71 15/- from Portree Congregation; A Friend, Eoropie, £2; Murray, 17 Port of Ness, £1.

Raasay Manse Building Fund—Mr. E. MacRae, Treasurer, acknowledges with sincere thanks the following:—Friend, Raasay, £1; Friend, Harris, £1; Mr. and Mrs. N. McL., Dingwall, £2; D. McL., Aynort, Skye, £1; Friend, Raasay, per Mr. E. M. S., £1.

South Harris Manse Building Fund—Mr. A. MacLennan, Treasurer, acknowledges with thanks a donation of £2 from Anon, Cluer.

Tain Congregation—Mr. A. Robertson, Treasurer, acknowledges with sincere thanks a donation of £2 2/- o/a Sustentation Fund, also £1 from E. R., Suffolk, for Congregational Fund.