

# **REPORT OF THE RELIGION AND MORALS COMMITTEE**

**Convener: Mr. F. R. Daubney**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

IT is with sadness that the Committee has to report a continuing erosion in the religious and moral state of the world and nation. In the past year the news has been dominated by the reported atrocities and brutalities of the so-called Islamic State in Syria, Iraq and Libya. We read of young Muslim men from this country fired up with zeal for the cause of those who would brutally suppress disagreement with their odious beliefs. We have seen further revelations of child abuse and of sexual exploitation of vulnerable young people. The sodomite lobby is becoming more bold and vociferous in its demands. The prosecution of Christian people with small businesses who, for instance, refuse to print sodomite literature or decorate their “wedding” cakes, is becoming more frequently heard of. The greed and avarice of the banking crisis, of a few years ago, still reverberates with further revelations of wrong doing. All of which vividly highlights a continuing falling away from the gospel truths with which this nation, and others, have been so greatly favoured. God has a controversy with us and unless we return to Him in repentance, then the flood of our iniquity will carry us away.

In the visible church we have witnessed a turning away from God’s Word in the embracing of sodomites, the appointment of women ministers and priests, and now the inevitable woman bishop. The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Reverend John Chalmers, has invited the Pope of Rome to visit Scotland. In his fulsome invitation he said that “All people of faith would welcome him”. The Convener of this Committee has written to Mr. Chalmers to protest but no reply has been received.

We must pray with Habakkuk, “O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years . . . make known; in wrath remember mercy” (Habakkuk 3:2).

## **2. RELIGION**

### *A review of Christianity worldwide*

“The kingdom of God cometh not with observation” (Luke 17:20), and there may be many things happening in Christ’s Kingdom, even of great importance, which do not make the news, or even come to the ears of those concerned for the well-being of the Kingdom. The purpose of this survey, therefore, is simply to state how world Christianity presently appears from Scotland.

### **European peoples**

Among the European peoples, now spread not only in Europe but in North America and the Antipodes, the reluctance to hear the Gospel or to give it any

serious consideration continues unabated. The general impression throughout the western world is one of decline in Christianity, with just a few encouragements here and there. In Britain there has been a significant increase in minor persecution during the last year.

#### **South and Central America**

Interest in evangelical Christianity is much greater in these parts of the world than it is in the West. However, reports of persecution, even death, at the hands of Roman Catholics come in from some countries in Central America. In Brazil there is a discernible and heartening enthusiasm for Protestantism and Calvinism, but not sufficient at present to counter the endemic corruption.

#### **Africa**

The Islamic violence against Christianity continues, especially in Nigeria, Niger, Central African Republic, Sudan, Kenya, and Tanzania. There is great interest in Christianity in southern Nigeria, with very large charismatic churches, but little progress in reformed religion.

#### **The Middle East**

Violence against “Christians” continues throughout the Middle East. Many of these sufferers adhere to false forms of Christianity but we hear of true believers as well, and the interest in the Gospel is far greater than in the West.

#### **India and Pakistan**

Christianity is widespread in southern India, but there are outbreaks of persecution from resentful Hindus. There is little evidence of reformed religion. In Pakistan the small number of Christians are the frequent victims of persecution.

#### **China and the Far East**

A substantial proportion of the South Korean population profess Christianity. The proportion is lower in China, but the numbers involved are large, and in both countries there is significant interest in reformed religion. Persecution in China appears to have worsened in the last year.

In summary, the persecution of Christians is very widespread, but tends to be localised rather than universal. The Gospel continues to spread in some parts of the world, generally in the face of fierce opposition. When a longer view is taken, countries such as Korea, Brazil, China, Russia, and Israel have seen a striking increase in true religion.

#### ***The suppression of Christianity in Britain today***

Those who profess to hold to the Word of God as their supreme authority, are presently tolerated in public national life, only in so far as they remain silent. The Bible has long been a forgotten guide for governments and their agencies

of law and justice. In more recent times the public expression of any opinion that is consistent with a belief in the Bible is almost always condemned, to the extent that it has become a rarity. In January 2014 there was a well-publicised letter to the Press by the Henley Councillor, Mr. David Silvester, in which he accused the Prime Minister of acting “arrogantly against the Gospel”, and implied that the floods of December 2013 were God’s judgment on the nation for the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act. In addition to much mocking in the Press, his statement elicited a response by the local Conservative MP, John Howell: “I thought Mr. Silvester’s letter was not the sort of thing that he should have written in today’s age.” This view is so pervasive, that the UK Independence Party felt that they had “no choice” but to expel Mr. Silvester. The implication of the view expressed by Mr. Howell is that biblical Christianity is not a reasonable belief for people to hold; and that there is an incompatibility with a view of God as the Governor of the nations, and a person’s participation in the earthly government of a nation. This state of *de facto* censorship of Christians in the UK looks to be worsening. Employment opportunities, particularly with government agencies, are increasingly restricted for those who refuse to act contrary to the Word of God.

Whilst the chief responsibility for this shameful condition lies with the churches who have not contended for scriptural truth, it is the education system, particularly the universities, that has been powerfully instrumental in the suppression of a public Christian voice over the past few decades. The pervasive teaching of evolutionary theory and liberal moral philosophy has had a profoundly deleterious effect. Journalists and teachers have for generations graduated from universities believing in, and relentlessly promoting, an atheist-leaning agenda; to the extent that dissenting voices have now largely been removed from the schools and the mainstream media. Children are taught according to an anti-Christian agenda which includes a distorted view of history, including the use of historical fiction. The nation is daily bombarded by the publicly-funded BBC and other privately-owned, and equally-corrupting media, with a similar agenda.

Very few people in Britain will now acknowledge the truth of the Genesis creation narrative. Indeed, belief in Darwinism and other forms of evolution is considered to be so sacrosanct, that most will not even publicly acknowledge God as the Creator – considering the issue of creation irrelevant when “scientists have shown the universe to have evolved over billions of years”. Unsurprisingly, therefore, a great many have now discounted the possibility of life after death, and the necessity of the salvation of their eternal souls. They thus refrain from reading the Word of God, attending a church, or otherwise preparing to meet their God.

In the universities, modern philosophers have espoused man-centric moral theories to fill the vacuum in the nation created by the forsaking of the law of God as a moral compass. Such theories exclude the possibility of the operation of a sovereign God and are therefore rooted in atheism. The late American philosopher, John Rawls of Harvard University, has been the most influential

in this regard. His *Theory of Justice*, first published in 1971, was founded on the principle that, “Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others”. Equality legislation, which is firmly based on Rawlsianism, is now an iron hand on all the nations of the west for the suppression of Christianity. One of the basic liberties that Rawls espoused was liberty of conscience. In equality legislation, however, the right to liberty of conscience for Christians has been overridden time and again by the supposed rights of homosexuals and others. Every mainstream political party in Britain, whether on the right or the left, fully supports this equality legislation and its consequential suppression of Christian morality. However, the Democratic Unionist Party in Northern Ireland has recently proposed an amendment in the Province’s legislation to “make reasonable accommodation for people with sincere and deeply-held religious beliefs”. Were this proposal to be taken up in Edinburgh and Westminster it would be an encouraging development, but that seems highly unlikely at present.

Although there have been well-publicised cases of individual Christians losing rights as a consequence of recent legislation, these matters are relatively inconsequential compared to the much more pernicious suppression of Christianity in Britain through the purging of Christian teaching in the education system, in regard to both teaching the Gospel, the teaching of creation and of biblical morality. The vilification of biblical Christianity by all branches of the media, both in terms of news and entertainments, greatly compounds the anti-Christian message that young people are hearing from day to day.

Another way in which Christian moral teaching is suppressed in the UK is through “relationship and sex education” in schools. It is required for all state-funded schools in England to provide such lessons for children from the age of eleven. Parents currently have the right to remove children from these lessons, but this veto was restricted by the last Labour Government to children up to the age of fifteen. If elected the Labour Party propose to make sex education compulsory from the age of five, and will be required to be “LGBT-inclusive”. Although there is no such statutory obligation in Scotland, schools are expected to provide “relationships, sexual health and parenthood education”, and guidelines are issued by the Scottish Government on its provision. Parents may withdraw their children but are discouraged from doing so. Amongst other troubling unbiblical aspects contained in the latest guidelines, issued in December 2014, it is recommended that secondary school pupils may make the decision independent of their parents as to whether they wish to attend such lessons. The purpose seems to be to make it as difficult as possible for parents to withdraw their children without enforcing a legal requirement.

So far suppression of Christianity in Britain is largely confined to public life. The state has not yet taken an active interest in what goes on in the church or in the home and, as long as there is no perceived difficulty for the state, this situation may well persist for some time. However, the history of persecution

of Christians suggests that neither the individual, the family nor the church, will be immune from oppression by the state if there is an effective witness against its own evil legislation and practise. One of the immediate dangers for families in Scotland is the “State Guardian” legislation. This law, which was passed by MSPs in 2014, and is due to come into effect in 2016, gives a government-appointed person access to every child in the land to check their wellbeing is not “compromised” in their family situation. The legality of the legislation is being challenged through Judicial Review by a group of petitioners led by Colin Hart of the Christian Institute. Biblical teaching has already been effectively barred from the public classroom as “not preparing children for life in modern Britain”. It is no great stretch of the imagination to see this prohibition extended to private schools and, by means of the above legislation, even to the family itself.

Unless the Lord will restrain the evildoers in His mercy, troubled times lie ahead. If that is the case, we ought neither to be surprised nor fearful of such troubles, but rather to rejoice that we are thus privileged (1 Peter 4:12-19). The suppression of Christianity in the UK to the point of persecution has long been foreseen. For example, in a letter to a correspondent at the close of the 18th century, Bishop Samuel Horsley made a very prescient prediction of a time when the state would turn against Christianity. He wrote: “This desertion will begin in a professed indifference to any particular form of Christianity, under the pretence of universal toleration; which toleration will proceed from no true spirit of charity and forbearance, but from a design to undermine Christianity, by multiplying and encouraging sectaries [members of sects]. The pretended toleration will go far beyond a just toleration, even as it regards the different sects of Christians. For governments will pretend an indifference to all, and will give a protection in preference to none. All establishments will be set aside. From the toleration of the most pestilent heresies, they will proceed to the toleration of Mahometanism, atheism, and at last to a positive persecution of the truth of Christianity.” More than two centuries later, his prediction has been fully realised.

### ***Popery (Romanism)***

Popery is described in Holy Scripture as that “. . . MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH” (Revelation 17:5), a “. . . woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus . . .” (Revelation 17:6), and a “. . . habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird” (Revelation 18:2b). Its head, the Pope of Rome is declared to be “. . . that man of sin . . . the son of perdition” (2 Thessalonians 2:3b), who blasphemously “opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God” (2 Thessalonians 2:4). And as a satanic institution (2 Thessalonians 2:9) beclouded with strong delusion, and believing a lie (2 Thessalonians 2:11).

In July 2014, the Pope, in a homily delivered before an audience which included some who had been abused by paedophile priests, addressed the scandal of wide-spread child sex abuse by Popish priests and, more strongly than previously, condemned the way in which the abuse crisis had been handled. Whilst so speaking, he said: “Before God and His people, I express my sorrow for the sins and grave crimes of clerical sexual abuse committed against you. And I humbly ask forgiveness.” However, his words were greeted with much scepticism, and largely dismissed as a mere superficial gesture. One report stated: “They have found fault with the way the pope, 77, has approached the scandal since his election last March. While condemning the abuse, Francis has seemed reluctant to mount a full-frontal attack on the church and angered many by claiming that no other organisation has ‘done more’ to tackle child abuse.” It appears to have been a reluctant, insincere, cynical damage-limitation exercise. Whilst Popery’s blasphemous priests are forbidden to marry, and remain in the heart-hardening, devilish environment of that system, Romanism will continue to breed paedophiles and sodomites.

The Pope granted the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the Reverend John Chalmers, an audience, which took place on the 16th February 2015. He, in seemingly eager anticipation of the meeting, said, “I am honoured to be able to meet with his Holiness Pope Francis. I hope to be able to discuss a range of issues including how faith is regarded in the 21st century.” He ought to flee from Popery’s idolatry, recoil from acknowledging the Pope’s blasphemous usurping of the designation “His Holiness”, and condemn his heretical doctrine of justification by works. He by his declared intention, and grateful acknowledgement of the Pope, exposes himself as a blind leader of the blind, and yet another dupe of Rome, that, as Satan’s masterpiece, excels at pretending a love to Christ, to truth and to holiness. Woe to him that embraces damnable heresy and idolatry, and woe to him that does not condemn it with all his power. “He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord” (Proverbs 17:15).

### ***Islam (Mohammedanism)***

There are an estimated 1.3 billion Muslims world-wide, about a quarter of the world’s population. These people are carried away with Islam in evidence of the righteous judgement of God. Islam is Britain’s fastest growing religion, numbering around 3 million, having almost trebled in size since 2001; 1 in 10 children under the age of 4 are Muslim. It is predicted that Islam will be the largest religion in Britain by 2030. There are about 1,500 mosques, and approximately 90 Muslim schools in England. Some areas have become predominantly Muslim, and it is reported that Sharia law is practiced there. Media accounts of the Muslim Community in general give the impression that it is becoming more assertive, even aggressive, with a few declaring that Britain will eventually become an Islamic State.

The Koran is the principal book from which the Muslim derives his teaching and practice. James Durham, in his commentary on the Book of Revelation,

chapter 9:13-21, states that the Koran was written by Mohammed, a non-Christian, together with Sergius, a Nestorian (who say Christ is two persons), Joannes Antiochenus, an Arian (who deny the Godhead of the Son and Holy Ghost), and some Jews. He also asserts that the Koran is a mere human composition (not given to Mohammed by the angel Gabriel as he claimed), but is instead a mixture of Paganism, Judaism and Christianity. The Koran includes many heresies, especially the denial of the Trinity of Persons in the Godhead. It is devoid of all the fundamental articles of truth, which without the knowledge and faith thereof, it is impossible to be saved: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved . . ." (Acts 16:31).

Islamic scholars disagree amongst themselves as to the meaning of the word Islam (*Salafi*); some consider that it means "peace", and others that it means "submission". It has been contended that Islam, in its traditional formulations and core text, mandates warfare against, and subjugation of, unbelievers (non-Muslims). Muslim jurists (experts in Islamic law) agree that the purpose of fighting against Christians and Jews is two-fold; either their conversion to Islam or their submission to it, and payment of the poll-tax (*jizya*). The Koran in 9:29 declares, "Fight those who do not believe in Allah and the Last Day, and who forbid not what Allah and His messenger have forbidden – who do not practice the religion of truth, being of those who have been given the Book – until they pay the poll-tax out of hand and are humbled". It makes a sharp distinction between the believer (Muslim) and the non-believer (non-Muslim), therefore, effectively teaching that the Muslim is superior to the non-Muslim, and also advocates a global agenda, the prospective establishment of a world-dominating Caliphate (Islamic Kingdom).

There are tensions in Britain between Muslims and non-Muslims. It is evident that many apparently moderate Muslims do not condemn extremist atrocities as strongly as may be desired, and they will not march en-masse publicly in condemnation of Islamic terrorist murder. Many non-Muslims are suspicious of Muslims, even when they condemn extremist violence. The 7/7 bombings, the murder of Lee Rigby, and the very frequent reports of thwarted terrorist attacks, have created an atmosphere of fear and wariness throughout the land. The Government is not unaffected by fear, and seems to be intimidated by the lurking bomber, shooter or be-header. It has publicly admitted that its security is insufficient to prevent all terrorist attacks, and that such are inevitable. The Government is in desperate need of wise biblical advice.

The truly godly are to take encouragement from the fact that better days are promised, indeed pre-fixed, in Holy Scripture (the Christian Bible), when the living and true God will bring about the propagation of the Gospel (a good report of Christ) and the spreading of the kingdom of Christ to all nations, This will involve the conversion of the Jews, the fullness of the Gentiles (which will include millions of Muslims) and the fall of Islam, and all other false religions. These better days of the glorious millennium will last for a very long time and during this blessed period the true Christian Church will thrive in fulfilment of

the Scriptural promises; “. . . the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9b).

### ***Islamic terrorism and persecution of Christians***

Following the death of Osama bin Laden it seemed, for a brief time, that the Islamist threat was in decline. However, what would appear to be a more sinister and random form of terrorism has emerged with the brutal activities of the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham or Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (Isis). The members of Isis are determined to form a Caliphate, an Islamic state, which would be intolerant of any form of opposition or disagreement.

In June 2014, the group renamed itself Islamic State (IS). The group sprang up in Iraq and then entered into the Syrian conflict with its own purposes, supporting neither the Syrian government nor the rebels. As a Caliphate it claims religious, political and military authority over all Muslims worldwide. This has been widely denounced by Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

There have been many instances of what Isis regards as “reprisals” against those who criticise Islam or Mohammed. Their dreadful and wicked treatment of their captives and hostages is beyond description. The beheadings, burnings and stonings are not simply executions but an indulgence in gratuitous sadism.

Towards the end of 2014, Isis claimed that it would fly the “flag of Allah” over the White House. Recruits are encouraged to “set out in jihad” if they “desire what God has promised”. In late September 2014 it was revealed that Isis planned to kill ten million Americans as retribution for their perceived role in killing ten million Muslims.

The members of Isis are Sunni Muslims and direct their violence against all who oppose them or refuse to pledge allegiance to the so-called Islamic State. Shia Muslims are also very much at risk. Amnesty International has said that Isis is responsible for “ethnic cleansing” in northern Iraq on a “historic scale”. They systematically target non-Arab and non-Sunni Muslim communities, killing and abducting possibly thousands.

Christians living in areas under Isis control who wish to remain where they are face three options: converting to Islam, paying a religious levy, or death. The number of their atrocities in Iraq and in Syria is legion. We regularly read of the murders of Christians and the destruction of church buildings by Isis. In February this year Isis released a video showing the apparent beheadings of 21 Coptic Christians in Libya. They were Egyptians who had gone to Libya looking for work. They were abducted and murdered for no other reason than that they were Christians. This is occurring wherever Isis operates.

Many of the terrorist attacks in Europe and the United Kingdom are by al-Qaeda related fanatics, such as the two brothers responsible for the murders of the Charlie Hebdo cartoonists in Paris. Theresa May, the Home Secretary, has said that forty terror plots have been foiled by British security services since the 7/7 bombings in 2005. The foiled plots include a planned Mumbai



style gun attack, the planned murder of members of the armed forces, an attempt to assassinate an ambassador, and an attempt to bring down a plane. She has said that since April 2010, 753 people have been charged and 148 have been successfully prosecuted. Arrests are being made every day. Boko Haram is a Muslim terrorist organisation in Nigeria which, as well as terrorising and abducting villagers in remote areas, has a policy of murdering Christians and burning churches. Those who refuse to convert are tortured and murdered. Sub-Saharan Africa has seen a dramatic increase in religious persecution in the past year with Islamic extremism being the major cause. Kenya, Niger and Nigeria, where once different faiths lived peacefully together, have now become areas of persecution.

Pakistan also sees the widespread persecution of Christians. The law in that country prohibits blasphemy against any recognised religion. However, the great majority of accusations of blasphemy have been levelled at non-Muslim religious minorities, mostly for perceived offences against Mohammed or the Koran. It is reported that in excess of 50 people accused of blasphemy have been murdered before their respective trials had been concluded. Once an accusation of blasphemy has been made it is common for not only the accused, but police, lawyers and judges to be subject to harassment and threats. The law is often used to persecute religious minorities and settle personal feuds. In August 2012, a young Christian girl in her early teens, illiterate and with mental disabilities, was accused of blasphemy for burning pages from a book containing verses from the Koran. Following a global outcry she was acquitted for lack of evidence. Subsequently, the imam who first gave the police the burned pages, was himself arrested for desecrating the Koran and tampering with evidence.

Scores of violent incidents have occurred in recent years against entire communities, places of worship and individuals, often perpetrated under the pretext of the country's blasphemy laws.

China, where there is a very large number of Christians, is another place where persecution is increasing. North Korea, which is said to be the worst country in the world for persecution, forces Christians into labour camps for refusing to join the cult of the state's founder, Kim Il-Sung.

According to the International Society for Human Rights, 80 per cent of all acts of religious discrimination in the world today are directed at Christians. "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you" (John 15:20).

### **3. MORALS**

#### ***Abortion***

Solomon exhorts in Proverbs 31:8, "Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction".

When he came to consider the subject of his own formation in the womb, the Psalmist put his hand on his mouth in astonished wonder saying, "I will

praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well". (There is a paraphrase which brings out the force of the Hebrew words used: "I have wonderfully come into being under fearful circumstances; i.e., circumstances exciting a shudder, viz., of astonishment".) Even Solomon was nonplussed by the formation of a human being in the womb: Ecclesiastes 11:5: "As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all."

It will clear up some questions if we explain the most important terms. By **abortion** we understand the deliberate termination of the life of a prenatal child. If we often use the term **child** in preference to embryo or foetus, it is because the learned translators of the AV frequently translated the biblical text using the personal expression "with child" to speak of a pregnant woman. By the **image of God** in man we understand a human being with rational and volitional faculties.

Abortion was legalised in England, Wales and Scotland in 1967. There have been over 8 million abortions in Great Britain since the 1967 Act. A general guide is that, at present, just under 200,000 abortions are carried out per year for social reasons. "Social reasons", in this context, refers to one or more of the following: a mother or parents in poverty; a mother deemed unable to cope with a child, the mother being herself too young to cope with a child. A number amounting to 3,063 are performed because the child is likely to be born handicapped. In the case where the life of the mother is in danger – if competent authorities have to make the sad choice between the life of the mother and the life of the unborn babe – reason requires them to choose the life of the mother, upon whom so much and so many depend. This should not be regarded as a breach of the 6th Commandment.<sup>1</sup>

In recent months, after reports of UK doctors referring women for abortions for no reason other than the mother being disappointed with the gender of the child in her womb, MP Fiona Bruce sought to add an amendment to the Serious Crime Bill, which stated, "nothing in Section 1 of the Abortion Act

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<sup>1</sup> Abortion under any other circumstance was universally regarded among the Jews as an aggravated breach of the 6th Commandment. The seriousness of the violation of the 6th Commandment is based on the fact of man's having been made in the image of God, as we learn from Genesis 9:6: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man."

One writer who has studied rabbinical literature said that in all known Jewish literature to AD 500, there was no record of an abortion which was not carried out to preserve the mother's life (M. J. Gorman, quoted in *Love Your Unborn Neighbour*, page 2).

Josephus stated that, "The law forbids women either to cause abortion or to make away with the foetus; a woman convicted of this is regarded as an infanticide" (Against Apion, ii, 25, cited in G. J. Wenham, "A Biblical theologian looks at abortion", in *Abortion: The Biblical and Medical Challenges*).

If one consults the religious literature of the early New Testament Church, intended for the Gentile nations, the same prohibition is found. The *Didache*, a brief early Christian treatise dealing with Christian ethics, prohibits abortion.

1967 is to be interpreted as allowing a pregnancy to be terminated on the grounds of the sex of the unborn child". MPs rejected the Bill.

The situation in the European Court of Human Rights (as far as we can ascertain) was made clear in a case in 2004. Because of a failure in communication, a woman's pregnancy was wrongly terminated in a French hospital. According to BBC reports, French courts said the doctor could not be prosecuted for homicide as the foetus did not have the right to life. She appealed to the ECHR to accept a "foetus's right to life". She and her lawyers argued that an unborn child has the right to live. But the Court ruled against her.

To ordinary people this state of affairs is utterly confounding. When a child dies in the mother's womb, doctors say that the baby died. That means the baby was alive but it died.

There are laws protecting vulnerable children and adults from exploitation. There are laws protecting animals from cruelty. Why is there no law to protect the lives of prenatal children? Why do Judges not protest that the law leaves them with no option but to get the blood of innocents upon their garments?

What says the Bible? Some say that there is no categorical statement in the Bible regarding the standing of the unborn child: in the law; in respect of its independent life; its relation to the rest of humanity; in respect of its being or not being a person.

Is not the general impression made by reading the Holy Scriptures, that the babe in the womb is a living pre-natal human being, made in the image of God and protected with the right to live?

Besides, if there is insufficiently detailed biblical teaching to construct a systematic doctrine in respect of the rights in law of the unborn child, this may be explained by the distinct possibility that the deliberate termination of the life of a prenatal child is regarded by God as a breach of the 6th Commandment and that the detailed biblical teaching regarding other categories of human beings applies to this class of human beings as well. Infants and octogenarians, boys and girls, men and women, young and old, sick and well people, are all protected by law: only one category of human being – our most tender little ones – may be dashed against the stones almost at will.

#### **Do we know if the prenatal child is a human being or not?**

John Calvin believed he had good ground for knowing it. Commenting on Exodus 21:22, he wrote: "the foetus, though enclosed in the womb of its mother, is already a human being, and it is almost a monstrous crime to rob it of the life which it has not yet begun to enjoy."

#### **Do we know if the prenatal child is a person or not?**

Recently, the Court of Appeal found that a child born with foetal alcohol syndrome was not legally entitled to compensation. Lawyers argued her mother had poisoned her foetus through the excessive consumption of strong

drink. But appeal judges ruled she had not committed a criminal offence. At the same time, men have been found guilty of committing a crime for cruelly poisoning birds and other animals. Lord Justice Treacy said an “essential ingredient” for a crime to be committed “is the infliction of grievous bodily harm on a person – grievous bodily harm on a foetus will not suffice”. The case is significant because it made a judgement on whether or not a foetus is considered a person, independent of its mother.

But many able and reliable students of Scripture argue that the Scriptures speak of a continuity, not only of life but of individual personality, from the womb. One example of the kind of argument that is used, is in connection with Job 10:18-19. Here Job says that had he died in the womb he would be as though [he] had not been. He does not say “I, Job, would not have been” but “I should have been *as though* I had not been”. The argument is that this points to a continuity of not only his life but his person, from the womb. If he must live, Job wished that he had known nothing of life but the first stage of his life, in the warmth of his mother’s womb. But the point is this – it was life and furthermore he refers to it as his life – the life of an individual person.

Similar arguments are based on statements found in Jeremiah’s writings. Also, Psalm 139 is particularly interesting to any who wish to understand this subject. Students of this topic should note that the Hebrew word translated “unperfect substance” in Psalm 139 is the word which also translates “embryo”. This is important because the Psalmist uses the personal pronoun with regard to the embryo. Psalm 139:16: “Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.”

### **Woven into the question about the continuum of prenatal and postnatal personality is the question of the time of ensoulment**

Some argue that ensoulment is at the time of birth. However, there are strong arguments, found by good and necessary inference in the Scriptures of Truth, for an early ensoulment. One such argument is based on Psalm 51:5: “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.” David traces the presence of sin in his soul back to conception. But guilt is possible only where there is moral agency. Moral agency requires a rational and volitional nature, i.e. a soul. If the foetus is a body without a soul until the moment of birth then moral agency is not attributable to it until birth. If that is the case then how are we to understand David in Psalm 51:5?

There is an argument based on the prophecy regarding the spiritual unction of John the Baptist from the womb. An angel informed Zacharias that John would be filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother’s womb. Luke 1:15: “For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother’s womb.” Not the body but the soul can be the receptacle for this spiritual unction.

Another argument is based on the prenatal joy of John the Baptist. When the virgin Mary visited John's mother Elizabeth, she said to Mary, "as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy" (Luke 1:44). It is argued by those who deny early ensoulment, that because there is a kind of physiological sympathy between the mother and the babe in the womb, that this is sufficient to explain this event in the Gospel narrative. But it is asked, first, Why would the Holy Spirit record a physical effect of Elizabeth's unctuous joy, which might be misleading? and secondly, Why would He attribute joy to the babe in the womb if not to show that indeed John manifested the effects of spiritual life from the womb? It is suggested that it is more honouring to the Spirit and to the Holy Scriptures to say that the joy spoken of is a mysterious and spiritual joy in the soul of the prenatal child, corresponding to what the angel had promised. It is very significant that the same Greek word translated "babe" in reference to John in the womb, is used to speak of postnatal infants in other places (see Luke 1:41; 44; 2:12, 16; Luke 18:15; Acts 7:19; 2 Timothy 3:15).

It has been claimed that in his 9th Topic, 12th Question, that Francis Turretin is speaking about the creation of the soul at birth but this is a misrepresentation of Turretin's teaching. He is speaking about the propagation of sin from our first parents, and not the creation (much less the propagation) of the soul thence. Not the soul but sin is the "tinder" he refers to.

It has been claimed that Thomas Boston expressed the view that ensoulment is at the time of birth. But in his lecture on the creation of man Boston says, "God infuseth the soul created by him of nothing, into the body formed in the womb when it is fitly organised to receive it".

It has been claimed that Boston wrote that ensoulment takes place when the body is "fully developed". As far as the writer can see, he did not use that term. It could be argued that he consistently and studiously avoided using that very expression, preferring to employ the more ambiguous term "fitly" or "fully organised". It has also been said that Boston taught "the full preparation of the body [was necessary] before the soul is infused". To be able to make this affirmation, one needs to replace the expressions "fitly" and "fully organised" which Boston uses, into "fully developed" and "fully prepared" which, as far as we know, he never used in this context. Besides, the term "full preparation" doesn't necessarily refer to the time of birth.

It has been argued from the creation of Adam, because the soul was united to the body of Adam only when his body was fully formed, that the soul of his seed is united to the body only when it is fully formed at birth. This argument ignores the fact that in Adam's case there was no other stage at which the soul could join his body because he was created in a state of perfect humanity. One might as easily argue, that, as Adam was ensouled as soon as his body came into being, so the unborn child is ensouled as soon as it comes into being.

There are various views as to the precise interpretation of Exodus 21:22: "If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her, and yet no mischief follow: he shall be surely punished, according as the woman's

husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine.” Seeing that it is not a woman simply considered but a child-bearing woman that is referred to, it would be difficult to deny that the fruit of the womb had protection not only under Old Testament civil law but under the sixth commandment specifically.

Several other biblical texts show that the heinous crime of the murder of a woman is an aggravated breach of the 6th Commandment if she is pregnant and the life of the child is taken away: see Amos 1:13; 2 Kings 8:12; 15:16. To one who fears to offend God and believes that he must give an account to God, the implications of this cannot be dismissed lightly.

The clamorous demands of a secular and promiscuous society have run ahead of us. Our Church has been warning against the wickedness of non-essential abortions since 1967. But we have not convinced the nation of the implications of taking away the life of the unborn child unnecessarily. Yet the consequences seem most definitely to be most tragically sad. Doleful as are the ramifications for mothers, fathers, medical practitioners, judges and, especially, for our legislators, there is a strong tide of biblical interpretation, of Patristic and Reformed theology, of reasonable arguments, and of good and necessary inference, based on the facts of revelation and of science, which oblige us in the fear of God to accept that the prenatal child is a living human person made in the image of God, possessing body and soul and that we are looking at a slaughter of unprecedented proportions and of unimaginable wickedness. “Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction” (Proverbs 31:8).

### ***Euthanasia***

NHS guidelines on euthanasia are as follows:

Euthanasia is the act of deliberately ending a person’s life to relieve suffering.

A doctor who gives a patient with terminal cancer an overdose of muscle relaxants to end their life would be considered to have carried out euthanasia. Assisted suicide is the act of deliberately assisting or encouraging another person to kill themselves. If a relative of a person with a terminal illness were to obtain powerful sedatives, knowing that the person intended to take an overdose of sedatives to kill themselves, they may be considered to be assisting suicide.

Both euthanasia and assisted suicide are illegal under English law. Depending on the circumstances, euthanasia is regarded as either manslaughter or murder and is punishable by law, with a maximum penalty of up to life imprisonment. Assisted suicide is illegal under the terms of the Suicide Act (1961) and is punishable by up to 14 years’ imprisonment. Attempting to kill yourself is not a criminal act in itself.

Attempts to legalise euthanasia in Britain have so far failed. But “when abortion and infanticide have been accepted by society, euthanasia cannot be far behind. All the same arguments can be used, in particular those based on the cost to society of supporting the ‘useless’ lives of those who, viewed from a purely utilitarian perspective, are regarded as ‘better off dead’. The notion of the life not worth living is a flexible one” (*Love Your Unborn Neighbour*, page 77).

### ***The promotion of homosexuality in society***

The passing into law of the Same-Sex Marriage Act is one of the main contributory factors in promoting homosexuality in society. Alex Neil, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing in the Scottish Government, said, “We are introducing same-sex marriage in Scotland because it is the right thing to do”. Obviously he is a blind leader of the blind.

Another contributory factor is pressure groups such as “Stonewall”, who claim on their website that they have trained OFSTED’s lead Inspectors and advised the government on the Equality Act, and also claim that the group is perfectly placed to help schools to “celebrate different families” because Stonewall has worked with OFSTED and other government agencies to create these legal requirements.

“Shall of iniquity the throne  
Have fellowship with thee,  
Which mischief, cunningly contriv’d  
Doth by a law decree?

(Psalm 94:20, metrical version)

### ***The future of biblical marriage in Scotland***

The future of marriage in our land is a cause of great concern to those who seek to uphold the teaching of the Word of God in every area of life. In addition to the fearful immorality of our generation in general, we can clearly discern the hand of the great enemy of souls endeavouring to destroy the institution of marriage, the stability of society and the usefulness of the Church, in the introduction of same-sex “marriages” by the nation’s legislature. At present, marriage in Scotland is regulated by the Marriage (Scotland) Act 1977 as amended by the Marriage and Civil Partnerships (Scotland) Act 2014, which has been operative since the end of 2014. This evil piece of legislation has redefined what marriage is so that it is no longer solely the union of one man and one woman according to the biblical law of marriage but now also includes sodomite couples – both male and female – as equally valid “marriages” in the eyes of the law of the land. This is the great difference between the current legislation and every previous unbiblical encroachment in the realm of marriage and divorce since the state began to regulate marriage in the mid-nineteenth century. Marriage, according to the new definition of Scots law, is not marriage according to the law of God. This is the only definition of marriage which the state recognises and under which it is prepared to allow our

ministers and people their civil rights. This is a fearful and deplorable state of affairs for us to find ourselves in as a nation. The marriage schedule itself has been altered in a way so as to incorporate same-sex couples. However, the form whereby marriages are conducted by Free Presbyterian ministers remains outwardly the same as before.

When we turn our eyes to the future of marriage in our nation we cannot help but observe the precarious nature of the current situation. Currently, the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland is one of a limited number of “approved celebrants” of marriage under the 1977 legislation as recently amended. The Scottish Government is seeking to draw up a new list of “approved celebrants”. Given the decision of Synod in 2014 to continue to perform marriages under the auspices of the new legislation, it is likely that the Church would initially seek to remain on any list of marriage celebrants authorised by the state. Since the amending of the Equalities Act by the Westminster Parliament last year, there are legal securities provided to stop any church or individual celebrant being forced to marry same-sex couples against their own convictions. The Committee wishes to draw attention to the fact that if the civil authorities can currently legislate to protect the rights of those who object to same-sex “marriage”, a future legislature could conceivably move to undermine or even abolish those rights.

It has been suggested that the government may seek to hold a consultation regarding the nature of any legal tests and requirements with which approved celebrants must comply, ostensibly to clamp down on bodies and individuals performing “sham” marriages. Again, if the tests to be imposed on approved celebrants were to be changed in future in the direction of compromising the rights of those who object to same-sex “marriage”, then this would be a matter of the utmost gravity for the Synod’s consideration.

#### ***Encroachments upon parental responsibility in the family***

One great danger in this area is the passing by the Scottish Government of the Young People (Scotland) Bill. This concerns the appointment of a state guardian for all children from birth to 18. The NHS will appoint a health worker to act as a “named person” for every child under 5. School teachers are likely to be appointed by the local authority. As a result of this change the state will have greater powers over the child’s life and will be able to override parents’ wishes. Christian families will have parental rights eroded by a secular state which will give greater opportunities for the insidious culture of “children’s rights”. Christian parents vow to bring up their children in the “nurture and admonition of the Lord”, but the child may decide that it is too strict; for example he or she may demand rights to go to a football match on Sabbath, or a girl may wish to gain information on contraception. Many situations which should be under the parents’ control could be manipulated so that the child would be able to complain to their guardian and in so doing the parents’ wishes may be overridden.



A member of Big Brother Watch says: “This whole scheme is an unprecedented attack on the privacy of families and the civil liberties of law-abiding parents and children.” In a day when family life is at a low ebb, should not the state be using all means to encourage the relationship between parents and children?

An article by the Christian Institute in the *English Churchman* quotes the *Daily Mail* on “The guidance behind schools regulator OFSTED’s inappropriate questioning of 10-year-olds about lesbians. Inspectors are briefed to ask pupils as young as four about homosexuality, trans-sexualism and same-sex parents. They are instructed to ask pupils about different types of families including having ‘two mums or two dads’ but no reference to families with both a mum and a dad. Parents at Grindon Hall Christian School in Sunderland complained at intrusive questioning as did parents at the Durham Free School.”

#### ***The UK Constitution in the light of the No vote***

With thankfulness we acknowledge the Lord’s goodness in the outcome of the referendum of 19th September 2014, which sought to separate Scotland from the United Kingdom. Immediately prior to the referendum, the Unionist parties, fearing imminent defeat, collectively made a promise to give further devolved powers to the Scottish Parliament in the event of a No vote, without specifying exactly what these powers would be. Following the No vote the Smith Commission was set up by the UK Government to determine these powers. The powers that were subsequently agreed were significant, but involve only taxation, welfare and other economic matters. There is an ongoing debate between the main political parties as to the extent to which English legislation will be determined by English MPs, and to what extent devolution may be introduced into England. No consensus has yet been achieved, and these matters have now been effectively left in abeyance at the time of writing.

There has thus been a further loosening of the practical ties that bind the UK, and there is potential for further weakening in the next parliament, after the general election of May 2015. This is indeed a cause of regret to some, but the essential constitutional ties of the Act of Settlement (1701), and the Act of Union (1707), the foundational documents that bind the UK as one Protestant country, are still unbroken. For that we ought to give abundant thanks to the Most High for His goodness to us as a nation, undeserved as it is.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

In addition to the usual meetings, a sub-committee met by teleconference on three separate occasions to press on with the production of a “Statement of Differences” to be presented at the Synod and, following this, to be passed on to presbyteries for comment. A lot of work has been put into this document and

our thanks are due to Mr. Matthew Vogan who, though not a member of the Committee, has put in a great deal of time and effort into its production.

A small sub-committee has been asked to look into the possibility of the provision of Christian schooling which could be made available to our families. The remit is wide and the group's thinking will be as lateral as possible. A single location for the "school" would not seem to be viable and, therefore, it may prove necessary for the facility to be internet based.

A lot more could have gone into this report but there is sufficient here to show that there is a continuing, fearful, downward slide with respect to the religion and morals of this nation. This is also true of those other nations where we have congregations. Both in Church and in State we have lost our way. We can all see it for ourselves. However, there are wonderful promises which shall be fulfilled. The Lord will not forget His people. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea they may forget, yet I will not forget thee" (Isaiah 49:15). "And there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Revelation 11:15).

## **SABBATH OBSERVANCE COMMITTEE'S REPORT**

**Convener: Rev. J. B. Jardine**

THE Sabbath Day is a divine and priceless institution. The Puritan Richard Baxter exhorted that "the Lord's Day should be spent in holy preparation for eternity". But this sentiment has been forgotten in our day when the Sabbath is a day for one's personal enjoyment and pleasure in recreational activities, or the day for shopping. Instead of spending the time in shopping, the Lord's Day should be a market for the soul. However, whether or not men keep the Sabbath, it remains a commandment of the law of God and a special gift to man. It is one of the main ways to prolong natural life and promote spiritual life. "Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isaiah 58:14).

When a nation keeps the Sabbath it does something which is not only pleasing to God but beneficial to the nation. "But now the Lord saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed" (1 Samuel 2:30). It calls down the blessing of the Lord.

The Day of the Lord will be a dreadful day to those that despise the Lord's Day. Those who want to prepare for heaven properly must keep the Sabbath here.

The work of the Committee continues as in previous years.