

The
Free Presbyterian Magazine
and Monthly Record

Volume 73 September 1968 No. 5

DISUNITY IN THE CHURCH OF ROME

The World knows the terms of the Pope's recent Encyclical on Birth Control issued for the instruction of all Roman Catholics; and we can hardly be expected to ignore entirely this deliverance and matters arising therefrom.

We are against Birth Control in the context of the modern outlook on the question, where that outlook believes in and encourages the use of artificial means. The extension of such means to unmarried young men and women, such as students at Universities, reveals the spirit of this age in certain sectors of society. Fornication may be indulged in and the responsibility of offspring may at the same time be avoided. In this connection, God will not be mocked by the new morality in the use of Birth Control methods. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption."

Biblical and Christian teaching and moral principles require of all in the married state **appropriate** self-discipline and a crucifying of the flesh. Paul says: "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection : lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Corinth., ch. 9, v. 27). Christian principles of conduct consistent with the Word of God can only contribute to the happiness of the married state, and must not be dispensed with to give place to the arguments and practices arising from carnal and human wisdom.

We have no intention here of entering upon a discussion of the aforesaid Encyclical; but we wish to take a brief look at some of the **repercussions** following upon its publication and the Papal ban on all artificial means of Birth Control

To begin with we now quote from "Catholic Belief", by the Roman Catholic theologian, Rev. Joseph Bruno, D.D. He writes *anent* the First Mark of the 'only one true Church' thus: "The true Church of Christ must not be a mere medley of disjointed parts, but the parts must be so corresponding and so well con-

nected together as to form a perfect whole . . . and this we understand when we say that the true Church must be **one**. That is, one in faith and one in organisation." — He continues: "Protestants hold and proclaim as a right for all, the private interpretation of the Bible. This principle, **if it were from God**, should make them all agree in what they believe and teach; but they are divided by this principle into a great number of denominations, opposed in various points of belief one to the other." Dr Bruno continues: "Catholics, however, **are all united in one body**, holding one faith everywhere the same . . . and all submitting to the same one, visible, universal Chief Pastor, the Roman Pontiff"

In the light of this statement, Roman Catholics can have no reason to complain, when we invite our readers to consider several authentic and declared views by Roman Catholics and others following upon the Pope's Encyclical.

There has been of course unqualified support for the Pope's ban on Birth Control, but there has also been strong opposition to it. It has been said that the Pope has split his Church right down the centre. The fact is admitted that he took the opinions of a small minority of the members of the Commission appointed to consider the whole question of Birth Control. The majority did not support his published views **when under consideration**. Then one Roman Catholic commentator ventured to say that he did not know whether the Pope was guided by the Holy Spirit or not: that this was not known. Again, from another Roman Catholic source it was maintained that the Encyclical was not an "infallible" statement. We on our part do not give place for one moment to the false claim of Papal infallibility. It may be asked: When, and in connection with what, did any Pope make an infallible pronouncement?

Some R.C. bishops have expressed personal disappointment with the ban. And many priests who have condoned Birth Control among their people are critical and in a difficulty for the future. One well-known Roman Catholic Member of Parliament in Britain, and one Roman Catholic woman doctor, from among many others, spoke **bitterly** against the Pope's ban in no uncertain terms. The woman doctor even suggested practising the R.C. religion outside the organisation of the present R.C. Church. Eighty-seven priests in Washington, U.S.A., disagreed with the Pope and criticised the ban on all artificial means of Birth Control.

We are not endeavouring to support the motives and views of the opposition to this ban. We have recorded them with the specific purpose of exposing the claims to unity, universal unity and unity throughout the Roman Church, and unity under the Pope. Dr Bruno asserts that the unity he claimed for his Church is the **first mark** of the only true Church of Christ. Dr Bruno

thinks to deprive Protestant Churches of any claim to be within the realm of the true Church of Christ, as readers will see from our quotation from his book.

The bringing to light in these times, and by this most recent Papal statement, of great, deep and widespread disunity in the Church of Rome, deprives that Church of the **first mark** of being "the only one true Church of Christ", in our understanding of Dr Bruno's claim. We will need to watch with interest the subtle reasoning which will be engaged in to gloss over or actually deny any real disunity under the Pope's government. Fundamentally and spiritually, and as before the all-seeing eyes of God, the real Christian unity is that which exists between the Lord Jesus Christ and a true believer by faith in Him, and further, the unity which exists between all regenerated believers by virtue of their vital union to Christ their Redeemer and alone Head.

After the Pope's ban, so much opposition to the ban arose, that certain Roman Catholic sources were aroused to defend the Pope and his declaration. There is a Vatican newspaper called **Observatore Romano** which is an official organ of the Vatican. The editorial on the 5th August, 1968, stated: "The Church is not a community ruled by a democratic regime whose logic follows the reasoning of the majority, or the minority." This of course has been a matter of history for centuries. The above is a statement relative to government, and clearly shows that the Roman Catholic people and even the ordinary clergy have no say at all in the government of their so-called Church and they have to accept as dogma what they are told by the Pope or a College of Cardinals. They do not therefore come to the acceptance of beliefs by a personal study of the Bible, but by an unquestioning acceptance of what they are required to believe by the Pope and a few ecclesiastical rulers. We are not here referring to any specific dogma. Then the same front-page editorial calmly declares: "Christ promised only to Peter and the Apostolic College the spirit of truth to interpret authentically the moral order in its natural expression and in its evangelical revelation." These words repeat the old arrogant claim that to only Peter and the Popes has been given the promise of the Spirit to interpret the doctrines of the Christian faith. Yet the Popes and their immediate ecclesiastical officials have proclaimed some strange and even blasphemous dogmas down through the centuries; these being diametrically opposed to the mind of the Holy Spirit revealed in the written Word of God. The Roman Catholic defence of the Pope at the present time — and we are not taking to do with the merits of his ban — is not able to fall back on their dogma of the infallibility of the Pope as there has been no claim for infallibility as to his recent declaration. We would very much like to learn of

any infallible declaration made by any Pope since the above dogma was made.

PRAYER-MEETING ADDRESS

by Rev. D. MacLean, Glasgow, on Monday, 29th May, 1967

(Continued)

(Taken down by a hearer)

The next thing we have mentioned in connection with the wilderness is this: there were great forces and great powers ranged against the soul coming out of the house of bondage. Pharaoh and all his hosts pursued them even after they had let them go, and after they had come out through the blood of the paschal lamb with their loins girded, and their shoes upon their feet, and their staff in their hand. When they passed out of the land of bondage, Pharaoh still pursued them, and sought to overthrow them, as we mentioned, at the Red Sea. Now while the soul is in the wilderness, as we find brought before us here, there are still great kings ranged against him, and very often at the end of the journey. Sihon, and Og, King of Bashan, were near the borders of the promised land. There they were, despite all the children of Israel had enjoyed during the wilderness journey. Despite the manna, despite the waters from the rock ("and that Rock was Christ") and despite their being led by the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night when they learned this :

"I will instruct thee, and thee teach

The way that thou shalt go;

And with Mine eye upon thee set

I will direction show." (Metrical Psalm 32 : 8).

when they were coming near the end of their journey they were confronted with "great kings" and "famous kings". These kings were great in power, and famous because of the victories they obtained over others. Now as Israel came near the end of their journey they were faced with these great and these famous kings. We can well understand this. Surely, if Satan is troubled greatly at the soul coming out of the kingdom of darkness and starting on the wilderness journey, do you think that he will not make as it were, a last effort, a final effort, before the soul gets into Immanuel's land? Is he not going to gather all his forces and all his powers in one last attempt to cause the soul to fall? You see that in the case of Moses himself. He came through the wilderness. He was thirty-eight years on the way through the wilderness, and the people provoked him, so that he smote the rock twice. The Lord did not tell him to smite the rock, and Moses, who had been so careful before, when he was now provoked by the people, smote the rock and said, "Hear now ye rebels; must we fetch you

water out of this rock?" (Numbers 30 : 10). Because he and Aaron did not sanctify God before the people, they were not allowed to enter into the promised land. They were not allowed to enter in because "the Lord our God is holy still", and see, my dear friend, how the very grace that Moses was strongest in — the grace of meekness — was the grace that he failed in when left to himself. He was left to himself just as it were on the borders of the promised land, and what a solemn lesson! When Satan sees the soul ripening for everlasting glory, drawing near that place where it is to enter into the haven of rest, we can very well expect that all his malignity and all the powers of the kingdom of darkness will be ranged against that soul.

In connection with Sihon, King of the Amorites, we read in the Book of Numbers that all Israel wanted to do was to pass along the king's highway and not to disturb him. That was all they wanted to do on their way to the land that God had promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Now this man, you see, would not have this. He was not going to have them taking the king's highway although it was the right way. He was going to resist them, and he was going to resist them with all the power that he possessed, although they were not expressly keen on that occasion to meet with him. There is just one thing I might mention in connection with this. It is not the duty of God's people to be stirring up the carnal mind in others. We very often bring persecution on ourselves by our own lack of care. If we are to suffer for Christ's sake, then we must suffer as if we were suffering from Sihon, King of the Amorites. Israel just wanted to keep to the king's highway. They told him that they would leave his fields and his vineyards. Now you see there may be occasions, although of course this is not one in the case of Israel, when God's people bring persecution upon themselves by their own carelessness, by their own lack of a proper spirit, by their own lack of discernment, and understanding of the situation in which they find themselves. On the other hand when, on walking on the king's highway, they incur the wrath of their enemies, it is unreasonable wrath; as Paul says when he prayed to be delivered from "unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith." (2 Thessalonians 3: 2). There is that kind of unreasoning in Satan, and unreasoning in the world, that although people are just walking along the king's highway, walking along the "way of holiness" wherein "wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err" (Isaiah 35 : 8), the world rises up in persecution against them. It is unreasonable and unreasoning persecution. There was no reason why Sihon, King of the Amorites should interfere with a people who were passing peaceably through his land, but you see, he would not allow this. He sec-

retly hated them, and he thought that he was more powerful than they were. He thought that he could destroy them. He thought that they could never reach the promised land if he dealt with them. But, as we know, through the mercy of God his power was overthrown, and he was defeated, and thoroughly defeated.

In connection with Og, King of Bashan, Israel had to meet him and to fight their way through his land. This illustrates the principle that I have endeavoured to mention. The Lord's people are the sons of peace. They are not called upon to fight on every occasion. They are to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ, but there are occasions when, as in the case of Sihon, King of the Amorites, when they are not called upon to battle unless disturbed by him. But in the case of Og, King of Bashan, they were called upon to battle with him, and because they were called upon to battle with him, they were given a promise. They were given a promise by God, and you see when duty will call us to spiritual warfare, the promise of God will be with us, and the promise of God will sustain us. "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God." (Isaiah 41 : 10). When we are truly engaged in spiritual warfare, when we are face to face with Og King of Bashan, and we must deal with him by warring against him and against his people, then we can expect to have the promise of God with us. Here Israel, coming near the end of their journey, met and defeated these great and famous kings who had conquered and brought others down on many occasions. How did they overcome? "For His mercy endureth for ever."

"For neither got their sword the land,
Nor did their arm them save;
But Thy right hand, arm, countenance;
For Thou them favour gave." (Metrical Psalm 44 : 3).

This was the cause of their victories at the end of their journey, "For His mercy endureth for ever." So it will be with all the people of God. They will be "more than conquerors through Him that loved" them, and Who manifested His love to them in bringing them out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son, manifested His love in guiding them through the wilderness, and manifests His love in bringing them safely into the haven of rest; although the end of their journey is very often the time when the powers of darkness range against them. The more spiritually minded a sinner is, the more engaged in this spiritual warfare he is. The more he is showing signs of departing to the Father's House "to be with Christ which is far better", the more these powers are ranged against him. Surely this is a very serious thing, my dear friend, and a very solemn thing. Although we would have the hope of going to Heaven, and going

through the wilderness of this world and coming to the end of it, we need great care at the end of our journey, if we are to take the Word of God as our guide. Sihon, King of the Amorites, and Og, King of Bashan, were out for the overthrow of Israel. Also as I mentioned, the rebellion of the people and the evil spirit of the people provoked "Moses, the man of God", and the very grace in which he excelled these thirty-eight years, failed. What an extraordinary thing that is. Yet it is true. Meekness was the grace in which he excelled. All God's people excel in different ways. Some are strong in faith, some are strong in hope, some are strong in love, some are strong in patience, and so on. "Moses, the man of God", was a faithful servant to the Divine Redeemer and he was, of course, one who was strong in faith and so on, but he is characterised in particular by the spirit of meekness. This was the grace in which he excelled, and he had every expectation according to the Word of God which said :

"The meek and lowly He will guide
In judgment just alway:
To meek and poor afflicted ones
He'll clearly teach His way."

(Metrical Psalm 24 (sec. ver.) : 9).

That is what he prayed for. "If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." (Exodus 33 : 15). Yet after thirty-eight years in the wilderness when he was tried and caught off his guard, he failed in the very grace in which he excelled, and he suffered.

The same thing is true with regard to Peter. Peter's faithfulness, courage, attachment to Christ, fearlessness as a friend to the Divine Redeemer, were such, that even in the garden of Gethsemane, he drew his sword, quite prepared to die by the side of Christ; but when Satan got the opportunity, he overthrew him in the very grace in which he excelled. A maiden girl overthrew him and brought him to deny his Master. What a tremendous lesson is there for every one of us as we go through the wilderness of time, and as we meet with trials and temptations. We may succeed in one, two, three, or four trials, and we may fail if we are not "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation" (1 Peter 1 : 5), and if we are like Moses, kept in an outstanding way through the thirty-eight years of our journey in the wilderness, then we can be sure of this: when we come near the end of the journey there will be some determined attack made by some Sihon or Og, by the kingdom of darkness, for our overthrow, to bring a spot on our profession.

Now these are solemn realities, solemn and powerful realities, and they are in the Word of God for our learning. These are

solemn, powerful realities that are searching in the extreme. I hear people talking about searching sermons. Well, one thing I will say is this. The sermon, my dear friend, which will search you is a sermon that brings a feeling of awe and solemnity into your soul with regard to spiritual teaching. What is going to search you and me is this: that the Truth brings out what spiritual experience really means, and whether we have it, or whether we do not have it. That is what searches the souls of God's people and that is what they want.

Despite the manna, despite the water from the rock, despite the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, despite what they heard about Pharaoh and his hosts being drowned in the Red Sea, Sihon, King of the Amorites, and Og, King of Bashan, did not change one whit. It does not matter, my dear friend, what favours you may have got from the Lord, and it does not matter what favours you may get in trials and temptations. It does not matter to Satan. He does not care. He is not the least bit interested, but what he is interested in is the downfall of the people of God. All his endeavours are because of the belligerence of his nature against the people of God. Once they are out of the kingdom of grace into the kingdom of glory, he is finished with them, and they are finished with him to all eternity. He knows that his time is short, and his malignity will be evidenced and made known. He knows that his time is short when he sees a soul ripening for the glories of Immanuel's land. How precious then this is: "For His mercy endureth for ever." "His mercy endureth for ever" coming out of the land of Egypt, coming through the Red Sea, through the wilderness, giving the manna and the water. Even now, faced with these famous kings, "His mercy endureth for ever." Israel would carry on into Immanuel's land, carry on led by "the Captain of their salvation" Who was made "perfect through sufferings", and Who is to bring many sons to glory. This is what you and I need. This is the Captain you and I need. "To him that overcometh" He says, "will I grant to sit with Me in My throne." (Revelation 3 : 21).

No wonder, my dear friends, this is the refrain: "For His mercy endureth for ever." The "great kings" and the "famous kings" fled before the Israel of God, although that people were not used to warfare. They had been travelling through the wilderness — they were not used to warfare — but the Lord gave them skill to fight. He taught their hands to war, and He brake the bow of the mighty in pieces, and that because of this: "His mercy endureth for ever." What a God, what a Saviour to possess! "In the world ye shall have tribulation," He says, "but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (John 16 : 33). May He bless His Word.

EFFECTIVE PRAYER

by C. H. Spurgeon

"Oh that I knew where I might find Him! That I might come even to His seat! I would order my cause before Him, and fill my mouth with arguments." — Job 23 : 3, 4.

In Job's uttermost extremity he cries after the Lord. The longing desire of an afflicted child of God is once more to see his father's face. His first prayer is not, "Oh that I might be healed of the disease which now festers in every part of my body!" Nor even, "Oh that I might see my children restored from the jaws of the grave, and my property once more brought from the hand of the spoiler!" But the first and uttermost cry is "Oh that I knew where I might find Him — who is my God! that I might come even to His seat!"

God's children run home when the storm comes on. It is the heaven-born instinct of a gracious soul to seek shelter from all ills beneath the wings of Jehovah. "He that hath made his refuge God," might serve as the title of a true believer. A hypocrite, when he feels that he has been afflicted by God, resents the infliction, and, like a slave, would run from the master who has scourged him; but not so the true heir of heaven, He kisses the hand which smote Him, and seeks shelter from the rod in the bosom of that very God who frowned upon him. You will observe that the desire to commune with God is intensified by the failure of all other sources of consolation. When Job first saw his friends at a distance, he may have entertained a hope that their kindly counsel and compassionate tenderness would blunt the edge of his grief; but they had not long spoken before he cried out in bitterness, "Miserable comforters are ye all," they put salt into his wounds, they heaped fuel upon the flame of his sorrow, they added the gall of their upraidings to the wormwood of his griefs. In the sunshine of his smile they once had longed to sun themselves, and now they dare to cast shadows upon his reputation, most ungenerous and undeserved. So the patriarch turned away from his sorry friends and looked up to the celestial throne, just as a traveller turns from his empty skin bottle and betakes himself with all speed to the well. He bids farewell to earth born hopes, and cries, "Oh that I knew where I might find my God!" Nothing teaches us so much the preciousness of the Creator as when we learn the emptiness of all besides, when you have been pierced through and through with the sentence, "Cursed is he that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm," then will you suck unutterable sweetness from the divine assurance, "Blessed is he that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is." Turning away with bitter scorn from earth's hives, where you found no honey, but

many sharp stings, you will rejoice in him whose faithful word is sweeter than honey or the honeycomb.

It is further observable that though a good man hastens to God in his trouble, and runs with all the more speed because of the unkindness of his fellow men, yet sometimes the gracious soul is left without the comfortable presence of God. This is the worst of all griefs; the text is one of Job's deep groans, far deeper than any which came from him on account of the loss of his children and his property: "Oh that I knew where I might find him!" The worst of all losses is to lose the smile of my God. He now had a foretaste of the bitterness of his redeemer's cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" God's presence is always with His people in one sense, so far as secretly sustaining them is concerned, but his manifest presence they do not always enjoy. Like the spouse in the song, they seek their beloved by night upon their bed, they seek him but they find him not, and though they wake and roam through the city they may not discover him, and the question may be sadly asked again and again, "Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?" You may be beloved of God, and yet have no consciousness of that love in your soul. You may be as dear to His heart as Jesus Christ Himself, and yet for a small moment He may forsake you; and in a little wrath He may hide Himself from you. But at such times the desire of the believing soul gathers yet greater intensity from the fact of God's light being withheld. Instead of saying with proud lip, "Well, if He leaves me I must do without Him; if I cannot have His comfortable presence I must fight on as best may be," the soul says, "No, it is my very life; I must have my God. I perish, I sink in deep mire where there is no standing, and nothing but the arm of God can deliver me." The gracious soul addresses itself with a double zeal to find out God, and sends up its groans, its entreaties, its sobs and sighs to heaven more frequently and fervently. "Oh that I knew where I might find Him!" Distance or labour are as nothing; if the soul only knew where to go she would soon overleap the distance. She makes no stipulation about mountains or rivers, but vows that if she knew where, she would come even to His seat. My soul in her hunger would break through stone walls, or scale the battlements of heaven to reach her God, and though there were seven hells between me and Him, yet would I face the flame if I might reach Him, nothing daunted if I had but the prospect of at last standing in His presence and feeling the delight of His love. That seems to me to be the state of mind in which Job pronounced the words before us.

But we cannot stop at this point. It appears that Job's end in desiring the presence of God, was that he might pray to Him. He had prayed, but he wanted to pray as in God's presence. He

desired to plead as before one whom he knew would hear and help him. He longed to state his own case before the seat of the impartial judge, before the very face of the all-wise God; he would appeal from the lower courts, where his friends judged unrighteous judgement, to the court of king's bench — the high court of heaven — there says he, "I would order my cause before Him, and fill my mouth with arguments." In this latter verse Job teaches us how he meant to plead and intercede with God. He does, as it were, reveal the secrets of his closet, and unveils the art of prayer. We are here admitted into the guild of suppliants; we are shown the art and mystery of pleading. We have here taught to us the blessed handicraft and science of prayer, and if we can be bound apprentice to Job and can have a lesson from Job's Master, we may acquire no little skill in interceding with God.

(To be continued)

THOUGHTS ON THE PSALMS

by Rev. A. McPherson

Psalm Fifty-one

Verse 17. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit : a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

Is it the case then that Christ's perfect sacrifice has abolished every other offering, and that the ending of the Levitical sacrificial system has left no room for sacrifices of any kind? In this verse David says that it has not, that a broken spirit is an offering which still pleases God well. A broken spirit is the natural product of faith in Christ's sacrifice. The work of grace in the soul shatters pride and self-sufficiency; the experience of redeeming love causes the heart-break, or acute grief spoken of here.

Additionally, however, faith in Christ produces the long-term effects signified here by the term "contrite heart." This means a bruised heart, and long after the acute sorrow of repentance for any particular sin has subdued, the tenderness remains. God promised this to the spiritual Israel. "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you : and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh." (Ezek. 36, v. 26).

The contrite heart is tender, it is sensitive to sin and becomes more so. It is soft, giving to a touch so that the believer yields to God's commands and reproofs. It is easily crushed; it cannot bear the guilt of sin and must seek relief by application to the blood of Christ. "I am feeble and sore broken : I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart." (Ps. 38, v. 8). The contrite heart is very sensible of the sufferings and troubles of others,

particularly the people of God. It is impressionable, taking on readily that form which God desires it to possess. Paul sums that up in Ephesians 4, v. 23, 24: "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

Verser 18. "Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion : build thou the walls of Jerusalem."

You may have observed that David uses the first person singular throughout this Psalm until he reaches this verse. Here the prayer broadens out, although the first indication that his agonisings are easing under the application of the healing balm of grace appears in verse 13 where he hopes that some good may yet come to others as a result of his awful experience. The experience of sin and grace is extremely personal. While a soul is wrestling with God for pardon, peace and restoration to favour, other people are excluded from the thoughts. But once the desired benefits are obtained, then other people and the Church on earth become the objects of love and compassion. It would be a very doubtful conversion which did not have this effect. "Andrew first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias." The woman of Samaria acted similarly; "Come see a man which told me all things that ever I did."

Also, in the case of believers who have been restored from falls or backsliding, there is commonly found a concern for the prosperity of the cause of Christ. As in David's case, the fall may have been of such a nature as to damage the reputation of the Church or even endanger it. What prayers there will then be that the sin may be overruled for good, and for the advancement of that cause which is so dear to every renewed soul! That is what David does in the final two verses.

"Do good to Zion." At this time Jerusalem and Zion hill were not beautiful and protected as they were to become in Solomon's day. In 1 Kings 3, v. 1, we read that Solomon lodged Pharaoh's daughter in the city "until he had made an end of building his own house, and the house of the Lord, and the wall of Jerusalem round about." It was David's desire to build a temple to house the ark, and to complete the fortifications of his beloved capital, but the wish was not granted in his time. But this verse tells us how greatly he longed to see Zion made glorious by a temple and made safe by a wall. He loved the hill which God had chosen for a habitation. (Ps. 132, v. 13). How much David grasped of the idea of the true Church of God, the spiritual dwelling-place of God on earth, we cannot tell, but he was inspired to write these words which express so well the desire of all who love and pray for the prosperity of the spiritual Zion.

Only God can do good to Zion. Men with dreams and ambitions for a world-wide church on the ecumenical model scheme, talk and strive to unite the many churches into one great church. But men made wise by God's grace know that the Church of God is of his own building, and that man can only propagate the Word which the Holy Spirit will use to save and sanctify sinful souls. "The Lord doth build up Jerusalem." (Ps. 47, v. 2). "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up an spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 2, v. 5).

To his people the Lord gives some understanding of what this building would be, namely, sinners saved, believers sanctified, error corrected, divisions healed, moral influence wielded, righteousness in the life of nations, international love and peace, and concerted effort to win the whole world for Christ. Yet He also teaches his people to defer to his own will in this matter. "Do good in thy good pleasure," that is, "Do good to Zion in thine own time and manner." Believers therefore should pray to be taught their duty, to be given grace to do it, to have the weak condition of the Church laid as a heavy burden on their hearts, and to be stirred up to continual, earnest prayer for Zion. Much depends upon its prosperity. "For my friends and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee." (Ps. 122, v. 8).

But, readers, let us pause for one moment to ask whether we, ourselves, belong to Zion and have a heart to pray in this way. Do we know of sin and salvation by personal experience? If so, pray for Zion. If not, let us pray first for ourselves.

Verse 19. "Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering : then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar."

When the Lord will arise to plead his cause and build it up, He will be pleased with the sacrifices which multitudes shall then offer in a right spirit. In the Levitical ceremonial the burnt offerings symbolised the surrender of the offerer's whole being to the will and purpose of the Lord; complete consecration to the Lord's service. Redeemed sinners will in the day of Zion's prosperity devote themselves and their possessions to the honour and service of God. What that will mean we can only imagine, but it will certainly be a time when God will be offered, not the moral equivalent of doves or pigeons, but that of bullocks. That which would correspond with whole burnt offerings of bullocks will be offered in Christ's name. Time, energy, talents, property — all will be expended for God's glory and the Church's good in a way not yet seen. May He hasten the day!

LETTERS FROM SAMUEL RUTHERFORD**To Mr J.G.****Complaining of Darkness — Christ's Fulness of Grace**

London. Jan. 30th, 1646.

Rev. and Dear Brother,

I do esteem nothing out of heaven, and next to a Communion with Jesus Christ, more than to be in the hearts and prayers of the saints; I know he feedeth there amongst the lilies till the day break, but I am at a low ebb, as to any sensible Communion with Christ; yea as low as my soul can be, and do scarce know where I am; and do now make it a question, if any can go to Him, who dwelleth in light inaccessible, through nothing but darkness? Surely, all that come to heaven have a stock in Christ, but I know salvation of others, and to know Christ to be the honey-comb, the rose of Sharon, the paradise of Eden of the saints and first-born written in heaven, and not to see afar the borders of that good land.

But what shall I say? Either this is the Lord making grace a new creation, where there is pure nothing and sinful nothing to work upon; or I am gone. I should count my soul engaged to yourself, and others there with you, if you would but carry to Christ for me a letter of cyphers; for I know not how to make language of my condition, only showing that I have need of His love for I know, many fair and washed ones stand now in white before the throne, who were once as black as I am. If Christ pass His word to wash a sinner, it is less to Him than a word to make fair angels of black devils; only let the art of free grace be engaged. I have no one to become surety, nor doth a mediator, such as He is in all perfection, need a mediator, but what I need He knoweth; only, it is His depth of wisdom to let some pass millions of miles over score in debt, that they may stand between the winning and the losing, in need of more than ordinary free grace.

Christ hath been multiplying grace by mercy above these five thousand years; and the latterborn heirs have so much greater guiltiness, that Christ hath passed more experiments and multiplied essays of heart-love on others, by misbelieving, after it is past all question, many hundreds of ages, that Christ is the undeniable and now uncontroverted treasurer of multiplied redemptions; so now He is saying, the more of the disease there is, the more of the physicians art, of grace and tenderness, there must be; only I know, no sinner can put infinite grace to it, so that the mediator shall have difficulty or much ado, to save this or that man; millions of hells of sinners cannot come near to exhaust infinite grace.

— Samuel Rutherford.

To the Professors of Christ and His Truth in Ireland**The Importance of Making Our Profession Sure—and of Self-denial**

Aberdeen. Feb. 4th, 1638.

Two special things ye are to mind. (1) To try and make sure your profession; that ye carry not empty lamps. Alas, security, security is the bane and the wreck of the most part of the world! Oh, how many professors go with a golden lustre, and gold-like before men, who are but base metal! Consider how fair before the wind some do ply with upsails and white, even to the nick of illumination, "and tasting of the heavenly gift, and a share and part of the Holy Ghost; and the tasting of the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come," Heb. 6, 5. And yet this is but a false aick of renovation, and in a short time such quickly broken upon the rocks, and never fetch the harbour, but are sanded in the bottom of hell. O make your heaven sure, and try how ye come by conversion; that it be not stolen goods, in a white and well-lustred profession! A white skin over old wounds! making an undercotting conscience. False under-water, not seen, is dangerous, and that is a leak at the bottom of an enlightened conscience, often falling and sinning against light. Wo, wo is me, that the Holy Profession of Christ is made a stage garment by many to bring home a vain fame; and Christ is made to serve men's ends; this is, as it were, to stop an oven with a king's robes.

Know. (2) Except men martyr and slay the body of sin, in sanctified self-denial they shall never be Christ's martyrs and faithful witnesses. Oh that I could be master of that house-idol, my self, my own, mine, my own will, wit, credit and ease! How blessed were I; Oh but we have need to be redeemed from ourselves rather than from the devil and the world! Learn to put out yourselves, and to put in Christ for yourselves.

—Samuel Rutherford.

To The Lady Larigie

Mistress,

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you. I exhort you in the Lord, to go on in your journey to heaven, and to be content with such fare by the way as Christ and His followers have had before you, for they had always the wind on their faces; and the Lord hath not changed the way to us, for our ease, but will have us following our sweet guide. Alas, how doth sin clog us in our journey, and retard us! What fools are we to have a by-good, or any other love, or match to our souls, beside Christ! It were best for us, like ill bairns (who are best heard at home) to seek our own

home, and to sell our hopes of this little clay idol of the earth, where we are neither well summered nor well wintered. O that our souls would fall so at odds with the Love of this world as to think of it as a traveller doth of a drink of water, which is not any part of his treasure, but goeth away with the using; for ten miles journey maketh that drink to him as nothing! Oh that we had as soon done with this world, and could as quickly dispatch the love of it! But as a child cannot hold two apples in his little hand, but the one putteth the other out of its room, so neither can we be masters and lords of two loves. Blessed were we, if we could make ourselves masters of that invaluable treasure, the love of Christ; or rather, suffer ourselves to be mastered and subdued to Christ's love, so that Christ were our all things, and all other things our nothings, and the refuse of our delights. O let us be ready for shipping against the time our Lord's wind and tide calls us! Death is the last thief, that shall come without din or noise of feet, and take our souls away, and we shall take our leave of time, and face eternity; and our Lord shall lay together the two sides of this earthly tabernacle, and fold us, and lay us by, as a man layeth by clothes at night, and put the one half of us in an house of clay, the dark grave. And the other half of us in heaven or hell. Seek to be found of your Lord in peace, and put your soul in order, for Christ will not give a nail-breadth of time to our little sand-glass. Pray for Zion, and for me his prisoner, that he would be pleased to bring me amongst you again, full of Christ, and freighted and laden with the blessing of his gospel.

Grace, grace be with you,

Samuel Rutherford.

To William Halliday

The Importance of Giving Diligence to Make Our Salvation Sure Aberdeen.

Loving Friend,

I received your letter; I wish you to take pains for salvation. Mistaken grace, and somewhat like conversion, which is not conversion, is the saddest and most doleful thing in the world; make sure of salvation, and lay the foundation sure, for many are beguiled. Put a low price upon this world's clay, put a high price upon Christ, temptations will come, but if they be made welcome by you, you have the best of it! Be jealous over yourself and your own heart, and keep touches with God; let him not have a faint and feeble soldier of you; fear not to back Christ, for He will conquer and overcome.

Let no man stare at Christ, for I have no quarrels against His cross; He and His cross are two good guests, and worth the

lodging — men would fain have Christ cheap, but the market will not come down; acquaint yourself with prayer; make Christ your captain and your armour; make conscience of sinning when no eye seeth you. Grace be with you.

— Samuel Rutherford.

THE SECOND THIEF

by the late J. C. Ryle

If some are saved in the very hour of death, others are not. This truth ought never to be passed over, and I dare not leave it unnoticed. Men forget that there were two thieves. What became of the other thief who was crucified? Why did he not turn from his sin, and call upon the Lord? Why did he remain hard and impenitent? Why was he not saved? It is useless to try to answer such questions. Let us take the fact as we find it, and see what it is meant to teach us. We have no right whatever to say this thief was a worse man than his companion; there is nothing to prove it. Both plainly were wicked men; both were receiving the due reward for their deeds; both hung by the side of our Lord Jesus Christ; both heard Him pray for His murderers, both saw Him suffer patiently. But while one repented, the other remained hardened; while one began to pray, the other went on railing; while one was converted in his last hours, the other died a bad man, as he had lived; while one was taken to Paradise, the other went to his own place — the place of the devil and his angels.

Now these things are written for our warning. There is warning as well as comfort in these verses, and a very solemn warning too. They tell me loudly; that though some may repent and be converted on their death-beds, it does not follow that all will. A death-bed is not always a saving time . . . They tell me, above all, that repentance and faith are the gifts of God, and are not in a man's power; and that if anyone flatters himself he can repent at his own time, choose his own season, seek the Lord when he pleases, and, like the penitent thief, be saved at the very last — he may find at length he is greatly deceived.

It is good and profitable to bear this in mind. There is an immense amount of delusion in the world on this very subject. I see many allowing life slip away quite unprepared to die. I see many allowing that they ought to repent, but always putting off their own repentance. And I believe one grand reason is, that most men suppose they can turn to God just when they like! . . . You may say, perhaps, "It is never too late to repent." I answer: "That is right enough; but late repentance is seldom true." You may say: "Why should I be afraid? the penitent thief was saved." I answer: "That is true; but look again at the passage

which tells you that the other thief was LOST."

Men look at the broad fact that the penitent thief was saved when he was dying, and they look no further. They do not consider the evidences this thief left behind him. They do not observe the abundant proof he gave of the work of the Spirit in his heart. These proofs I wish to trace out. I wish to show you that the Spirit always works in one way, and that — whether He converts a man in an hour, as He did the penitent thief, or whether by slow degrees, as He does others — the steps by which He leads souls to Heaven are always the same.

Let me try to make this clear to everyone who reads this paper. I want to put you on your guard. I want you to shake off the common notion that there is some easy, royal road to Heaven from a dying bed. I want you to understand that every saved soul goes through the same experience, and that the leading principles of the thief's religion were just the same as those of the eldest saint that ever lived.

See then, for one thing, how strong was the faith of this man. He called Jesus "Lord". He declared his belief that he would have a "kingdom". He believed He was able to give him eternal life and glory, and in this belief he prayed to Him. He maintained His innocence of all the charges brought against Him. "This Man," said he, "hath done nothing amiss." Others perhaps may have **thought** the Lord innocent — none said so openly but this poor dying man. And when did all this happen? It happened when the whole nation had denied Christ-shouting, "Crucify Him! crucify Him! we have no king but Ceasar"; when the chief priests and pharisees had condemned and found Him "guilty of death"; when even His own disciples had forsaken Him and fled; when He was hanging, faint, bleeding and dying on the cross, numbered with transgressors, and accounted accursed! This was the hour when the thief believed in Christ, and prayed to Him! Surely such faith was never seen since the world began . . .

Would you know if you have the Spirit? Then mark the question I put to you this day — Where is your faith in Christ?

See, for another thing, what a right sense of sin the thief had. He says to his companion: "We receive the due reward of our deeds." He acknowledges his own ungodliness, and the justice of his punishment. He makes no attempt to justify himself, or excuse his wickedness. He speaks like a man humbled and self-abased by the remembrance of past iniquities . . . This is what all God's children feel. They are ready to allow they are poor hell-deserving sinners . . .

Would you know if you have the Spirit? Then mark my question — Do you feel your sins? . . .

In the penitent thief you see the finished work of the Holy

Ghost. Every part of the believer's character may be found in him. Short as his life was after conversion, he found time to leave abundant evidence that he was a child of God. His faith, his prayer, his humility, his brotherly love, are unmistakable witnesses of the reality of his repentance. He was not penitent in name only, but in deed and in truth.

Let no man therefore think, because the penitent thief was saved, that men can be saved without leaving any evidence of the Spirit's work. Let such a one consider well what evidences this man left behind.

It is mournful to hear what people sometimes say about what they call death-bed evidences. It is perfectly fearful to observe how little satisfies some persons, and how easily they can persuade themselves that their friends have gone to Heaven. They will tell you when their relatives are dead and gone, that "he made such a beautiful prayer one day — he talked so well — he was so sorry for his old ways and intended to live differently if he got better, or that he craved nothing in this world — or that he liked people to read to him, and pray with him." And because they have this to go upon, they seem to have a comfortable hope that he is saved! Christ may never have been named — the way of salvation may never have been in the least mentioned. But it matters not; there was a talk of religion, and so they are content!

Now I have no desire to hurt the feelings of anyone, but I must and will speak plainly upon this subject. Once for all, let me say, that as a general rule, nothing is so unsatisfactory as death-bed evidences. The things that men say, and the feelings they express when sick and frightened, are little to be depended on. Often, too often, they are the result of fear, and do not spring from the ground of the heart. Often, too often, they are things said by rote; caught from the lips of ministers and anxious friends, but evidently not felt. And nothing will prove all this more clearly than the well-known fact, that the great majority of persons who make promises of amendment on a sick bed, and then for the first time talk about religion, if they recover, go back to sin and the world.

When a man has lived a life of thoughtlessness and folly, I want something more than a few fair words and good wishes to satisfy me about his soul, when he comes to his death-bed. It is not enough for me that he will let me read the Bible to him, and pray by his bedside — that he says "he has not thought so much as he ought of religion, and he thinks he should be a different man if he got better." All this does not content me: it does not make me happy about his state. It is very well as far as it goes, but it is not conversion. It is very well in its way, but it is not faith in Christ. Until I see conversion, and faith in Christ, I

cannot and dare not feel satisfied. Others may feel satisfied if they please, and after their friend's death say they hope he is gone to Heaven. For my part, I would rather hold my tongue and say nothing. I would be content with the least measure of repentance and faith in a dying man, even though it be no bigger than a grain of mustard seed. But to be content with anything less than repentance and faith seems to me next door to infidelity.

If you die without conversion to God — without repentance, and without faith in Christ — your funeral will only be the funeral of a lost soul; you had better never been born.

GOD IN CHRIST

by Octavius Winslow

We need every view of the Gospel tending to illustrate its value and endear its preciousness. Here is a truth calculated to produce this holy effect. Nature does not teach it; the law does not reveal it; philosophy does not inculcate it; tradition does not contain it; the Gospel only makes it known. How God is revealed in Jesus Christ; how that "two should become one, and yet remain two still, as God and man do in Christ; that He who maketh should be one with the thing which himself hath made; that He who is above all should humble himself; that He who filleth all should empty himself; that He who blesseth all should be himself a curse; that He who ruleth all should be himself a servant; that He who was the Prince of Life, and by whom all things in the world do consist, should himself be dissolved and die; that mercy and justice should meet together, and kiss each other; that the debt should be paid, and yet pardoned; that the fault should be punished, and yet remitted; that death, like Samson's lion, should have life and sweetness in it, and be used as an instrument to destroy itself," are evangelical truths and mysteries revealed alone in the "glorious Gospel of the blessed God." "In nature we see him a God of power, in providence a God of wisdom, in the law a God of vengeance, but in the Gospel a God full of compassion, of overflowing love, 'ready to pardon'; humbling himself that He might be merciful unto his enemies — that He might himself bear the punishment of those injuries which had been done unto himself; that He might beseech His own prisoners to be pardoned and reconciled again. In the creature He is a God above us; in the law He is a God against us; but in the Gospel He is Immanuel, a God with us, a God like us, a God for us."

What strong encouragement does this subject afford to every truly-humbled, sin-burdened, Christ-seeking soul! God in Christ is no longer a "consuming fire," but a God of love, of peace; a

reconciled God, God in Christ holds out His hand all the day long to poor sinners. He receives all, He welcomes all; He rejects, He refuses, He casts out none. **It is His glory to pardon a sinner.** It is the glory of His power, it is the glory of His love, it is the glory of His wisdom, it is the glory of His grace, to take the prey from the mighty, to deliver the lawful captive, to pluck the brand from the burning, to lower the golden chain of His mercy to the greatest depth of human wretchedness and guilt, and lift the needy and place him among the princes. Behold Christ upon the cross! Every pang that he endures, every stroke that he receives, every groan that he utters, every drop of blood that he sheds, proclaims that God is love, and that He stands pledged and is ready to pardon the vilest of the vile. Justice, sheathing its sword, and retiring satisfied from the scene, leaves Mercy gloriously triumphant. And "God **delighteth** in mercy." Having at such infinite cost opened a channel — even through the smitten heart of His beloved Son — through which His mercy may flow boundless and free, venture near nothing doubting. No feature of your case is discouraging, or can possibly arrest the pardon. Your age, your protracted rebellion against God, your long life of indifference to the concerns of your soul, the turpitude and number of your sins, your want of deep convictions or of stronger faith, or of worth or worthiness to recommend you to His favour, are not true impediments to your approach, are no pleas wherefore you should not draw nigh and touch the outstretched sceptre, bathe in the open fountain, put on the spotless robe, welcome the gracious pardon, and press it with gratitude and transport to your adoring heart.

In the light of this truth cultivate loving and kindly views of God. Ever view Him, ever approach Him, and ever transact your soul's affairs with Him, **in and through Jesus.** He is the one Mediator between God and thy soul. God thy Father may now be leading you through deep and dark waters. His voice may sound roughly to you. His dim outline is, perhaps, all that you can see of Him. His face seems veiled and averted; yet deal with Him now **in Christ**, and all your hard thoughts, and trembling fears, and unbelieving doubts, shall vanish. In Jesus every perfection dissolves into grace and love. With your eye upon the cross, and looking at God through that cross, all the dark letters of His providence will in a moment become radiant with light and glory. That God who has so revealed Himself in Jesus must be love, all love, and nothing but love, even in the most dark, painful, and afflictive dealings with his beloved people.

Especially in the matter of prayer, cultivate and cherish this kindly, soothing view of God in Christ. Without it, in this most solemn and holy of all transactions, your mental conceptions of his nature will be vague, your attempts to concentrate your

thoughts on this one object will be baffled, and the spiritual character of the engagement will lessen in tone and vigour. But meeting God in Christ, with every perfection of his nature revealed and blended, you may venture near, and in this posture, and through this medium, may negotiate with him the most momentous matters. You may reason, may adduce your strong arguments, and throwing wide the door of the most hidden chamber of your heart, may confess its deepest iniquity; you may place your "secret sins in the light of his countenance"; God still can meet you in the mildest lustre of his love. Drawing near, placing your tremulous hand of faith on the head of the atoning sacrifice, there is no sin that you may not confess, no want that you may not want to make known, no mercy that you may not ask, no blessing that you may not crave, for yourself, for others, for the whole church. See! the atoning Lord is upon the mercy-seat, the golden censer waves, the fragrant cloud of the much incense ascends, and with it are "offered the prayers of **all saints** upon the golden altar which is before the throne." Jesus is in its midst,

"Looks like a lamb that has been slain,

And wears his priesthood still."

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, and having an High-Priest over the house of God, let us **draw near.**" Open all your heart to God **through** Christ, who has opened all his heart to you in Christ. Remember that to bring Himself in a position to converse with you, as no angel could, in the matter that now burdens and depresses you, He assumed your nature on earth, with that very sorrow and infirmity affixed to it; took it back to glory, and at this moment appears in it before the throne, your Advocate with the Father. — Then hesitate not, **whatever** be the nature of your petition, **whatever** the character of your need, to "make known your requests unto God." Coming by simple faith in the name of Jesus, it cannot be that He should refuse you. With His eye of justice ever on the blood, and His eye of complacency ever on His Son, Himself loving you, too, with a love ineffably great, it would seem **impossible** that you should meet with a denial. Yield your ear to the sweet harmony of the Redeemer's voice, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

The subject is in the highest degree soothing, comforting, and encouraging. It seems to introduce us into the very pavilion of God's heart. There, curtained and shut in, we may repose in perfect peace. Not a single perfection can a believing mind view

in Christ but it smiles upon him. Oh! to see holiness and justice, truth, and love bending their glance of sweetest and softest benignity upon a poor, trembling soul, approaching to hide itself beneath the shadow of the cross! What a truth is this! All is sunshine here. The clouds are scattered, the darkness is gone, the tempest is hushed, the sea is a calm. Justice has lost its sting, the law its terror, and sin its power: the heart of God is open, the bosom of Jesus bleeds, the Holy Spirit draws, the Gospel invites, and now the "weary and heavy laden" may draw nigh and rush into the bosom of a reconciled God in Christ. Oh, were ever words sweeter than these, "**God was in Christ**, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." "**Whom God hath set forth** to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." "**He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him?**"

God in Christ is the covenant God of his people. He is **their** God; their tender, loving, condescending, Father. They may lose for a while the sight and enjoyment of this truth, but this contravenes it not; it still remains the same, unchangeable, precious, and glorious. Nothing can rob them of it. In the tempest, let it be the anchorage of your faith; in darkness, the pole-star of your hope. Let every circumstance, — the prosperity that ensnares and the adversity that depresses, the temptation that assails and the slight that wounds, endear to your believing soul this **precious thought**, — "God reconciled, God at peace, God a Father in Christ, is **my** God for ever and ever and he will be my guide even unto death."

If to view God in Christ is a comforting truth, it is also a **most sanctifying truth**. Why has God revealed himself in Jesus? To evince the exceeding hatefulness of sin, and to show that nothing short of such a stupendous sacrifice could remove it consistently with the glory of the Divine nature, and the honour of the Divine government. Each sin, then, is a blow struck at this transcendent truth. The eye averted from it, sin appears a trifle; it can be looked at without indignation, tampered with without fear, committed without hesitation, persisted in without remorse, gloried in without shame, confessed without sorrow. But when Divine justice is seen, drinking the very heart's blood of God's only Son in order to quench its infinite thirst for satisfaction; when God in Christ is seen in his humiliation, suffering, and death, all with the design of pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin, how fearful a thing does it seem to sin against this holy Lord God! How base, how ungrateful, appears the act in view of love so amazing, of grace so rich, and of glory so great! Cultivate a constant, an ardent thirst for holiness. Be not discouraged, if the more intensely the desire for sanctification rises, the deeper and darker the revelation

of the heart's hidden evil. The one is often a consequent of the other; but persevere. The struggle may be painful, the battle may be strong, but the result is certain, and will be a glorious **victory, VICTORY**, through the blood of the Lamb!

"Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!"

GLEANINGS

False faith makes lies her refuge; but true faith makes God's Word her shield and buckler. — **Huntington.**

Go on in the strength of the Lord, and put Christ's love to the trial, and put upon it burdens, and then it will appear love indeed. We **employ** not His love, and therefore we know it not. — **Rutherford.**

Some years ago, a friend of a clergyman still living, said to him, "You have a very large family, Sir; you have just as many children as the patriarch Jacob had." "True," answered the good old divine, "and I have Jacob's God to provide for them."

A man should never be ashamed of owning he has been wrong, for it is but saying in other words, he is so much wiser today than he was yesterday.

The growth of a believer is not like a mushroom, but like an oak, which increases slowly indeed, but surely. Many suns, showers, and frosts pass upon it before it comes to perfection; and in winter, when it seems dead, it is gathering strength at the root. — **Newton.**

And shall we not be willing to bear reproach for Him who made Himself of no reputation for us? Shall we not readily part with our reputation, and follow Him without the camp, bearing His reproach? Fear it not; it should rather be esteemed a jewel that adorns us. The cross of Jesus is our best ornament: God forbid we should glory in anything except in that cross.

You would have us abstain from the mention of these grand doctrines (election and predestination), and leave our people in the dark as to their election of God: the consequence of which would be that every man would bolster himself with a delusive hope of a share in that salvation which is supposed to lie open to all. Thus genuine humility, and the practical fear of God would be kicked out of doors. — **Luther.**

The same Spirit which endueth the elect with the knowledge of the truth, and sanctifieth them, giveth them therewith all the gift of perseverance to continue to the end. — **Old Bible, 1610.**

As in a family, where there is much business to be done, even the little children bear a part, according to their strength: "The children gather wood, the fathers kindle the fire, the women knead the dough"; so in the family of Christ, the weakest Christian is

serviceable to the strong. — **Flavel.**

Noah was warned. This warning he believed, and saw the destruction coming on. It was attended with fear, which moved him to prepare an ark. Without faith and fears we never begin in truth to look out for escape from the wrath to come. The ark as a place of safety or security, may be a type of Christ, though in other respects a type of the church. And faith, which is God's gift, and fear, of His own implanting, both act and move by God's Word, and will never suffer the soul that is possessed of them to be at rest, till it find security from wrath and ruin in Christ Jesus. — **Beeman.**

I am weary of the instability of the streams. O let me go to the Fountain. When I am saying, I shall die in my nest, my nest is soon fired about my ears, and turned to ashes. — **D.**

As winds and thunders clear the air; so doth afflictions the soul of a Christian.

POSADH AN ANAMA RI CRIOSD

Leis an Urr Eideard Pearce (A.D. 1672)

(Air a leantuinn bho t.d. 121)

II. Tha E coinneachadh ri t-fhalambachdan uile, agus a deanamh ullachadh beannaichte air an son. Is e àite an fhir a bhi coinneachadh ri uile fhalambachdan a mhnatha, agus a bhi deanamh ullachadh air a son. Agus a' nì a tha Criosd a deanamh air son a cheile; tha E deanamh "a reir a shaoibhreas ann an gloir." Tha falamhachdan aca-san, agus tha lànachd Aige-san; tha feuman aca-san agus tha lànachd Aige-san; agus tha E toirt as a lànachd-san a dh'ionnsuidh am falamhachdan-san, agus gu saor a comhphàrtachadh an dara aon ris an aon eile. Gu firinneach tha sinn làn de fhalambachdan dheth gach seorsa, falamhachdan anns an anam, agus falamhachdan anns a chorp. Tha sinn "dòruinneach, agus truagh, agus bochd, agus dall, agus lomnochd." Tais. iii, 17. Seadh, tha ar falamhachdan dhe leithid de ghné, agus a teannachadh cho mòr oirne, agus, maille ris a mhac struidheal, gu'm bheil sinn eadhon a bàsachadh le gort. Lucas xv, 17. Tha eadhon na naoimh fein 'n an sluagh bochd agus ainniseach. Isaiah xli, 17. Nis, cia mar is urrain na falamhachdan sin a bhi air an lionadh? Is ann a mhàin le Criosd, agus a mhàin dùinn a stigh Ris agus lionaidh E na h-uile nì gu pailte. Bithidh e mhàin 'n a latha pòsaidh eadar Criosd agus thusa, agus tha t-fhalambachdan uile air an lionadh gu siorruidh. Is firinn e gu'm bheil Criosd 'n a uile; is E'n Uile Mhòr E, mar a tha aon àraidh ag ràdh Ris, tha neamh agus talamh, ùine agus siorruidheachd, gràs agus glòir uile anns an aon Chrìosd. Tha E coin-

neachadh ri feuman spioradail a cheile. Am bheil thu 'g iarraidh beath? "An ti aig am bheil Crìosd tha beatha aige, I Eoin v. 12. Am bheil thu 'g iarraidh gràs? Dùinn a stigh ri Crìosd agus bheir E dhuit gràs, pailteas de ghràs. Eoin i, 16. Am bheil thu 'g iarraidh sìth? Dùinn a stigh ri Crìosd, agus bheir E dhuit sìth. Eoin xiv, 27. Am bheil thu 'g iarraidh neart agus fireantachd; fireantachd air son t-fhìreanachadh, agus neart air son naomhachadh agus ùmhlachd? Dùinn a stigh ri Crìosd, ni Esan ann an am iomchuidh do lionadh le aoibhneas agus comhfhurtachd, bheir E comhfhurtachd do bhuir cridheachan. II Tes. 16, 17. Coinnichidh E ris gach uile fhalamhachdan bho'n leth a muigh a tha air a cheile, agus sin air son nach bi easbhuidh aon nì math oirre, Salm xxxiv, 10. Cha bhi easbhuidh aon nì math air bith oirre bho'n leth a muigh, ach na bhiodh na bu bhuannachdail dhoibh a bhi as eugmhais na gu'm faigheadh iad e. Is firinneach, gu'm faod iad, agus gu tric a bhitheas iad, as eugmhais a bhi air bheag comhfhurtachd bho'n leth a muigh; ach gidheadh tha aca ann an sin mòran ann am beagan, mòran gràidh, mòran beannachd, mòran de Chrìosd agus de'n chùmhnaidh, agus uime sin tha'm beagan a tha aca, air a ràdh gu'r "fearr beagan aig an duine ionraic na saoihbheas mhòrain dhroch dhaoine." Salm xxxvii, 16. Maille ri sin, a' nì sin anns am bheil iad air an gearradh goirid ann an nithibh aimseireil, tha Crìosd gu bitheanta dha dheanamh suas dhoibh ann a' nithibh spioradail. Tha iad bochd anns an t-saoghal so, ach "saoibhir ann an creidimh, agus 'n an oighreachan air an rioghachd, a gheall e dhoibh-san a ghràdhaicheas e." Seumas ii, 5. Cha'n eil mòran aca anns na sruthain, ach tha barrachd aca anns an tobar; barrachd gràidh, agus co-chomunn nì's mìlse ri Crìosd. Ann am focal, ge b'e is urrain neamh agus talamh a thoirt seachad, cho fad 's a tha iad a cur feum air, bithidh e aca: "Bheir an Tighearna gràs agus glòir: cha chùim e maith air bith uatha-san a ghluaiseas gu h-ionraic." Salm lxxxiv, 11. O! co nach dùineadh a stigh ris a Chrìosd so? Anam ca'r son a tha thù seasamh a mach bh'uaihte? Am bheil aon ann is urrain t-fhalamhachd an a lionadh ach Esan? Am bheil aon ann is urrain beatha a thoirt dhuit, agus sìth, agus maitheanas, agus fireantachd, agus slàinte, ach Esan? Na, am b'fhearr leat bàsachadh 'n a t-uireasbhuidhean na tighinn a dh'ionnsuidh an Tobair so gu bhi air do lionadh? Am b'fhearr leat a dhol a dhìth ann a d' bhoichdainn na tighinn a dh'ionnsuidh an ionmhais so gu bhi air do dheanamh saoibhir?

III. Leighisidh E do lotan, agus leighisidh E do ghalairean uile. Is E an Leigh dha cheile, agus a leithid de Leigh; is ged a bhiodh a chreuchd cho domhain 's a b'urrain dhith bhi, agus an galair cho uamhasach 's a b'urrain dha bhi, gidheadh cha'n fhàilnich E ann a bhi 'g oibreachadh leighis dhith. O! cia mar a bu chòr dha so 'ur tàladh dha Ionnsuidh. Tha againne, a mhuinntir

mo ghràidh, ar lotan cho math ri ar falamhachdan, tha sinn làn ghalairean agus euslaintean anama. Is firinn e, “Bho bhonn na coise gu ruig an ceann, cha’n eil fallaineachd ann: ach lot, agus bruthadh, agus creuchd lobhta: cha do theannaicheadh ri cheile iad, cha do cheangladh suas iad, cha do thaisicheadh le ola iad.” Isaiah i, 6. Tha aig na naoimh fein an leointean, seadh, leointean a tha iomadh uair “lobhta, breun,” mar a tha Daibhidh ag radh, Salm xxxviii, 5. Da-rìreadh, tha iad buailteach a bhi faotainn lotan as ùr gach latha, lotan ’n an gràs, agus lotan ’n an sìth; lotan ’n an comhfhurtachdan, agus lotan ’n an coguisibh; lotan a tha cràiteach goirt, agus a bhitheas aig amaibh a sileadh, mar gu’n sileadh iad a dh’ionnsuidh a bhàis leo. Seadh, ach ni Crìosd an lotan uile a leughas: agus na dean ach dùnadh a stigh Ris ann an cùmhnanta pòsaidh, agus leighisidh E do lotan-sa mar an ceudna, ge b’e air bith cò thù. Is Esan an Samaritanach math sin aig am bheil ola agus fion, fhuil agus a Spiorad gu bhi dha’n dòrtadh ann an creuchdaibh a shluaigh a chùm a bhi dha’n leigheas. “Le a chreuchdaibh-san shlànuicheadh sinne.” Isaiah liii, 5. Tha fhuil agus a Spiorad ’n an iochd-shlàinte shònraichte, a leighiseas na lotan is doimhne, agus na galairean is marbhtaich. Tha cheile dha fhaotainn mar so; “Aisigidh e m’anam, treoraichidh e mì air slighe na fireantachd air sgàth ainme fein,” tha Daidhbhidh ag ràdh, Salm xxiii, 3. Bha anam buailteach do iomadh galair agus anmhuinneachd, ach dh’aisig Crìosd air ais e bh’uatha uile. Am feum sinn a ràdh, “Nach eil iochd-shlàinte ann an Gilead? nach eil leigh an sin?” Is cinnteach gu’m bheil. Da-rìreadh cha’n eil aon ach Crìosd agus fhuil is urrain ar lotan a leigheas. O anam, c’ar son nach eil thu dùnadh a stigh Ris a chùm agus gu’m biodh tù air do leigheas? Nach eil do lotan breun? Nach eil iad ullamh gu droch fhaileadh a bhi dhiubh agus lobhadh? Agus mar a leighis Crìosd iad air do shon, nach fheum thù gu do-sheachainte bàsachadh dhiubh, agus a dhol a dhìth gu bràth? Nach fheum thu bhi fullung gearradh a mach bho Dhia, gearradh a mach bho Chrìosd, gearradh a mach bho neamh agus gach uile gu bràth? Agus an urrain thù bhi giulain a leithid sin de ghearradh a mach? Am bi thu riarichte bàsachadh agus a dhol a dhìth gu bràth, a roghainn air tighinn a dh’ionnsuidh Chrìosd air son leighis?

(R’a leantuinn.)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Czechoslovakia

The Czechoslovak Government and people have provided a great deal of news for the world in these recent times. Readers are familiar with the details reported regarding what is called the liberalisation policy of the new Czech government. Previously

this nation, in the heart of Europe, was ruled according to the Russian pattern of Communism. A detestable pattern! What interests many in Britain and elsewhere throughout the free world, is the arrogant and dictatorial attitude of Russia to the Czech government and nation. The vicious propaganda and military activities employed to frighten this small nation into turning back again to Russian Communism, is an up-to-date proof and revelation of the real character of the Russian "peace-lovers". In their view the Western nations are imperialists and oppressors of the people and should be eliminated by Communism. But Russia is the very tool of the devil to keep human beings in evil bondage and atheism. When they are afraid of losing part of their bulwark between them and the Western powers, as in the case of Czechoslovakia, they act the tyrant to keep this smaller nation under their influence and on their side. As a Member of Parliament said lately, the protest-marchers to the American Embassy in London about Vietnam, would do well to turn their attention to the Russian Embassy in London. Another observation we would make is — What about the United Nations Organisation and its useless General Secretary? They can interfere speedily in the case of Israel fighting for its very existence and in the case of Rhodesia. But what are they doing about Russian interference in the internal affairs of another small nation? How silent the Left-Wing M.P.s of our British Parliament are as to Russian conduct, at the time of writing. The United Nations Organisation should be disbanded. God and His mind is not in their councils.

Biafran Distress

All people with the least feeling of sympathy for human suffering are at the present time, hoping that relief supplies of food and other things, will soon flow into Biafra to relieve the starving and dying people of that stricken country. Men and nations bring great suffering and distress upon themselves and others by controversy, malice and conflict, as in the case of the Nigerians. The Lord reigneth in the kingdom of men and among the heathen; and without appearing to judge in this case, the Lord does in cases manifest that He has a controversy with nations and peoples by permitting great adversities to overwhelm them. Truly, the world needs the Gospel of Christ Jesus, the Prince of Peace, today.

The Fourth Commandment Ignored

We are well aware of the widespread, conspicuous and bold desecration of the Lord's Day in Scotland as elsewhere. At times when we read the daily press, certain apparently insignificant items of news take our attention. A brief paragraph appeared recently

in a Scottish daily paper stating that members of Golspie (Sutherland) Youth Club were to make an attempt, on a specified Sabbath Day, to swim from Portmahomack to Golspie Pier. Many readers might not have troubled to read this item of news. But it indicates a great deal regarding the modern state of religion and morals in the North of Scotland. Many of the youth and their parents and youth leaders reveal that they just take for granted nowadays, that the Lord's Day is an 'excellent' day of the week to spend out of doors indulging in varied recreations, away from home and any thought of the public worship of God. The above is indicative of what we may describe as the widespread complete indifference to the claims of God and the true religion of the Bible. A more conspicuous item of news appeared in the same daily paper under the heading, "A great day of motor sport." This referred to a certain Sabbath at Crimond being devoted to a British motor cycle road racing championship. Here we have one of the evidences of "perilous times," when men shall be "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." We hear and read the phrase, "The Church has failed." Whatever may be true of Christian Churches, we are certain that the people of this land, in general, have failed to adhere to the Word of God, in their personal conduct, in their homes and in their attitude to the name and claims of God. The conduct of the young and old on the Lord's Day points to this. God says, "Turn ye from your evil ways: for why will ye die?"

A Backward Step by Ross County Council

A Committee of Ross and Cromarty County Council came to a decision to rescind a former decision, which former decision did not permit of officials or young people going on courses of one kind and another which included worldly activities on the Sabbath. The recent **new** decision declares that the Ross County Council, which approved of it, are now prepared to organise or authorise those under their supervision to take such weekend courses and to hand out ratepayers money to finance those who may attend. A Free Church elder from Lewis, a member of the said County Council, made an excellent speech in opposition to the decision and in defence of the Sabbath. Unfortunately, the Convener of the County, the Rev. Murdo Nicolson, also of the Free Church of Scotland, moved the adoption of the Committee's minute in which the evil, new decision appeared. And he failed to speak out at the County Council in condemnation of the new policy, which holds no real respect for serious Sabbath observance. It is good to note that Mr Nicolson's Presbytery took the matter up with him and also issued a statement condemning the County Council for the backward step they had taken in connection with the Lord's Day. As a note of interest relative to the above, we at an

educational meeting in Edinburgh, last May, heard a lecturer in Physical Education remark, that a number of school pupils from some part of the West of Scotland, returned home on a Saturday from Aviemore, when they heard that part of their educational activities were to include swimming instruction on the Lord's Day. The lecturer was highly critical of those West Coast pupils over the action they took. We commend them; and in all probability the influence of their parents at home had much to do with their wise conduct. The action of Ross County Council is now an influence in the opposite direction. Men have to account to God for their deeds.

Another Dangerous Cult from America

We look upon the Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Science and other cults, most of which, in these modern times, seem to have their origin in America, extremely dangerous influences permeating Great Britain. They are anti the true Christian faith found in the Word of God and sad to say obtain many disciples. The Lord Jesus explained this in His Condemnation of the Jews who went about to kill Him because He told them the truth. He told them if any man came in his own name, him they would believe and follow. He meant, although such a man would bring with him false doctrine. Now the latest cult we have heard of establishing itself in Britain, is Scientology. It professes to be a kind of philosophy which the heads of this cult are said to teach. It is supposed to increase the ability of the whole man. The cost of courses runs from over £100 to over £200. Without going into further details, it is sufficient for us to conclude it is a dangerous cult, when the Minister of Health has exposed and condemned it on the floor of the House of Commons. Cults are not the subject of criticism in the House of Commons. This has been unusual action on the part of a Government Minister. Mr Robinson, the Minister of Health, stated that the activities of Scientology were a danger to the health of old and young who may be deceived into undertaking courses of instruction from this cult. Members of families have been alienated and separated from one another by the influence and effects of this new danger to the unwary. We are glad that the Government has banned the entry into Britain from America or any other country, of persons coming for the purpose of scientology activities. We know it is a difficult matter from the legal aspect to ban people on religious grounds from practising all kinds of strange cults. But the strong action by the Government in this case indicates that there is something sinister involved in Scientology. There are many anti-Christ's. Mormonism is in this category with other cults operating in Britain.

Church of England Articles

A Report was issued on 2nd August, 1968, by an Archbishops' Commission, on the 39 Articles of the Church of England. To these Articles, evangelicals in the Church of England faithfully adhere. The Commission declared that no change should be made in any of the Articles. But from the terms of the Report this view was not altogether because of a unanimous adherence to the said Articles. In future, clergymen having to subscribe, or say ordination, to the doctrinal position of the Church, are to be required to subscribe to only a **general acceptance** of the Articles. And so the drift goes on, in the professing Christian Church, away from faithful and firm adherence to the sound doctrines of the faith of the Gospel, set down systematically in writing by Godly divines in our nation, centuries ago.

CHURCH NOTES

Literary Contributions to the Magazine

Will ministers of the Church endeavour to send articles for publication in the Magazine. Sermons or Addresses will be appreciated. But we would like also articles on particular subjects which will be informative and edifying for our readers. We trust this note will have a response. We are not unmindful of those who have been and are helpful as above.

Grafton Communion

The Communion will be held (D.V.) in the Grafton Congregation, Australia, on the first Sabbath of October : Wm. MacL.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS OF DONATIONS

The General Treasurer, Mr Wm. D. Fraser, 20 Daleview Avenue, Kelvindale, Glasgow, W.2, acknowledges with sincere thanks —

Sustentation Fund — Miss S. A. MacLeod, Inverness, £2; Miss M. MacDonald, Clisham, Lochcarron, £3.

Foreign Mission Fund — Anon., Inverness postmark, £25; J. K. Hogg, £2; Anon., Lairg, £5 for Zenka Mission.

College and Library Fund — A Friend, Inverness, £5, per Rev. D. MacLean.

Mission to the Jews Fund — Anon., Argyll, £5.

On behalf of the Trinitarian Bible Society — Anon., Argyll, £5; Portree Congregation, £50 13/-.

On behalf of Auckland Manse Fund — Psalm 72, v. 19, £3.

The Publications Treasurer, Mr R. W. M. MacKenzie, C.A., 10 Beaufort Road, Inverness, acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:

Free Distribution Magazine Fund — Mr MacA., Lovat Road, Inverness, £1 2/-.

Trinitarian Bible Society — Mr A. M. Morrison, Rhiconnich, £2; Mrs I. Munro, Dalchreichart, £1; Mr A. MacDonald, Kiltarlity, £2 16/-; C.F., 4/6.

The Treasurers of the following congregations acknowledge with sincere thanks :

Lochinver — Mrs Adam, Glasgow, £2 for Home Mission Fund, per Rev. A. MacAskill.

Portree — From the estate of the late Miss Jessie Macpherson, Portree, £100 for Portree Congregational Purposes; Envelope in Church Hall plate containing £25 towards "the piece of ground adjoining, the Church Fund"; £5 from "Tunbridge Wells Friend" for Congregational Purposes, per Rev. F. MacD.; £5 in memory of Mrs Morrison, Drumuie, R.M.—for Congregational Purposes; £1 from Donald Macdonald, 11 Martin Crescent, Portree, for Congregational Purposes.

Bracadale — F.P. Manse Building Fund — From Friend, Staffin, £3; Glendale Friend, £1, per Mr D. MacAskill.

Greenock — £5 for Congregational Purposes from Mr and Mrs Conway, Bangor, N.I.

Fort William — Church Funds — Mrs Smallman £10; Car Fund — D. McLeod, Achintoul £4, A. Cameron £5; F.W.F.P. Church Extension — A. Cameron £5, "Friend" £2; Church Extension — R. McK. £2 per M. MacRaild, A. Cameron £5; Car Fund — C. Montgomery £2 per Rev. J. A. McDonald, A. Cameron £5.

Glendale — Car Park — A Friend £3 per Rev. J.C.

Stornoway — £50 each from Breasclete and Achmore congregations for Car Fund.

Harris (North) — For Congregational Purposes £5 from Mrs Morrison. Rockview House, Tarbert, Harris.

Beauly — Church Building Fund — "Psalm 122" Beauly £5, Shieldaig Friend £1, Mrs A. MacIennan, Tomich, "In Memory of Parents", £100, per Mr A. MacIennan; Friends, Fearn £2, Portree Friends £2, per Mr J. MacIennan; Anon. £10, Friend £5, per Mr D. MacKenzie; D. Macleod, Lochbroom £5, per Mr Kelly, £2 per Mrs Tallach; J.M., Gairloch £10; Friend, Kishorn £5; "Interested", Inverness £2 10/-; J. Stewart, Fortrose £5; Inverness Friend £5; Ullapool postmark £3; Edinburgh Friends £5; A Friend £2, per Mr R. W. M. MacKenzie.

Home of Rest Fund — Resident £1; Anonymous £10; Home of Rest Friend, Glendale £5; Resident £1; Resident £1; Anonymous £10 10/-; Resident £1; Visitor £1; Resident £1; Anon. £10 10/- "A Scourie Friend" £5, per Rev. A.F.M.

Inverness Ladies' Rhodesian Mission Fund — Anon., Inverness post mark, £50.

Foreign Mission Fund — Collection at Kinlochbervie Mission Meeting, to be used for Books, £24 6s 10d, per Rev. A.F.M.

Bracadale — "A Friend", Glendale, £10 for Repairs to Bracadale Church.

Gairloch — Car Fund — North Tolsta Ladies £1 and £1 10/-; Friend, Strath £1; Anon. £1; Mrs C., Nairn £5; Miss M.M., Croft, Poolewe £3.

Applecross — A Friend, Inverbain £2 for Motor Cycle, per Rev. A. Murray; M.G.N.C. £5 for Foreign Mission, per R. Gillanders.

Uig — "A Stornoway Friend" £3 for Car Maintenance, £2 for Communion expenses, per Rev. D. J. Macaskill.

London — Manse and Church Building Fund — Mr Geo. Mackenzie, London £5; Anon., a Harris Friend £2, per Rev. D. B. Macleod. Congregational General Fund — Anon., Harris £2, per Mr Murdo Maclean.