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Sin

“My sin I ever see.”

The subject of sin, its consequences and even its remedy is one which we are very unwilling to consider. The love of sin is so strong in us that we prefer not to view sin in the light of the holy law and word of God. We are ready to go on living in sin all our days, not laying to heart that sin is that abominable thing which God hates. It is true that our natural conscience from time to time arouses us out of our stupor and forces us at least to consider how we may obtain relief from the accusations of our own conscience. We do not go, however, to the only balm which can pacify a wounded conscience—the blood of the Lamb of God—but resort to our own devices to bring us peace of mind. These remedies will never remove the guilt of sin.

When the Lord in a day of His mercy and grace does bring sin home upon our conscience by the effectual working of His word and Spirit in our hearts and minds we cannot then put off consideration any longer of the great and solemn issues of sin and salvation. David might appear to have lost sight of his sin for a little time but when the Lord by His Spirit applied the rebuke of the prophet to his soul, then he had to say—“my sin I ever see”.

A sense of sin, however weighty that burden may be, is preferable to a state of indifference. If we are unaffected by sin we have reason to be in a greater state of alarm than if we were deeply conscious of our guilt. The publicans and the harlots were to go into the kingdom of God before the Scribes and the Pharisees, because they realised they were sinners, whereas the Scribes and the Pharisees had no consciousness of sin and guilt and consequently had no need of a Saviour.

Let us ask ourselves how we stand in relation to this solemn

matter of sin. Do we see sin as that abominable thing which God hates? Are we conscious of our sin and the awful depravity of our heart? Do we realise our guilt in the presence of the God to whom we must give account at the end of the day? If we are conscious of our ill-desert, if we are sensible that our sin offends infinite majesty and exposes us to the wrath and curse of God eternally; if we have to say with the Psalmist, "my sin I ever see", it is well that we should be so affected under a sense of our sin. Such a realised sense of sin, far from cutting us off from hope of salvation, is the way that the Lord is pleased to take in His mercy in bringing sinners to the only remedy for sin—the blood of the crucified Saviour.

How wonderful it would be for us as poor sinners, as guilty sinners, as lost sin-laden sinners, to taste of the sweetness of forgiveness—a free and full pardon of our sins through the blood of the everlasting Covenant. If we obtain this we will sing in time and throughout eternity a song of praise to Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.

"Forget not my Law"

by Rev. D.A. Maclean, M.A., Halkirk

Jeremiah's lamentation was, "This is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the Lord their God, nor receiveth correction: truth is perished and is cut off from their mouth". Jer. 7, v. 28.

We witness the same tragic situation today as the foundations of truth and absolutes are being continually condemned. The Law of God is forgotten but it must not be forgotten if moral education is to continue being taught in a changing and affluent society. In this age of moral licence man in his relationship to God is hardly mentioned. The root of the trouble is sin but sin has come to be regarded as a sickness and those in authority have employed armies of sociologists and psychologists to deal with a worsening situation. The tragedy is that society has almost completely abandoned the Moral Law. In their thinking they are confused and in their outlook they are beclouded and they hate and detest the only remedy. The Ten Commandments reveal the holy character of our God. This is where we must admit that the church has gone astray. The God of the Bible is forgotten. How sad the consequences, equity is no longer an integral part of our way of life.

Our work is not only to confront those who make absolute

denials such as atheists and agnostics but those who do not accept Bible truth in its entirety. In an age when we have hardly any absolute standards almost every basic Christian doctrine is either rejected, denied or distorted. People can say different things and one dare not say categorically that any viewpoint is entirely wrong. One would like to know how we can speak confidently of black and white in a grey age. Freedom of thought and expression are encouraged and all approaches to moral issues are considered valuable contributions. The vague thinking of this age would probably say that all are equally right. The kind of conduct expected of us depends on the environment which tells us "What is the done thing". Convention in any environment is so fallible and wobbly a guide that without any hesitation we call it defective. But if the individual is to decide righteously he needs more than the backing of thoughtful public opinion. The only sure guide is Bible teaching and the only test of our views is whether or not they are four-square with Scripture.

Moral education is always needed. We are living in a period of rapid social change but alas how difficult it is to give this education when there seems to be hardly any recognised standard of reference and hence no solid foundation for right and wrong and of the superiority of right over wrong. We must admit that the climate is not very invigorating for the teaching of moral responsibility. Moral education, however, is not a function of churches and schools only but of society as a whole and this includes the family unit which is the basis of society. Sad to say most parents, teachers and spiritual leaders are indifferent and the general policy is "train them to fit in". MAN'S idea of God and of Truth are very poor weapons with which to fight the evils and temptations of modern society when materialism and permissiveness are portrayed in almost every walk of life. To a great extent the revealed will of God in the doctrines of His Holy Word is rejected. Sad to say this is largely true of what is called the Christian church.

The disregard for sacred things has resulted in an increase of profanity and we are now facing a major national scandal because of laxity in religion and morals. There are so many trends in "permissiveness". Immediately we hear the word "permissiveness" we are too ready to associate nothing with it but increased promiscuity and drug taking among teenagers. There is much more which does not seem to hit the headlines and yet has an equally bad effect in a moral and spiritual way. Some of these trends in permissiveness can be noticed in many aspects of life. In the home there is a breakdown of parental control and outside the home an increase of juvenile delinquency. This laxity is also found in man's attitude

to religion. The mass media follow the pop scene plays and of course unscrupulous men exploit the young in many channels because of the money involved.

Hooliganism is a most serious problem and this is witnessed even in acts of wanton destruction on school buses. Many are concerned and are seeking hard for a suitable basis for ethical teaching. This cannot be done in a cold clinical fashion. We are certain, however, that the only motivating force for morality is the Christian faith.

We cannot always blame the young and few topics are more important to parents than discipline. Every child needs careful instruction and discipline if he is to grow up to become a responsible adult. Homes which have no established rules and regulations have significantly enough many offenders. Children when allowed to do what they like are often inconsiderate of other people's feelings and are resentful of any kind of authority in the family and also in the school. No one can act as he pleases; we have to live within certain boundaries. It is a known fact that children feel more secure when they know what is expected of them. If "we spare the rod" we "spoil the child". If parents give an explanation of "rules" the children will come to know the necessity of having rules and certainly they will be happier within these bounds. Children must learn that obedience is important and this framework of law and obedience brings security and a continued sense of duty for all concerned.

When the worship of God is not practised in the home regularly what can we expect? It was wisely said that the home without family prayer is like living in a house without a roof. The family altar has proved a blessing to many and it continually strengthens the moral fibre to meet the temptations of modern life. Without doubt the family prayer circle exerts a tremendous influence for good. To attend church regularly on Sabbath and week days is a duty but important as this is it can never take the place of family worship. It is in the home that godly instruction is given. Precept and example will undoubtedly mould and develop the character of the young. God's word is very plain concerning this, "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto this children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up". Deut. 6, 6 and 7.

Religious education in schools is most important and parents have every right to know what is being taught. It is sad to relate that in an age of much learning Christian teaching is replaced by humanism and intellectualism. From a Christian standpoint, I

express the view that the teaching of Religious education should not be enforced on all teachers. This teaching should be left in the hands of those who feel it a vocation to volunteer. There is much need of having consultants in the field of Religious education but unless they know the Lord their professionalism can be nothing but a deadly miasma. The teacher must on no account be "a blind leader of the blind". The child's religious and ethical judgments are based on what he learns. It may well be that the child's only religious education is what he receives at school—the only factor which by God's mercy could bring salvation to him. The Bible has a unique place in communicating the saving knowledge of God. We face difficulties in seeking to help our pupils but we believe that the Bible is authoritative and must continue to be presented in its fulness. What is meaningless to adults is as meaningless to children so careful attention must be given to make Biblical teaching clear. For example, salvation will continue meaningless unless there is an understanding of sin. It is sad that much of the inspired Truth is regarded in much the same way as fairy stories. As the children are at a very impressionable age it is the parent's duty to keep a clear eye on their children's education outside their home and also to try to keep in touch with their families after they go to College or University. As the parent holds a key position in the home so does the teacher in the school but teaching Scripture is entirely different from teaching English and Mathematics. The role of the teacher is unique here. Through the teaching of Scripture the teacher's aim ought to be to create conditions that can only be found in Christian homes. Such an attitude is essentially relevant to Religious education.

In a world of humans we face tremendous problems and mounting tragedies. In a tragic age are we seeking a practical solution? As the parent and teacher hold a key position so the Gospel minister should be a specialist in dealing with human problems. These problems are the fruit of man's sin and the only remedy is found in the Word of Truth.

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the only way-marks to direct us. Jeremiah said, "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein and ye shall find rest for your souls, But they said, We will not walk therein". Jeremiah 6, 16. He addressed the people in a metaphor and he thought the people were in a position to judge for themselves. The advice given is for all times. By the "old paths" we are to understand the foundational and unchanging truths of the Bible. Briefly these are, that all men are ruined by sin; that redemption is only through Christ in His

finished work on the Cross and that regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit. This is the teaching we must turn to and seek prayerfully to grasp. Pseudo-religion, however popular to the unconverted, will not give light or life to any soul. It is a liberal Gospel and is the product of the Minds of the false prophets of our times. Bible truth, when it is set aside, is replaced by a gospel of man's devising. Many ministers believe in universal redemption and the emphasis is almost always on the universal fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man. Nowhere is this more clearly demonstrated than at funeral services where it is customary to eulogise the deceased irrespective of the life he had led. The need of a change of heart and life appears to be overlooked entirely and the precious promises of everlasting life and happiness are measured out indiscriminately. It is little wonder that non-churchgoers are bewildered and cynical. The word of Christ is unequivocal. "Not everyone that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? And in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." Matt. 7, 21-23.

The only prospect of moral and spiritual prosperity is in a return to Bible truth. The answer is in the Gospel provision. As in Jeremiah's day, so today. Modern man, while he glories in being open minded, treats the Gospel solution—the only remedy—with prejudice and intolerance. This is his 'honesty'. As man's fundamental problem is his relationship to God, it can only be rectified by exercising faith in Christ and repentance towards God. So it is to the Gospel of Jesus Christ which is as relevant today as in past generations that we must turn. The experience of all who have found forgiveness and rest is that this Gospel is indeed adequate and that it will satisfy in every respect.

Sermon

by Rev. Robert Murray MacCheyne

"For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."
I Cor. 11, verses 29 and 30.

When it pleased God lately to pour out His Spirit in a

remarkable manner on one of the parishes of Scotland, I was told by the minister that the sin that took deepest hold upon the consciences of the people, was the sin of unworthy communicating. He told me it was a most affecting sight, to see aged persons of three score and ten sitting weeping over the broken sacraments of bygone days and years. If it shall please God to pour out His Spirit on the grown up part of this congregation, I feel deeply persuaded that this dreadful sin of unworthy communicating will be like a mill-stone around most of your necks. Yes, my dear friends, God has a controversy with you about this matter, and He will either plead with you in time or in eternity.

1. There is such a thing as eating and drinking unworthily. Even in the days of the Apostle Paul this sin existed; and so it does in our day. There are many at the Lord's Table who should not be there. There are many who come without the wedding garment—many who displease and provoke God by coming—many who will repent it to all eternity.

2. They get no good by it, but great evil. They eat and drink damnation to themselves. They think they are eating harmless bread and wine; or perhaps they think they are covering the sins of the past six months by eating; whereas God says they are eating and drinking damnation to themselves. It is as if they were eating poison.

3. He explains wherein their unworthiness consists; they do not discern the Lord's body. The phrase here used is evidently taken from the sense of taste in the human body, whereby we discern between different kinds of food. To discern the Lord's body, is to have a peculiar taste or relish for the way of salvation by Christ and Him crucified. When a heavy laden sinner feels the power of the Gospel—when he sees the sweetness, freeness, and fulness of Christ, he then tastes or discerns the Lord's body. But those who have not come to Christ, have never got this taste, this relish for the way of salvation by Christ. They may be very decent, good natured people—they may read the Bible, and keep up a form of godliness; but they have never tasted the honey in the clefts of the rock. These are they who profane the Lord's Table.

(1) None should come to the Lord's Supper but those who discern the Lord's body—i.e., have a true relish for Christ.

(i) From the actions of the communicant. You do not come to look at the bread and wine, but to feed upon them. You stretch out the hand, and take of the bread and eat it; you take the wine and drink it. Now, since that bread and wine represent the Lord's body, it is plain to a child, that the meaning of that action is: "I relish the Lord Jesus Christ. He is my manna—my sweet food—my

only way of pardon, peace, and holiness—my Lord and my God.” When a hungry beggar comes to your door, and you give him a piece of wholesome bread, how gladly does he catch at it, and begin to eat it! Why? Because he relishes it; it is what he requires. Such is your feeding at the Lord’s Table. You thereby declare that Christ is your Saviour—your manna—your all. When the man found the treasure in the field, he was glad, and went and sold all that he had and bought that field. Such is your declaration in coming to the Lord’s Table; Christ is precious to me; I have left all for Him. The bride in the Song of Solomon says: “As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.” So do you say in coming to the Lord’s Table: I have found rest in the shade of Christ—His fruit is sweet to me—His way of pardon, His spirit, His commands—all are sweet to my taste. When the maniac had the devils cast out, he sat at the feet of Jesus clothed, and in his right mind. Once he bade Jesus depart: “What have I to do with Thee?” Now Christ is all. Such is your declaration at the Lord’s Table. When Paul was an unconverted man, he was a blasphemer—he breathed out threatenings; but when he got a taste of Jesus, he said: “I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord”. Such is your declaration in taking that bread and wine.

Can you truly say that you have found the treasure—that you have sold all for it—that you have sat down under the shade of that apple tree, and that you delight in his holy fruit; that you were once far from Christ, but now sitting at His feet—that you now preach the faith which once you destroyed—that, like Paul, you glory only in the cross of Christ? Can you say, in the sight of God, that Christ is your manna, your sweet food, your peace—your all? Then, you are welcome to the Lord’s Table. Eat, O friends; drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved.

Most of you cannot say this. You have not found the treasure. Will you come to the Lord’s Table? To what purpose? You will eat and drink unworthily. It will provoke God in a dreadful manner. You will repent it when you die. You will grieve on account of it to all eternity. Some even perpetrate in half an hour what they will mourn for ever and ever. Judas, in eternal torments, bewails his sin and folly. So will you.

(ii) From the words of Jesus: “This do in remembrance of Me.” An unconverted man cannot remember Christ; for he hath never seen Him, neither known Him. A man who never tasted honey, cannot remember the taste of it; so a man who never had a saving taste of the sweetness of the Lord Jesus, cannot possibly remember

Him. Indeed, there is a kind of remembrance of Christ that any man may have. You may remember the events of His life—that he was born in a stable—that He walked on the Lake of Galilee—that He wept over Jerusalem—that He prayed in Gethsemane—that He died on the cross in Calvary; even the devils can remember Christ in this way. They remember all His history much more perfectly than we do. Satan has more knowledge of divine things than many doctors of divinity. And lost souls in eternal misery remember Jesus; they remember all He did, and all He suffered, and how often He would have saved them. Judas, in his place in hell, remembers Jesus. But, ah! this is not the saving remembrance of Jesus which we have at the Lord's Table.

When a labouring, heavy laden sinner is brought to the feet of Jesus, he finds a joy and peace in believing he never felt before. He gets a discovery of the love of Christ that he never had before; the love of Jesus in coming for the ungodly, and dying for them; the freeness of Christ to every creature—to sinners, even the chief—to publicans and sinners coming to Him; the wisdom and excellency of this way of salvation—the amazing glory and perfection of the righteousness of God. When the Spirit thus takes the veil from the eyes, he gets a sight of Christ which he never will, and never can forget. This is the spiritual relish and discerning of the Lord's body. Every new exhibition of Jesus calls up again this sweet sense of His goodness and beauty. He cannot hear His name but his heart is drawn away to remember Jesus. As when the widows stood by Peter weeping, showing the coats and garments that Dorcas had made, every new piece of handiwork of their departed friend called up fresh love in their bosom, and fresh tears to their eyes. So to those that know Jesus, the broken bread and poured out wine stir up their inmost soul to remember Jesus.

Have you this sanctified memory? Do you remember when the name of Christ was all a blank to you? And is it now like ointment poured forth? Do you remember when first you saw the Lord, or if not the very time, do you feel the amazing change that has been wrought in you? Then welcome—"This do in remembrance of Me."

But most, I fear, have no such memory. You have no gracious discovery of Christ to remember. You have never discerned the Lord's body. You say you will remember His Life and death. Why, devils could do that. Would it not shock you to see devils seated at the Lord's Table? And yet they have as much right to sit there as unconverted souls.

(iii) From the practice of the Apostles. One example: The Ethop-

ian eunuch was "a man of great authority under Candace, Queen of the Ethiopians, and had the charge of all her treasure."—Acts 8, 27. By the amazing grace of God this man became concerned about his soul—a Bible had come in his way, and perhaps some wandering messenger of mercy. He could not rest, but left his country to go to Jerusalem. There he found no peace—no light. Sad and weary he proceeded on his journey home. Still his heart was heavy; he sat reading Isaiah the prophet. By the mercy of God, Philip was sent to him, and in his chariot preached to him Jesus, the Lamb of God. Oh what a new world now opened to the Ethiopian! He sees the way of righteousness without works. Now they come to water: "What doth hinder me to be baptized? If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest. I believe that Jesus is the Son of God. So they went down into the water, and Philip baptized him, and he went on his way rejoicing." Is this your experience, beloved? Have you sought Christ as he did? Have you found Him as he did? Do you believe with all your heart? Then the Lord's Table is open to you, and you will go on your way rejoicing.

But, ah! it is not so with most. If some of you had been keeper of Candace's treasures, you would not have gone the length of the street to find the way to be saved. Some of you never read your Bible as that Ethiopian did—never sought instruction. You dare not say that you have believed with all your heart. Why, then, would you sit down at this holy table? You may come; but, alas! you will not go on your way rejoicing.

(2) It is very dangerous.

(i) They are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. There is no sin less thought of on earth—there is no sin more thought of in heaven and in hell, than unworthy communicating. Those who commit it are sharing with those who betrayed and murdered the Lord Jesus. They share with them in two respects—(1) In pretending love and friendship toward Him; (2) In real hatred to Him in their hearts, and contempt for His Gospel. When Judas betrayed the Lord Jesus, he pretended great love for Him. He had followed Him during all the years of His ministry—had preached in His name. He sat very reverently at the Lord's Table—dipped his hand in the same dish with Christ. His words were smoother than butter; but war was in his heart. When he came to betray Christ he said: "Hail, Master!" and kissed Him; yet all the while there was awful

hatred in his heart—a deadly enmity at Christ and His gospel.

So the high priests and pharisees pretended great zeal for God and for His cause—they pretended to be very sanctified and holy men; and yet they hated and condemned Christ to die. The soldiers of Herod pretended great respect to Christ, when they kneeled to Him and said: “Hail, King of the Jews!” but all the time they mocked and hated Him. Pilate pretended much to be a friend of Christ: he washed his hands, and said, “I am guiltless of this innocent blood;” and yet he condemned Him to be crucified.

So it is with unworthy communicants. You come to the Lord’s Table with a great show of respect. You appear deeply solemnized. You take the bread and wine, pretending that you have been converted—that Christ is your portion. You appear to be under deep emotion. Yet all the while you despise Christ and His people—ridicule conversion, and the life of grace. “Woe unto that man! it had been good for him that he had never been born.”

You have the same heart as Judas, as the high priest, as the soldiers, as Pilate. You are guilty.

(ii) Eat and drink judgment. This is true in two ways. (1) It is adding another sin—heaping another mountain on the burdened soul, and so bringing heavier condemnation—sinking the soul deeper. (2) It is always hardening—all sins harden, but especially sinning in holy things. One who makes jests out of the Bible is hardly ever saved, it is so hardening. But of all sins against holy things, unworthy communicating is the most hardening; so that an unconverted man communicating does often literally eat and drink damnation to himself. Just as a child of God drinks life, so he drinks death, out of that cup.

Some of you may be saying: though I be unconverted, I will go: for though it do me no good, it will do me no harm. Is it no harm to add another sin to your soul? Is it no harm to harden and seal your heart unto perdition? Is it no harm to eat and drink judgment to yourself?

Some may be saying: I hope I shall cover the sins of my past six months by it. Some of you, who have only been once or twice at church all that time, will be saying: I will make up for past neglect, and cover my sins. Will it cover your past sins, to add another to the heap? Will it atone for your broken Sabbaths, to come and

profane the sacrament too? Will it cover sins to eat and drink judgment?

(iii) Many weak and sickly, and many sleep. There are some sins which God visits with temporal judgments, as weakness of body, sickness, and death. When Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Ghost, they fell down dead at the Apostle's feet. When Herod gave not God the glory, he was eaten up of worms, and died upon his throne. So it is especially in profaning the Lord's Table. This is God's Word, who knows best: "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep". The Lord Jesus, the Master of the Table, has all providences in His hand, and He can, and does, make use of them to bring down those who insolently profane His Table. Just as God has provided a real hell of material fire that never will be quenched, in order to affect some gross sinners, who would not be moved to flee from anything but bodily pain; so in the Lord's Supper it pleases God to make use of sickness and death to keep off profane hands from that bread and wine. I have often observed God doing this. I remember three deaths which took place in such a way and at such a time, that I could not doubt it was the fulfillment of this verse. Watch and see, beloved!

Take heed, then O beloved, lest when the bread is in your mouth you should fall down dead. Ah! it is an awful thing to die profaning the Lord's Table; for you will sink lower than the grave.

"Therefore, let a man examine himself." What are your real motives for coming to the Lord's Table? Is it because you are come to a certain time of life?—But are you born again? Is it because your family are coming? Is it for a name? Is it for money? Ah! Judas over again. Is it to get baptism for your child? That is to commit one sin to help you to commit another.

Is it to praise Him for what He has done for your soul?—Psalm 116. Is it to show the world whom you have chosen? Is it to get near to Jesus? Come, then, and lean on His breast, and never draw back. Amen.

Dundee, 1841.

Judge the health of thy faith by the pulse of charity.

Thomas Watson.

The Diary of Dugald Buchanan

Period V—From March 1743 to May 1744

(Continued from page 21)

About the beginning of March, 1744, the Lord began to restore my peace as a river after my long trouble since the first of November, 1743. He shewed the holy end He had in suffering me to be tried with such temptations, and that there was "a need-be" for everything which had befallen me.

But I observe, that no sooner one trouble goes than another comes in its room, and perhaps greater than the former. But blessed for ever be the name of the Lord, who, with the temptation, makes a way to escape. The Lord shewed me unspeakable comfort from these Scriptures anent my approaching troubles: "Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you. Be careful for nothing", etc. (1 Peter 1, 7). And in Psalms 4, 6 "Commit thy way unto the Lord. Trust in him and he shall bring it to pass. The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me. But my God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus".

14th March—When I was at Morning prayer I had more than ordinary sense of my wants, and also of the difficulties of a present life; but I was wonderfully refreshed from the above Scriptures, and the Lord helped me to gather all my wants both spiritual and temporal, and cast them upon Himself; whereby I found my spirit as sensibly eased as if I had gotten a heavy burden cast off my body.

When I went to work in my lawful calling, my spirit at the same time was rejoicing that I had got all my cares cast upon Christ as upon a faithful creator; and while musing upon these things, the fire did not burn afresh in my breast, which forced me to cry out, How great is the pleasure of religion! how sweet it is to cast all my care upon God! how good is it to believe that God careth for me! These thoughts made me work cheerfully at my lawful calling wherein I was placed.

My anxious cares were taken away, for I believed that the Lord would perfect that which concerned me in every way, and bring it to pass in the way which would tend most to the advancement of His own glory and my good.

I saw that whatever the Lord had promised to His people, He had also appointed means for obtaining. Then I saw that when I was under trouble, it was my duty, as a reasonable creature, to

find out the means which God hath appointed for the accomplishing of such an end, or relieving from such a burden, etc. So that when I am found in the practical use of those means which God hath appointed to further my spiritual or temporal happiness, although the thing wherein I am labouring or avoiding should fall out contrary to that which I had designed or expected, I have real peace and comfort, especially as I had committed such a matter to the Lord, and was not negligent in the use of the means appointed by Him. Here is my peace, to be still in the use of means, looking to the Lord to give what issue He pleaseth (Ezek. 36, 37).

How sweet is it to be making every day one bundle of all my cares and casting them over upon Christ, when faith can read these words, "He careth for me". Blessed be God that the government is set upon His shoulders.

I think it would be impossible to bear my crosses and troubles, unless the Lord had shewed me something of the mystery of providence revealed in that word, Romans 8, 28, "We know that all things work together for good to them who love God, who are the called according to his purpose". I find that Christ's yoke is easy and His burden light, so that I may say, that I have neither crosses nor afflictions. Although it may seem strange, yet it is true, and all the reason I can give for it is the view that God hath given me in the passage just mentioned in the eighth of the Romans.

Whenever I meet with a cross I renew my submission to His will, but can never declare the pleasure my soul findeth in this exercise. I think that, though religion had no reward in a future state, I would not exchange the sweetness of it in the meantime for anything in the world.

Now, when I find these very crosses and troubles which were wont to make me complain, become sweet and easy, it affordeth just ground of praise and thankfulness to the Lord, who hath bestowed such an unspeakable mercy upon me the chief of sinners. Therefore, since I believed that it is the sufferings and afflictions of the Lord Jesus Christ which make satisfaction for sin, and the God never afflicts His children but in a way of chastisement and not of satisfaction, I am resolved to be at the disposal of His infinite wisdom. But if He in love defers my chastisement, I will praise His name, and if He in faithfulness afflicts me, I will endeavour to praise His name. "He is the Lord, let him do unto me what seemeth him good", and, whatever He is pleased to do, I will be satisfied. I am not anxious how these things come to pass; but all my care is how to be found prepared for either of these which God may please to send. "Thy will be done."

1st May 1744—I have been long in doubts about perfect freedom

from sin, which now, in a great measure, are cleared up. At this time the Lord kindled vehement desires in my soul after holiness of nature and conformity to the image of His dear Son. I groaned in this tabernacle, being burdened with corruption, and said, "O that I had wings like a dove, then would I flee away and be at rest". I can freely say that it was not any trouble that could befall my body or injury done to my name in this state which made me wish to depart, but a real desire to be free from in-dwelling sin and corruption; but when I took a view of the universal corruption of my nature, and how deeply sin was rooted in every faculty of my soul and member of my body, my heart began to fail, and I said, How shall such a body of sin and death be destroyed, or how can I think of perfect freedom from it in another world? How can I think that my heart will be so fixed on God as not to have one wandering thought through all eternity? How can I believe that I shall serve God for ever without weariness? No, I could scarcely believe it. Sometimes I considered the almighty power of God, which could make new heavens and a new earth; then I said, Why not new natures, new bodies, and new spirits also? Then the Lord convinced me of the certainty thereof, and kindled my desires more and more after the enjoyment of it. Oh! how sweet was my meditation on the beauties of holiness. The following Scriptures were sweeter to my taste than the honey-comb: Isaiah 14, 3, 4, "And it shall come to pass in the day that the Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve, that thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!" Even so I will say in a scriptural sense, When the Lord shall make me enter into an eternal rest in Himself, how hath the devil ceased? how hath my unbelieving heart ceased? how hath the tempting world ceased? how have the secret springs of sin in the heart ceased? how hath all weariness in the service of God ceased? how hath secret love to sin ceased? how hath everything that is contrary to a holy God in the creature ceased? Eternal thanks and praise to God, who hath made us partakers of the divine nature and translated us out of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son. This was a sweet declaration in Isaiah 95, 17, 18, 19, "For, behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people; and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying".

Here an objection of my mind was answered to the full; former things shall not come into my mind, for I was afraid that the remembrance of former evils would either breed shame or fear again; but glory to God, that former things shall not come into my mind.

The next Scripture was "For our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile bodies", etc.

Here is a change indeed, to be made on a vile body! I lose my thoughts on this wondrous change. O! mighty Redeemer, who can subdue all things to Thyself, hasten the day in which it shall be done. Praise to God, who hath wrought in my heart the faith of this resurrection by His Holy Spirit, and hath given me good hope through grace of a part in the first resurrection. With what joy and delight do I read that passage in 2 Cor. 5, 7, 8, "For we walk by faith, and not by sight: we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord". Absent from this body of clay which is such a clog on my spirit in Thy service, absent from these eyes which have carried my mind after a thousand vanities and unclean objects. O! that I may be enabled to labour, so that, whether present or absent, I may be accepted of Him; absent from the flesh wherein I am kept as in a prison, so that all I can do is only to look out at the windows of my prison-house. O! when shall they be darkened? O! when shall I appear before God, in whose presence there is perfect freedom from sin and fulness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore? May the day break and the shadows flee away! Amen. Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus!

For some time after this the Lord gave me great light of mind and warming of affections. I rejoiced much at the undiscovered mystery of godliness which I believed would be full revealed in due time; and the Lord showed me greater things than ever from the passage of Scripture above mentioned.

John Wycliffe (III)

In this third article, we intend to show Wycliffe's relationship to the translation and preaching of the word of God. A dramatic background to this aspect of Wycliffe's work is provided by an incident which is thought to have occurred at the beginning of 1379. Wycliffe, though not an old man, had fallen ill, and it was said that he was dying. The friars were overjoyed. With consummate presumption they hurried to his bedside. They began by

wishing him recovery, but soon they let out the real aim of their visit. "You have death on your lips", they said, "be touched by your faults, and retract in our presence all you have said to our injury". Uncharacteristically, Wycliffe at first gave no reply. With un pitying eyes, the friars watched the prostrate figure. Then Wycliffe spoke, but not to his visitors: he asked a servant to raise him up. "I shall not die, but live," he said, "and again declare the evil deeds of the friars." Dismayed and confounded, they hurried from the scene.

The backbone of the work which was done in fulfilment of this prophecy was Wycliffe's translation of the scriptures into English. Before his illness he had published a work "On the Truth and Meaning of Scripture". In this book he had asserted that "Christ's law sufficeth by itself to rule Christ's church". Now that he was recovering, Wycliffe set himself to open the way for the common people to have access to Christ's word. His expression of his hope is sublime. "I will fill the realm of England with light, and the ghostly terrors inspired by the priests, and the bondage in which they keep the people through their superstitious fears, will flee away as do the phantoms of the night when the sun rises. I will re-open the appointed channel of holy influence between earth and the skies, and the face of the world will be renewed."

There had been some previous attempts at translating the Bible in England, but these had been fragmentary at best, and some had been wholly unsuccessful. Wycliffe was certainly the first to take steps to translate the whole Bible into English. He translated the New Testament himself, but was assisted with the Old Testament by Nicholas Hereford. The translation was made from the Latin Vulgate, and took four years to complete. The language which he employed in the translation was powerful and graphic. It has been said that Wycliffe's Bible marks as great an epoch in the development of the English language as Luther's Bible does in the history of the German language. The appeal of Wycliffe's English can be felt from the following passage, despite the absence of punctuation: it is his rendering of John 5, 2-9.

"And in ierusalem is a waischyng place that in ebrewe is named bethsaida and hath fyue porchis in these laie a greete multitude of sike men blinde crokid and drie abidyng the mouyng of the watir for the angel of the lord cam doun certeyn tymes in to the watir and the watir was moued and he that first cam doun in to the sistterne aftir the mouyng of the watir was made hool of what euer sikenesse he was holden and a man was there hauyng eiyte and thritti year in his sikenesse and whanne ihesus hadde seen hym liggyng and hadde knowen that he hadde myche tyme he seith to

him wolt thou be made hool the sike man answerid to hym lord I haue no man that whanne the water is moued to putte me in to the cisterne for the while I come another goith doun bifor me.

"Ihesus seith to hym rise up take thi bed and go and anoon the man was made hool and took up his bedde and wente forth and it was saboth in that dai."

Printing had not been invented in Wycliffe's time, and the copying of manuscripts was a slow work. As and when the new work became available therefore, it was eagerly bought: "Poor people gathered their pennies and formed co-partneries for the purchase of the sacred volume. Those who could afford it gave a sum of five marks for a manuscript copy; others for a few leaves of Peter of Paul would give a load of hay".

While the common people clamoured for the scriptures in their own tongue, churchmen held up their hands in horror. The Canon of Leicester, for one, was scandalised: "Christ delivered his gospel to the clergy and doctors of the Church, that they might administer to the laity and to weaker persons, according to the state of the times and the wants of men. But this Master John Wycliffe translated it out of Latin into English, and thus laid it more open to the laity and to women who could read, than it had formerly been to the most learned of the clergy, even to those of them who had the best understanding. And in this way the gospel pearl is cast abroad, and trodden under foot of swine, and that which was before precious to both clergy and laity is rendered, as it were, common jest to both". When men are in such darkness as is seen lurking in these words, one wonders whether rational or spiritual arguments will be of any avail to enlighten them. Whatever arguments Wycliffe used to defend his action, we fear they fell only on deaf churchmen's ears. For our own interest, however, we note that Wycliffe began his defence by demanding: "Do you know whom you blaspheme? Did not the Holy Ghost give the word of God at first in the mother-tongue of the nations to whom it was addressed? Why do you speak against the Holy Ghost? You say that the Church of God is in danger from this book. How can that be? It is you who place the Church in jeopardy by hiding the divine warrant, the missive royal of her King, for the authority she wields and the faith she enjoins".

Thus Wycliffe came into sharpest conflict with the church of Rome on the subject of the word of God. That is a significant fact, for there is no subject which lies nearer to the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

We have looked at Wycliffe as a translator: we must now consider him as a preacher.

That there were many in Wycliffe's time who corrupted the word of God, Wycliffe himself frequently testified: he described the friars as "adulterers of the word of God, who did not preach in sincerity". Their attempts at expositing the scriptures Wycliffe dismissed as telling of "cronyclis and fablis to please the puple". That he himself knew what is required of a preacher is evident from the remark in one of his sermons: "It is noo nede to dipe us in this stori more that the gospel telleth Hold we us apaied (content) on the mesure that God hath govun us, and dreams we not aboute newe pointes that the gospel leveth, for this is a synne of curioustie that harmeth more than profiteth". The following is an extract from a sermon of Wycliffe's on Luke 15. In the interests of brevity, only a few isolated sentences are given: the spelling has been modernised.

"In this gospel telleth Christ two parables of comfort, how his people shall be saved allif (although) priests grudge there against The story of this gospel telleth how publicans and sinful men were coming to Jesus to hear his lore (teaching); and he treated them graciously as a good Lord, but Scribes and Pharisees grudged against this and blasphemed against Christ, and said he ate with them unlawfully." Later Wycliffe compared the scribes and pharisees of our Lord's day with the prelates and monks of his own. Having made the comparison, Wycliffe pursued it, making satirical use of "scribe", meaning "writer", and of "pharisee", meaning "separatist". "And these secular prelates may well be cleped (called) scribes, for they write the money that they pile (pillage) of the people more busily than they print in their souls the knowing of God's law. And these religious (monks) be pharisees for they be divided from the common manner of living by their rotten rites, as the pharisees were." Though Wycliffe was the greatest scholar known in Oxford for many a year, we see from the above that his preaching was very plain and direct. Thomas Fuller has an interesting comment on this: "On the week days, in the schools, he proved to the learned what he meant to preach, and on the Lord's Day he preaches in the pulpit to the vulgar what he had proved before his disputing making his preaching to be strong, and his preaching making his disputations to be plain".

Wycliffe placed great emphasis on the importance of the preaching of the gospel. For a time he disputed as if he were set only for the defence of the gospel. Towards the end of his life, however, he appears to have adopted wholly the principle that the best form of defence is attack. "If begging friars," he said, "stroll over the country, preaching the legends of saints and the history of the Trojan war, we must do for God's glory what they will do to fill their

wallets, and form a vast itinerant evangelisation to convert souls to Jesus Christ.

We cannot here review the work of Wycliffe's "poor priests", nor the Lollard movement with which they merged. Only a fleeting glimpse we can give of this facet of Wycliffe's work—a glimpse in which we see him bidding his departing disciples "god speed".

"Go and preach; it is the sublimest work, but imitate not the priests whom we see after sermon sitting in the ale-houses, or at the gaming table, or wasting their time in hunting. After your sermon is ended, do you visit the sick, the aged, the poor, the blind and the lame, and succour them according to your ability."

J.T.

The Rise of the Papacy

by Rev. M. MacSween, M.A.

(This Paper was read at the first Theological Conference held at Inverness in December 1964.)

Our subject is so vast that we can only attempt to deal with a few points in such a paper as this.

The Papacy has been described by the late Principal William Cunningham of Edinburgh as "a Satanic system", and, following the testimony of the Word of God, we have no hesitation in saying that the ultimate source of that mystery of iniquity called the Papacy is the apostate Satan, and that the proximate source is sinful, corrupt, proud, fallen men. This ought to be a sobering truth, for we are reminded of that solemn exhortation, "wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall". I Corinthians 10: 12.

But, in the background of our subject, having noted the awful apostasies of Satan and of men, we also note Cain with his false worship, Nimrod (whose name means "rebellion"), the founder of Babel and of the Babylonian Pagan religion, the mother of all the false religions of antiquity: Semiramis, Nimrod's licentious Queen, who was worshipped as Rhea, (Cybele and Venus), who made Babylon, in the Babylonian Pagan "Mysteries" the grand seat of idolatry and of consecrated prostitution: and the Babylonian Grand Council of Pontiffs, which controlled the iniquitous "Mysteries" at Babylon, with its President, called the Pontifex Maximus, (Chief Bridge-builder), or Sovereign Pontiff.

The name "Pontifex" was borne by the heathen priests, who by this name indicated that they alone were capable of bridging the gulf between the seen and unseen worlds.

In course of time, many other Grand Councils were set up on the original Babylonian model. When Babylon was taken by the

Medo-Persians under Cyrus in 539 B.C., the Babylonian Grand Council fled to Pergamos, in Asia Minor, and consequently "Satan's Seat" was there for many centuries (Revelation 2: 13, 14). Much closer contact was thus obtained with its daughter Grand Councils of Greek, Roman, and other heathen priesthoods. Finding an asylum in Pergamos, the Grand Council of Pontiffs deified the Kings of Pergamos, putting them in the vacant place which Belshazzar of Babylon and his predecessors had occupied. Then, when Attalus III, King of Pergamos, died in 133 B.C., he bequeathed his dominions and the Babylonian Grand Council of Pontiffs to the Republic of Rome, which had become mistress of the world by overcoming the Kingdom of Macedon at the Battle of Pydna in B.C. 168. Thus, the second move of the Babylonian Grand Council was to the capital city of that power which now ruled the world. Then, about 64 B.C., Julius Caesar, the first Roman Emperor, was invested with the title of Pontifex Maximus, claiming the divine dignity of Attalus and of the Babylonian Kings as invested in himself, as we see from his motto "Venus Genetrix", which signified his being made the "son" of that notorious goddess. On certain occasions he appeared in all the pomp of the ancient Babylonian costume, in robes of scarlet, with the crozier of Nimrod in his hand, wearing the mitre of Dagon—which simply represents the head of a fish with its mouth open—and bearing the keys of Janus and Cybele.

This state of affairs was continued under the succeeding Pagan Roman Emperors, and in essence even under professedly Christian Roman Emperors after Constantine (312 A.D.), who, as a matter of policy and as a salve to their conscience, appointed a heathen official to act as their substitute in the more directly idolatrous functions of the Pontifex Maximus. This phase continued till Damasus, Bishop of Rome, accepted the key post of Pontifex Maximus in 378 A.D. His successors, the Popes of Rome, have carried the title of Pontifex Maximus ever since. Paganism was thus enthroned in the Papacy.

From this extraordinary event, in which we find the Pagan priesthood supremely vested in the person of the so-called christian Bishop of Rome, we now retrace our steps a little, chronologically.

In the spring of 58 A.D., Paul the Apostle wrote his Epistle to the Romans, which he addressed, "to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout

the whole world". Romans 1: 7, 8. How very highly the Christian Church in Rome is here commended! Paul wrote this Epistle five years before his first visit to Rome, but the actual origin of the Christian Church in Rome is unknown. In all probability it was first set up there on their return by those persons who were at Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, and who are called "strangers of Rome" in Acts 2: 10. Persecutions, such as that following Stephen's death, about 34 A.D., and that under Herod Agrippa in 44 A.D., and other factors, also caused a dispersion of the earliest Christian believers from Jerusalem throughout the Roman empire. There is no proof from Scripture that the Apostle Peter was ever in Rome.

Stephen I, (258 A.D.), was the first Bishop of Rome to claim succession from the Apostle Peter. But the strange identification of Peter with Rome arises from the very probable explanation that Romanists, for their own aggrandisement deliberately confused Peter with the Roman heathen official called Peter the Reader. This Pagan official, (not the Pontifex Maximus), was the interpreter of the Book of heathen "Mysteries", called the Book Petr-Roma. By the time of the evil Bishop Damasus, (378), this confusion was complete. Romanists also, for the same reason, have confused Peter with Paul, who even himself was not the founder of the Church of Rome.

Of the many persons named in the Epistle to the Romans, some are Jews, some are Greeks, while others have Latin names, such as Urban and Ampliatus. In Philippians 2: 22, we are told that there were believers even "of Caesar's household". The early Christian Church in Rome was thus evidently a representative metropolitan, and peaceful community, in which the saving power and grace of the crucified, risen, and ascended Redeemer, shone very brightly. But, even because of this, many eyes were fixed upon her in hatred and covetousness, among them the eye of Satan, Paul had declared (c. 52 A.D.), that "the mystery of iniquity doth already work", (II Thessalonians 2: 7). As Calvin says, it was even then secretly at work. Paul had also warned the Romans against unbelief. "Because of unbelief they (the Jewish Church) were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high minded but fear. For, if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee." Romans 11: 20, 21.

For a short time, the Christian Church in Rome was considered as Jewish, and was treated according to the general Roman policy of toleration of national religions throughout the Empire. But, when the difference between Christianity and Judaism began to be realised, however, the Christians in Rome and elsewhere began to

suffer grievous persecutions under many of the Pagan Roman Emperors, such as Mero (54 A.D.), Domitian (95), Severus (193-211), Decius (249-251), and Diocletian (284-305). There were at least ten such persecutions, the last being the worst. The Church had indeed short intervals of rest, but in these the process of secularising her began. Her enemies gained more from these intervals of rest than from all the blood shed by the Christian martyrs. But, when it seemed as though Christianity was to be destroyed, outward relief came in 313 A.D. through the Edict of Milan, first issued by the joint Emperors, Constantine and Licinius. This Edict granted full toleration to Christianity, which soon afterwards became the religion of the Roman State. By 323 A.D., when Constantine became sole Emperor, one half of the inhabitants of the Roman Empire professed Christianity.

But now, endeavouring to approach our subject more closely, we come to consider:—

1. The Rise of the Papacy to the Ecclesiastical Supremacy.

2. The Rise of the Papacy to the Temporal Supremacy.

Both aspects are, of course, very closely connected.

First, then, with respect to the Ecclesiastical Supremacy, although traces are seen of this development as early as 140 A.D., yet, as Calvin points out, the oldest important notice we have of this in the Rome See is in a Decree of the Council of Nicea, in 325 A.D., assigning the first place among the Church Patriarchs to Julius, Bishop of Rome, and enjoining him to take care of the suburban churches only. This took place in the important period which extends from the Edict of Milan (313) to the Council of Chalcedon (451), the first being an Imperial Decree, and the second an Ecclesiastical Council. The point to note here is that in the interval between 313 and 451, the supreme ecclesiastical power had virtually passed over from the State to the Church. The first factor, then, in the rise of the Papacy to the Ecclesiastical Supremacy was the union of Church and State under Constantine. Though promulgated by the joint-Emperors, Constantine and Licinius, the history of the next ten years proves that Constantine was keen-sighted enough to see that heathenism was on the wane, while Christianity, having borne the most cruel persecution must continue to increase. Constantine became a Christian by profession only. He conceived that the only protection against the threatened disruption and decay of the Empire lay in a universal religion. The Parallel between political and ecclesiastical unity frequently recurs in his Edicts, and represents the fundamental principle of his policy. So long as he shared the Empire with Licinius, he confined himself in his public measures to placing Christianity on a level with the ancient

religions. But the compensation which he granted to those who had been persecuted, his contributions to the support of bishops and to the building of churches, the immunities and privileges which he granted to the clergy in common with the heathen priesthood, and his laws with respect to "Sunday", or the Lord's Day, showed that he was disposed to favour the Christians. He was convinced of the superior worth of Christianity, but Licinius began to persecute the Christians in his provinces, a procedure which led to his defeat and death in war with Constantine. In 323, the year of his victory over Licinius, Constantine became sole Emperor, and openly declared himself on the side of Christianity. In 325, he convened the first General Council of the Church of Nicea, taking a lively interest in its deliberations, not from an intelligent appreciation of the points in dispute, but from a hope of realising a universal religion. With a view to abolishing idolatry, he sought to deprive the ancient Pagan priesthood of the prestige derived from connection with the State by transferring the seat of government from Rome to Byzantium, which then became Constantinople and New Rome (330). But Constantinople was also a much better strategic base than Rome against barbarian attacks by land and sea. History has proved the truth of this. Constantine, however, failed to cope effectually with heathenism. He tried hard to conciliate those who adhered to the old polytheism. He thus used vague terms in his Edicts into which heathen and Christian might each read his own meaning. While he styled himself "a bishop for the external relations of the Church", yet he retained to the end of his life the title and dignity of the heathen Pontifex Maximus. While he preached to his Court what he supposed to be Christian sermons, he remained unbaptized until shortly before his death, chiefly from policy, though partly from a superstitious regard for the efficacy of the ordinance.

The favour shown by Constantine to Christianity induced many to declare themselves Christians from interested motives. The presence in the professing Church of multitudes who had no sincere Christian convictions was the cause of much of the compromise on the part of the Church with the State, leading to Papal Supremacy. It was thought that unity among such diverse elements could be preserved only by bringing some external authority to bear upon them, and this authority naturally fell into the hands of the clergy. This increase of power on the part of the clergy widened the gulf between clergy and laity and favoured the growth of the idea that the clergy possessed a mediatorial character as the channels of the influence of the Holy Spirit. The universal priesthood of believers was thrown into the background, and the clergy became a priest-

hood. The laity thus drop out of account, the inferior clergy succumb to the bishops, the bishops to the Patriarchs: and, in the end, the chief power having centred in the three leading Sees—Constantinople, Alexandria, and Rome—the struggles of the three great Patriarchs for ecclesiastical supremacy led to the separation of the Eastern from the Western Church (1054), and to the consolidation of the Papacy. The supreme power had been vested in the great ecumenical Councils—Nicea (325), Constantinople (381), Ephesus (431)—for a long time. But the fact that all these Councils were held in the East, and the consequent absence of such assemblies from the West, favoured the concentration of the chief ecclesiastical power in the Bishop of Rome. But the Church leaders became willing to surrender to heathenism and secularism, if thereby they could secure the triumph of the Church.

The recruiting of the priesthood from all classes of people was a master-stroke of Papal policy especially for obtaining information regarding all parties. If much of this deplorable issue can be traced to the alliance of Church and State under Constantine, we may be prone to think that we see in it a proof from experience that the State-Church system carries in it the seeds of evil. To hold such an opinion would mean that we reject the Establishment principle and are Volantaries. We, however, maintain that the Establishment principle is Scriptural, and would point out that the State of Constantine's day was the outcome of a heathen civilisation, and was heathen to the core, and therefore, that no fair analogy can be drawn between such an alliance as we have described, and an alliance of the Church with a State which is in itself the outgrowth of Christian civilisation.

Obituaries

Archibald Robertson, Missionary, Tain

Archibald Robertson reached the age of 81 on the 5th February 1971, and six weeks later passed to his rest and reward. In Psalm 90 God warns men that the normal limit of their life is 70 years and that whatever more time may be granted is likely to be laborious and sorrowful. This was certainly the case with Mr Robertson; his last years were marked by much weakness and discomfort, and with sorrow too. Yet it has also to be recorded that the close of his life was distinguished by inward peace and an overwhelming desire to praise God in Christ. His very last words were, "He is the Prince of life." His outstanding Christian character and long service as a lay-missionary are worthy of remembrance. In this outline

of his life we shall refer to him mainly as "Archie", for it was as "Archie Robertson" that he was known far and wide, even by some who never met him.

Archie Robertson was a native of North Uist, born at Baleshare on the west side of that Hebridean isle in 1890 on the date given above. His father, Donald Robertson, was twice married, and Archie was the older of two sons by the second wife, Catherine MacIsaac. Looking back on his childhood years, Archie had to acknowledge that he received little instruction in spiritual things. The only impression he gained was a dread of the day of judgment, yet this was to play its own part in later causing him to use the means of grace. As the years of boyhood and youth passed, so did he become increasingly forgetful of God, and plunged ever deeper into the ways of sin and vanity. The Bible was a neglected book, and he was 20 years of age before he again made use of it. We say "again", for his only previous recollection of deliberately reading it for his soul's sake, was when a severe thunderstorm drove him to it and to prayer.

Again a storm was the divine means employed to make Archie fear for his soul. He had joined the army as a piper and was on his way to India by troopship. A severe gale alarmed him so much that he sought a corner where he could pray to be spared. This experience sobered him so much that he vowed to lead a better life, but his attempted reformation did not last long. Like the morning cloud and early dew it speedily passed away, yet one effect of his alarm did remain. He felt an impulsion to read the Bible. In India he was as careless as his comrades, and, as he later confessed, had little more knowledge of eternal realities than the heathen who there surrounded him.

In August 1914 his battalion of the Cameron Highlanders was brought back for service in France and Flanders. Exposure to danger had no softening effect upon him. In providence, most of 1915 was spent at the Camerons' headquarters at Invergordon, and it was here that the Lord drew him from sin to Himself. Archie believed that the first definite step towards conversion lay in the acceptance of a pocket Testament on condition that he carried it always and read at least a chapter per day. He signed an agreement to do this and quickly found that he had shouldered an uncongenial yoke. Yet he felt that he must keep his word, so he continued to read his daily portion. Strangely, he felt, the more he read; the more he felt impelled to read. So the process went on; the blind was being led by a way he knew not. As the reading of good books was added to the reading of the Scriptures, and as attendance at church was added to the reading of good books, and

the seeking of the company of a godly man added to that; so did a sense of sin increase, and then his mother's sudden death set him on seeking the Lord in real earnest. Sometime in the spring of 1916, Archie was made willing to embrace the Saviour, and the summer of that year was a summer indeed to his soul.

He became dissatisfied with the services of the Established Church to which he belonged, and found the Free Church services at Invergordon more to his taste. But though he knew practically nothing as yet about the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, he was in various ways drawn towards it, and at last sought an interview with the late Rev. Donald MacFarlane at Dingwall. As a result of this meeting, and a fuller acquaintance with the preaching and fellowship within the denomination, he decided to become a Free Presbyterian. He never changed his mind on this subject. He first communicated within the denomination at the November communion at Dornoch. Spiritually it was high summer; winter set in almost at once.

Archie was sent to Salonica where he tasted loneliness, danger, and unsatisfied hunger for Church ordinances, and the grief accompanying discoveries of heart sin. Two and a half years this lasted, but many mercies were mingled with it. He endeavoured to be of some spiritual help to comrades who would consent to his taking worship with them, and at last he had such a powerful urge to tell others of the way of salvation, that he vowed that if God would spare him, he would give himself to his service.

Discharged from the army in July 1919, Archie had first to settle the question whether the Lord was calling him to the ministry. He decided that he did not have that kind of call, and almost at once his decision seemed to be confirmed by a request that he go to Plockton as a lay-missionary. He did, and thus commenced a work in which he continued for over fifty years. From Plockton he was transferred to Ullapool, then to London, and to Stoer where he met the young woman who became his wife. February 1925 saw him back in Plockton where he served faithfully until a serious illness necessitated his removal to Invergordon Hospital in 1930. He did not return to Plockton, but after his recovery was appointed to be missionary at Tain in April 1931. There he spent the next 40 years expounding the Word and caring to the utmost of his ability for the people who had been placed in his charge. He was a thoughtful and greatly exercised man; he read much and prayed much; so that the congregation of Tain had no cause to complain that their souls were neglected, nor that they were being served with superficial teaching. Out of the abundance of his large and varied spiritual experience, Mr Robertson was able to speak to

the needs of others. He had a quiet dignity and expressed himself clearly and accurately, moving surefootedly amidst the facts and doctrines of the Scriptures. In private he was most pleasant and hospitable, but his manner and conversation were marked by seriousness and an obvious preference for spiritual topics.

Archie Robertson passed through many trials in his long life. He experienced hardship and had his own share of sorrow. Illness and constant weakness made the last four years of his life burdensome, and yet more sorrow bowed him low. Yet he continued in the way of faith and love, humbly acquiescing in God's will and patiently waiting the call of his Redeemer to leave the place of winter and rain, and go to the land where He says there is perpetual summer. (Song 2 v. 10-13). When his body was so weak that he could scarcely leave his bed, Satan delivered one last onslaught of strong temptations over a period of some weeks. In God's kindness that passed, and his latter end was great peace of mind and heart, resting on the infinite merit and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. He died in faith.

The very large and representative attendance at the funeral revealed how much Mr Robertson had been esteemed and respected. The loss to the Burgh of Tain itself was expressed in a town council tribute which spoke of his "long and faithful service as a witness and preacher of the Word of God". The Church on earth is the weaker for the passing of this man of prayer.

Mrs Robertson who was of one mind with her husband all their married life, shared with him fully the joys and sorrows of his pilgrimage, and was able to nurse and care for him at home until the end. For her we would express our sincere sympathy and desire that the Lord would be her Comforter and Helper through the remainder of her life. Our sympathy we also extend to the sons and daughters, desiring for them all that the example and instruction of a godly father may be blessed as means to their own salvation.

A.McP.

John MacLeod, Deacon, Stornoway

The subject of this brief obituary was so well known throughout our congregations particularly in the Outer Isles and Skye that we think it fitting that his passing from time to Eternity should be noted in the pages of the magazine.

John was born on the Island of Scalpay, Harris, and his associations with the Free Presbyterian Church began when as a young man he came to Glasgow for employment and in the Divine Providence was attracted to St Jude's Church. There he came under the

preaching of the late revered Rev. Neil Cameron and others of the early fathers of the church who from time to time preached from the same pulpit. Of them he was wont to speak with affection and, judging from the way he regarded this period of his life, it would seem that it was then that he passed from death to life. It was, however, after settling in Sandwich and during the pastorate of the late Rev. Malcolm Gillies that he became a member in full communion being received in February, 1938. A year later he was elected a Deacon and the duties of that office he discharged faithfully to the end, his figure standing at the Stornoway church door, over the years becoming very familiar to those who worshipped there. Even when overtaken by the frailties of old age he was still most exemplary in his attendance on the public means of Grace, his place never empty if it was at all possible for him to be present. Not possessed of any great ability as far as public speaking was concerned, he nevertheless, excelled in prayer, the manner in which he addressed his Maker revealing how conscious he was of being but dust and ashes in His presence, and some of the choice expressions and petitions to which he was then wont to give utterance will long be remembered by those who were privileged to hear him. That his voice is now silent in the church below is a great loss to the Stornoway congregation and to the church and community at large, for the "effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much". His latter end was peace. On the 9th January 1970, at the age of eighty-two he passed away, departing, we believe, "to be with Christ; which is far better". His wife predeceased him by about fifteen years. To his only daughter and her family we would desire to express our sincere sympathy, with the prayer that his God would be their God forever and ever and their guide even unto death.

J.McL.

Church Notes

Death of Beaully Missionary

It is with deep regret we record the death of Mr Alexander MacLennan, Muir of Ord, which took place on 1st January 1972. His passing leaves a great blank, especially in the North of Scotland where he was well known. He was a shining light in the world and a bright ornament in the Church of God. It is our prayerful desire that the Lord will raise up many others like him in the church. We extend sincere sympathy to his widow and to his brother, Mr John MacLennan, in their great loss.

Aberdeen Communion

The Aberdeen Kirk Session have agreed that there will be two communions in the congregation each year. They will be held on the 1st Sabbath of May and on the 1st Sabbath of November (D.V.).

Shieldaig Congregation

Shieldaig Congregation wish to make it known that the cost of supply with expenses are paid out of the Sustentation Fund and that only the remainder is sent to the General Treasurer.

Acknowledgment of Donations

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

Sustentation Fund: Anon., £50; Miss E.M. MacKellar, £5; Mr D. MacKenzie, Glenelg, £5; "In memory of my dear Parents" £3.40; Mr N. Morrison, Stornoway, £2.90; Miss G.A. Sutherland, 65p; (last 5 per R.W.M.M.).

Jewish and Foreign Mission Fund: A. Forgie, £25; Portree Sabbath School Collection, £60; Micah 4, v. 1 & 2, Wellington postmark, \$30 for Mission to Jews, per Rev. W. MacL.; Stornoway Sabbath School Children, £30.

Aged and Infirm Ministers' etc. Fund: A. Forgie, £25.

College and Library Fund: Anon., £25.

Organisation Fund: Anon., £25.

Dominions and Overseas Fund: "In memory of our mother, the late Christina F. Gibson, from the Fowler-Gibson family, £19.84; John 4 v. 4, £5.

Home of Rest Fund: Lochbroom Congregation, £100; London Congregation, £55; Anon., £500; St Jude's Congregation, £138.50; "Wellwisher", Dingwall Congregation, £5; Mrs Wilson, Bonar Bridge, £2.50 per Rev. D.B.M.; Greenock Congregation, £62.50; A Friend, £10; Mr G. Haarsma, California, U.S.A., £34; Miss M. MacCuish, Lochs, £2; B.P. London, £20; (last 5 per R.W.M.M.); M.S., Denhy, £10; D.M. Neilson, Surrey, £10; Mr and Mrs Livingstone, Muir of Ord, further £5; Portnalong and Bracadale Congregation, £41.05; Ness Congregation, £44; Friend, Shieldaig, per A. MacInnes, £5; Laide Congregation, £27; Beaully Congregation, £46.88; Gairloch Congregation, £2 per J. MacLeod; Mrs Isabella Mathieson, Kyle, £4; Knockbreck Congregation, Skye, £5; Kames Congregation, £26.35; Mrs J. MacBeth, Kyle, £5; Resident, £10; D. Campbell, £10; Miss A MacLeod, £10; M.M., £3; Resident, £1; Two Residents, £10; Skye Friend, £20; Mrs de Gersdorff and Miss Ogden, U.S.A., £40; Miss MacIntosh, £5; Miss A. MacLeod, £10.

Foreign Mission Fund: A Friend, G.R., Michigan, £35; A Friend, Lochbroom, £5; Miss A.M. MacK., £1; Miss G.A. Sutherland, Brora, 65p; all per R.W.M.M.

On behalf of the Trinitarian Bible Society: Portree Congregation, £87.06; Anon., Argyll, £8.

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

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Ness Congregation, £5; Mr G. MacLennan, Muir of Ord, £1.40; Mr R. Gillanders, Applecross, £2; Mrs A.P.B., £1.50; Inverness Congregation, £20.

Publications Fund: Mr K. MacLennan, N.A., Michigan, £14.20; London Congregation, £8.16; Mrs John MacLeod, Isle of Harris, 40p; Miss M. MacKay, East Kilbride, £3.40; Mr R. Gillanders, Applecross, £2; Mrs A.P.B., £2.

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Two Friends, Ness, £2; M. Gillies, Raasay, £2; A Harris Friend, £2; M. Gillies, Glasgow, £2; J. Campbell, Inverness, £2.50; Anon., St Judes, £1. R.S., Lairg, £1; Portree postmark, £2.50; Mrs J.H. Buggs, £5; G.A. Buggs, £10, Tonbridge; F. Graham, Uig, £2.50; F. Coxon, Long Eaton, £2; P.O. Keighley, £5.50; P.O. Greenock, £5; P.O. Lochgilphead, £2; Inverness Friend, £30; A friend of the cause, \$10; J.A. Macleod, £1; Mrs R. Macleod, Hallin, £1; Anon., Dumbarton, 50p; Miss Mackintosh, £1; Mr R. Macdonald, £1.

The Treasurers of the following Congregations acknowledge with sincere thanks:—

Bracadale: Mrs C. MacDonald, Portree, £5 per Miss D. McK.; In Memory of the late Donald MacDonald, who was missionary at Loch Portain, North Uist, from "Herrach in Exile, £5; A Friend, Stornoway, £2; A Friend Uig, £1.50; A. MacLennan, Finsbay, Harris, £20; (last 4 per Rev. D.J. McD.); F.B., Dunvegan, £10; In memory of a brave war-time comrade—Peter Beaton—from No 2098, Glendale, £3; (last 2 per A. Beaton); all for Church Renovation. M.S., £10 per D.Y.M; Mrs Robert MacIntyre, RR2 Wiarton, Ontario, Canada, £3.95 per Mr Fraser, General Treasurer.

Glasgow: In memory of Andrew Patrick Walker, £10; W.M. Matheson, £20; Anon., £3; all for Sustentation Fund. Anon, £3; Mrs Walker, £1; Mrs Piper, 50p; all for Congregational Fund for Church bus. Miss MacIver, £20 and Anon, 25p for College and Library Fund.

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