

THE
Free Presbyterian Magazine
and Monthly Record

Vol. 86

JULY 1981

No.7

Is any thing too hard for the Lord?

The Lord promised Abraham that Sarah would have a child. When Sarah heard it she laughed and said, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? To this the Lord replied, Is anything too hard for the Lord?

In this instance Sarah was old and Abraham was old, and if anything seemed unlikely it was that Sarah in her old age would bear a child to Abraham. Natural reason would say that the thing was impossible, and by natural standards it was impossible. But we are not to judge God by natural standards or our view of God and of His power will be very limited — Is any thing too hard for the Lord? What is impossible with men is possible with God.

Earlier Abraham had laughed and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? And shall Sarah, that is ninety years, old, bear? He also said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before Thee? But this could not be. The son of the bondwoman was not to be the heir, but the son of the freewoman. Isaac was the seed of the promise, for God had said, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. What God had promised he was to fulfil. And from the line of Isaac was to come the promised Seed of the woman who was to bruise the head of the serpent. Is any thing too hard for the Lord?

When difficulties arise how ready we are to conclude that these difficulties cannot be resolved. They become a burden to us too heavy to be borne. We become cast down and ready to despair. In such a case this Scripture conveys a message to us, Is any thing too hard for the Lord? What difficulty, what trial is there out of which the Lord is not able to deliver us? Even when every other refuge fails us in our hour of need, Is any thing too hard for the Lord? Even when our problem is so intractable that it seems impossible to us that there could be any resolution of it, Is any thing too hard for the Lord? In His hand, impossibilities become not

only possibilities and probabilities, but certainties and actualities. Is any thing too hard for the Lord?

But our situation, our circumstances, our need may appear so altogether unique that we are ready to conclude that it would be presumption on our part to think that the Lord would intervene on our behalf to deliver us. Again the Word of the Lord assures us, Is any thing too hard for the Lord? Sin-laden, guilty, exposed to the divine wrath and curse what hope can there be for us? The answer comes again, Is any thing too hard for the Lord? Is He not able to deliver and has He not made provision for the deliverance of sinners in and through His well-beloved Son? If He is able to deliver the lost and the hell-deserving, then is any thing too hard for the Lord? The Apostle could say, to the believing Church at Rome, He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

When the state of the Church is low and she is faced with trials and tribulation out of which there appears to be no deliverance, again the Word of the Lord comes to give encouragement and assurance to His tried people and Church. Is any thing too hard for the Lord? He will indeed deliver His Church. To this end the Lord is exalted at God's right hand — "Sit on My right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." Let us not then be discouraged. Our Redeemer is mighty. "He hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea." So sang Moses and the children of Israel at the Red Sea. And He is the same God still. "Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?"

Notes of a Sermon

Preached by Rev. M. Gillies at Inverness Free Presbyterian Church on Monday 26th January 1942

"We will make thee borders of gold with studs of silver." *Song of Solomon 1:11*

This book is a spiritual book. It speaks of the salvation that the Lord Jesus Christ bestows upon sinners in every day and generation and of the effects, or the fruits that follow Christ being made precious to a poor sinner — the fruits that follow in a sinner being closed into Christ and in the Saviour being made all and in all to him.

The book opens with the kindness and the love bestowed upon a lost, ruined, hell-deserving sinner described under the analogy of King

Solomon bringing home to himself one who was as the tents of Kedar, one who was an outcast — yet he brings such an one home. Dear friends, when the Holy Spirit shows to us what we are before God we shall find that we are as black and as sooty as the very tents of Kedar, that there is nothing in us that can commend us to God. Yet it is to such a sinner that the Saviour is made known in His kindness and in His love. It says here, “the king hath brought me into his chambers.” “We will be glad and rejoice in Thee.”

There is no experience comparable to the experience of a poor lost and fallen sinner exposed to the wrath and the curse of God, lying in his own blood unwashed, uncared for. The Son receives such a one and brings the poor sinner “to taste and see that God is gracious”, to see Christ as His own personal Saviour. We find here a new song in the mouth of the Church as it says the ‘Song of Songs’ and it is just according to the analogy of the 40th Psalm “He took me from a fearful pit, and from the miry clay, and on a rock he set my feet, establishing my way. He put a new song in my mouth, our God to magnify.” And once the Holy Spirit, or once the Lord Jesus Christ by His Spirit, puts the song of salvation in the mouth of the soul, that mouth will not be altogether without that song in time or in eternity. You see, it is the Lord who puts that song in his mouth. I think — if time would permit — that the mournings that God’s people have in this vale of tears, and their groanings are connected with the grace of God in Christ, for they have tasted that the Lord is gracious. The bewailings and the groanings of the believer are that of a soul who has tasted and seen that the Lord is good, and who wants to receive again in some measure that which it has received already. He has put the new song in his mouth. Oh! when the believer is receiving nearness and when he is in the banqueting house, when he is receiving nearness to the Lord — and most of the Lord’s people had such a season as that when the Holy Spirit says “He took me to the banqueting house and his banner over me was love,” — when one has that fellowship it is easy to sing *that* song, the new song, “to the praise of all grace” to the One who has manifested the gift of His own Son to be the Saviour of poor lost men and women in the world. And if we would get our choice, that would be the condition in which we would go through this world, enjoying nearness to the Lord and having a good persuasion that we were Christ’s. Let me have more of the consolations, consolations and consolations. That is what the creature would choose — to pass his days basking in the sunshine of Jesus’ love in a way that would satisfy and give joy to the heart. You read the song, and study the banquets, and the wine, and pomegranates, and all the rest we have in the

book, and then you come to the very last chapter — the very one who began that verse with the banquets — you have that very person and now everything has been made a wilderness to that creature, but the Son remains the same. Although all the comforts one had at the beginning seem to be altogether gone and he finds a wilderness round about him — the world has become a wilderness and he has got a wilderness in himself — all the beauty, all the nourishment, all the sweetness, seems to have gone all away. It is wonderful what beautiful prayers and what beautiful meditations some of God's people had at the beginning of their career and how time would pass in contemplating His beauty and glory. But all these beautiful things that the believer has at the beginning, they are like Jonah's gourd. If God were to leave all those things you would just make a Saviour of them. And if the Lord would give peace, as we in our wisdom think would be good for us, oh friends, there would be danger that we would rest on these things and would not appreciate, as we must appreciate, that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the soul. We must be emptied. We must be brought down in ourselves. That is why the Lord leaves his people poor and needy. The Lord leaves them poor and needy simply because there is in them a carnal nature, and that carnal nature must be crucified, and the soul must be made completely dependant on the Saviour alone in his feelings without a vestige of anything we can lay hold on ourselves. We must be saved by "free and sovereign grace".

"Who is this that cometh up out of the wilderness" Oh! she is leaning on her Beloved. That is to say — she would fall altogether, she would never come out of the wilderness without her Beloved. But ah! there is strength in Him. What do you think of this? Does the sinner appreciate the Saviour more when he is enjoying the sweetness of the Gospel, than when he is nearing the end of the journey, when he has had experience of what the world has been, what the world itself is apart from Christ? Why you are never more vile than when you are on your two knees in secret. It is there you see what you are, in departing from the living God. I find a law when I would do good, when I would withdraw from the world and shut the door of my room in order to deal with God, for my own soul and the soul of others, I find that there is another nature. Thus the pricelessness of being often in secret prayer. That is where the Lord's people saw their need of grace and to be dependant on Christ. Very well, the most of the Lord's people had nearness and fellowship to the Lord in a way that their cup was overflowing. Let me spend my days like this. But ah! there is a more important thing than that. What is more comforting than that? Sure, when you get to Heaven you will get an Eternity of assurance of faith.

One can, through the grace of God arrive at a comfortable assurance that the Saviour of sinners is theirs.

But just now, what do you mean by borders and studs? "We will make thee borders of gold with studs of silver." Your walk and your conversation must be within certain limits in order that you will prove that you are the Bride of the King. The King's daughter is certainly all glorious within. But she must behave herself as the daughter of the King and she must wear borders of gold. Dear friends, there is the border of gold *there* which you must wear if you are to glorify Christ in the world, and there is for instance the ten commandments. You see you are not under the law as a covenant. The law cannot curse you and bless you. "By the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified." You do not look to the Law in order to save you. If you did, then how could you make out that you belong to Christ and neither should you look to the law to curse you. "But we are under the law to Christ." Dear friends, what did Jesus do for you? He went under the law in order to satisfy the law in your stead. But in the day in which your soul was married to Christ, what was in the hand of Christ that day? If you married the Saviour, I tell you what was in the hand of Christ that day — it was the ten commandments; in order to walk accordingly — not to obtain life. He saved you for life. *There* was the present the day Christ was married to you. He gave you the ten commandments with the other presents He gave you, and do not think for a moment that you are not honouring your Heavenly Husband when you seek to keep the commandments of God, and Christ is honoured in midst of all the dishonour that is done to Him in this world, by those who seek to keep the commandments of God. Well, the Bible is first of all an exposition of the moral law — the law of the Bible, and secondly, an exposition of the Gospel, and this is the duty of those who look to Christ for life, this is how they adorn the doctrine of God the Saviour; to set it forth first of all morally.

But then again you have the borders of gold in connection with the proclamation of the Gospel, the relation of the Persons in the Godhead in the economy of grace and the nature of that Gospel with which we are confronted, by which we are to be saved. You see there is the great commandment and this is His commandment "That we believe on the Name of His Son Jesus Christ" and it has to be a life of faith upon the Son of God as poor needy sinners all our days. This is the commandment "That ye believe on the name of His Son the Lord Jesus Christ."

And then there are the duties connected with the Gospel. "A new commandment I give unto you. That ye love one another; as I have loved

you, that ye also love one another." Heaven does not exist in feelings — very far from it. Salvation is not altogether receiving out of Christ's fullness. Salvation is a walking in a godly walk, and conversation, whereby we are witnesses in the world, whereby we grow in grace.

"We will make thee borders of gold with studs of silver," — *studs of silver*. May we not take those to illustrate the exhortations and consolations of the Word, "exhorting one another while it is today." Not only the exhortations but the invitations. It is very wonderful that the invitations that the child of God will be able to receive are those that are condemned by the world.

But then there are the promises — studs of silver. Oh!, we need it all. Oh! dear friends the great matter just now is holiness, holiness of heart, and holiness of life. According to His Word, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Indeed the gracious life becomes that more and more. It is striving after holiness. There is this striving to keep within the borders of gold, through the revealed Word of God in law and gospel, in order that our union to Christ might be proved thereby and might be illustrated.

The Sheep of Christ and the Devil's Lambs Distinguished

They are either hypocrites or formalists or back-sliding Christians who have not a daily and growing sense of their need of the Lord Jesus Christ in all His Offices, and of the Holy Spirit in His illuminating, quickening, and sanctifying influences. (See Phil. 3 8-14). Paul when thirty years in Christ, felt as much, and perhaps more, his need of Christ then the first time he closed with Him. They who are really in Christ come daily to Him in the exercise of humble and believing prayer. They come for a present salvation, for a new heart, for new tokens of pardon, for true faith, true love to God, true repentance unto life, true zeal for the divine glory, true indignation against sin, and victory over it, and for a true meetness for the heavenly world.

The true people of God are desirous that the devil and hell may be cast out of their souls in this life, and that the kingdom of God, which consists in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost may be established within them. They who are exercised about these things, and cannot be content without them, have a true and lively faith, and those who say or think, that they rest upon Christ, and are not exercised about these things, whatever appearance of holiness, comfort, joy, and assurance they possess, they in their present state are but the devil's lambs

and going quietly and comfortably to hell. They who can live quietly with the hell of in-dwelling sin in their souls in this world, shall be shut up in a hell of misery and sin in the next; for sin must and will go to its own place if not destroyed. Let professors say what they please, if they are not seeking above all things the glorious work of regeneration and sanctification in their souls they are growing more like devils and ripening for hell. On the other hand they who are tortured and tormented with sin, and are desirous above all things to be made new creatures in Christ and perfectly holy, are preparing as vessels of mercy for heaven and glory. We have many professors of religion but few new creatures. Indeed it is a rare thing to meet with a person really seeking after a change of nature; the most of professors are on very good terms with themselves, and this is a sure evidence that the Holy Spirit is not dealing savingly with their souls.

When the Spirit commences to destroy the work of the devil, there is an uproar in the soul; then the flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh, because they are contrary to each other. The warfare gets hotter and hotter as the work of grace advances. Satan and sin say, if we are forced out of the soul at last, we will do all that we can against the Holy Spirit and the new creature while we remain. If we are not able to destroy the new creature we will at least make it groan, and weep, and cry. The Holy Spirit put it here to disturb our rest and repose. Now the devil and sin outwit themselves here, for the new creature runs and tells God all what sin and Satan are doing against him. "Lord thou seest how vile I am, like and worse than a devil, and a picture of hell; Oh Lord I am sore oppressed, undertake for me. Oh destroy the devil's work in me; if thou wilt not destroy sin in me, it will destroy me in time and eternity. Lord give me an holy nature to hate sin and to strive successfully against it. Write thy lovely law upon my heart, that I may delight in it after the inward man. Oh Lord save me or I perish, for I know I can do nothing but destroy myself; convert, humble, quicken and sanctify me in spite of myself (the carnal mind). Take hold of my soul by Thy Spirit and grace as the angel took hold of Lot and pulled him out of Sodom. Lord pull me out of myself, and every refuge of lies, for I feel Sodom within me. Pull me unto Christ, and pull me on in progressive sanctification, and never let me go, but make me like unto Thy blessed self, and meet for glory." Now if you are really exercised about these things, your soul is in health and prospering before God.

— From a letter to a friend in Soul Distress, by the Late Rev. William Stewart, Lochee.

(See Romans, Chapter 7.)

The Inspiration of the Scriptures

The inspiration, infallibility and inerrancy on the Holy Scriptures is one of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith. He who denies this doctrine makes God a liar, and is an apostate from the faith, no matter his pretensions to the contrary. "All scripture," it is written "is given by inspiration of God." All books, magazines, articles, etc., which instil doubts in the mind as to the authenticity and plenary inspiration of the Scriptures are from the devil. The writers of all such, whatever their status or claims, are agents of Satan. They may appear to be stars in the firmament of the visible church, but for them is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

The following extract from the writings of the late Bishop Ryle clearly sets forth the orthodox view of inspiration. "The view," he writes, "for which I contend — that every word of the Bible is inspired — this is the same ground which almost all the fathers occupied; which Calvin, Cranmer, Jewell, Hooker and Owen took up long ago; which Chalmers, Robert Haldane, Gaussen, Bishop Wordsworth, Burgon and Archdeacon Lee, of the Irish Church, have ably defended in modern days. Here are some of the reasons which satisfy me:—

" (a) I cannot see how the Bible can be a perfect rule of faith and practice if it is not fully inspired, and if it contains any flaws and imperfections. If the Bible is anything at all, it is the statute-book of God's kingdom, the code of laws and regulations by which the subjects of that kingdom are to live, the register-deed of the terms on which they have peace now, and shall have glory hereafter. Every lawyer can tell us that in legal deeds and statutes every word is of importance and that property, life, or death may often turn on a single word. If God's statute-book is not inspired, and every word is not of divine authority, His subjects are left in a pitiable state.

" (b) If the Bible is not fully inspired, and contains imperfections, I cannot understand the language which is frequently used about it in its own pages. Such expressions as 'The oracles of God', 'He saith', 'God saith', 'The Holy Ghost spoke by Esaias the prophet', would appear inexplicable and extravagant if applied to a book containing occasional blemishes and defects. Once grant that every word of Scripture is inspired, and there is an admirable propriety in the language.

" (c) The theory that all the words of the Bible were not given by inspiration of God appears utterly at variance with several quotations from the Old Testament which are found in the New. Consider those quotations in which the whole force of the passage turns on one single

word, and once even on the use of the singular instead of the plural number eg., Matt. xxii 44; John x 4; Gal. iii 16; Heb ii 11, 12. In every one of these cases the whole point of the quotation lies in a single word. But if this is so, it is hard to see on what principle we can deny the inspiration of all the words of Scripture. At any rate, those who deny verbal inspiration will find it difficult to show us exactly which words are inspired and which are not. Who is to draw the line, and where is it to be drawn?

“(d) If the words of Scripture are not all inspired, the value of the Bible as a weapon in controversy is greatly damaged, if not entirely taken away. Who does not know that in arguing with Jews, Arians, Socinians, the whole point of the texts we quote against them often lies in a single word? What are we to reply if an adversary asserts that the special word of some text, on which we ground an argument, is a mistake of the writer, and therefore of no authority? To my mind it appears that the objection would be fatal. It is useless to quote texts if we once admit that not all the words of which they are composed were given by inspiration”.

The late Principal J. Willoughby, one-time Vice-President of the Sovereign Grace Union, wrote: “In recent times many scholars have attempted to discredit the written Word, especially of the Old Testament. Many other scholars of repute, however, have found that the evidence on which the destructive critics base their conclusions are utterly worthless. The late Professor Dick Wilson was a scholar of massive learning. At the age of twenty-five he could read the New Testament in nine different languages. He could repeat from memory a Hebrew translation of the entire New Testament without missing a single syllable. He could do the same thing with large portions of the Old Testament also. He says: ‘For forty-five years continuously since I left college I have devoted myself to the one great study of the Old Testament in all its languages, in all its archaeology, in all its translations, and, as far as possible, everything bearing upon its text and history’. He was acquainted with about forty-five languages and dialects. He probably knew more about the Old Testament and everything connected with it than did all the destructive critics put together. Professor Wilson, having long and thoroughly examined the evidence on which the destructive critics base their conclusions, found that it was utterly worthless. Concerning the evidence for the orthodox position he writes: ‘The evidence in our possession has convinced me that “at sundry times and in divers manners God spoke unto our fathers through the prophets”, and that the Old Testament in Hebrew, “being immediately inspired by God”, has “by His singular care and providence been kept pure in all ages”’.

W.M.

Trinitarian Bible Society

The 150th Anniversary Meeting of the Trinitarian Bible Society took place at Westminster Chapel, London on 30th May 1981. Nearly 700 people gathered for the occasion to give thanks to God for His blessing and provision in the past and to seek His continuing guidance and help in maintaining the work and testimony of the Society in the future. The Chairman of the Committee, Mr A.J. Levell spoke of the considerable growth of the Society's work in recent years, mentioning that the total number of Bibles circulated during the last 25 years was seven times as many as in the previous 125 years. Mr J.C. Fraser, Toronto conveyed greetings from the Canadian Committee and referred to the tenfold increase in financial support since the organisation of the Canadian branch in 1968.

The sermon was preached by Dr. P.M. Rowell, a member of the Committee, on Acts 1.8 "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth". The words spoken to the Apostles by the Lord Jesus Christ shortly before His ascension into heaven expressed His concern for the extension of His kingdom, and that His disciples should be witnesses unto Him among all nations. That concern He maintains in heaven. The same concern was manifested when He encouraged men to begin the work of this Society 150 years ago, and the same concern has ensured its continuance. Enduing His people with the gift of the Holy Spirit, He gives them power enabling them to be His witnesses, to be "martyrs" in His cause, to live consistent lives, to maintain a clear and faithful testimony to the omnipotence and sovereignty of God, and to the Son as "God manifest in the flesh". They faithfully witnessed to the eternal deity and perfect humanity of the Redeemer, to His substitutionary death, to the reality of His resurrection, and to His present intercession in heaven. As faithful witnesses they proclaimed the Gospel which is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth".

In a later age Erasmus and Tyndale both expressed their concern that people in every walk of life should have a Bible in their own tongue that they could read and understand. At the present time the Society, under God's blessing, has the same concern and responsibility to ensure that the Gospel, which is to be "preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations", is also printed and widely circulated, in faithful translations so that among all nations people may read and under God's blessing

understand the Word of Truth in their own tongue.

The Secretary, Rev. T.H. Brown, gave in the 150th Annual Report which showed that the circulation had increased from the previous year, as did also the income and expenditure. In more than a hundred countries copies of the Holy Scriptures published by the Society have been made available in many tongues. The Secretary mentioned that greetings had been received by the Society on its 150th Anniversary from various organisations and from the Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. In concluding his Report he said, "We give thanks to God for the blessings of the past, and look to Him for His provision and guidance in the future, as the Society continues to produce and propagate faithful versions of the Word of God, trusting that there will be spiritual fruit according to His promise".

Is the Pope Anti-Christ?

It has become the order of the day in Presbyterian circles at home and abroad to find fault with the statement in the Confession of Faith in which the Pope is described as "Anti-Christ, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the Church against Christ, and all that is called God" (Confession of Faith, chap. xxv. sec. 6). Some of the largest of the Presbyterian bodies have cut out the passage altogether. It is well, therefore, that we should consider the proof-texts advanced by the Divines for their statement. The first is II. Thess. ii. 1-12: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you; I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way: and then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming: even him, whose coming

is after the working of Satan with all power and signed and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they receive not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." The second is in I. Tim. iv. 1-3: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils: speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth." These are solemn words and one naturally asks is there any system or organisation among men answering to the description given in these verses? Our forefathers had no hesitation in saying there was and that the system was Romanism culminating in its head, the Pope, and we believe they had scriptural authority for so saying. Let us briefly note the following points from the foregoing verses.

1. The Apostasy. The Apostasy referred to in the foregoing verses was a much more serious departure from the faith than that which characterised the early Christian Church in common with Churches in all ages of gradual decay in spiritual life and love. This is pre-eminently called "the apostasy" and the description given of it makes it plain that it refers to no ordinary "falling away." It was to be such an outbreak of clerical ambition that was well-nigh impossible when Christians were a persecuted people. It supposes the Church an organised body and its ministers able to mount to heights almost incredible (Brown's *Structure of the Apocalypse*, pp. 152, 153). Has such a condition of things been actually realised? Let us notice the claims put forward by the Church of Rome. Has not the Pope claimed to have supreme authority in the Church of Christ and over nations? Hildebrandianism* has become the accepted order of the Romish Church. The Pope wears the triple crown — no other ruler does so. This position has been further strengthened in the place assigned to him by the prelates of the Church in Council assembled in 1870. So it is not merely an individual claim — serious and all as that would be — but it is now an acknowledgment of the whole Roman Church. Principal David Brown commenting on the words in Thessalonians says: "If this does not come up to all that is here predicted of the 'man of sin' we may safely say that the prediction will never be realised" (*Structure of the Apocalypse*, p. 153).

2. Anti-Christ is further described as "the man of sin" (ho anthropos

tes hamartias), "the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." To Anti-Christ is applied the description given to Judas by our Lord — "the son of perdition." The Pope, like Judas, professes reverence for Christ, but by his teaching and works actually betrays him. The Pope claims the divine prerogative of forgiving sins by the priests delegated by him. Titles have been ascribed to Popes which no mortal man had a rightful claim to and did our space permit many of these might be quoted.

3. "Forbidding to marry." The reference here means more than the entrance of the ascetic spirit which crept so early into the Christian Church. It is this asceticism organised into a system and worked out by church authority in the specific form of prohibition of marriage. "Now, in point of fact there is one, and only one such body existing. The Church of Rome forbids clerical marriage, and holds celibacy forth as a holier state of life, and therefore the fitting thing for those who minister in holy things" (Dr. Brown's *Structure of the Apocalypse*, p. 154).

4. "Commanding to abstain from meats." The Church of Rome has commanded that the faithful abstain from flesh meat one day of the week.

It is remarkable that the foregoing descriptions of Anti-Christ should find their embodiment in the Church of Rome as represented in the Pope and Richard Baxter's comment is pertinent to the point when he remarks: "If the Pope be not Anti-Christ he hath ill-luck to be so like him!" It is not necessary to enter further on a discussion of the subject as we are sure it will be generally admitted that the Westminster Divines had solid grounds for the statement they made in the Confession of Faith.

— *F.P. Mag.* Vol. 42, p. 145.

* The doctrine that the State is in subjection to the Church. It is so called after Hildebrand (Pope Gregory VII). It is the opposite of Erastianism — Editor.

The purest churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error; and some have so degenerated as to become no churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan. Nevertheless, there shall be always a church on earth to worship God according to His will.

There is no other head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ: nor can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof; but is that antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the church against Christ, and all that is called God.

Westminster Confession of Faith, Chap. 25, Sections 5 & 6.

Book Reviews

Sketches from Church History by S.M. Houghton. Banner of Truth Trust. Price £4.50.

This excellent illustrated account of the history of the Christian Church has been compiled by Mr S.M. Houghton who was a teacher of history for over twenty years. It is based in part on an earlier work by B.J. Bennink. The compiling of these sketches from twenty centuries of Church History was no mean task and Mr Houghton is owed a debt of thanks for the masterly way in which he has accomplished it. It is a most readable and balanced account of the history with which it deals. It makes available to the ordinary reader the highlights of Church history over the long period of twenty centuries. The account given of Calvin is particularly impressive but all through the book Mr Houghton is able to retain the reader's interest.

We are glad to commend this volume to our Magazine readers. Our only regret is that the publishers did not produce it in a hard cover as it is a book of lasting value.

D.B.M.

The Trumpet Sounds for Britain (Vol. I) by David E. Gardner. Price £1.25. (Obtainable from most Christian bookshops or from author at 6 Hillside Gdns, Barnet, Herts.)

This paperback, sub-titled *Revival or Perish*, is the first of three volumes on the state of Britain today. It is written by an English evangelical minister and warns of the danger confronting Britain through the nation's apostasy from God. After giving an account of the great blessings bestowed on our land over many centuries, the author shows the great change that has come about. He indicates that we are now by our sins a nation ripe for the judgments of God and shows from which direction these judgments may come by revealing our exposure to Russian attack.

This is a timely warning and ought to be given heed to by the nation and by those in authority.

D.B.M.

The Word of God among all Nations. by A.J. Brown. Trinitarian Bible Society. Price £1.30 or by post £2.

This book contains a brief history of the Trinitarian Bible Society during the 150 years of its existence, 1831-1981. Mr Brown goes into considerable detail about the beginnings of the Society outlining for readers the reasons for its existence as a separate Society from the British and Foreign Bible Society. He indicates, too, the various difficulties met with by the Society during its history, and gives an account of the various projects undertaken during that time. From the account given, along with the statistics which are set out in one of the appendices, it is clear that the work of the Society has been greatly blessed and increased in recent times. The adherence of the Society to faithful versions of the Scriptures is stressed.

We gladly recommend this history of the Trinitarian Bible Society to readers of the Magazine.

D.B.M.

Notes and Comments

Blasphemy Law

The Law Commission have suggested that the blasphemy law should be abolished while the law against offensive behaviour in places of worship should be strengthened. Under the blasphemy law it is an offence to publish material that reviles, vilifies or insults God, Christ, the Bible or the beliefs or doctrines of the Church of England. The view of the Commission was that if religious beliefs were to be protected in a largely secular and multi-religious society, it was anomalous to confine protection to one denomination of a single religion.

It was under the blasphemy law that Mrs Whitehouse initiated a successful prosecution against "Gay News" and its editor for blasphemy against Christ. It would be regrettable if a change would be made in the law which would prohibit such a prosecution. The view expressed by the Commission stems from a desire to adapt to present-day atheistic and non-Christian outlook. The important matter, however, is not whether

the law is acceptable to men but whether it is in accord with the divine law. The prohibiting of material that reviles, vilifies, or insults God, Christ and the Bible is surely in accordance with the law of God. We have yet to learn as a people that "righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people." The condoning or overlooking of the sin of blasphemy by the law of the land will only increase the nation's guilt.

Baroness Wootton's Bill Defeated

At attempt by Baroness Wootton to change the marriage law on incest has failed in the House of Lords when the Bill was defeated on its Third Reading by 124 votes to 79. Her Bill would have changed the law so far as affinity is concerned and would have permitted the marriage of step-relations and in-laws. Strong opposition had been voiced against the change by Church leaders in Scotland and England and it is gratifying to know that the Bill will not be made law. It is obvious that those who are humanistic in outlook object to the safeguards of Christian morality enshrined in the laws and constitution of the nation and will do their utmost to have these safeguards removed. We hope and pray that all their schemes will be frustrated.

Assasination Attempt on the Pope

It would appear that the Pope escaped death by a hairsbreadth through the attempt on his life but is now recovering. His death, had it occurred, would not necessarily have ended the Romanist system over which he is head. No doubt another Pope would have been forthcoming to continue the line of rulers over that anti-Christian system. What we pray for is the downfall of that system of iniquity and the liberating of the millions who are held captive in its thralldom. The day is promised when it shall fall and when it shall be said: "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen." What a deliverance that will herald! Until then the Romanist system will remain, as it has remained hitherto, an active and virulent foe of the Lord and of His Christ. As we value the prosperity of Zion, so let us pray for the downfall of anti-Christ.

Good Advice for the Press

The Lord Advocate in addressing members of the Press said that while he appreciated that papers were produced to be sold he did not believe that this condemned the media to the lowest common denominator of the values held by the public. He told them that they did not need to stoop to buying dirt. He urged them to let the public see that responsible

law-abiding citizens were newsworthy. "Yours is a vital role", he said, "and the values which underlie them reach to all our people. Your influence is enormous, so also is your responsibility." We trust that the Press will give good heed to the advice given, and take their responsibility seriously. This would be for the good of our nation.

Church Notes

Reprint of Early Volumes of F.P. Magazine

A Questionnaire was sent out with the June issue of the Magazine about the proposed publication of a subscription edition of the early issues of the F.P. Magazine. This is a reminder to readers to send in the Questionnaire before the date stated on the form. We trust that there will be a good response and that it will be possible to go ahead with the scheme.

Petition against Pope's Visit

For the information of readers we would mention that already 4500 signatures have been obtained for the Petition against the Pope's visit. These have come from different parts of the country including Northern Ireland.

It is hoped that many more signatures may be obtained before the closing date of 31st August (D.V.). It is regretted that the Churches in our land are not united in opposition to this visit. Even in some denominations which are evangelical in outlook opposition to the visit of the Pope is very muted. It may be that the Lord will be pleased to intervene and not permit the visit to take place.

Induction at North Tolsta

The induction of the Reverend John MacDonald to the North Tolsta Congregation took place on Thursday, 5th February, 1981, in the presence of a large congregation.

After the usual proclamation had been made three times at the Church door and the Officer of Court had intimated that no-one had appeared to offer objection to the life and doctrine of the Pastor-elect, the Reverend Alexander Morrison went to the pulpit and preached a most appropriate discourse on the words: "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." (Ps. 126: 5,6).

Thereafter the Moderator, the Reverend Duncan MacLean, gave a brief narrative of the proceedings in the Call to Mr MacDonald and then addressed to him the Questions appointed to be put to Ministers on admission to a pastoral charge. These having been satisfactorily answered and Mr MacDonald having signed the Formula in the presence of the Congregation the Moderator then, in the name of the Presbytery, and by the authority of the Divine Head of the Church admitted him to the pastoral charge of the North Tolsta Congregation and, with the other members of the Presbytery, gave to him the right hand of fellowship. Thereafter the Reverend A. MacKay suitably addressed Mr MacDonald and the Reverend D.A. MacLennan likewise the Congregation. The Clerk intimated that the Skye Presbytery had, through its Clerk, asked him to convey its good wishes to the newly-inducted minister. The people then had an opportunity of welcoming Mr MacDonald as they retired from the Church.

Strangers present from other Congregations — and there were many — were after the service, most hospitably entertained in the local school canteen where the North Tolsta ladies had prepared a more than adequate provision. For this work and, we believe, “labour of love”, the Presbytery would desire to record its gratitude to them.

It is our desire and prayer that Mr MacDonald’s ministry in his native village will be abundantly blessed and owned of the Most High in many coming to have their eyes opened and thus turning “from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God” and in the Lord’s people being edified and encouraged in the course of their pilgrimage to the “better country”.

J.M. Clerk of Presbytery.

Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland Bookroom

By decision of the Synod at its meeting in May, a new Committee was set up to superintend the running of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland Bookroom at 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow G.3. This committee consists of Revs. Donald MacLean, Convener, Lachlan MacLeod, D.J. MacDonald with Messrs. W.D. Fraser, Alex. Gillies and Dr. Duncan MacSween.

The finances of the Bookroom will be provided by the College and Library Fund now called the College, Library and Bookroom Fund.

The Church Bookroom is well known to its customers in Glasgow and elsewhere as a place where sound literature can be obtained without having to wade through piles of unsound writings. It needs to become

much better known and it will be the aim of the Committee to secure this as well as to add to its list of titles of books reflecting the doctrines of the infallible and inerrant Word of God.

The Committee hope that those who are interested in the circulation of sound literature will give their full-hearted support to this Bookroom. Any donations for its support should be made out to the **FREE PRESBYTERIAN BOOKROOM**. In this connection, it should be clearly understood that there is no connection between the Church's Bookroom and the Blythwood Tract Society. This Society is an entirely separate organisation from the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland and our Bookroom has nothing to do with any of their Bookshops. The Committee understand that there has been a certain amount of confusion in the minds of the religious public on this particular matter and takes the opportunity of clarifying the position and making clear the fact that the Bookroom at 133 Woodlands Road belongs to the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

*Rev. Donald MacLean
Convener.*

Acknowledgement of Donations

The General Treasurer, Mr W.D. Fraser, 20 Daleview Avenue, Glasgow G12 0HE, acknowledges the following donations with sincere thanks:—

Jewish and Foreign Mission Fund: G. Main, £100; Bethel Strict Baptist Chapel, Luton £50.
Home Mission Fund: In loving memory of a dear brother George MacKay, Armidale £1000 for Strathy Home Mission Fund.
General Building Fund: Dornie House £1.80.
Chesley Manse Fund: Anon, Tolsta £20; M.M., Stornoway £10; Port Glasgow Postmark £20; Grafton Deacons' Court \$138.60; Friend, U.S.A., \$120; K. Gillies, Glasgow £20; Friend, Edinburgh £20; Friend, Stornoway \$20; Mrs Fraser, Ballifeary Home £5; Miss I. MacDonald £10.

The Publications Treasurer, Mr R.W.M. MacKenzie, C.A., Hilton of Cadboll, Fearn, acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:—

Free Distribution Fund: Cor. 15: 57 & 58 £2.50; D.M.R. £2.80; A.M.R. 80p; J.M.R. 30p; J.W.M. £2.

The treasurers of the following Congregations acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:—

Barwoldswick: Anon £10 per R.C., St Jude's; Anon £20 Inverness postmark; Anon £20 also Inverness postmark; Anon £30 Inverness Friend; Correction to April issue: — A Friend, Inverness per Rev. D. MacLean £50.

Bracadale: Campbell Bros 9 Carbost £5 for Sust. Fund per D. McLeod; W & M.S. £5; D. MacL. £5; J. MacL., 10 Portnalong £5, all for Comm. expenses and all per D.J. Morrison; J.M.C. £200 for Sust. Fund and £100 for Church Maintenance per Congr. Treasurer.

Dumbarton: Anon £1; Mrs. A.M. £1, both for Spastics; Friend, Inverness £10 per T.M.; Friend, Inverness £5 per M. McL.; Banacharaid a' Glaschu £15 per G.M.; Friend, Edinburgh £5; Friend Edinburgh £5, both per T.M., last five for Manse Fund; Anon, Cardross £10 for Mission to China (in plate); Anon £20 for Aged and Infirm Ministers etc Fd; Friend £5 for Comm. expenses; Friend £5 for Church Maintenance; Wellwisher £5 for Sust. Fund.

Fearn: In loving memory of SMN William MacAngus, H.M.S. Ghurka (Psalm 68:22) £100; M. Tarrel £10.

Fort William: Envelope in plate £2; D.C., Lochaline £35; K.C. Lochaline £20; Friend, Lochaline £10; Mrs C., Drimnin £10; Mrs C., Caol £2; Envelope in plate £1; R.N. Inverness £50; all for Sust. Fund and all per Rev. J.A. MacDonald.

Gairloch: R. Tain £50 for repair of Melvaig Mission House; Two Lewis women £10 for Congr. Purposes per Rev. A.E.W. MacDonald.

Laide: Laide Friend £7.35; Friend, Poolewe £10; Friend, Stockinish £5; Friend, Shieldaig £5; Friend, Inverness £10, all for Manse Building Fund; New Zealand Friend £25 for Laide Sust. Fund; Home of Rest Friend £2 per Rev. A. McD.; Strathburn Friend £2, both for Comm. Expenses; Poolewe Friend £5 for Church Door Coll. per D. MacRae; From estate of late Miss J. MacLennan, Laide £100 for Laide Home Mission Fund.

North Harris: Friend, Tarbert £100; Friend, Tarbert £100; Friend, Ardvoulie £10; Friend, Tarbert £10; Friend, Winnipeg £12; Friend, Kyles Scalpay £50; School Boy, Tarbert £10; School Girl, Tarbert £8; Friend, Tarbert £100, all per Rev. A. MacKay; Friend, Glasgow £20; Two Ladies, Tarbert £30; Friend, Leacklee £300; Friend, Leaclee £500; Friend, Finsbay £10; Friend, Meavaig £5, last six per R. MacCuish, all for Church and Manse Repair Fund. Kyle Coll. Plate £4 for Communion Expenses per T.M.; From Estate of late Mrs Effie Shaw, 1 Kennedy Terrace, Tarbert £200 (£150 for Ch. & Manse Repair Fd & £50 for Car Fd.) Friend, Leacklee £3.50 for Car Fd.; Friend, Tarbert £3 for Ch. & Manse Property; Friend, South Harris £5 (£4 for Ch. & Manse Property & £1 for Car Fd.); Friend, Kyles Scalpay £10 for Ch. & Manse Property), all per Rev. A. MacKay; Friend, Harris House £1 for door Coll. per R.M.; Friend, Tarbert, Deed of Covenant £1 for door Coll.; Friend, Harris House, £5 for Ch. & Manse Property; Friend, Harris House £1.50 per Mrs MacKay; Friend, Tarbert, Deed of Covenant £2 for door Coll.

North Tolsta: In memory of loved ones £35 for Church or Manse repairs per J. Murray; In memory of our loving parents £10 for Manse Repairs; Friend of the Cause, Back £10 for Congr. Purposes per I.C.; Anon, N. Tolsta £10 (church plate); Anon £5; Anon £10, last three for Induction Expenses; Anon £10 for Manses Expenses (church plate); Friend of the Cause £2 for Repairs per J. Murray; Stornoway Friend £5 per J. Murray; North Tolsta Friend £10 per M.M., both for Induction Expenses; Friend of the Cause in loving memory of a beloved husband and father £20 per J. Murray for Manse & Church repairs; North Tolsta Friend £50 for Manse redecorating.

Stornoway: Glasgow Friend £60 for Sust. Fund per Rev. J. MacLeod.

Strath: Mrs M. MacLennan, Lochcarron £100 for General Purposes per J.W.R.

Waternish: A Friend, Troon £5 for Church Funds.