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Two Opposing Kingdoms

The Word of God makes abundantly plain that ultimately there are but two kingdoms in the world — the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of Satan. The Scriptures make equally clear that one of these kingdoms is destined to triumph over the other. The kingdom of Christ is to have the victory, while the kingdom of Satan is to perish. It is true that on many occasions in this world it may appear as though the very opposite is to take place and that Christ's kingdom is to disappear. It certainly appeared like that in the old world before the flood when Satan's kingdom so overspread the earth that the kingdom of God and of His Christ seemed to be virtually extinct. Only Noah was left. Yet it was not Noah and his household that perished but the whole world of the ungodly. Noah and his family were preserved alive through the provision of the ark. So it shall be in every crisis in the Church's history in the world. When the Church seems destined to perish through the fearful onslaughts of her enemies, the Lord Himself will intervene and preserve her alive by His mighty power.

That conflict between these two kingdoms is inevitable, arises from the fact that the principles of each kingdom are totally opposed to those of the other. One is a kingdom of light, the other is a kingdom of darkness. One is a kingdom in which righteousness reigns, the other one in which unrighteousness reigns. One is a kingdom in which truth holds sway, the other is one in which the lie is exalted. Christ is the Governor in one, Satan the tyrant in the other. It is certain that neither kingdom will ever relinquish the principles for which it stands, therefore perpetual conflict is inevitable.

The outward appearances of the two kingdoms are quite different. The one appears weak the other appears strong. To the outward eye Christ's kingdom appears weak indeed. It consists of all those in whose heart is some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel. It consists of those who,

like their Master, are despised and rejected by men, who are reviled, who are persecuted, who are made as the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things. Their outward appearance, however, belies their strength. Weak they are indeed in themselves but they are strong in Him who is their strength. Their Leader and Commander has given them this promise: "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn." "This", He says to them, "is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord."

To the outward appearance the kingdom of Satan is strong. It consists of many diverse elements, yet united together in their hatred and opposition to Christ. The Roman Catholic anti-christian system is no small part of Satan's kingdom. Luther referred to the Church of Rome as "the masterpiece of the devil." Satan has possessed it and shaped it and made it a polished shaft in his service. Its achievements in the destruction of souls has not been equalled, it has made itself drunk with the blood of the saints. How impregnable are the fortresses that Satan has erected in this part of his kingdom as well as in the other parts of it. What active agents in Satan's service have been those other powers such as atheistic Communism, Hinduism and Mohammedanism. Surely the combination of all these forces must triumph — and so it appears to the outward eye. What hope has the Church of God against these mighty foes?

Well might we despair if we were to take our eye off from Zion's King. He is to reign until all His enemies are made His footstool. With regard to our own land in these dark days we might well despair of Christ's Cause and Kingdom ever rising up again and obtaining a place of eminence in the land. We are to remember, however, that these are covenanted lands, and though the Lord is bound to visit us as a nation for our sins, yet He will not altogether cast us off for His own Name's sake. He will take glory to Himself in raising up Jacob when he is small and restoring the outcasts of Israel. The Pope of Rome may come and, kissing the ground, may take possession of these islands for himself. It is all in vain. Christ has a prior claim to them as covenanted nations and when He will arise to assert that claim, who then will stand before Him?

"Thou shalt arise, and mercy have
upon Thy Zion yet.

The time to favour her is come,
the time that Thou hast set. . .

When Zion by the mighty Lord
built up again shall be,
In glory then and majesty
to men appear shall He."

Sermon

By Rev. Wm. MacLean, M.A., Ness.

TEXT: John 6:27 — "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed."

At the beginning of this chapter we have an account of the miracle that Christ performed in feeding a multitude with five loaves and a few fishes. After He had performed this miracle He sent His disciples across the sea towards Capernaum. We are told of the storm that they encountered on their way while Jesus Himself remained on the land. Darkness fell and Jesus had not come to them. We are told that Jesus saw them toiling in rowing. He was fully aware of the difficulties they were encountering in the path of duty. It was the Lord Himself who had set them upon this course. It was in obedience to His command that they crossed over to the other side. It was in the path of duty, in the path of obedience to their divine Lord and Master, they encountered this storm. "The wind was contrary unto them" and they were "toiling in rowing" as we read in Mark's Gospel. To make matters worse darkness fell upon them, and Jesus had not come.

When they had rowed for about thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, drawing nigh unto the ship and they were afraid. They thought it was a spirit that they saw and were afraid. Jesus said unto them "It is I; be not afraid. Then they willingly received Him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went." It is true spiritually at times in the experience of the Lord's disciples, that in the path of duty they encounter storms of diverse kinds. They meet with, as it were, contrary winds, something contrary in their providence, things going against them. They are therefore tempest-tossed in soul. They have darkness too. Everything seems so dark and unpromising. They are there toiling in the dark, toiling in rowing and almost on the point of giving over, but we see that the Lord came at the fourth watch, that is, about three o'clock in the morning, and spake these comforting words to them: "It is I; be not afraid". He was in full control of the situation, for He sits

King upon the floods and ever shall, and He shall bless His people with peace. (Psalm 29:10, 11). He spake peace to them at this time, "It is I; be not afraid", and the storm was changed into a calm at His command and will. The disciples did not give over or turn aside from the course they were on. They continued on the course the Lord had set them. That is left written for the good of His people that they would persevere and that the Lord will come in His own time. "Weeping may for a night endure, at morn doth joy arise." (Psalm 3:5 Metrical). They safely reached the other side.

The day following when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that Christ was not there, they took boats and crossed over to where Jesus was. "They came to Capernaum seeking for Jesus" (verse 24). That is, the multitude or numbers of them whom He had miraculously fed with the five loaves and the two fishes. When they had found Him on the other side of the sea, they said unto Him, "Rabbi, when camest thou hither?" (v. 25). Addressing Him as Rabbi, they appeared to acknowledge Him as their Lord and Master. After Christ had performed the miracle in miraculously feeding them, they said, "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world." (v. 14). They professed to acknowledged Him as the promised Messiah and as proof of their zeal they followed Him across the Sea of Tiberias to where He was. Their desire was to make Him their King. To all appearances they gave evidence of being genuine disciples. They addressed Him as Rabbi, as Master, and said, this is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world. Outwardly they appeared very promising but we see that before Christ finished His discourse to them, as that is recorded for us in this chapter, they said in connection with the doctrines which He preached, "This is an hard saying; who can hear it?" (v. 60), and they "went back and walked no more with Him" (v. 66). They were like the stony ground hearers who continued for a time. They could not endure the doctrines which He preached and that is true of persons who may have been disciples in appearance only. They may appear to have a zeal for a time and make a profession for a time and go great lengths, it may be, in following the Lord as this multitude did, but the Lord will test or put to the trial everybody's faith, of what nature it is. When they were tested by the doctrines which Christ preached, they could not endure these doctrines and accordingly went back and walked no more with Him. If it is not doctrines that people will find "a hard saying", they will find some other excuse. Oh, we cannot put up with this. This is far too hard and we are not going to submit to this. They make one excuse or another and they

go back. They go back to perdition. "If any man draw back my soul shall have no pleasure in him." God forbid it should ever happen to any of us who are under the preaching of the everlasting gospel, that we should turn from the truths of the Gospel and go back. However plausible our excuse may be, we can rest assured of this, that the day in which we turn our back upon the Gospel and upon the truth, we are setting our face on eternal perdition.

When the Lord's people are tried, the more they are tried, the more they cleave closer to the Lord. When Christ puts the question, "Will ye also go away?" the response of their soul is, "to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." v. 68). They cleave to Him. We find the church in one place confessing—

Unto thy people thou hard things
hast shew'd, and on them sent;
And thou hast caused us to drink
wine of astonishment. (Psalm 60:3 Metrical)

But even then she was cleaving to the Lord, for her confession was—

And yet a banner thou hast giv'n
to them who thee do fear;
That it by them, because of truth,
displayed may appear. (Psalm 60:4 Metrical)

His people seek to maintain and display that banner although they may be called upon to drink the wine of astonishment.

We would now notice what Christ said to the multitude who followed Him and what He is still saying to us — "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed."

In the *first* place we shall notice Christ's command, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life" (v. 27) and *secondly* we shall notice the "meat" that Christ here speaks of as enduring unto everlasting life; and *thirdly*, the promise that He gives to those who labour for it, "which the Son of man shall give unto you" and He confirms the promise with what He here declares concerning Himself "for him hath God the Father sealed".

First of all the command which Christ is here giving, "Labour not for

the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life". The first doctrine these words bring before us is the immortality of the soul. We are souls and we have a body. We dwell in this earthly tabernacle. At death the body shall return to the dust from whence it came and the spirit unto God that gave it. Now our bodies are sustained by the "meat which perisheth" but our souls can only be fed and sustained by the "meat which endureth unto everlasting life". We read that when God created man, He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and Adam became a living soul. In the exercise of that life which he had in his soul he had fellowship and communion with God. Now this is not said in connection with any of the creatures which God created, that He breathed into their nostrils the breath of life, but only in connection with man, and man became a living soul. We know that in the day in which Adam sinned he lost that life, that spiritual life which he had in his soul, and came under the death threatened, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die". (Gen. 2:17). Although Adam did not die a natural death that day, his soul came under the power of spiritual death, for he lost the image of God and his body became mortal, and that is how we are born into this world. We have bodies which are mortal and which shall return to the dust from whence they came. Our souls as we are by nature are under the power of spiritual death. Men are dead spiritually, dead in trespasses and in sins. They are dead Godward, dead spiritually, but are very much alive to the things of this life. Many, like the multitudes we referred to, may have a form of godliness, they may have a name to live and be very active in an outward way and yet destitute of the life of grace in their souls.

Although man is dead spiritually and totally depraved in his nature, and on that account, totally unable to will that which is spiritually good, man is a rational accountable being; he is responsible unto God. The command here given emphasises man's responsibility, that he is responsible to give that glory to God which is due to Him as his Creator. He claims from man that obedience in accordance with the covenant which He made with Adam. His claims have not changed. The Saviour in this verse lays emphasis on man's responsibility in the light of the provision that God has made in providing salvation in His beloved Son, the bread of life which leads to everlasting life. It is in the light of that provision we are called upon to labour for that meat that never perishes. Men may make excuses and say what can we do, we are spiritually dead. By saying this they pervert the doctrines of God's word to their own destruction, but God will hold every person accountable unto Him.

"Everyone of us must give an account of himself to God". These words clearly reveal man's accountability and man's responsibility to God. We are without excuse. A person who has squandered his money in drink or in gambling, may be totally unable to pay off his debts but this excuse will not stand. He is still responsible for these debts. And we are responsible for our sins. They are our sins and we will also be held responsible as to how we deal with the salvation which is freely offered to us in the gospel. That is clearly implied as we shall notice in the words of our text, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life". We shall be held responsible as to how we deal with that salvation which is in our offer. "For how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?". There can be no escape for us. Now when we are still on mercy's ground and this door of hope is set before us by the Saviour, how we should give an ear to what the Lord is saying to us. "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed." The command clearly does not rule out man's duty to labour for his daily bread, here spoken of "as the meat that perisheth". That command is still binding on sinners of mankind. "In the sweat of thy brow thou shalt eat thy bread". We are to earn our daily bread in a conscientious way and not by gambling as many do nowadays. This is what the Saviour is emphasising and which is of paramount importance, that above all, we must "labour for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life". However valuable and good in themselves the things of this life may be, they shall perish with the using. No matter how valuable our homes or our property may be or whatever we may have in this world, there is a day coming when we shall have to leave all. How solemn the thought to face eternity Christless, without the bread of life which endureth unto everlasting life! That is your danger and the greatest danger in this day of apostasy, that you will lose your soul for eternity. Give obedience to what the Saviour is saying. Do not give over until you entertain a hope that you have that good part which will stand you in good stead for eternity.

In the *second* place we shall notice the meat which Christ here speaks of which endures unto everlasting life. We find that Christ Himself makes that clear in this chapter. He says, "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth in me shall never thirst." (v. 35), and again he says, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world". (v.

51). Christ makes it clear in these verses that He is the "meat" that endureth unto everlasting life; He is the "living bread" which came down from heaven; He is the "bread of life". He also makes it clear that before He could be the bread of life on the table of the gospel for sinners, He must needs die. "And the bread that I will give is my flesh which I will give for the life of the world". By His flesh of course He means His human nature and His human nature embraces a true body and a reasonable soul. He had life in Himself from all eternity as the Son of God. He was the eternal Word as we read, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1), and "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us". He took to Himself the human nature that He might give His flesh for the life of the world, that He might give it in the way of sacrifice, for without the shedding of blood in the way of sacrifice there can be no remission of sin. The claims of God's law and justice in connection with the eternal death Adam brought upon himself and on the whole human race, could be satisfied in no other way but through the obedience unto death of God's eternally begotten Son in our nature. Christ here says to the Jews he addressed, "The bread that I will give is my flesh". He will give it, as the words make clear, in the way of sacrifice. He speaks of His body being broken, "my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed" (v. 55). That is a clear reference to the sacrifice which He offered when His body was broken and His blood was shed for the remission of the sins of many. He gave His life for the life of the world, not for the life of the Jews only but also for the Gentiles. The Gentiles were spoken of as the world. They were outside the pale of the visible church but Christ gave His life for an elect world, for a number which no man can number. He makes that clear. To the Jews He said, "I am that living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world". "The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" (v. 52). We find that Christ goes on to say "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him." (v. 53-56). He makes clear there could be no life, no meat that endureth unto everlasting life, that there could be no bread of life apart from His atoning death. By His body being broken and His blood being shed, He procured eternal life for sinners who deserve

eternal death. That eternal life He shall bestow, as we find Him saying in His intercessory prayer to the Father, "As thou has given Him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him."

That leads us to notice what is implied in Christ imparting eternal life to a sinner. Bound up in that life is that the sinner believes what Christ here says, "Whosoever eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." Christ not only procured eternal life for the soul but a glorious immortality for the body of those who believe in Him. "I will raise him up at the last day", that is to a glorious immortality and that awaits those to whom the Lord has bestowed the gift of eternal life in this world.

What is implied in Christ by His word and Spirit bestowing eternal life upon any sinner? Well, in connection with that, we shall quote the words of truth, "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 6:23). A sinner to whom the Lord gives this gift, imparting the gift of eternal life, is convinced of his need of that life. He is convinced that the wages of sin is death. The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord and that life is not bestowed apart from the sinner being convinced that his sins deserve eternal death. That conviction is wrought in the soul of the sinner. I am a sinner in God's sight and nothing that I have of my own will stand me for eternity. I cannot meet the claims of God's holy law and justice. I am bankrupt and unable to pay the debt in which I am and I deserve on account of my sins, the wages which I have earned, the eternal death due to my sins. That conviction is wrought in the soul of the sinner in effectual calling. The sinner is enlightened in the knowledge of Christ, and in that knowledge is made able and willing to receive Christ. That sinner now rests not on his own merits for he has none, but upon Christ's merits. He rests upon Christ alone, as we find Sameul Rutherford saying,

I stand upon His merits,
I know no other stand,
Not even where glory dwelleth,
In Emmanuel's land.

He believes that there is no standing place before God, the judge of all, but on the ground of Christ's finished work. They therefore believe in the atonement which Christ made, that in the fulness of time, He who was the eternally begotten Son of the Father, took to Himself the human nature and in the human nature suffered and died the just in the room and stead of the unjust. They receive the atonement, and plead the efficacy of

Christ's blood which cleanseth from all sin. Where this spiritual, this eternal life is in the soul, there is a conviction bound up in that life that every sin deserves eternal death and damnation. Those who have this life in their souls could not listen to a gospel which denies eternal punishment. They are assured that such a gospel is not the everlasting gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, but a delusion from Satan as an angel of light. The doctrines here taught by Christ, that His flesh is meat indeed and His blood drink indeed, are life to their souls, that apart from Christ's body being broken and His blood shed, there could be no eternal life for sinners deserving eternal death. Where there is no mention of Christ's substitutionary death, His resurrection, His ascension and glorification at the right hand, there is no gospel. "All truth" as the noted Rev. Lachlan Mackenzie, Lochcarron said, "is not gospel truth". Where gospel truth is, there Christ, in the glory of His Person and His office as prophet, priest and king, gets the pre-eminence. These doctrines are life to the souls of His own.

In that life in the soul there is repentance and the remission of sin. The eternal life which Christ imparts to the soul in the day of regeneration, evidences itself in godly sorrow for sin which worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of. It is in Christ they have life, and in this life they have the forgiveness of sin. The spiritual death, the sentence of eternal death and condemnation under which they were, has been removed, for there is no condemnation to them who are in Jesus Christ. "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." In Christ they have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace. They are a people who seek to be fed, to be led and to be kept. These are the exercises of the life of grace in the soul. All such are under the shelter of Christ's blood. It is in virtue of the atonement which He made by His blood, for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. Christ is set before us as the only refuge and hiding place from the wrath due to our sins. "I flee to Thee to cover me" is the exercise of grace in the soul.

They labour for that bread which endureth unto everlasting life in seeking to make their calling and election sure. Not all who have this life in their souls have an assurance of their interest in Christ. Assurance says as one of the old divines put it, "I believe my sins are pardoned through Christ". Faith says, "I believe in Christ for the pardon of my sins".

Christ says in connection with the person that eats of this bread, the person who in other words is living a life of faith upon Himself, "I will

raise him up at the last day". Not only will his soul be made perfect in holiness at death and immediately enter into glory to be with Christ, but at the resurrection, his body will be raised and made like unto Christ's glorious body. Christ through His body being broken and His blood being shed, procured eternal life for the soul and a glorious immortality for the body.

Lastly we have the promise which Christ here gives in connection with the words "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life". In giving that meat, He speaks of Himself as the Son of man sealed and appointed by the Father to give the bread of eternal life to perishing sinners deserving eternal death. "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son". (1 John 5:11)

The multitude who ate of the loaves and fishes and who were labouring for the meat which perisheth, proved that they were wholly unconcerned about the salvation of their souls. It is to them that Christ made the offer of the meat which endureth unto everlasting life. It is because the bread of life was freely offered to them that they were called upon to labour for it. There are those who hold the view that Christ is not offered to sinners as such, but to sinners who are penitent and who give evidence that they are concerned about their soul's salvation. In the beginning of the 18th century there was a debate held in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland on this question. There were those who questioned the free offer of Christ to sinners. Principal Haddow of St Andrews University, who was of this view, asked for one verse in the Bible which would prove that Christ was offered freely to sinners. One of the Erskines, either Ebenezer or Ralph, arose and quoted the words, "My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven" (John 6:32). Christ spoke these words to the Jews who murmured against and rejected His teachings. If Christ were not freely offered to us as sinners, we would not be condemned for rejecting Him. Our total inability instead of being an excuse as many vainly hold, is proof of our ruin and guilt. I may have mentioned what a godly minister in the past said, that as sinners we have forfeited all, even the right to live. There is only one thing under these broad heavens we have a right to and that is to Christ in the free offer of the everlasting gospel. You have the right and warrant to look to Him for salvation. Reject Christ and you will be lower than the devils in hell, as Christ and the salvation that is in Him was never offered to devils.

I will now quote what the great Dr. John Owen says in his precious treatise on "The Glory of the Person of Christ". "Consider" he says, "the

infinite condescension and love of Christ in His invitations and calls to you to come to Him for life, deliverance, mercy, grace, peace and eternal salvation — This I shall only say, that in the declaration and preaching of them, Jesus Christ yet stands before sinners, calling, inviting, encouraging them to come unto Him. That which is now proposed for consideration is the readiness of Christ to receive every sinner, be he who and what he will, that shall come unto Him. And of this we have the highest evidences that divine wisdom and grace can give to us. This is the language of the gospel, of all that the Lord Jesus did or suffered which is recorded therein; — this is the testimony of the “three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost”; and of the “three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, the water and the blood”; all give their joint testimony that the Lord Jesus Christ is ready to receive all sinners who come unto Him. They who receive not this testimony make God a liar, both Father, Son and Spirit. Nothing but cursed obstinacy in sin and unbelief can suggest a thought into our minds that He is not willing to receive us when we come unto Him. Consider the horrible ingratitude there is in a neglect or refusal to come to Christ upon His invitation, with the awful eternal ruin that will ensue. “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?”

“Some, it may be, will say, what then shall we do? What is it that is required of us? Take the advice of the apostle, “Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness. But exhort one another daily, while it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.” (Heb. 3:7, 8, 13.) Today, even this day, is unto you in the offer of grace the acceptable time: this is the day of salvation. Others have had this day as well as you and have missed their opportunity; take heed lest it should be so with you also.

We shall conclude by quoting the words of our text, “Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.”

May He bless His truth.

(This sermon by Rev. William MacLean M.A. was preached and recorded in the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, Grafton, N.S.W., Australia on 11th November 1973.)

Remember Lot!

by Bishop J.C. Ryle D.D.

"He lingered." Gen. 19:16

Who is this man that lingered? — Lot, the nephew of faithful Abraham. And when did he linger? — The very morning Sodom was to be destroyed. And where did he linger? — Within the walls of Sodom itself. And before whom did he linger? — Under the eyes of the two angels, who were sent to bring him out of the city.

Reader, the words are solemn, and full of food for thought. I trust they will make you think. Who knows but they are the very words your soul requires? The voice of the Lord Jesus commands you to "remember Lot's wife." (Luke 17:32.) The voice of one of His ministers invites you this day to remember Lot.

Let me try to show you,—

- I. *What Lot was himself.*
- II. *What the text already quoted tells you of him:*
- III. *What reasons may account for his lingering:*
- IV. *What kind of fruit his lingering brought forth.*
- I. *What was Lot?*

This is a most important point. If I leave it unnoticed, I shall perhaps miss that class of professing Christians I want especially to benefit. You would perhaps say, after reading this paper, "Ah, Lot was a poor, dark creature — an unconverted man — a child of this world! no wonder he lingered."

But mark now what I say. Lot was nothing of the kind. Lot was a true believer — a real child of God — a justified soul — a righteous man.

Has any one of you grace in his heart? — So also had Lot.

Has any one of you a hope of salvation? — So also had Lot.

Is any one of you a "new creature"? — So also was Lot.

Is any one of you a traveller in the narrow way which leads unto life? — So also was Lot.

Do not think this is only my private opinion — a mere arbitrary fancy of my own — a notion unsupported by Scripture. Do not suppose I want you to believe it, merely because I say it. The Holy Ghost has placed the matter beyond controversy, by calling him "just," and "righteous" (2 Peter 2:7, 8), and has given us evidence of the grace that was in him.

One evidence is, that he lived in a wicked place, "seeing and hearing" evil all around him (2 Peter 2:8), and yet was not wicked himself. Now to

be a Daniel in Babylon — an Obadiah in Ahab's house — an Abijah in Jeroboam's family — a saint in Nero's court, and a righteous man in Sodom, a man must have the grace of God.

Another evidence is, that he "vexed his soul with the unlawful deeds" he beheld around him. (2 Peter 2:8.) He was wounded, grieved, pained, and hurt at the sight of sin. This was feeling like holy David, who says, "I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved, because they kept not Thy word." "Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not Thy law." (Psalm 119, 136, 158.) Nothing will account for this but the grace of God.

Another evidence is, that he "vexed his soul from day to day" with the unlawful deeds he saw (2 Peter 2:8.) He did not at length become cool and lukewarm about sin, as many do. Familiarity and habit did not take off the fine edge of his feelings, as too often is the case. Many a man is shocked and startled at the first sight of wickedness, and yet becomes at last so accustomed to see it, that he views it with comparative unconcern. This is especially the case with those who live in towns and cities. But it was not so with Lot. And this is a great mark of the reality of his grace.

Such a one was Lot — a just and righteous man, a man sealed and stamped as an heir of heaven by the Holy Ghost Himself.

Reader, before you pass on, remember that a true Christian may have many a blemish, many a defect, many an infirmity, and yet be a true Christian nevertheless. You do not despise gold because it mixed with much dross. You must not undervalue grace because it is accompanied by much corruption. Read on, and you will find that Lot paid dearly for his "lingering." But do not forget, as you read, that Lot was a child of God.

II. Let us pass on the second thing I spoke of. *What does the text, already quoted, tell us about Lot's behaviour?*

The words are wonderful and astounding: "He lingered;" and the more you consider the time and circumstances, the more wonderful you will think them.

Lot knew the awful condition of the city in which he stood; "the cry" of its abomination "had waxen great before the Lord" (Gen. 19:13): and yet "he lingered."

Lot knew the fearful judgment coming down on all within its walls; the angels had said plainly, "The Lord hath sent us to destroy it" (Gen. 19:13): and yet "he lingered."

Lot knew that God was a God who always kept His word, and if He said a thing would surely do it. He could hardly be Abraham's nephew, and live long with him, and not be aware of this. Yet "he lingered."

Lot believed there was danger — for he went to his sons-in-law, and warned them to flee: “Up!” he said, “Get you out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city.” (Gen. 19:14.) And yet he “lingered.”

Lot saw the angels of God standing by, waiting for him and his family to go forth. And yet “he lingered.”

Lot heard the voice of those ministers of wrath ringing in his ears to hasten him, “Arise! lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.” (Gen. 19:15.) And yet “he lingered.”

He was slow when he should have been quick — backward when he should have been forward — trifling when he should have been hastening — loitering when he should have been hurrying — cold when he should have been hot. It is passing strange! It seems almost incredible! It appears too wonderful to be true! But the Spirit writes it down for our learning. And so it was.

And yet, reader, there are many of the Lord Jesus Christ’s people very like Lot.

Mark well what I say. I repeat it that there may be no mistake about my meaning. I have shown you that Lot “lingered” — I say that there are many Christian men and Christian women in this day very like Lot.

There are many real children of God who appear to know far more than they live up to, and see far more than they practise, and yet continue in this state for many years. Wonderful that they go as far as they do, and yet go no further!

They hold the Head, even Christ, and love the truth. They like sound preaching, and assent to every article of Gospel doctrine, when they hear it. But still there is an indescribable something which is not satisfactory about them. They are constantly doing things which disappoint the expectations of their ministers, and of more advanced Christian friends. Marvellous that they should think as they do, and yet stand still!

They believe in heaven, and yet seem faintly to long for it; and in hell, and yet seem little to fear it. They love the Lord Jesus; but the work they do for Him is small. They hate the devil; but they often appear to tempt him to come to them. They know the time is short; but they live as if it were long. They know they have a battle to fight; yet a man might think they were at peace. They know they have a race to run; yet they often look like people sitting still. They know the Judge is at the door, and there is wrath to come; and yet they appear half asleep. Astonishing they should be what they are, and yet be nothing more!

And what shall we say of these people? They often puzzle godly friends and relations. They often cause great anxiety. They often give rise to

great doubts and searchings of heart. But they may be classed under one sweeping description: they are all brethren and sisters of Lot. *They linger.*

These are they who get the notion into their minds, that it is impossible for all believers to be very holy and very spiritual. They allow that eminent holiness is a beautiful thing. They like to read about it in books, and even to see it occasionally in others. But they do not think that all are meant to aim at so high a standard. At any rate, they seem to make up their minds it is beyond their reach.

These are they who get into their heads false ideas of *charity*, as they call it. They would fain please everybody, and suit everybody, and be agreeable to everybody. But they forget they ought first to be sure that they please God.

These are they who dread sacrifices, and shrink from self-denial. They never appear able to apply our Lord's command, to "cut off the right hand and pluck out the right eye." (Matt. 5:29, 30.) They spend their lives in trying to make the gate more wide, and the cross more light. But they never succeed.

These are they who are always trying to keep in with the world. They are ingenious in discovering reasons for not separating decidedly, and in framing plausible excuses for attending questionable amusements, and keeping up questionable friendships. One day you are told of their attending a Bible reading: the next day perhaps you hear of their going to a ball. They are constantly labouring to persuade themselves that to mix *a little* with worldly people on their own ground does good. Yet in their case it is very clear they do no good, and only get harm.

These are they who cannot find it in their heart to quarrel with their besetting sin, whether it be sloth, indolence, ill-temper, pride, selfishness, impatience, or what it may. They allow it to remain a tolerably quiet and undisturbed tenant of their hearts. They say it is their health, or their constitutions, or their temperaments, or their trials, or their way. Their father, or mother, or grandmother, was so before themselves, and they are sure they cannot help it. And when you meet after the absence of a year or so, you hear the same thing.

But all, all, all may be summed up in a single sentence. They are the brethren and sisters of Lot. *They linger.*

Ah, reader, if you are a lingering soul, you are not happy! You know you are not. It would be strange indeed if you were so. Lingerer is the sure destruction of a happy Christianity. A lingerer's conscience forbids him to enjoy inward peace.

Perhaps at one time you did run well. But you have left your first love

— you have never felt the same comfort since, and you never will till you return to your first works. Like Peter, when the Lord Jesus was taken prisoner, you are following the Lord afar off; and, like him, you will find the way not pleasant, but hard.

Come and look at Lot. Come and mark Lot's history. Come and consider Lot's lingering, and be wise.

An Invitation to Prayer

by Rev. William Romaine

In the beginning of the last war providence seemed to take part with our enemies. We wanted unanimity in our public councils, and success in our public measures. One miscarriage followed another, Our national courage ceased to exert itself, and a general dejection of spirits ensued. At this time several clergymen of the established Church agreed to meet at the Throne of Grace on the Lord's-day. The subject of their joint prayers was to ask the blessing of God upon our public councils, our fleets, and our armies. They were soon joined by a great number of the laity in most parts of the kingdom. In the spirit of prayer and supplication they humbled themselves before the Lord: they sought success at His hands, and He was gracious to their requests; He sent victory after victory, until our enemies were willing to be at peace, and then they gave Him unfeigned thanks, and ascribed all the glory to His goodness and power.

The principles upon which they then acted were these. They believed in the Being of God, the Lord and Maker of all worlds. They acknowledged His providence over His works; for "He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth." His kingdom, ruleth over all, every person and every thing, and "none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?"

They believe also, that in the course of His providence, He acts by an infinitely wise rule, which He has made known to us in the holy Scriptures. He is the Almighty Creator, and sovereign Lord of mankind, and He has given them a law, which is holy, just, and good. Every tittle of it is not only for His glory, but also for their profit. He has secured obedience to it by promises and threatenings, neither of which can fail. His Word cannot be broken, either to the obedient or disobedient. According to His revealed will His love infallibly follows the one, and His justice the other.

This is true of societies, as well as of private persons. Sin is like the transgression of the law, and deserves in many or in few the threatened punishment; but according to the number, it becomes more poisonous, because it spreads its infection by example. When the multitude agree to do evil, the restraint of shame is taken off. If times should favour them through much luxury, and great licentiousness, they harden one another in sin. Then general dissipation and false pleasure take possession of the heart. These hinder the mind from being cultivated with any profitable knowledge. The sound principles of religion become neglected, and as these grow out of fashion, immoral practices must prevail. The authority of God is cast off. His Word, His Sabbaths, His ordinances, are first disused, and then by degrees despised. Thus infidelity gets deeper root, and immorality, which is its natural fruit, becomes luxuriant. The restraint of the Divine law being taken away, human laws lose their force upon the conscience; for when the fear of God is gone, there is no motive left sufficient to influence the heart or conduct; men will then venture to sin without any sense of danger, even of death itself. And when national sin is come to this height, God has declared in His Word, and by the constant course of His providence has made it manifest, that He will interpose to maintain the honour of His law and government. When men have thus deeply corrupted themselves, He will remember their iniquity, He will visit their sins: "Shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord, shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?"

When God arises to vindicate His authority, He is never at a loss for means. All creatures are ready to execute His judgments, which are the more fearful, because in His hands, irresistible. Among them war is one of the most severe and desolating; it is one of the sore visitations of God (as Ezek. xiv. 21), which does not come by chance, but by His command. And He sends it (Amos ix. 4) to plead His controversy. It is the just appointment of His providence to vindicate his broken law and His despised government. It is His wise interposition, either to correct for those things, or to destroy. When it is the loving rod of correction, it humbles; it brings the sinner upon his knees; he repents, he turns from the error of his ways, and is reformed by the visitation. When it comes to punish, He gives warning before the blow, but the people sin on, they fear not the sword, nor Him who sent it; then it vindicates the righteous quarrel of the Lord upon impenitent sinners. It strikes at every thing truly valuable — liberty, property, yea life itself. This scourge is now sent, and felt; sent by the Divine providence, and felt, yea sorely complained of, but not as it should be; not with submission to the justice of the visitation,

but with murmuring; not with turning from sin, but with returning to it with more hardness and greater greediness.

This was our situation when we entered upon the war in 1756. Considering ourselves as Christian ministers, we saw our duty and what part it became us to act, as good citizens. We had read the promises of God made to those, who at such times seek His help, and implore His blessing. We had seen those promises fulfilled. We in earnest pursued the means of His own appointing, and we met with the desired end. He humbled us at His footstool; we asked pardon for our national departure from the Living God; we implored His mercy through Christ; and He heard prayer, He answered prayer, and we glorified Him.

The use of the same means is now again recommended; the same occasion calls for it, and we have the same encouragement. The promises, and the examples in Scripture, warrant us to expect the same success. May the Spirit of grace and supplication be poured out abundantly upon ministers, and people, that multitudes may use the means, until God send us a blessed issue: yea, may He turn to us in mercy, and turn us as a people unto Himself, with repentance and faith. The cloud may be dark which hangs over our heads; it may threaten a destroying storm; it may spread blacker, and look more dreadful; yet prayer can pierce through the cloud; the prayer of faith can gain admittance into His presence, who "has His way in the whirlwind, and who presides over the storm." The effectual fervent prayer of the righteous was heard, the cloud was dispersed, and the face of the heavens again serene and peaceful. O for another army of such supplicants! What cannot they do! calling for, and trusting to, the help of the Almighty? This is our spiritual armour, and more useful than the arm of the flesh and we would that thousands be stirred to humble themselves under the mighty Hand of God, and to seek His help in this time of need. If we do it in earnest we need not despair. The same means will bring about the same end. May we use the means, and pray on, till God shall hear and answer.

AN EARNEST INVITATION

God has declared that when a land sins against Him by trespassing grievously, then He will stretch out His hand upon it, and visit it with His four sore judgments, the sword, the famine, the noisome beast, and the pestilence. These He sends to punish the land for its grievous trespasses. He has visited us with some of His sore judgments, and therefore our land has trespassed grievously. And if we continue to provoke Him, and

refuse to receive correction, He will continue these punishments; and it is to be feared, if we remain hardened and impenitent under them, He will at last give us over to the destroyer.

The present circumstances of our public affairs are exceedingly awful and alarming. Our danger is confessedly great. Our enemies are many and mighty, and our numerous sins are in their interest. Every sin helps them to destroy us; and God has been thus far on our enemies' side. He has been by them punishing our sins, and yet with a strange infatuation we sin on securely, as if we did not apprehend that continuance in sin would certainly cause the continuance of our calamities. And dreadful it is to see how ineffectual all the former judgments have been to reform us. Still our people refuse to deny themselves their diversions and their vices. And the season of the year is come when without any reformation at home we are going to send out our fleets and armies against our enemies abroad, vainly flattering ourselves with hopes of success, while our sins set God at defiance, and make Him continue to fight against us with His almighty power.

If then our people have not been reclaimed by past judgments, then consequently greater must be expected. What is to be done? What can true believers do, but use their interest with God in prayer? We have no other expedient left. If our people will not plead with God for themselves, let us plead for them. Our encouragement is great; we have many sweet promises in Scripture to rely upon. There is one in Solomon's prayer, which suits our case exactly (2 Chron. vi. 24, 25), "And if thy people Israel be put to the worse before the enemy because they have sinned against Thee, and shall return and confess Thy name, and pray, and make supplication before Thee in this house, then hear thou from the heavens, and forgive the sins of Thy people." There never was an instance wherein God acted contrary to the method here mentioned. Whenever a people turned to Him and confessed their sins, He turned away from His fierce anger. If they called upon Him in the day of trouble, He heard and answered. If they put their trust in Him, He maintained their cause.

Several ministers of the established Church from the consideration of our danger and seeing no remedy more effectual than prayer and supplication, have resolved to spend part of every Lord's day in this holy exercise. They have chosen this day, partly for the sake of the day itself, being a day sacred to religion, and because they wanted to have the joint prayers of those persons who might be hindered on other days but who were now entirely free from worldly advocations: and they have chosen to spend from eight to nine o'clock in the evening, because it is the time that

could be best spared from the duties of the day, and because after attending upon public worship, the mind would be better disposed for private worship — prayer, and the Word, and the Sacraments, having put the soul into a proper frame to humble itself before God, first for its own sins, and then for the sins of the nation. We earnestly request our brethren of the established Church, and all our fellow Christians to join with us in this religious design. It is a seasonable, and a pious request that we make, and we hope no person who has the spirit of prayer and who is a lover of the Protestant religion, will be prevented by any slothful or needless excuse, from offering up his petitions along with ours at the appointed hour; but that all the faithful servants of God in every part of the land will be at the same time as one congregation, presenting their prayers before the Throne of Grace. Oh how much to be desired, how good and joyful a thing would it be, to see brethren thus praying together in unity. May God put it into the hearts of both ministers and people thus to pray in sweet agreement, at one time and with one heart, until God hear and answer, and deliver this Church and kingdom out of their dangers and troubles.

The first part of the duty which is incumbent upon us at this time consists in humbling ourselves before God, under a deep sense of those sins which have provoked Him to send down so many heavy judgments upon our land; in confessing those sins with a godly sorrow, and in turning from them with a repentance not to be repented of. And that we may all be stirred up to a due discharge of this duty, we should be fully persuaded that our public calamities come from our sins. God is angry at nothing but sin. Every man therefore should look into his own heart, and see what great reason God has to be angry with him, and accordingly to humble himself under the mighty hand of God, that He may pardon him and exalt him in due time.

Let each of us then at the appointed hour retire from the world, and in the presence, and before the footstool of the sovereign Creator and Redeemer, examine what grounds and reasons we have for deep humiliation.

(I). *We have great reason to mourn and be afflicted before Him for the sinfulness of our nature*, which is the fruitful parent of all our actual sins. We have corrupted ourselves in every faculty of soul and body, and the sight and feeling of this corruption should give us the most humbling views of our sinful, lost, and helpless condition. For by this fault and corruption of nature, every man naturally engendered of the offspring of Adam is not only far gone from original righteousness, and of his own

nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit, but also deserveth God's wrath and damnation. How can we believe ourselves to be thus conceived and born in sin, thus by nature the children of God's wrath, and not be deeply humbled? What can be matter of greater humiliation than to consider how low we are fallen, that we have lost original righteousness, have lost the image of God, have lost His love, and favour, and grace, and have lost all hope as to any thing we can do to His glory? Let us then begin with lamenting the sinfulness of our nature, which is the fountain of all sin. Let us beg of God to cleanse it by the blood of Jesus, and to renew us daily by the grace of the Holy Spirit, that we may put off the sinful nature, the old man with his deeds, and may put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

(II). *We have great reason to be humbled for the sinfulness of our lives.* God requires nothing of us but what is for His glory and for our happiness. His law is holy, just, and good; but how often have we broken it in thought, word, and deed, how presumptuously — after so many solemn vows and resolutions — against the light of conscience — against the light of the Gospel — ungratefully after receiving numerous mercies — hardened in sin, after being visited with heavy judgments. Who amongst us is not deep in guilt in these respects? Let us look back upon our past lives, and remember wherein we have particularly offended. Let us recollect our sins of commission against God's holy law, and our sins of omission, with the aggravating circumstances attending them. And then considering how injurious the least of these things was to the glory of God, let us be humbled to the very dust. For the Scripture is clear and express "that we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God," we have robbed Him of His glory. Now it is our duty as Christians to live to the glory of God, and to have a single eye to His glory, even in the common affairs of life, when we eat or drink, or whatever we do. Have we then at all times, and in all things, had a single eye to God's glory? Oh guilty, guilty, must we all plead to this charge. With shame and confusion of face must we confess that we have not spent all our lives to God's glory! Seldom have we had an eye to it, and when we had, very rarely have we indeed promoted it. And after we have thus taken an humbling view of our sinful nature, and our sinful lives—

(III). *Let the consideration of our national wickedness humble us still lower before God.* Christianity is the religion professed in this country. Ours is a Reformed Church. We are a free people. God continues to us the light of His Gospel. We have His Word and His ordinances, and all

the blessings of inheritance. We are highly favoured above all the nations on the earth. Now to whom much is given, of them men always require the more, and so does God. He requires more of the professors of Christianity, than of the ignorant heathen. But do we make Him more returns of love and obedience than they do? Look around the kingdom and judge. You will find in several parts of this land as great ignorance of the life and power of Christianity as in the deserts of Africa. What distant corner of the kingdom has not heard the blaspheming tongue speaking treason against God our Saviour? And where is the happy village free from open and scandalous immoralities? Here is our condemnation that light is come into the world, and shines among us, and yet we love darkness rather than light. This makes our sins exceedingly sinful, that Christ came to destroy the works of the devil, and yet they abound among us. To repeat these works by name would be tiresome; to aggravate them is impossible. Open your eyes, you see them covering our land like a deluge. Open your ears, you can scarce hear any thing but cursing, lying and evil speaking. Go where you will, you meet with sin at noon day. It has thrown off restraint and is not afraid to appear without a mask. Yea, sins abominable to nature are heard of in our land, and there are too many men among us, who refuse to believe that God ever rained down fire and brimstone from heaven and miraculously destroyed certain horrible monsters of sin. Stop and consider whether these things be so. If they be, have we not great reason for humiliation? Ought we not to be humbled for our national wickedness, and still more humbled, for that having so many means of reformation graciously vouchsafed to us, we not only continue wicked but also are hardened, and thereby grow worse and worse.

Archibald Crawford*

At the beginning of the South African war he was very harassed in his mind by reading newspaper reports of our army firing shells among the Boers while they were assembled at a prayer meeting in the open field on the Lord's Day. He expressed his fear that this would bring down the wrath of God upon us as a nation, as it proved not only awful rebellion against the Lord's command — "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy" — but also contempt of the reverence due to His worship. It came into his mind to set some time apart in order to seek by prayer the Lord's mind on this matter. While he prayed for light upon it, the scripture came vividly before his mind: — "The backsliding Israel hath justified herself

more than treacherous Judah." He understood this to mean that the prayer meetings of the Boers were not so genuine as he thought and that there was less hypocrisy in British shells than in Boer prayer meetings. He deplored exceedingly the amount of Sabbath desecration perpetrated by our army in that war, and he along with many others who feared God, believed that many of the terrible catastrophes which befell our army in that war were due to the reckless disregard manifested by officers and soldiers to the Lord's command. Ever after that day he lost his confidence in the integrity of the Boers and as time opened up their intrigues, the most of his fellow-countrymen too became conscious of the same fact.

He had a method of expounding the word of God peculiar to himself. He was in the habit, when some friend called to see him, of quoting some passage and then he would proceed to open up the meaning of it with marvellous lucidity. It was clear to every intelligent listener that the wonderful thoughts he poured forth were all his own. The light he caused to spill into the mind of the attentive listener was convincing, informative and comforting. On one occasion he quoted the words: "So is the Kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep and rise night and day and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself: first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. He went on to say, "There is nothing more green, sappy and beautiful than a field covered with grain but when the ear or stalk shoots up, if you look you will see just at the mouth of the ground a yellow ring appearing. This ring travels up the stalk and as it proceeds, a green leaf falls to the ground — today on this side and tomorrow on that side — until by the time it reaches the top, not one green leaf is left. You have then nothing but a stalk of straw and a few grains of the same kind that was sown. So is the kingdom of God in man's soul. The Word of God is sown in the soul by the Holy Ghost. There is always a time of rich experiences following, which may be compared to the blade. After that experiences begin to decay until the poor sinner will have nothing but what may very well be compared to straw and a few grains or passages of the Word of God. If this will not stand, poor Archie Crawford will be lost for ever. I am nothing in myself but a dry stalk of something more useless than straw, but I must confess there are a few passages of God's Word in my mind upon which I rest my hope for eternity, dry and withered as I am."

Quoting the words: "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of heaven." "Where," said he, "could we find the best illustration of this change?" Let us take

Nicodemus. He was hearing much about Christ and the miracles he performed and he did not bury in the earth the talent God gave him (i.e. his reason) but used it about the report which went abroad about Christ. So he came to the conclusion that Christ was a teacher sent from God, because he was convinced in his own mind that no man could do these works except God were with him. This moved him to desire an interview with Christ but he was afraid to come in daylight lest the Pharisees (his former companions) should hear of it and mock. He came at night. When he did meet Christ he told Him of the conclusion he had come to, as the cause of his having come. Christ introduced at once the great doctrine of the new birth and the necessity of it in order to salvation. Nicodemus, knowing nothing about this doctrine, stated the impossibility of being born of a woman twice. Christ told him that, even although it should be possible that one could be born again of a woman, he would still be flesh as he was at his first birth; but that one needed to be born of water and of the Spirit in order to his entering into the Kingdom of God. He was amazed at this doctrine which he had never considered and asked Christ, "How can these things be?" Christ upbraided him with being a teacher in the church while he was ignorant of this most important change. So you will find him taking the place of the little child, and he got that night the Kingdom of God which he was utterly ignorant of till then. As a proof of this you find him putting in a good word for Christ when the Sanhedrin asked the officers who were sent to apprehend Him, "Why have ye not brought him?" They answered "Never man spake like this man." He afforded additional proof at the burial of Christ.

Fatalism

He considered fatalism one of the most destructive evils to which the mind of fallen man has become subject. The most dangerous form of it, he thought, was that which caused the sinner to neglect the duties which were bound upon him by the God of Truth. As an instance of it, he told us that he once went to visit a dying woman along with his minister. The minister urged upon the woman her need of repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ. The woman answered: "O, if He will not do it Himself, what can I do?" He urged upon the woman to lay to heart that she had her duty laid upon her by God and that she would be held responsible for neglecting it. To this she returned the same answer.

The minister, finding that he could not dislodge her mind out of this position, turned to Mr Crawford and said to him, "Have you anything to say to this woman?" Mr Crawford answered: "I will ask her one question and it will depend on her answer whether or not I shall say anything to her." Turning to the woman, he asked her, "Was it from hearsay only that you came to the conclusion that unless the Lord will work in you, you can do nothing or did you learn it by self experience?" She gave no reply and he had to leave her in her fatalism.

Arminianism

He concluded Arminianism as directed against the sovereignty of God and Calvinism, when set before sinners unguardedly, as tending to fatalism. "The Arminian," he said, "falls into the fundamental error of believing that man has the power to turn to God by an act of his own will and overlooking the doctrine of regeneration by the Holy Spirit as absolutely necessary in the sinner's returning to God by repentance, they press upon the sinner to act rational faith on the Word of God and that he will be saved. Calvinists, on the other hand, urge the sinner to repent and believe, which is certainly the sinner's duty: but I have heard ministers urge this upon their hearers and in the next breath saying, "But I must tell you that you cannot either believe or repent."

This is a great fact, than man is impotent of himself and it has its own place in the Word of God, but should that be thrust in in this place to throw the poor sinner on his back and cause him to refrain from all effort? When one declares to sinners the state into which the fall brought them, with its corruption, guilt and impotency, he should make these points as clear to them as he can — he has ample warrant from God's Word to do so — but when one offers mercy through Christ crucified to sinners and calls them to turn from sin to God by repentance and faith, he ought not to entammel the call of the Gospel but to leave the issue with the Holy Ghost and the sinner. It is always so in the discourses of Christ and His apostles."

He illustrated this by two illustrations:

(1) "Let us," he said, "take a man's hand as an illustration. If a man has all the fingers but wants a thumb, he cannot grasp anything by that hand. Again if he has the thumb but wants the fingers, he cannot grasp anything. Now take the fingers for man's responsibility and the thumb for God's sovereignty. A man's effort will not lay hold of Christ in the offer of the

Gospel without God's sovereignty closing in with that effort and neither will God's sovereignty close you in with Christ without your own faith, which is the sinner's act.

(2) "Let us use another illustration. A river needs two banks in order that it may run in its channel. If it has only one bank it will run out on the fields and spoil them. It does not matter which bank is wanting. But if it has its two banks it will run between them till it comes to the sea. So it is with God's sovereignty and man's responsibility; they are the two banks between which the river of the water of life runs freely in the Bible — between which it will run into the ocean of eternity. God works by means in everything and it is in the use of means that He bestows His blessing. This is true in spiritual matters; God has set up the means of grace and He blesses them, at His own good time, to sinners who make a diligent use of them as means to accomplish the end for which God gave them — His own Glory and the salvation of sinners."

Discourse on Paul's Shipwreck

We heard of a very ingenious discourse which he preached at Millhouse at the time of the revival in 1860. His text was: "But the centurion . . . commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea and get to land: and the rest, some on boards and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass that they escaped all safe to land."

He compared those told to swim to those who are already in Christ and in whom the Spirit dwells as the Spirit of adoption. It was safe for them in the greatest trials, even in death, to cast themselves on the mercy of God in Christ and they would assuredly get to land safely. Those who could not swim he compared to the unconverted sinners who find themselves ready to be drowned by the Wrath of God in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. The broken boards and pieces of the ship upon which they were commanded to cast themselves were the invitations and promises of the Word of God. He then began to set forth the invitations and promises of the gospel to all present. "Look unto me and be ye saved all ye ends of the earth: for I am God and there is none else." "Cast thyself," he said, "on that invitation and promise of God and it will bring you safe to land as it brought many before you."

"I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." That is another board that has brought many a poor sinner safely to land. "Cast thyself upon it and it will

bring you also." The effect of that discourse on the audience was extraordinary. For 31 years afterwards it remained quite vivid in the mind of the elder who rehearsed it to us.

(To be continued)

*These anecdotes relating to this eminent man were taken from a handwritten manuscript left by the late Rev. Neil Cameron, Glasgow.

D.R. McS

Book Reviews

The Last Days of Jesus by T.V. Moore. Banner of Truth Trust Paperback. 212pp. Price £1.95.

Earlier the Banner of Truth Trust reprinted T.V. Moore's Commentaries on Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. We now have this reprint of his discourses on the appearances of the Lord during the forty days between the resurrection and the ascension. This is a subject full of interest to the Church of God and one that is not often dealt with in this systematic way. These meditations — for that is what they are — on the ten appearances of the Saviour to His disciples after His resurrection contain much that is enlightening and comforting. They remind one of Dr Hugh Martin's *Shadow of Calvary*, only Dr Hugh Martin was dealing with the period leading up to Christ's death on Calvary. On the whole this paperback reprint must be regarded as a most satisfactory unfolding of the events of the forty days with which it deals and we are glad to recommend it to readers of the Magazine.

Shall we know one another in Heaven? by Bishop J.C. Ryle. Mournie Missionary Trust, 4 Church Rd, Carginach, Kilkeel, Co. Down. N.I. Price 35p, by post 50p.

This small booklet by Ryle deals with the subject of Heaven. There are four chapters: (1) Shall we know one another? (2) Our company; (3) Our gathering together and (4) The whole family. Ryle's views on these topics are sober and Scriptural and are presented with that clarity of expression for which he is well known. This subject will be of interest to all who have a good hope for eternity, and should be enlightening to all who would seek to be heirs of that inheritance that is incorruptible and undefiled and reserved in heaven for the people of God.

D.B.M.

Notes and Comments

Letter to Prime Minister

A number of Societies in England, including the Trinitarian Bible Society, have written a joint letter to the Prime Minister protesting at the establishment of full diplomatic relations with the Vatican. The letter was drawn up by the Protestant Reformation Society. The text of the letter is as follows:

Dear Prime Minister,

The announcement recently by the Pope of the upgrading of the British minister to the Vatican to the level of ambassador, and by implication the appointment of a pro-nuncio to the Court of St James is a cause of deep concern to us for a number of reasons.

First, we would like to know why Parliament was not consulted about this step. It seems to us that the establishing of this kind of relationship with, and recognition of, the papacy by Her Majesty's Government calls for discussion and debate in Parliament, especially since the Bill of Rights and the Act of Settlement appear to preclude it.

Secondly, we are unable to concur with the view that this is a political and not an ecclesiastical matter. It must be clear to almost everybody who thinks about the question that the Vatican State is merely a temporal base from which the Church of Rome and the papacy can pursue their spiritual activities and religious ambitions. If Her Majesty's Government approves this move it will be confirming the Church of Rome in those ambitions, and conferring upon it a special and privileged status with which to operate in this country.

Thirdly, in choosing this time to make the announcement of the diplomatic change, the Church of Rome is presuming upon the atmosphere of tolerance and goodwill, which obtains between the Churches, to achieve what has been its long-term goal without interference or opposition. That goal is to establish itself politically in the life of this country and so create, for what is a minority church, a strong and influential position.

Fourthly, when the proposed visit of the Pope was announced by Cardinal Hume in August 1980 Protestants expressed concern lest the visit should be used as a lever to effect changes of a political, religious or constitutional nature, and were given an assurance that that would not happen. Yet the appointment of the papal ambassador is linked with the papal visit as a change arising out of it. This gives us occasion to consider

that there may be other changes in the near future, in which again neither Parliament nor the people will be consulted.

Lastly, the proposed papal visit was originally described by Cardinal Hume as a "purely pastoral visit to the Roman Catholic community". Since then a number of things have happened which have given the visit an official character in the eyes of ordinary people. For example, the minting of a medallion with the heads of the Pope and the Queen vis-à-vis, the production of a motif for the visit with a representation of the Union Flag and the papal keys combined. The appointments of ambassadors must be seen as yet a further step towards giving the visit an official character. We strongly oppose what appears to be a systematic attempt to upgrade the visit.

We understand that the appointments though announced have not yet been ratified. We take this opportunity, therefore to acquaint you with our serious disquiet and we hope to see this proposal abandoned.

Yours sincerely, etc.

Anti-Sabbath Legislation

The L.D.O.S. has drawn attention to the fact that there are at present two Bills before Parliament which are seeking to extend Sabbath trading laws. In the House of Commons Sir Angus Maude aims to allow garden centres to open on the Lord's Day. However, in the House of Lords, Lady Trumpington has presented a Bill which aims to sweep away all Sabbath trading laws, thus fully commercialising the Lord's Day. The Society states that these and other pressures to pollute the Sabbath show a clear and open disregard for Almighty God and His command to "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy."

The Speaker of the Commons and Foul Language

The Speaker of the House of Commons is to be commended on his firm stand against the use of foul language in parliamentary debate. The practice of profane swearing has become commonplace in recent times so it is encouraging to know that the Speaker has upheld the prestige of the House of Commons in his making plain that such language will not be tolerated there.

Zimbabwe-bound

So heads an item in the Press and Journal of 24th February. Intimation is given of the return to Zimbabwe of Roman Catholic priest, Dr Adrien

Hastings, a lecturer in religious studies at Aberdeen University. He has been appointed Professor of Religious Studies at Zimbabwe University for two years. He is regarded as an expert on African religious affairs. His task will be to 'Africanise' the Religious Studies Department. He stated that it was going to be a very creative task.

It is not a hopeful sign when posts of this nature fall into Roman Catholic hands. The Roman Catholic Church has always found it easy to 'Christianise' heathen religious practices and in this way accommodate heathen belief within Christianity. What Zimbabwe needs is deliverance from heathenism, from Roman Catholicism and from all false teaching. Only the Gospel in the power of the Holy Ghost can raise up Zimbabwe to a position of eminence among the nations of Africa and of the world.

Britain's Rape Laws

The penalties dealt out for the crime of rape have come into public review as a result of recent cases. No doubt because of the public outcry, the Government will have to consider what action may be necessary in order to ensure that those guilty of this crime should receive condign punishment. In a society where morality has been steadily declining, encouraged by the media which has aided and abetted the breaking down of moral standards, it is good to know that this particular evil is regarded with such abhorrence.

Church Notes

Overseas Deputies

Rev Angus MacKay, Tarbert arrived back in this country in February after a three month visit to New Zealand and Australia as Church Deputy. Rev D.A. MacLean, Halkirk spent six weeks in Canada as Church Deputy during February and March. He was engaged in supplying Chesley. We have to acknowledge the Lord's protecting care over the deputies while absent from this country. Our desire is that the Lord may bless His own Word to the good of never-dying souls.

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Northern: At Dingwall on 6th April at 2 p.m.

Skye: At Portree on 13th April at 11 a.m.

Outer Isles: At Stornoway on 4th May at 2 p.m.

Australia and New Zealand: At Auckland on 4th June at 2.30 p.m.

Acknowledgement of Donations

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

Jewish & Foreign Missions Fund: Anon, Glasgow £10 for Zimbabwe appeal; A Friend, £10 per I. MacK.

Aged & Infirm Ministers' etc Fund: A Friend, £5 per I. MacK.

Dominions & Overseas Fund: Mrs Hopkins, London, £100 for work in Italy.

Trinitarian Bible Society: Kyle Congregation, £20; Plockton Congregation, £41.60; A Friend, £5 per I. MacK.

Ingwenya: Miss J. Graham (Inverness), £200; Netherlands Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, USA, US\$200; Miss C. Leitch (Wick) per Rev R. Sinclair, £10; 'From Two Sisters, Achmore, Lewis', £40; Gisborne Congregation, N.Z. per J. MacPherson, NZ\$861.30; 'From a Winnipeg Friend' per J. MacKay, Can.\$325; Vancouver Congregation per J. MacKay, Can\$3,275.

The Publications Treasurer, Mr Wm. MacKenzie, C.A., Hilton of Cadboll, Fearn desires to acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:—

Welfare of Youth Fund: M.G. Glasgow, £5.

Free Distribution Fund: M.G., Glasgow £3; D.M. £2.20 per Mr J.W. Mackenzie, Laide; J.M. £2.20; A.W.M. £2; Kinlochbervie Congregation, £10.

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

Bracadale: In Memory of my beloved husband, Peter Campbell, Glenfield, £50 for Sust. Fund.

Fort William: Mrs MacI., Ross Place, £10 per Rev J.A. MacDonald.

Gairloch: Ullapool, £10 per Rev A.E.W. MacDonald; M.L., Ullapool, £30; 4 donations, £50; £20; £2000; £10; £10; £10; £10; £5; Dingwall, £5, all for Strath Meeting House.

Glasgow: Anon, Harris, £2 per R.A.C.; Sam. 7:12 £5; Anon £50, all for Publication Fund; Anon £20, £15, £5, £5, £5, all for Jewish and Foreign Mission; Anon, £10, £10, £10; N.H. £5 per Rev D.M.; Anon £30, all for Sust Fund; Anon £10, £15, £10, £2, all for T.B.S.; Anon £5 for Bus Fund; Anon £15 for B.T.S.

Greenock: R.M. Greenock, £20 per Rev L. MacLeod; Mrs G.A. Cookson, Maghult, near Liverpool, £20, both for Sust. Fund; Well wishes, Portree, £5 for Congr. Funds per Rev L. MacLeod.

Lochbroom: Anon £100 for Sust. Fund; In memory of a dear sister £20.

Portree: Mrs MacK., Uig £10 for Rhodesian Mission per L. Roberts; Estate of late Miss Mary MacIntosh £300 for General Funds per Wm. Byers; Envelope in Plate, J.N.D., £50 for Property Maintenance; Envelope in Plate £2, where most needed; D. & B.G. £30 Sust. Fund; £30 Jewish and Foreign Mission; £40 Home Mission; M.C. £3 Sust. Fund; last four per F.M.; Anon £5 for Church Bus (in church plate); Anon £20, for most needy fund; Anon (church plate) £2, College & Liby Fd.; Mrs R.L. £5 for Congr. Funds; Anon (Church plate) £16 for College & Liby Fund; Anon £5 for T.B.S. (Church plate); Anon, Inverness £10 for Sust. Fund per D.M., Mrs B.C.L. £5 for door coll. per F.M.; C. & D.M. £4 for T.B.S. (Church plate.)

Staffin: Mr R. MacD., Invss. £20 for Congr. Purposes per MMI; Friend, Stockinish £5 for Car Expenses; A.M.G.P. £5, where most needed, both per Rev D.A. MacLennan; Friend, Glasgow £10 for Sust. Fund per Mrs Mgt. MacDonald.

Stirling: Mrs R.T., Stirling £10 for Stirling Congr. Funds per Rev D.J. MacD.

Stornoway: Banffshire Friend £20 per Rev J. MacLeod; Anon (Envelope in plate) £10, both for Congr. Fund.