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Shall not My Soul be Avenged on such a Nation as this?

Britain as a nation has been raised up to heaven with privileges and blessings. When the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ returned to our land in Reformation times it proved a turning point in the nation's history. The fruit of the gospel was seen in every department of the nation's life. For several centuries our nation was raised to a high place among the nations of the world. God was acknowledged in the land throughout much of this time, apart from seasons of relapses, and God was pleased to give the nation His blessing.

When a nation or an individual departs from God it is a solemn matter, but more so in the case of a nation. An individual's departing from God affects only a few; a nation's departing from God affects multitudes. This has been the case with our nation. In the last century the people of the land began to turn their back on the Bible, which is the Word of God. As the spiritual plight of the nation increased, so did her moral state decrease. The result has been a national decline from former moral standards so that the nation has become morally debased by outbreaks of evil of every kind on every hand.

The standard by which a nation's morality ought to be judged — the standard of the inspired and infallible Word of the Living God is no longer acceptable to a nation wise in its own eyes but not cleansed from its filthiness. The true standard by which actions might be weighed has been set aside and replaced by man's own standard. This standard, as we might expect, is like man himself — a very low one. What is acceptable to the majority of people, or what people may be willing to tolerate — that is

now the standard. What a fallible standard this is! On what a slippery slope are people or a nation when public opinion is to determine what is right and what is wrong.

When a nation departs from God — that is solemn! When a nation begins to forget God — that is solemn! When a nation turns its back on God — that is solemn! When God is no longer even in the thoughts of the leaders of the nation, and His Name no longer upon their lips — that is solemn. Yet there is something more solemn still — that is, when God departs from a nation and leaves it to its own will. Into what depths will it not plunge itself then? What evils and abominations will it not tolerate and even sanction them? It is then that it will call evil good, and good evil; put darkness for light, and light for darkness; put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. This is the road along which our nation has been travelling — a path that leads it further and further from God and into accepting all manner of false religions, while the religion of the One Living and True God, the religion of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is cast aside as a thing of nought and His Name every day blasphemed.

One area in the national outlook and belief that has tragically suffered through this decline is that of the sanctity of human life. The protection of human life from conception until death was safely guarded, and was regarded by all, except the most abandoned, as sacrosanct. The preservations of the life of the unborn child, as well as the life of each individual from birth to the grave was hedged about with safeguarding sanctions. To take away life unjustly was regarded as a crime of most serious dimensions. The tenet of a life for a life was no empty threat but was brought to bear upon the party guilty of deliberate premeditated murder. The Scriptural enactment: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man" was the sanction imposed for such a crime. But when the nation departed from the fear of God, leaders arose that were wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight. To them the standards of the divine law were of no account. To them the principle of retribution for evil was a hateful concept, and the practice of rehabilitation must take its place. The avenging of the blood of the slain was to such thinkers a relic of Old Testament times. The adoption by our nation of their unscriptural creed and practice has left the blood of multitudes at the door of the nation. Let us mark well that it is not the blood of the innocent that is the burden of those who have adopted this false creed but the blood of the guilty. It is a small step from this to the slaying of the innocent in the womb and the slaying of the unwanted aged in their beds. A nation that will not tolerate the execution of the

murderer will stand silently by as the lives of millions are terminated in the womb and as the process of the slaying of the aged gets underway.

However it is not how man regards these matters which ought to concern us most but how God regards it. Is it with a benevolent and approving attitude that the God of heaven looks up these evils, perpetrated and approved by a nation that has forgotten God?

Surely not! He has left on record in His holy Word what His mind is towards such a nation and people. "Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" The situation of our nation, therefore, is perilous at the present time. What a call there is to repentance lest His judgments break forth upon us. His exhortation to us in His own Word is: "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little."

Letter on the Bible

By Rev. W. Romaine

I have good news to tell you from a far country, as refreshing as cold water to a thirsty soul. God has spared me to read over my Bible once more. O what a treasure — what unsearchable riches are there in this golden mine! I never dug deeper, nor found more precious jewels than upon this last perusal. You know it is my constant custom, as soon as St Dunstan's lectures are over, to begin the Bible, and without stopping or interruption, to go on from Genesis to the end of the Revelation. This exercise is always begun with prayer, and carried on with settled dependence on the Spirit of prayer, and I am always wishing to ascribe all profit (and it has been very, very great) to the praise of the glory of His grace. At present I am not reading my Bible in order to find out some new truth, but to be established in what I do know, and to attain more confirmation of it. This I would chiefly seek for, that I may get growing experience of the wisdom of God, and of the power of God in His word, and may thereby enjoy the blessings of His love promised in it. With this view, I send you some of my observations on the reading of the Bible in the year 1783. I am happy in believing that your heart harmonizes with me in them. One of the first things to be noticed and expected is the actual fulfilling of the promises to this day — namely, that the Holy Spirit is still in the Word. He works in it, and by it. He makes it at present, as much as ever He did, the great ordinance of God unto salvation, as you may observe in Isa. 59: 20, 21; hence it is called the ministration of the

Spirit, because in it He holds forth Jesus Christ to be the Almighty Saviour; and whomsoever He calls by it to come to the Saviour, He makes His call to them effectual. They receive the Spirit by the hearing of the Word, as Gal. 3: 2. This, my good friend, is what you and I should above all things seek. We should be always praying for the Spirit to accompany His own Word. It is our duty to hear and read; but we should always do it with the fixed dependence of our hearts upon His divine teaching; without which the Word itself will profit us nothing, as we read, Heb. 4: 2, "The Word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them who heard it." May the good Spirit keep us in the use of means, but entirely dependent upon Him in the use of them! Thanks be to Him that in this frame of mind I have once more gone through His Word, settled and grounded more steadfastly than ever before, but the Word of God can be made useful to me only by the Spirit of God.

The next thing that engaged my attention was the divine and infallible truth of the Holy Scriptures, of which I have been convinced with all the riches of the full assurance of understanding. Our Lord said in His last prayer, "Father, Thy Word is truth." And I say the same. I have set my seal to it on this last reading: every line, every word, is according to the mind of the infinitely wise God. It is His revealed will, and it discovers to us objects in God's light, as He sees them, whereby the Holy Spirit renews us in true knowledge after the image of Him that created us. He brings our understanding to submit to be informed by His unerring Word. Whatever it reveals of Jehovah, of the three Persons in Jehovah, of the God-Man, of His salvation, of the way of receiving the benefit of it in time and in eternity; He has made me willing to live in entire subjection to its teaching. My constant enquiry is — What it reveals. Not why? I study to know it, not as a metaphysician, but as a Christian. I seek, not so much to comprehend it as to believe it. Nothing appears to me more reasonable than that my reason should submit to God's reason; and therefore I am kept praying for divine grace, to make His Word, like the light of the sun, clear in my head, and fruitful in my heart.

My dear friend, let me recommend to you this method of reading your Bible. Ever take it up as the oracles of God — the infallible standard of truth. The abiding persuasion of this will save you a great deal of trouble, and will bring you in vast profit. You will not have much occasion to consult authors, or to spend your time in perusing many books. If you take up your Bible with a settled conviction that it is the truth of God, and that it has the stamp of Divine authority, this will be the means of your understanding more of the Scriptures than all the comments in the world

could give you; because your mind, having received the impression of Divine truth, is now disposed to receive the impression of Divine power; which is another matchless excellency of the Word of God.

The Spirit of God still works in it and by it; as in the first creation, so in the new creation, He does all by His Almighty fiat. He speaks, and it is done; He commands, and is obeyed. He is a creating Word; He calls, and the dead hear. It is a life-giving Word. He follows the call, and the quickened sinner believes — faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God; and this faith is as great a demonstration of Divine power as raising Christ from the dead was; as you may see, Ephes. 1: 19, 20, etc. Then He puts His Word into the inward parts, and the believer is enabled to feed upon it, and to be nourished thereby, even up unto life everlasting, so that he often says to his Lord — “Jesus, to whom should I go? Thou only hast the words of eternal life.” This Divine efficacy of the Scriptures is the principal thing by which God magnifies His Word, above all His Name. He has made it His ordinance, like the fixed laws of nature — by which He still keeps up intercourse and communion between Himself and His people, and gives them to see and to enjoy His perfections. His Spirit makes it effectual to begin and to carry on fellowship with the Father and the Son. And thus He is daily magnifying it, by releasing the promises, and putting believers into possession of the graces and blessings promised in it. So that it is to this hour, the mighty power of God, as truly as when He spake the word into being; as effectual as when He said, “Lazarus, come forth.” My dear friend, may you and I feel it more, still more: may we live happy partakers of its influence; and whenever we hear it, read it, or meditate upon it, may we get fresh experience of the power of God in His word; which will bring us another blessing peculiar to the Scriptures; by acknowledging them to be the truth of God, and finding them to be the power of God, we shall come to experience their divine sweetness.

It is by continual dependence on the teaching of the Spirit in and by the Word, and by mixing faith with it, that we come to find its value, and to taste its pleasures; for it then opens a new world to us, a spiritual and eternal world — it reveals to us the God of that world — our Father loving us in His Son. It makes known the Son’s wonderful Person and His heavenly work in salvation, with all the blessings of it, which faith brings unto present enjoyment. The believer is made alive to them, and then has his spiritual senses exercised upon them; and each sense has its proper object and its peculiar delight, as we read — O come, taste and see how gracious the Lord is — hear His voice, for it is sweet — smell

the good odour of His perfume, for His name is as ointment poured forth — come and handle the Word of God. What a paradise is here! as real, but more blessed, than Adam's. Believe me, sir, I know you do. In my last reading God has thus blessed me; what the Word reports, the Spirit has realised. In the way of believing the promises, I have found the fulfilling of them. I speak for God, and for His glorious Word. Away self. The Holy Ghost, the Comforter, does by it, at this day, make good His name and His office. "He shall take of mine," says Jesus, "and shall show it (manifest it) unto you;" the spiritual world, all the graces, all the glories of it — He will not only manifest them to you clearly but He will also enable you to believe them with a pleasing earnest, and to enjoy them with many a sweet foretaste of the glory that it is to be revealed.

There is a very delightful account of this in the 19th Psalm. What if I should set my seal to it, and say that I know what is spoken in the first part concerning the light of this world to be matter of fact, as well as what is spoken in the second part concerning the light of the spiritual world, would not you allow me, sir, to be a competent judge of both? And when the same prophet adds — "O, what love have I unto Thy law! I rejoice in it as one that findeth great spoil! yea; it is dearer to me than thousands of gold and silver!" Blessed be God, I find it so. Indeed, upon every reading of the Bible it grows more precious to me, as it did to David; because it is not only the discovery, but it is become also the conveyance of the unsearchable riches of Christ: these are revealed in the Word and applied by the Word. Faith is the lawful key which opens the infinite treasury and hears the proclamation of grace: "O ye that are seeking durable riches — these, all these are yours. Come, take all you want — use all you wish. You cannot do the free Giver a greater favour than to enrich yourself daily out of His boundless store. Read His promises — how exceeding great, how exceeding precious they are: read His faithfulness to them. Only trust, take, use — all that is in the promises shall be yours in time, yea, yours in eternity." This proclamation of grace I have heard. I believe it. Blessed be a promise-keeping God! I enjoy it. And I can assure you, sir, there is more to be had out of Christ's fulness than any one upon earth has yet enjoyed. For He not only giveth fresh grace, but also more grace. I have never been more thoroughly convinced of this than upon my last reading. God has humbled me, and has made me feel more of my own poverty, and has thereby led me to live more upon Christ's everlasting treasury. You do suspect me of boasting: O no, I would glorify the Word and work of the Almighty. A beggar would not be reckoned proud for saying, "When I was just starving I met with a charitable per-

son, who not only fed me but also feasted me, and then most generously provided for me all the rest of my days." Should not such a one acknowledge his benefactor, and bless him? So do I. Thanks be to Him who realised to me His Word — who opened mine eyes to see wondrous things out of His law — who often made me look up and say, "O, how sweet are Thy words unto my taste; yea, sweeter than honey unto my mouth." Blessed be God for His good Word: it is really manna; it is angels' food; it comes from Heaven; it tastes of Heaven!

When I sat down to write, I little thought my pen would run so fast, and that I would hold out so long. Will you excuse this long scribble. You will. I am writing to a friend who knows that I have still much more to say of my last reading. I bespeak your candour, while I am mentioning one thing more; and that is, the great end and design of the Scriptures, which is to conform us to it. This is the completing work of God the Spirit by His Word; all the rest were to lead to this. When the Word is understood, and believed, and lived upon, then He makes it the means of conforming the whole man to it. The believer is cast into the mould of it; he takes the impression — every feature. It is so assimilating, every tint is to be seen upon him. He lives the Word; it is to be read in his looks, visible in his walk, manifest in his tempers. See him, study him: he is the lively picture of a Bible Christian; let your conversation be as becometh the Gospel of Christ. By this rule he orders it; he seeks to be a pattern of the truth as it is in Jesus, and does not seek in vain. The Spirit by faith makes Jesus very precious. The heart loves Him. Loves to be like Him; much fellowship with Him endears Him more to the heart, and it becomes true liberty. It is real happiness to have constant communion with Him, especially to feel the influence of His cross and the power of His resurrection.

My much beloved, may this be your experience. Outstrip me as far as you can; may your sentiments, your affections, your life and conduct, all of them be conformed to the rule of God's Word. I shall pray for it, for you and for yours, that you may live by Gospel motives, and do all to Gospel ends. And may the Bible be made good, and fulfilled to you in earth and in Heaven!

I stop, but not because my subject is exhausted. I have daily fresh matter of praise. Still I am reading and admiring. New beauties spring up. Yearly, daily, I shall have praises to give for this most blessed book; and if I live to walk with you on Heckfield Heath, I may continue the subject. May your Lord and mine open our understandings, that we may understand the Scriptures.

A Lecture

by Rev D. Beaton

"For they are dead which sought the young child's life." — Matt. 2: 20.

Christ had no sooner appeared in the world than Hell was moved to its depths against Him. With a skill which was not lacking in persistent determination to thwart the divine purpose, Satan marshalled his forces and inspired his instruments for the overthrow of that Kingdom which was to be set up as an everlasting Kingdom — "for of a truth," says Peter, "against Thy Holy Child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together" (Acts 4: 27). But Satan had miscalculated the tremendous resources of power against which he threw his hosts, and had completely under-estimated the deep, unsearchable counsels which eternal wisdom had decreed for the frustrating of every attack of the adversary, and for consummation of the great design that the God of salvation had in view. This was a conflict in which God's glory was at stake, and the hope of a countless number of the race to which we belong. To God the issue was certain from the beginning, but to men looking on how often it appeared that the forces of darkness were to gain the day. As the Redeemer entered into the battle with the crown upon His head, conquering and to conquer, men were too ready to have their eyes diverted by the great upheavals caused by the struggle, instead of keeping them fixed upon the One who was ruling in the midst of His enemies with the assured knowledge that the issues of the day were to be on the side of eternal truth and righteousness. Viewed from one standpoint, nothing seemed so easy of accomplishment as the utter destruction of God's great plan. He, upon whom the accomplishment of this design rested, was a weak and helpless infant, and nothing was easier for Satan than to work on the mind of one of his servants to stretch forth their hand against Jesus. When men were told that through this Child the great purpose of salvation was to be brought about, they might have said that the hopes of that countless number who were to be saved was hanging upon the breath of a helpless infant. But this is not a correct way of viewing the helpless infant, it is no less true that He was the everlasting God, and no created power — angelic or otherwise — could touch that life until He gave permission. In this case, as in the case of His cause, it was hanging on the slender thread of life, but that thread, said Beza, was in the hand of God, whose power is irresistible. Satan's attempt to frustrate God's design was not met by the exerting of power sufficient to crush Herod, but by the use

of means to render null the well-planned scheme of Satan. And when God's time had come. He summoned the defeated tyrant into His presence to answer for his misdeeds. It was when this took place that the announcement was made — "For they are dead which sought the young Child's life." In these words we read heaven's divine announcement, not only in regard to this attempt to frustrate God's purpose, but to every attempt that has been made, is being made, and will be made to the end of time. However long the struggle may last, and however hopeless it may appear to God's people to battle any longer, the day is coming when it may be written at the head of every chapter of history describing the conflicts against the cause of Christ — "They are dead, who sought the young Child's life." The same words epitomise the description of the issue in the spiritual struggle of God's people also; for, as surely as it was announced to Israel and witnessed by their very eyes — "The Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more for ever" (Exodus 14: 13), so surely will it one day be fulfilled that every power that sought to destroy the life of grace in the soul will be subdued. For our present purpose, however, we intend to consider these words as conveying a message to us in connection with the opposition Christ's cause has met, is meeting, and will yet meet in the world. The methods Satan has adopted to destroy Christ's cause have been so varied and so incessantly supplemented by new methods the moment he discovers the old are a failure, as to indicate that there is a ceaseless vigilance and malevolent determination to crush the cause of truth if Satan can accomplish it. It is to be observed that whatever differences there may be in the plan of attack, the objective is always the same — the destruction of God's cause — and towards the goal Satanic subtlety directs its attacks and Satanic power drives them home. The more one reads the history of the Church of God in the world with his mind fixed on this aspect of its history the more will he be impressed with the thought that it is a miracle of miracles that there is a cause of Christ in the world, and the only explanation that can be given of its existence is that the Saviour's promise is being realised before our very eyes — "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." We shall now proceed to notice some of the methods Satan adopts to destroy God's cause in the world.

I. Satan attempts to destroy God's cause by stirring up men to put Christ to death. This was a well-planned scheme, and though it failed in the first attempt, when Herod, under the instigation of Satan, stretched out his hand, against the Lord's Anointed, he did not give up his plan. When He came to Nazareth where He had been brought up, and read the divine

promise announcing His own coming and His work, the eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened on Him, but, as he expounded the truth, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath, "and rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led Him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast Him down headlong" (Luke 4: 29). But, on this occasion, as at the first, "He went His way." Time and again this plan looked like it would be carried out, but it failed. His hour was not yet come, but when that hour came — the hour and power of darkness — He was delivered over into the hands of His enemies. The demonic hatred with which Satan had drenched the hearts of men was soon to find expression in one of the most vengeful cries that ever was heard in this world, and in one of the most awful prayers that ever was made to the Judge of the whole earth — "Away with Him! Away with Him! Crucify Him!" — "His blood be on us, and on our children." If there could be joy in hell, the devil would have felt it when that awful cry was heard on earth. It looked like at length that a decisive victory had been won. But if such a hope was ever entertained it must have been shattered by the extraordinary happenings of the resurrection morn. The One who died in weakness was alive, and now alive for ever more; and in the message He gave to His persecuted servant in Patmos — "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for ever more" — we have the divine announcement of the eternal frustration of Satan's well-planned and seemingly successful scheme. But what has the word of God to say as to the issue of this struggle of which we have been speaking? — it declares that He made a show of principalities and powers — that he led captivity captive. And as for the men who shouted out, "Away with Him, crucify Him," they have long since gone to their account, and the cause they tried to destroy is still in existence.

II. Satan seeks to destroy God's cause by stirring up persecution against His people. We may consider this subject from a three-fold point of view — (1) the persecution under the Jewish Church; (2) the persecution under the pagan power; (3) the persecution under the papal power.

(1) The persecution under the Jewish Church. The hatred of the Jews to Christ was extended to His followers. He warned them that they were going forth as sheep among wolves. The wolf, if it could speak, even though it could reason, could give no intelligible excuse for the desire it had to destroy the sheep whenever it saw it, except that it was its very nature to do so. And when one considers the intensity of the hatred stirred up against the infant Christian Church, no natural explanation can account for its continued existence. At the time of Stephen's martyrdom

we are told that "there was a great persecution against the Church which was at Jerusalem, and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the Apostles" (Acts 8: 1). Satan, in kindling the fires of persecution to a fiercer glow, did not reckon on that scattering abroad of Christians in the regions of Judaea and Samaria. How fiercely these fires burned, and how persistent were the efforts put forth by the persecutors are clearly indicated by the words — "And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest" (Acts 9: 1), and again — "I persecuted this way," says Paul "unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women" (Acts 22: 4). But the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the Church, and who knows but as Saul stood by Stephen consenting unto his death as he witnessed the beautiful heavenly composure of the martyr as he passed through the cruel ordeal, that thoughts were awakened that day that were not easily silenced. The attempt to destroy the cause of God by the Jews utterly failed, and the more the church were persecuted, the more it grew.

(2) Persecution under the pagan power. Satan now enlisted the strong arm of the civil power to crush the cause of the Most High. We do not wish to harrow the feelings of our readers here with a description of the means adopted during the Neronian, Decian and Diocletian persecutions, but the bare mention of these is enough to chill one's blood. But no tortures that racked the body or fiery ordeals through which gentle women and heroic men passed could stay the onward progress of the heavenly cause. Men chose to be torn by wild beasts in the Roman amphitheatres and cast into caldrons of boiling oil rather than renounce the Lord who redeemed them. Satan had not reckoned on the divine strength vouchsafed to the martyrs in the day of trial, and here again the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the Church, and Satan was utterly baffled to destroy it.

(3) Persecution under the papal power. Satan having failed to accomplish his purpose through the Jewish Church and the pagan power, now had recourse to the so-called Christian Church as represented in the Church of Rome. This enlisting of a powerful so-called Christian institution on his side was a masterstroke of the enemy, and right skilfully did he make use of it. The diabolic ingenuity evidenced in the methods and means of torture were of such a nature that were it announced that men and women could face them without renouncing their faith, one would unhesitatingly say it is impossible, that is, if one overlooked the promise — "My grace is sufficient for thee and my grace is made perfect in weakness." The dark

dungeons that witnessed the lingering deaths of saintly men and women and the walls that heard the groans of heroic men as their limbs were racked, but heard no word of renunciation of their faith could they but speak, would have a tale to tell that would appear almost incredible. The men who planned these tortures have long since passed to their account, and the power that authorised them, drunken with the blood of the saints, is doomed to drink the cup she filled to others. What was the crime of which these men and women were guilty? Loyalty to the truth as revealed in the Word of God, and loving devotion to the Lord who redeemed them were the crimes that awakened the hatred of Satan and moved the hearts of wicked men to stamp out, if it were possible, any signs of the true cause of God in the world. At times it looked like that the enemy was to prevail, but neither the terrors of the Inquisition, nor the extirpating wars against the Waldenses and the Huguénots nor the fires of Smithfield were successful, and the cause of God came through the fiery furnace, heated seven times, with a vigour after the terrible struggle that can only be accounted for on the supposition that One like unto the Son of Man was with it in the fiery furnace. When the French King threatened to wipe out the Huguénots, he was answered with the fearless and significant words of Beza — “Sire, the Church of Christ is an anvil that has broken many a hammer.”

But persecution was not the only means Satan used to destroy God's cause in the world. Error cleverly disguised and plausibly presented was intended as a potent instrument for the destruction of Christ's cause in the world. The Christian Church was not long in existence when Satan began to sow his tares. (1) Legalism, with its complete subversion of the ground on which a sinner's hope rests for eternity was a cunningly devised scheme, and it is significant that in his Epistles the Apostle Paul gives the clearest indication of the distress caused him by this false teaching, which was not a gospel at all. He suffered more from the Christian Judaising teachers than from the adherents of the old faith, and while the doctrines of grace presented an insuperable barrier to the advance of legalism, the enemy, by a cleverly-executed move, swept the great bulk of the professing Christian world into line with this deeply laid plan. The basic doctrine of the Church of Rome is founded on this ruinous error, and thousands of Protestants are building upon this false foundation for eternity. For though at the Reformation the great truth of justification by faith was declared with no uncertain sound by the great Reformers, yet it was lost sight of in after days by many of those professing to be Protestants. But though Satan has deceived so many, he has not yet been able

to stamp out God's truth. (2) The attempt to destroy God's cause by denying the true Deity of the Son of God was a blow struck not at the out-works of the Christian Church, but at its very heart. It looked like for a time that it was to be successful, and as Athanasius, the fearless defender of the faith, was banished, it seemed that the cause of God had fallen. But Athanasius was recalled, and the truth of God triumphed. Satan did not cease in his attempt to overthrow this great doctrine, and so down the ages the Church had to contend with Socinianism, Unitarianism and Kenoticism. The latter theory is one of the most subtle of modern attacks on the true Deity of the Son of God, and it has been invoked as a foil against our Lord's testimony to the Old Testament Scriptures. (3) The attack on the Scriptures in the name of learning has had an extraordinary vogue. It has entered into the high places of theological learning, and has been warmly welcomed there. Young candidates for the holy ministry have imbibed this deadly poison at the hands of their teachers, and have in turn become disseminators of the same. But, however long the tide may take in turning, the ebb will come by and bye.

If time permitted reference might be made to Evolutionism, Spiritism, Communism, Christian Science, Russellism, Seventh Day Adventism, and other members of that numerous brood hatched by Satan, but they are all destined to fail in the end.

III. Satan attempts to destroy God's cause by introducing worldliness into the Church. With apparent diffidence he suggests that the rules and laws of the Church are too strict — that a little yielding on the part of the Church will work to its advantage. And if this subtle suggestion is given heed to it is followed up by others in which the interests of the young figure prominently. The young, he suggests, must be kept in hand at all costs, and the best way of doing so is by introducing into the services of the sanctuary and the management of the Church as much of the world as possible. New generations need new methods, it is suggested, and the old paths by which the saints of God went on their way to their everlasting rest are said now to be out of date, and unless we have a religion that suits the men and women of the world, it will not do. If it is suggested in opposition that the way of worshipping God is not left to man, but set before us in His Word, then we are met with the subtle and deluding question — "What harm can there be in this?" Anything that wars against the spirituality of the worship of God and that deadens the spiritual life of God's professing people ought to be shunned by them as the plague. That a determined effort is made to destroy the cause of God by infecting it with a deadly worldly spirit is plainly manifest to all who love Sion.

but even this device of the enemy will be frustrated, and the attempt to smother the cause of Truth by a worldly spirit will be overthrown by Him who promised that the gates of hell would not prevail against His Church.

The Church of Christ exists in a hostile world. It is attacked on every side, but however diverse the mode of attacks, there is behind them all a governing mind, and however unrelated the opposing agencies may appear, there is no getting away from the fact that there is a co-ordination that indicates all too plainly that they are not isolated agencies working without any objective, but are all definitely shaping towards one goal — the overthrow of the cause of God in the world, and as the believer scans the field of battle his heart would fail him if he had no help but in man — his sure and all-sufficient help is in the name of the Lord.

Only the Sinner finds the Saviour

I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners. — Matt. 9: 13

“Life was once to me like summer,
With its glitter and its smile;
I, as thoughtless as the insect,
Trifled through the little while.
All was buoyant life within me,
All was jubilant around;
Need of Jesus then I felt not,
So I sought Him not, nor found.

“But the summer soon was ended,
And the gloomy winter came;
All my blooming joys were withered
Into griefs of every name.
Still, I hoped the change of season
Would bring summer round again;
But, instead, the gloom grew blacker —
And I sought my Saviour then.

“Yes, I sought with cries and weeping,
But no answer was returned;
Echo flung me back my 'plainings,

'Twas as if my cry was spurned.
Sore distressed at the silence,
I with fervour did entreat:
Still the ear could catch no answer,
Save the heart's distracted beat.

"Well I knew 'twas but through Jesus
That the sinner comes to God;
But with what we come to Jesus?
Ah! 'twas here I missed the road:
I was bringing Him obedience,
When I should have brought but sin,
So my knocking, though half-frantic,
No admittance thus could win.

"Then I studied to know better
What already well I knew;
And the good things that I practised,
Better still I strove to do:
Yet the deeper grew the darkness,
And the silence grew more dread
So I owned my case was hopeless,
And my soul among the dead.

"Then I cast me self-despairing,
On the Saviour's boundless grace;
Not a hope had I of blessing,
If He met not such a case.
And I felt that need so urgent
Scarce on earth could ever be:
So I begged for one so ruined
Mercy instant, mercy free.

"Then at once the peace of pardon
Did my sinking soul restore,
And the love sprung up spontaneous,
Which I could not force before.
When I took the place of sinner,
And at mercy's footstool lay,
Jesus took His place as Saviour,
And at once put sin away.

“Ah! ’tis ruinous to cover
Filthy sores with rags more foul:
Let us strip them bare before Him,
That His grace may make us whole.
He delights in showing mercy
To a soul that owns its sin:
But the soul that thinks of earning,
Not a smile shall ever win.”

J. Dickie, Irvine.

Obituary

Mr James Grant, Elder, Inverness

It is with a sense of grief and loss that we record the passing of James Campbell Grant, an elder of the Inverness congregation, on 8th December 1989.

He was born on 22nd June 1924 to godly parents, John and Isabella Grant, the second child of a family of three sons and one daughter. John Grant was for many years the General Treasurer of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland (1924-1960) having followed a career in banking, as did his brother, the late Rev. Wm. Grant. With such familial connections, it is not surprising that James followed a career in banking which took him to various parts of the country, in Lewis, Skye, Shetland, Aberdeen and Kingussie.

The light of the truth was shed gradually in his soul in his youth, and when asked which part of the Word of God first spoke to him, he said many portions. He had a number of years of ill health, and in times of special weakness referred to Psalm 46 as a strength and comfort. Psalm 103 was also one of his delights.

In the Scots Guards he was preserved through the war years in London when guarding Buckingham Palace and other places. He greatly appreciated the ministry and kindness of the late Rev. J. P MacQueen, and the liberal hospitality of the friends in the congregation as did many of his contemporaries in the forces who worshipped there at that time.

He was received as a member by the Inverness Kirk Session in June 1949. His sins had been brought home to him so that he found that Christ alone could save him. He could not state definitely when he obtained forgiveness of his sins, but among several scriptures which impressed and melted him, he mentioned “I have loved thee with an everlasting love” and “we love Him because He first loved us.”

He was quiet and unassuming, but firm in his adherence to the truth. In due course he was ordained to the eldership in May 1965. He was appointed Clerk of the Deacons' Court in January 1968, succeeding the late Finlay Beaton, and he held this appointment for over 15 years. The Kirk Session remember him as one with whom it was a pleasure to work, knowing that the good of Zion was uppermost in his mind.

He was of a peaceable disposition and all acquaintances appreciated his kindly respectfulness on meeting them. His years of illness he bore patiently. He was interested in reading, possessing with his sister a library of good books. At the end of his life, he was still buying up good books such as the writings of the 19th century Southern Presbyterians of America as they were becoming available in reprints.

He proved useful to the end, always ready to help with the practical side of the congregation, whether it was arranging the heating prior to services or attending to the practical aspect of the financial arrangements of the congregation. So retiring was he, that few knew what he did.

An interesting event occurred when he was distributing Scripture portions in Israel; he was arrested by the police in Jerusalem for brief questioning. A copy of the gospel of Mark caused special objection.

Rev. G. G. Hutton, our minister in Larne, first came in contact with our church when in Inverness. In a restaurant he noticed James bowing his head to give thanks to God for the food. Mr Hutton waited to enquire what church he belonged to and attended for the first time the next Sabbath.

His last illness came suddenly, but James was prepared. Being hospitalised, he succumbed to the raging influenza that has taken away so many this winter. It is extraordinary that I was visiting him at 4 p.m., he passed away at 6 p.m. and the induction service began at 7 p.m. James was ready for the last enemy, through Him that loved him. In his weakness, the last words that he was heard to speak were "the Lord's my Shepherd." The last verse of the same Psalm was precious to James' father on his death-bed in 1967, as recorded in his father's obituary in Vol. 76, p309-312, of the *Free Presbyterian Magazine*. The same Shepherd that led James beside the still waters and made him to lie down in green pastures is also the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne who is now feeding him and leading him unto living fountains of water.

To his surviving sister and brothers we extend our sympathies and prayer that they will each enjoy the grace which will bring them to the glory that James is now enjoying with his Lord in heaven.

*For God the Lord's a sun and shield:
he'll grace and glory give;
And will withhold no good from them
that uprightly do live. (Psalm 84: 11)*

D.M.B.

Divisive Courses

by Rev. J. A. T. van Dorp, Gisborne

"Now I beseech you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." When the apostle appeals to us by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, he appeals to us in the strongest possible terms. The word "divisions" is the translation of the Greek word "schismata". When we think of a schism we tend to think of an actual separation occurring and that often is the case. In 1 Cor. 1: 10 where the above words of the apostle Paul are recorded he is not writing about a separation from the church but divisions within the church. Something that undoubtedly he was very concerned about and that therefore we should be very concerned about. It is not for nothing that the word of God appeals to us by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ i.e. by the authority of Christ. He speaks to us in the most authoritative manner possible. He is concerned about the preservation of unity.

In Ephesians he introduces the subject of unity in connection with a worthy life, walk and conversation. "I beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (Ephes. 4: 1). Believers have been effectually called out of the power of darkness into God's marvellous light and should therefore be finished with the works of darkness. One of these works of darkness is disunity or division. It has often been remarked that Satan's policy is to divide and conquer. The apostle therefore uses another very strong term when he writes: "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephes. 4: 3). According to Vine's expository Dictionary the word "endeavour" means to make haste, to be zealous and hence to be diligent. All terms with a strong meaning. It is little wonder then that he also uses strong words in dealing with those that break this code of ethics. "Mark them that cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which you have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. 16: 17 & 18).

While we cannot brand as hypocrites everyone that falls into the sin

of schism or any other sin for that matter, enough is said about it for every sincere Christian to have a thorough abhorrence of it and to do every thing in his or her power to endeavour to avoid it if it can possibly be avoided.

The Rev. John Calvin in his renowned Institutes made a series of apt comments which clearly indicate the serious nature of divisions. Although written over four hundred years ago the thoughts are as fresh and applicable today as they were then. I therefore copy them here for the edification of the church in 1990. A more thorough perusal of the whole of Book IV of the Institutes will no doubt amply reward the diligent student and is highly recommended.

“God has omitted nothing that would contribute to an holy unity of faith.”

“The church is the mother of all who have God for their Father.”

“The church is called catholic, because there could not be two or three churches without Christ being divided.”

“Such is the effect of union with the church that it retains us in the fellowship of God.”

“Those whom God excludes from the heavenly life shall not be enrolled amongst his people.”

“The saints have no common bond of union to hold them together any longer than while learning and profiting with one accord.”

“The church is . . . the whole multitude . . . who testify their unity in true doctrine and charity by a participation of the sacred supper. . . .”

“We ought to acknowledge as members of the church all those who by a confession of faith, an exemplary life and a participation of the sacraments profess the same God and Christ with ourselves.”

“The universal church . . . are united by the bond of the same religion.”

“In order to keep the truth of God from being lost in the world the church is its faithful guardian.”

“As it is necessary therefore to believe that Church which is invisible to us and known to God alone, so this Church which is visible to men, we are commanded to honour and to maintain communion with it.”

“God commends the authority of the church in such a manner as to account every violation of it an infringement of his own. For it is no trivial circumstance, that the church is called ‘the house of God, the pillar and ground of the truth’ (1 Tim. 3: 15).”

“Every member of the Church is required to exert himself for the general edification according to the measure of his grace provided he do it decently and in order; that is to say that we should neither forsake the communion

of the church, nor by continuing in it disturb its peace and well regulated discipline."

In connection with Mat. 18: 19 he points out that God frequently promises that He will graciously listen to the private requests of each individual so here Christ makes a remarkable promise to public prayers in order to invite us more earnestly to the practice of them. The next verse contains a precious promise that is even more extensive i.e. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Mat. 18: 20). Calvin's comment here is: "whoever either disregards the holy assemblies, or separates himself from brethren, and takes little interest in the cultivation of unity, by this alone makes it evident that he sets no value on the presence of Christ."

Since disputes can arise so easily and each one of them is a potential trouble spot that can cause far deeper and troublesome divisions in the household of faith the Lord has made a most merciful healing provision. "I am the Lord that healeth thee." (Exo. 15: 26). The great Head of the church knows our frame and has abundantly provided for the healing of the painful wounds of the household of faith through the various courts of the church. It is for this reason no doubt that the apostle calls on us to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. It is for this reason also that office-bearers are required when taking their solemn oath of office to answer in the affirmative to the question: "Do you own and acknowledge the Presbyterian Church Government of this Church by Kirk-Sessions, Presbyteries, Provincial Synods, and General Assemblies, to be the only government of this Church; and do you engage to submit thereto, concur therewith, and not to endeavour, directly or indirectly, the prejudice or subversion thereof?"; and to sign the Formula which states: "likewise I do own the purity of worship presently authorised and practised in the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and also the Presbyterian government and discipline thereof," "and that I shall in my practice, conform myself to the said discipline, government and exclusive jurisdiction, and not endeavour, directly or indirectly, the prejudice or subversion of the same; and I promise that I shall follow no divisive course from the doctrine, worship, discipline, government and exclusive jurisdiction of this Church, renouncing all doctrines, tenets and opinions whatsoever, contrary to, or inconsistent with, the said doctrine, worship, discipline, government, or jurisdiction of the same."

No doubt we are all familiar with these terms, as well as the questions put to ministers at their ordination which includes the following question; "do you promise to submit yourself willingly and humbly in the spirit

of meekness, unto the admonitions of your brethren of the Presbytery, and to be subject to them, and all other Presbyteries and superior judicatories of this Church, where God shall cast your lot; and that, according to your power, you shall maintain the unity and peace of this Church against error and schism, notwithstanding of whatsoever trouble or persecution may arise, and that you shall follow no divisive courses from the doctrine, worship, discipline and government of this Church?"

On the subject of unity Thornwell states: "The principle of the unity of the Church lies at the foundation of the Presbyterian polity." "As the body of Christ the Church is one." No more needs to be said to indicate what the position of the Church is in general and what the responsibility of office bearers in particular.

Knox and Mass Attendance

by **Rev. J. MacLeod M.A., Stornoway**

Knox's "History of the Reformation in Scotland" has been described, and, we believe, accurately, as "the honest and truthful record of one of the most highly energised men that ever crossed the stage of life — a record, withal, so masterly that the reader's mind and heart attain the writer's meaning and point of view at the bound."¹ Thomas McCrie speaks of it as "the principal source of information as to ecclesiastical proceedings in that period; and although great keenness has been shown in attacking its authenticity and accuracy, it has been confirmed in all the leading facts by an examination of those ancient documents which the industry of later times has brought to light." It had also the added distinction of being marked, as were all of Knox's writings, in the Index Expurgatorius of Rome! For anyone who has an interest in Scottish ecclesiastical history it makes compelling reading. If one wants to know what his mind was on any of the main issues of the Reformation it may be found here, under his own hand, and stated so plainly that one is left in no doubt as to where exactly he stood.

One such issue was attendance at mass. 'At the first coming of the said John Knox, divers who had a zeal to godliness made small scruple to go to the Mass, or to communicate with the abused sacraments in the papistical manner. Perceiving this, he began, in privy conference as well as in preaching, to show the impiety of the Mass, and how dangerous it

(1) The History of the Reformation of Religion in Scotland — John Knox — Revised and Edited by Cuthbert Lennox — Andrew Melrose — London — 1905 — Introductory Note.

was to participate in any way with idolatry. The consciences of some were affrighted, and the matter began to agitate from man to man. So the said John was called to supper by the Laird of Dun for that purpose, and there were convened David Forrest, Master Robert Lockhart, John Willock, and William Maitland of Lethington, younger, a man of good learning, and of sharp wit and reasoning. The question was proposed, and it was answered by the said John that it was nowise lawful to a Christian to present himself to that idol. Nothing was omitted that might make for the temporiser, and yet was every head fully answered, and especially one wherein they thought their great defence stood, to wit, that Paul, at the commandment of James and the elders of Jerusalem, went to the temple and feigned to pay his vow with others. After a full discussion, William Maitland concluded, saying, "I see perfectly that our shifts will serve nothing before God, seeing that they stand us in so small stead before man."

The answer of John Knox to the act of Paul, and to the commandment of James, was that Paul's act had nothing to do with their going to the Mass. To pay vows was sometimes God's commandment, and was never idolatry: but the Mass was from the beginning, and still remained odious idolatry. . . . After these and like reasonings, the Mass began to be abhorred by such as before had frequented it for the fashion, and for avoidance of slander, as then they termed it.³

In June, 1547, a French fleet, arrived off St Andrews where the castle was under siege. Military aid, promised by England, failed to materialise and the besieged were eventually forced to surrender to the French commander. "The terms which they obtained were honourable; the lives of all in the castle were to be spared; they were to be transported to France, and if they did not choose to enter into the service of the French king, were to be conveyed to any country which they might prefer, except Scotland. Knox, although he did not expect that the garrison would hold out, could not prevail upon himself to desert his charge, and resolved to share with his brethren in the hazard of the siege. He was conveyed along with them on board the fleet, which, in a few days, set sail for France. . . . The capitulation was violated, and they were all detained as prisoners of war at the solicitation of the pope and the Scottish clergy. The principal gentlemen were incarcerated in Rouen, Cherbourg, Brest and Mont St Michael. Knox, with a few others, was confined on board the galleys; and, in addition to the rigours of ordinary captivity, was loaded with

(2) *Life of John Knox* — Thomas McCrie — William Blackwood & sons — 1884 — p299.

(3) *History* p199.

chains, and exposed to all the indignities with which Papists were accustomed to treat those whom they regarded as heretics.”

Knox describes the steadfastness of these Scottish prisoners in the following extract; it, also, describes an incident which appears to have involved himself: ‘The principals being confined in several houses, as before we have said, there was great labour to make them have a good opinion of the Mass. Chiefly was there travail with Norman Leslie, the Laird of Grange, and the Laird of Pitmilley, who were in the Castle of Cherbourg. Pressed to go to Mass with the captain, they answered that “The captain had commandment to keep their bodies, but he had no power to command their conscience.” The captain replied that “He had power to command and to compel them to go where he would.” They answered that “They would not refuse to go to any lawful place with him; but they would not, either for him or for the King, do anything that was against their conscience.” The captain said, “Will ye not go to the Mass?” They answered, “No; and if ye would compel us, we will displease you further; for we will so use ourselves there that all those that are present shall know that we despite it.”

Similar answers, and somewhat sharper, did William Kirkaldy, Peter Carmichael, and such as were with them in Mount St. Michael, give to their captain; for they said they would not only hear Mass every day, but that they would help to say it, provided that they might stick the priests. Master Henry Balnaves, who was in the Castle of Rouen, was most sharply assaulted of all; for, because he was judged learned, learned men were appointed to travail with him, and with them he had many conflicts. But, God so assisting him, they departed confounded, and he, by the power of God’s Spirit, remained constant in the truth and profession of the same, without any wavering or declining to idolatry.

These that were in the galleys were threatened with torments, if they would not give reverence to the Mass; but the French could never make the poorest of that company give reverence to that idol. Yea, when, upon the Saturday night, they sang their *Salve Regina*, the whole Scotsmen put on their caps, their hoods, or such things as they had to cover their heads; and when others were compelled to kiss a painted board, which they called “Notre Dame,” they were not pressed more than once; for this was what happened. Soon after the arrival of Nantes, their great *Salve* was sung, and a glorious painted Lady was brought to be kissed, and was presented to one of the Scotsmen then chained, amongst others. He gently said, “Trouble me not; such an idol is accursed; and therefore I will not touch

it." The patron and the arguesyn¹ with two officers, having the chief charge of all such matters, said, "Thou shalt handle it;" and so they violently thrust it to his face, and put it betwixt his hands. He, seeing the extremity, took the idol, and advisedly looking about, cast it into the river, saying, "Let our Lady now save herself; she is light enough; let her learn to swim." After that no Scotsman was urged with that idolatry.

These are things that appear to be of no great importance; and yet, if we do rightly consider, they express the same obedience as God required of His people Israel when they should be carried to Babylon. He gave charge unto them that, when they should see the Babylonians worship their gods of gold, silver, metal, and wood, they should say, "The gods that have not made the heaven and the earth shall perish from the heaven, and out of the earth."²

As far as the mass was concerned, Knox and the Scottish Reformers were no more prepared to incur "guilt or stain either by look, access or vicinity" than was Calvin.

(1) Skipper and Lieutenant.

(2) History p107.

Book Reviews

NAPHTALI PRESS, Volume 1, Number 1: Christopher Coldwell (Ed.)

The editor and advisory board of Naphtali Press are to be congratulated on producing an anthology of Presbyterian and Reformed literature of which the number under review is the first issue. The series promises to provide a veritable feast of sound and edifying works from spiritual giants of the past. The present issue contains three sermons by Alexander Henderson, three by James Durham on death and a commentary on the first seventeen verses of the first chapter of Colossians by Paul Bayne. We are grateful to our American friends for reviving the memories and works of those eminent servants of Christ who, under God, contributed so outstandingly to the consolidation of the Reformed Faith and the Presbyterian form of church government in Scotland. The sermons by Henderson were preached before the House of Commons and the House of Lords in the years 1643, 1644 and 1645. In reading them one is convinced that they could only be preached by one who was sensible, to a rare degree, of the majesty and holiness of God, the exceeding sinfulness of sin and the all sufficiency of Christ as the Saviour of His people.

It was said of Henderson that "while he lived, his chief desire and endeavour was to keep alive among the people the light of evangelical

religion and he is the man of his generation who did most to pass it on to us." Commenting on the fact that the Lord seals His testimony to His people by the sacraments and by His Spirit, Henderson says that the confidence that this is so will "carry us through all discouragements, because it makes us see greater things than the world. It opposes the wrath of God against the terrors of the world. This assures us of the presence of Christ in all our troubles, 'It is I; be not afraid;' the most terrible word to the enemy, the most comfortable to the godly. It persuades us that God cannot deny Himself, nor forsake His own cause; and for ourselves, that though this life and all things in it should fail us, yet our happiness awaits us."

Durham's sermons are all on the words of Revelation, chapter 14 verse 13. They are solemn expositions of scripture teaching on death and eternity. There is no dilution of the teaching of the Word of God on the awfulness and certainty of eternal perdition as the destiny of all who die Christless. Durham is no less scriptural when speaking of those who died united to Christ. In connection with that glorious state he says that "it (the understanding) shall have a full and satisfying knowledge of the great mystery of the adorable Trinity, as Christ assures His disciples. 'At that day ye shall know that I am in the Father.' The affections shall be made capacious to receive and shall be satisfied and filled with delight in the enjoyment of that clearly and distinctly known Object. It satisfies angels and must satisfy the spirits of just men made perfect; it makes them happy to behold and enjoy Him and the greatest happiness that the scripture speaks of, is to be in Christ's company beholding the glory that He has gotten from the Father."

Two volumes of the anthology have already been published and it is anticipated that the third will be completed during 1990. The agent in this country is Mr Neil MacLean, Bookroom Manager, Free Presbyterian Bookroom, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LE, from whom further information may be obtained. The annual subscription is £16. The series is worthy of the highest commendation and the present reviewer is confident that subscribers will feel amply rewarded.

D. McS.

MEDITATIONS ON THE LORD'S SUPPER. Rev. John Willison, Dundee. Reformation Press, 11 Churchill Drive, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis. Obtainable from F.P. Church Bookroom, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LE. £1.50.

John Willison (1680-1750) has been described as one of the bright

ornaments of the Church of Christ. As a minister of the Scottish Church he laboured first in Brechin and latterly in Dundee from 1718 to the time of his death. He took a keen interest in the questions which agitated the Church in his day, especially in the Marrow controversy, but he did not join the Seceders as he felt the constitution of the Church was still intact.

His published works show him to have been a faithful and spiritually minded minister of the Gospel where he displays "A feast of fat things and of wines on the less well refined."

As stated in the foreword his works have — sadly — been long out of print, and very difficult to obtain in the second hand market.

The booklet contains seventeen meditations on the Lord's Supper taken from his Sacramental Catechism (and not from Sacramental Meditations as such). Meditations one to nine are intended for communicants before partaking of The Supper, and ten to seventeen after partaking. These meditations show the high and solemn view Willison held of this ordinance, and reveal his own spiritual mindedness. We give a few quotes:— "O for the practical and experimental knowledge of Christ! Lord hide not thyself from me; stand not behind the wall, but show Thyself to me through the lattice of ordinances." "Lord I have a multitude of sins and miseries, but Thou hast a multitude of tender mercies. I have a deep and heinous guilt, but Thou has a deep fountain to wash it out. Behold one depth calleth to another, the depth of my misery to the depth of Thy mercy." "O whither am I going? The place is holy, the bread I am to eat is holy, the cup I am to drink is holy, and God, who is infinitely holy, is 'terrible from his holy places'." "O that I could sing a song of praise to my well-beloved; a song of His eternal love and glorious undertaking."

The publisher has done well to issue this work, especially in the present day when so many take a light view of this solemn ordinance and are carried away on a tide of sacramentalism. We recommend it to all who come to the Lord's Supper, or who intend to come, as setting out the frame of mind appropriate for this ordinance. We look forward to other selections from Willison's works from the same publisher.

R.K.M.

NOT GUILTY. John Appleby Grace Publications Trust, 139 Grosvenor Avenue, London. Distributed by Evangelical Press, 12 Wooler Street, Darlington. £1.95.

This small paperback of 71 pages (96 with the foreword by H. M. Carson) purports to be a resumé of Prof. James Buchanan's book "The Doc-

trine of Justification.” The book began as the second series of Cunningham Lectures delivered in 1866, and is regarded as one of the most significant of the Cunningham Lectures, and a worthy product of Scottish theology in its better days.

In the original work — republished recently in the U.K. (B.O.T.) and U.S.A. (Baker Book House) — Dr. Buchanan displays a masterly grasp of this fundamental doctrine of Scripture and of the believers hope — Justification by Faith, and therefore the place it must have in the preaching of the Gospel. The original work (Baker Edition) extends to over five hundred pages including notes to each lecture. It will therefore be appreciated that this abridgement has been achieved by considerable condensation of each lecture. Today the doctrine of Justification by Faith is a crucial issue on the Rome-Canterbury agenda, and hence the necessity for all to be thoroughly grounded in the history and Biblical foundations of this subject. This can only be achieved by careful reading of the original lectures. In the reviewer’s opinion this digest fails to present the doctrine of Justification in the way Dr. Buchanan has done and the most it can achieve is to send readers to the original volume which is eminently readable, intellectually satisfying, and doctrinally sound. We commend a study of Dr. Buchanan’s work to our readers, especially in the current theological climate.

R.K.M.

Notes and Comments

Strangeways Jail Riot

The prison authorities have come under strong criticism for allowing the jail riot at Strangeways Prison in Manchester to continue so long — from the 1st of April until almost the end of the month. The riot began in the chapel and spread to the rest of the prison which held 1500 prisoners. Within 18 hours, 1200 prisoners had been moved out, but it took ten days to bring 110 prisoners down from the roof. A hard core of prisoners held out for a longer time and only surrendered when they were isolated on the roof. One prisoner died as a result of injuries received. During the disturbance the prison was wrecked by the inmates and this went on until the seige ended. Lord Justice Woolf has been appointed to look into the whole affair. This event has highlighted the serious overcrowding of prisons at present. Because of this many come out of prison more hardened as criminals than when they went in. The segregation of different types of prisoners seems to be essential. It may be necessary to have smaller prisons

where prisoners can be properly supervised. The reason why the prison population is so large should be looked into by the authorities. They might well look into the question as to which of the Churches in Britain contributes most to the prison population. It is very likely that a genuine study would reveal that the Roman Catholic Church is responsible for contributing the highest percentage of offenders and criminals. A genuine study of crime statistics, and their cause, might well reveal, also that the evil programmes sometimes shown on television beget criminal activities. The drink trade and longer licensing hours also make their own contribution to crimes of violence.

Sabbath Trading Law

At the end of April a further attempt was made to relax the Sabbath Trading Laws. The Bill was introduced by Mr James Couchman who said that about 60,000 shops were open every 'Sunday', most of them selling goods that were illegal, yet there were only some 400 prosecutions a year. A Labour member described the Bill as the thin edge of a very damaging wedge. She also said that the number of people who worked on 'Sundays' should be kept to a minimum. Rev. Wm. McCrea, Ulster, said that as a minister of the gospel he objected to the Bill. Referring to the practice of prayers in the House of Commons each day, he said, that they were seeking God's blessing on their deliberations. Now they were seeking by this Bill to flout God's law and taking the retrograde step of destroying the Sabbath day. "Any country," he said, "that leaves God out will not enjoy God's blessing." The Bill was talked out.

Easter Cross in Dingwall

According to a Press Report, three Dingwall churches united in a ceremony in which a large Easter Cross was carried through the town. A priest and two ministers with some people from their churches walked from the Roman Catholic Church to Mitchell Hill in a Good Friday commemoration. There a 15 minute service was held. The priest found it a very moving experience. He also thought it made an impression on the people of the town. If the carrying of a wooden cross in a procession led by an RC priest, an episcopal dean, and a Church of Scotland minister can impress people, then they are easily impressed. It appears to be but the resuscitation of the dregs of Romanism from which the Reformation delivered Scotland. Sad day for Dingwall that such tomfoolery is tolerated in a town, once famous for the proclamation of the Gospel by such noted servants of Christ as Dr. Alexander Stewart and Dr. John Kennedy.

Embryo Bill

The House of Commons gave its sanction to research on embryos up to 14 days old. It also reduced the time for abortions from 28 to 24 weeks. The British Medical Association supported this recommendation. The latest medical advances show that foetal viability is often possible before 28 weeks, but not substantially possible at less than 24 weeks.

The laws that have been passed in the House of Commons are man-made laws, but are in conflict with the laws of God. So far as men are concerned, it is clear that expendable fetuses have been the order of the day since the legalisation of abortions. It is but a logical step from there to expendable embryos. We have no reason to be surprised what a generation which is wise in its own eyes will do: it is but a reflection of the truth that this is a generation of God's wrath. What contradictions such a generation can swallow — a programme for infertility at one end of the scale and of easy abortion at the other end! Only a return to Biblical standards can deliver the nation from its sad plight.

Moderator elect's Antipathy to Fundamentalists

The Moderator-elect of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland has delivered a strong attack on Christian fundamentalism. Rev. Prof. Robert Davidson, Principal of Trinity College, Glasgow, said, according to a Press Report, that he was worried about the growth of fundamentalism within the Church. His view was that their position was based on a false attitude to the Bible. He is reported to have said: "They make claims about the Bible being some kind of infallible book, which is just not supported by the evidence." He also questioned the omission of the Apocrypha from the Bible, saying that some of its books were of more value than those of the Bible. Perhaps the Moderator-elect gives the clue to his adoption of this mode of thinking when he says that he had once been attracted to fundamentalism but was glad that he came out of it. Evangelical religion never has had such inveterate enemies as those who once professed it and then abandoned it, so this may explain Prof. Davidson's antipathy to it. Surely it is a sad day when this is the kind of man that the Church of Scotland delights to honour — one who by his own expressed views shows that he has never come to saving belief of the truth as it is in Jesus. May the Moderator-elect's eyes yet be opened to see the glory of the Divine Redeemer and to receive the infallible divine revelation in the Scriptures of truth where that glory is revealed. Otherwise Prof. Davidson must remain a blind leader of the blind, as so many of his predecessors in office have been.

Church Notes

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Outer Isles: At Stornoway on 12th June at 12 noon.

Zimbabwe: At Bulawayo on 12th June at 2 p.m.

Western: At Laide on 19th June at 6 p.m.

Southern: At Glasgow on 19th June at 6 p.m.

Skye: At Portree on 26th June at 11 a.m.

Northern: At Dingwall on 26th June at 2 p.m.

Urgent Appeal for Foreign Mission Staff

At Ingwenya, at John Tallach Secondary School, there is an urgent need for teachers having Mathematics or Science at degree level. Persons not having teacher training will be acceptable.

At Sengera in Kisii Province in Kenya there is urgent need for a doctor or nurse to supervise the setting up and running of the Hospital Clinic which has recently been built.

Again we would urge suitably qualified persons to give prayerful consideration to the above appeal. Anyone willing to respond to these needs should contact the Clerk to the Foreign Missions Committee, Rev. Dr. J. R. Tallach, Free Presbyterian Manse, Raasay, Kyle, IV40 8PB.

On Mission Furlough

Miss Jessie Coote from Mbumba Mission Hospital arrived home in April for a period of leave. Miss Marion Graham also arrived home for a short visit. Due to illness her return to the Mission was delayed. Miss Etta MacLennan has also returned home on leave. We trust that the period of home leave will prove reinvigorating for each of these members of the Staff so that they will return refreshed to Africa to undertake anew the many burdens which they have to bear.

Acknowledgement of Donations

The General Treasurer acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:—

Eastern Europe: R. & M.R., Foindle £150; I.D.L., Glasgow £100; R.M. & M.M., Rhuvolt £100 (last three per D.A.R.). N.M.B. Stornoway, Expenses E. Europe £50; Matt 28: 19, 20, N.Z. £200; R.&L. MacB., Romanian Expenses £20; Friend, Raasay £100; Friend, Raasay £100 — last two for Bibles for Romania, per TR RM; Friend, Edinburgh £20; A.N., Gairloch £100; Friend, Stornoway £50; Friends, Edinburgh £20 (last three per D.A.R.); Friend, Wick for Romania £50; Anon., Canada, Bibles for Europe C\$100.

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Larne: Friend, Inverness per G.G.H. £10; Envelope in plate £50 (£25 to Mbumba and £25 to Congregation).

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Shieldaig: Anon., Inverness £25 for Congr. Fds; Anon., £10; Anon., £5, both for Bibles for Eastern Europe; Anon., £100 for Sust. Fd, in grateful memory of a loving husband and father.

Stirling: Anon., £20 for Comm. Exps per Mrs Miller.

Stornoway: J. & K. £20 for Congr. Fds; Friend, N.T. £10 where most needed, both per Rev. J. MacLeod; Anon., £10 for Comm. Exps (in Church Plate).

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