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Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy

The Sabbath is a creation ordinance. It was instituted by God at the beginning of the world's history and was intended for man's spiritual, moral, mental and physical good. We are told in the Word of God that God "rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made." It pleased God in His infinite wisdom to set apart one day from all the other days of the week as a day of rest and worship for man. None knew man's need as God did, and He saw that the keeping holy to God of one day in the week for the worship and service of God would tend to man's highest good. The fact that it was given to man as a day specially dedicated to the worship of God of necessity made it the queen of all the days of the week. And man, as long as he retained his unfallen state, counted it so and looked forward to its weekly recurrence.

As we begin another year it becomes us to remember anew to the praise of God this privilege which he has bestowed upon us and upon all mankind. Men have an inalienable right to the Sabbath day for the worship and service of God. It is a high privilege which God has given to men and ought to be highly valued as one of the most precious gifts that God has bestowed upon mankind. Our Creator is in this way our Benefactor and we ought to recognise it and render thanks to the Lord for His goodness in this provision for the children of men. In a life of seventy years in this world a person enjoys ten years of Sabbaths. God has so ordered it and, if men used this privilege aright, what a blessing it would be to them.

This creation ordinance of the Sabbath came to be enshrined in the ten Commandments given by God on Mount Sinai to Moses for His people Israel. The two tables of the law were written with the finger of God and the Commandments stand or fall together. If men break one of the Commandments of God they are guilty of all. They are found law-breakers.

In our day men think they can discard the Fourth Commandment without affecting any of the other Commandments. Yet how evident it is that, when men begin to take liberties with the Sabbath day, before long they are taking liberties with the other Commandments as well. The unrestrained licence which men demand in our day with regard to the Sabbath day has its repercussions in every department of man's life in this world. Let us cast off the fear of God, man says, and before long the consequences of such an attitude are only too transparent. Men hold up their hands in horror at the violence and murder and other evils which have broken out in the land but do not recognise that much of it may be attributed to the rejection by men of the law of the Sabbath. The law of the Sabbath is a door which, if once broken through, lets in a multitude of other evils.

Men need to be reminded of the law of the Sabbath. This commandment begins with the word "Remember" because of man's forgetfulness of it. The law itself is a weekly reminder to men that they are not their own rulers but are subject to the rule and authority of the God of heaven. Fallen man would be wiser than God and set up his own law by establishing the rules which he thinks are a sufficient guide for his life, whether or not these rules may be in opposition to the rules which God has set up in His law. Such is the folly of man! Yet man has to learn either by bitter experience or by judgment, as Nebuchadnezzar had to learn in his day, that there is a God in heaven that "doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" Men may fight against God and do fight against Him, and condemn the Most High, and trample under their feet the law of Heaven, but a day of reckoning is coming when men will be answerable to God for the liberties they have taken with His holy law. Well may men reflect upon this and tremble at the thought of it. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." There will be no escape for men in the day of Judgment from the consequences of their dishonouring of the law of God.

The Sabbath has been given to men for rest from the burdens of other days, so that they may be free to be taken up with the things that belong to the glory of God and the good of their never-dying souls. Only such time as has to be occupied in the works of necessity and mercy is to be otherwise employed. The things belonging to the Sabbath day are as high above the things of this world as the heavens are above the earth. God is giving men a special opportunity of being taken up with those things which belong to His kingdom and glory. From having his mind set for six days of the week on the things of this world, man has the opportunity

on God's holy day of having his mind lifted up above the things of earth, above the things that are seen and temporal, to those things which are unseen and eternal and which can only be viewed by the eye of faith. These are things that are heavenly and in the contemplation of them, the soul is drawn out to them and ravished by them.

We may ask what is the substance of those things with which the soul may be taken up on the Sabbath Day. It is the revelation of the glory of God in Jesus Christ. It is in this that the exercised soul finds what is substantial and real. It is a revelation of the mercy and love of God in Jesus Christ to sinners, ready to perish, and undeserving of the least favour of the God of heaven. The soul is led into the wonder of redeeming love and this opens up an ocean-fulness of wonder which it will take an eternity fully to unveil. The believing soul is led into the scheme of redemption which infinite wisdom devised, and sees in it how God can be just and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. The soul is brought to wonder at the revelation given of the Divine Redeemer as the One who satisfied all the claims of the divine law and justice in the room and stead of the guilty. Sinners had so dishonoured that law and here One comes who is willing to restore that which He took not away — and do it in such a way that Heaven would be eternally satisfied with it. What glory is opened up for the soul in the atoning death of the Lamb of God as He stood where His people should have stood — the place of condemnation — and there did bear in His holy soul and body the pains of hell on the accursed tree in order that His people might go free. So, too, is the soul led into the wonder of electing love, the fountain from which all other blessings flow. Why me? Why me? the soul says in the light of revelation of electing love when they remember that they, too, deserved to die eternally. And how much more is the soul led into, including Christ's resurrection, ascension and continual intercession at God's right hand. How few must the Sabbaths be, even of those who live to enjoy ten years of Sabbaths in this world, for the contemplation of things so glorious, so divine. The whole work of the Spirit of God in the application of redemption would of itself afford ample scope for ten years of contemplation, yea, for an eternity of it.

In the light of all this how miserable, how sordid is the life of those who know nothing of the spiritual rest and spiritual enjoyment of one Sabbath day in time. How blind are such to the exhortation of God in His Word through His servant Isaiah! — "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure of my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speak-

ing thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it." How many live and die without experiencing the fulfilment of that promise, only because they refuse to honour this commandment of the law of God, and live in rejection of the mercy and love of God as revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us then as we begin another year seek to honour this Commandment — Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy — as well as all the other commandments of the law of God. Yet let us not base our acceptance with God upon our keeping of the divine law but upon that perfect keeping of the law by Christ and the infinite satisfaction He rendered to offended justice. And being justified by His grace let us seek to honour the Lord in the keeping of his Commandments out of love to Him who, as His people can say, loved us and gave Himself for us, and who says to all His people, "If ye love Me, keep my Commandments." And do we not have an additional reason for keeping holy to God the Sabbath day by the change in the Sabbath from the seventh day to the first day of the week to commemorate the rising again from the dead of the Son of man.

Notes of Lecture

by Rev. Donald Macfarlane

(Delivered at Portree on 14th March, 1898)

Josiah's Reformation — 2 Chronicles 24: 1,2

The Word of God gives us the history of His cause in the past. Sometimes it was very low, and when it was so low that there was none to help His people, then the Lord began to revive it. In the days of Josiah it was very low. His grandfather, Manasseh, had brought this about by his sin against God. Hezekiah, his father, had left the cause in a flourishing condition at his death. And in this condition it was delivered to Manasseh when he succeeded his father on the throne. Manasseh was bound to keep it in this condition, but this he did not do. Instead of doing so, he began to set up new ways of worship to suit his own taste. Perhaps he would not say that Hezekiah was not a godly man, but he would contend that the things that suited in his father's time would not do in his generation. So he pulled down what his father had set up. He set up another order of things instead, and he borrowed his new order from the idolatrous customs of the heathen around him. He set up the image of Baal in the

house of the Lord. Not only was it the case that he went as far as the heathen away from God, but he actually led his people further away from God than the very heathen.

Let us now see how he acted when he found out that the way of transgressors is hard. He took pains to pull down what he had built up with his own hands. He had first been at the pains of pulling down what his godly father had built up, and these he had built up according to his own inventions. Now, however, he had to pull down what he had spent a lifetime in building up, and to build up what he had spent his days in pulling down. Such are the troublous ways of sin. Matters would have been all right had he continued them as he had found them. Though Manasseh got repentance, and his soul was saved, the Lord kept his sins in remembrance, and though he did his utmost after his conversion to build up, yet his son Amon followed the evil example of Manasseh's earlier days, and pulled down the cause of God again. Men in this generation are busy at work pulling down what our fathers built up. See, although Hezekiah left the cause of God prosperous, others pulled it down. So with the men of this age, after our fathers laid the foundations, their sons attempt to raze them. That Manasseh got repentance and pardon cannot afford them the slightest excuse for their conduct. He got repentance, and is in glory, but the evil of his rebellion against God, continued after his death, and many poor souls were brought by its means to the pit of ruin.

Amon succeeded Manasseh, and he reigned for only two years, yet he spent them in doing what he could to injure and to overthrow the worship and kingdom of God. Satan did not know how short Amon's reign was to be, but had he known it he could not have asked him to undertake any work worse than what he put his hands to. For he spent his short reign in trying to overthrow the cause of God.

But when the Lord has a work to do, He raises up fit instruments to do it. It is a bad sign for the generation when wicked kings are raised up. Saul was given to the children of Israel in judgment. On the other hand, when good is intended for a country — when a kingdom is to be reformed — the Lord raises up men in high position to do His work. The poor and humble ones do not reform whole kingdoms. They may be owned and blessed for local reformation and the advance of Christ's cause in their own neighbourhood, but a national reformation is not a case of rain falling on one city and not falling on another. The shower is generally all over the land when the land is to be turned to God.

From the time of David and Solomon, Israel had not the privilege of

godly rulers. On the death of Solomon the ten tribes revolted from the house of David and followed Jeroboam and his sin. It was a great blessing that Judah enjoyed when the Most High raised up over the southern kingdom a number of godly kings, and after times of decay and backsliding He raised up reforming kings. Of these was Josiah.

There are two things which are worthy of notice regarding this good king: his personal character and the good work he did in his day.

There is a very high character given him in the Word of God. "And like unto him there was no king before him that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses, neither after him arose there any like him." — (2 Kings 23: 25). "And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the ways of David his father, and declined neither to the right hand, nor to the left." — (2 Chron. 34: 2). This is the character given him, not by himself or by a fellow-creature, but by the Lord who knows the heart. There were other good kings in Judah, but none like unto Josiah, either before or after him. He was made good, and then he did good. "He did that which is good in the sight of the Lord." It is taken notice of that he declined neither to the right hand, nor to the left. He followed the Lord in the straight way of His commandments. "The ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them." — (Hos. 14: 9). It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps, but the Lord led him, and kept him. Josiah was born into the world like other men, a sinner, but he was "born again" when young. Many of those whom the Lord makes eminently useful in the church and kingdom are converted in their youth. Indeed, the most of those saved in any generation are effectually called before they are old. Comparatively few are brought into the kingdom of grace when they attain to old age, though the door of mercy is open, so far as we know, till death. Josiah began to reign when he was eight years of age, and whatever secret strivings he may have experienced in his boyhood, not till he was sixteen years do we see any indication of a saving change. At that age we are told that "he began to seek after the God of David his father". Though the son of a wicked father, who set a bad example before him, the Spirit of God found access to his soul, and began a good work in him. The Spirit works by the use of means and instruments. Although the book of the law was lost, it is probable that there were extracts of it among the people whereby the young prince might acquire as much knowledge of his lost condition and the way of salvation as was blessed to him. Besides, there were at least two eminent prophets in the land — Jeremiah and Zephaniah — whose teaching he

may have heard. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." One thing we may be sure of that the Word of the Lord was used in his conversion. There was oral teaching by the prophets, besides what was written in the book of the law. The prophets spake by the inspiration of the Spirit. The first indication of the work of the Spirit in Josiah was that he, like Saul of Tarsus, began to pray. "Behold, he prayeth." There were many others in the land of Judah who prayed to gods who could neither hear nor help them, but this young king prayed to "the God of David his father." He not only prayed to Him for mercy, like the publican, but he sought after Him, sought to know Him as his covenant God, to love and obey Him. The secret of his success afterwards lay in his unfeigned piety, his knowledge of God, and his love to Him. He was made good before he was used to do good. Those whom the Lord makes instruments for good to others, whether they are kings or ministers of the gospel, He prepares them by His grace. Kings need grace for their work as well as prophets. "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of the Lord." (2 Sam. 23: 3). Josiah began to rule over men, and he ruled in the fear of the Lord. He is a good example for all young people to follow, whatever station in society they occupy, whether they be kings or subjects. And it was a great privilege to the Church and the State that a God-fearing king was set over them. The cause of the Lord in a nation is very much according to the people composing the nation, and a great deal depends upon the rulers of the people. When there was a good king in Israel and Judah the cause prospered, but when there was a bad king it declined. And so it is still. Rulers have a great influence over the people either for good or evil. When the glorious days, or rather years, of the millennium shall come, kings shall be nursing fathers, and queens nursing mothers to the Church.

Josiah was not only a man of eminent piety, but he was a man who gave himself wholly to the work to which he was called. All he did, he did it "with all his heart", his heart was in the work as well as his hand. "And with all his soul," his whole soul was in what he did. "And with all his might," he spared not himself, but exerted all the spiritual and natural energy that the Lord bestowed upon him. He was willing to spend, and be spent for the cause of truth and righteousness. The rule by which he did everything was the will of God made known to him in His Word. So it is recorded of him that "he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord". He was not actuated by public opinion, but by "thus saith the Lord". Many do some good actions — good as to the matter of them — that they may receive the applause of their fellow-men, but Josiah acted

so as to receive the approval of God. He acted in his responsible calling as one who had to give an account of his stewardship. "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ".

If the people of God knew that they were to have a ruler who feared God for such a time, it would be a source of great comfort to them. They would be pleased that a long reign was before him. When he was only eight years on the throne he began to seek the God of David his father. It was a beautiful sight to see the youthful king praying at the age of sixteen, not to idols, but to the Lord God of his fathers. The Word of God gives no good report of those that do not seek God whether they are old or young. Its command, and the example of such as Josiah, have this message, however, to convey — "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near." This godly king at the age of sixteen was an example to old and young alike. It would cheer and comfort his heart to hear of others, whether old or young, that were seeking the Lord. Such was the mind of John when he said that he had no greater joy than to know that his children walked in the truth. He ought to be an example, not only to people in general, but also to rulers. Most of them, however, fail to profit from his example. They prefer in our times to lead the people to all kinds of vanity and folly. This was not the course Josiah pursued. He was not alone concerned for his own personal salvation. He was concerned about his example and its influence. He prayed as Saul of Tarsus prayed for himself, but this did not satisfy him. In the calling in which he was called, he put the matter thus to himself — "I must act according to my opportunities. They are many, and I am responsible for the use I make of them. I will put them to the best advantage. I must rule in the fear of God." His godliness broke out in the calling in which he was called. He began to be concerned for his people that they too should fear God. He looked to see how they were, and he found the whole land full of idolatry. The love of Christ works like itself in all ages. When it sets a soul aflame he begins to ask himself, "How are my friends? How are my neighbours? How is my country?" Before you were converted your thought corresponded with Cain's words, "Am I my brother's keeper?" but now you look to see how godliness fares in the town or country in which you live.

When he looked out and saw the state of the land he had cause to rend his clothes and weep. In the days of Manasseh or Amon, the king might look to see if the people had theatres, public parks, and places of amusement. Josiah's interest, however, was in other things. He came out among his people to see how the cause of God prospered among them. When

he did look, he saw, like Paul at Athens, many altars, but they were not to the God of Israel. If you read the twenty-third chapter of Second Kings you will see in what a terrible state the land was. Its state, however, did not check his reforming good. He did not begin to say, "I must not begin to meddle with matters as they are, or I shall displease men everywhere." He said rather, "I must break down every altar and abomination within my kingdom."

When he undertook the task of reforming his kingdom his work was two-fold. On the one hand it was destructive, on the other hand it was constructive. Some might be disposed to say to him — "You may set up the worship of God without pulling down these idols." His reply would be — "What concord is there between Christ and Belial, between the temple of God and idols?" Had this course been adopted idolatry would soon be set up again, for so it was in the reigns that went before. You see the altar of Jeroboam at Bethel had not been pulled down during all the preceding reigns. Idolatry is like a tree. Its branches may be whipped off, but unless it will be uprooted it will still live and grow.

Josiah did not send other people to do this work and stay himself idly at home. No, he did not trust this work to his servants. He burned the bones of the priests on their altar, and you may see he himself was present by the account of his coming to the grave of the prophet that came from the land of Judah. He told them to let this grave alone. As surely as it is the duty of fathers to see the promotion of the fear of God in their families, so surely is it the duty of kings to attend to the cause of Christ in their kingdoms. But if Josiah had lived in our days he would get many a minister to say to him — "You have no right as a civil magistrate to take anything to do with the house of God. You have as much right to keep up the Papacy or Mohammedanism as the cause of Christ." Josiah was not a disestablisher. Any argument will satisfy those who have not the cause of Christ at heart. Cain said — "Am I my brother's keeper?" as though he had required that to be told to him. "No one," he said, "said to me that I was my brother's keeper," and so he slew him. Josiah was thorough-going in his reform. When Manasseh repented, he threw out of the city the idols and altars which he had made in the days of his ignorance, but Josiah beat them into small dust, and went with it to Bethel, as though he said — "It was here idolatry began, and I am not throwing the dust of your idolatry in your face." There are places in this land that were centres of declension from God, and from generation to generation you scarcely hear of a soul converted in these places. Why? The wrath of God rests upon them. Take you good care that forsaking God will not

begin at your house lest His wrath settle down upon your house and family.

When the Spirit searches out sins He goes to the root. He goes to the garden of Eden where sin began. "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners." By the sin of one many have fallen. Some might merely say, "How wicked the land is." Another might add, "I remember when there were only two idols in it," but Josiah went behind present appearances to the sin of Jeroboam, who made Israel to sin all these sins. If that was a fountain poisoned, and you saw some who drank from its streams and were poisoned, you would not halt at the streams, you would trace the poison to the fountain. So he who first set up idolatry was the fountain of the nation's idolatry. However small the sin may be in its beginning, the Lord will bring back the ashes of idolatry to that place. When did such declension begin in this land? When men began to introduce uninspired hymns into the worship of God. We would seek to bring the ashes and cast them upon those that began the sin. Josiah would carry his own share of the ashes, and so do you. Young men, young women, old men, old women, and say to those who would lead you astray, "Do not come any nearer me".

Josiah, however, did not stop at the idols. He went on to the teachers of the people. When the displeasure of God is shown to a people, unfaithful teachers are placed over their heads. In Josiah's time religious leaders were unfaithful. Before his time there had been such also. There were the living and the dead, and they were each dealt with after their own fashion. In times of declension any sort of teachers will do, men that will not be too hard on us or rebuke us. I heard of a certain minister who conciliated the young men of his congregation by appearing among them on the first Saturday afternoon he was among them to join in their silly sports. This conduct would suit Manasseh and Amon very well.

Do you ask, however, "What shall we do when we have no godly ministers in our midst?" Why, keep to the praying men. Have nothing to do with men who will suffer you to trample on the Lord's day. This is full of instruction alike for speakers and hearers. Some who were not of the tribe of Levi had been put into the priesthood. What did Josiah do with them? He killed them, and burned them upon the altars. God commanded him to do this, but this is not now to be done literally. Only God will burn such offenders eternally. In reforming the Church, it is right to condemn not only those who are still alive who had a hand in corrupting it, but also those who are dead. We are not, indeed, to raise their bones out of the grave and burn them literally, as this king did, but to raise them from their graves by bringing to the remembrance of our hearers

the evil they had done to the cause of God, and burning their bones by the fire of God's Word. "Is not my word like as a fire" — (Jer. 23: 29). What did he do with the sons of Levi? He put them out of their office, but showed his mercy in this that he ordered them to be fed while they lived. They were in office only for their back and belly, and what they wanted they got, but they got no authority to put their finger to the cause of Christ. If he lived today he would find many ministers and elders he might put out of office. Many are in office that they may get a piece of bread, and if they get their bread they are content. If a Josiah were to rise up in our land, many, if they got their living, would be content to give up their office. When people call such men to be their pastors, they virtually say, "We ask you to keep us from escaping from the devil's camp. We ask you to come to keep up from Christ, and to make sure that we will be lost forever."

But were not some of these deceivers dead? Yes. So the next question arose, "Where are their graves?" Perhaps some old man led Josiah to their graves. Their bones were raised up. "Where now are the altars where they sacrificed?" They are in yonder town. The bones must be brought there and burned on their altars. There was one grave undisturbed, that of the prophet from Judah who had prophesied about the altar. "He cried against the altar in the word of the Lord, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the Lord; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee." — (1 Kings 13: 2). The wicked king tried to kill him, but was prevented. Three hundred and fifty years had now passed since the time that God told by his prophet that Josiah should arise and do these things. In the meanwhile there had been several small reformatations in the land of Judah, but none so thorough as this one.

He now comes to the temple. What did he find there? Men were worshipping the sun, moon and stars. There were prophets in Judah, Jeremiah, &c, but see how low a land may come in a short time. Leave Skye for a hundred years without a Bible, and you would find it at the end of that period like a heathen land. What should this teach you and me? "Hold fast that which thou hast that no man take thy crown." But Josiah turned all idols out of the house of God, for "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." What did they find in the house? The book of the law of God. The Highlands of Scotland were long without the Scriptures, and how were they then? In utter darkness. This was not like the ark. It was lost among the Philistines, but the book of the law was lost in the house

of God. It is a fearful thing when the law of God is lost in the Church. Until this happened idolatry could not be set up in the temple. when the rule was lost, the worship went astray. Had the law been kept these things could not take place. Here is teaching for us. In a sense the Bible is lost in our days. People may say we have the Bible, we did not take a part of Isaiah or the Song of Songs away. They might say the same thing. The law was *in* the temple, but at the same time it was lost there. It was lost under the rubbish that was heaped over it. It is hid from the eyes of many in our time, but the Lord be praised, not from the eyes of all. You may ask who have lost it? The higher critics have. More also have lost it who misinterpret its teaching about man's fall, and his hopeless ruin in an undone eternity and other fundamental doctrines. We don't know how the book of the law was lost. Some think it was hid to preserve it, others that it was thrown away. I believe the latter to be the true explanation. Though it was lost, it was not lost irrecoverably, for the Word of the Lord endures for ever. So it was found again. By whom? By Hilkiah, a godly man, who found it, and was delighted with what he found. Who will recover the Bible when it is lost? The very class of men by whom it was lost. The Almighty, as it were, says to Satan, "If your ministers lost my word, I will find it by my ministers." Luther was one of those that found the lost Bible. Hilkiah found the book, and not the men that were removing the rubbish. If ministers were the means of losing the book, other ministers found it. When was it found? Not in the days of Manasseh, not in the days of Amon, not till they began to clear the rubbish out of the temple. It will be found again in Scotland and England when men will begin to cleanse the house of God.

If the Lord will have mercy on your soul, it will be with you as it was with Hilkiah. You will have to say, "I have found the word of God." This book was brought before the king, and he rent his clothes. If you found this word, you did like Josiah, you looked back upon your way in the valley and rent your clothes. Josiah then gathered the elders, and they decided that all the people, small and great, should be gathered into the purified temple. Why was this decided on? In order that the king might read it to the people. How beautiful! Had there been plenty copies of it, he would have handed one to all the young. But is this what our rulers have done to the young? Alas, no. They have taken the Scriptures out of their educational code. Is it not tolerated in the schools? Yes. But it has no fixed standing place in our public training system. A minister told us that once at the end of an examination he proceeded to conclude with prayer, but the inspector tried to stop him. He shook him off, and prayed.

When he was done, the inspector asked him, "What have you now done? You have made me break the law."

The late Dr. Wylie, who was a keen observer of how the nation was forsaking the Lord, mentions in his writings that a certain statesman said that there was a large tree with three branches which would require to be cut down before any good could come to the nation. The tree was "Protestant ascendancy," and two of its branches were, (first) the place the Bible had in the schools and (second), the establishment of the Protestant religion. These branches were to be cut down, not simultaneously, but one at a time. So the first was attacked, and the Bible was put out of the schools. This branch was cut off. Is this from God or from Satan? The Bible is only tolerated or suffered to be in a corner — will the Lord not take vengeance on such a nation as this? Men are now busy sawing at the second branch, but have not sawn it yet. When the first branch was being hewn off, ministers of the gospel went hand in hand with the ungodly. "If you cannot tear the Bible out of the children's hands we will help you." I knew a godly minister who had a hand in this work. When after the change, he went to examine a school and found ignorance, where once on a time he would find intelligent acquaintance with the Scriptures, he sat down and wept at the fruit of the policy he had supported.

What a black cloud overhangs this nation, now that the Bible is out of the hands of the children! What has been given in its place? Vain songs instead of the psalms of David are sung by the children. But Josiah went into a covenant along with the whole of the people. We endeavoured to do the same in our day — we entered a bond that we would have nothing to do with anything but the Word of God. Many cried out against this and even ministers from the pulpits spoke of the evil. But what was the evil? Was it because, like Josiah and the people, we were going to follow the Lord according to His word, to keep His commandments and His testimonies, and His statutes, with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our might?

Application. — Those people whom we have been considering, are long since in eternity. Several in everlasting happiness, others in everlasting misery. The kingdom of Judah has no existence among the nations of the world. To us the passage of Scripture we have been endeavouring to meditate upon speaks. It becomes us then to ask, — What is the state of our nation? What is the state of our Church? and what is the state of our souls? These are important questions, but they are questions which we must face now if we would, as responsible creatures, render our account with joy at the last day. And there is none of these questions but

we are bound to consider whatever our station in society is.

(1) Then, what is the state of our nation? We as a nation have been like Israel and Judah, highly favoured by the Lord. Has He not, delivered us from the heathen idolatry under which our forefathers had been before the light of the Gospel shone on our land? Our forefathers worshipped all the hosts of heaven before the Lord in His sovereign mercy sent us His Word, and servants to show us the way of salvation by Jesus Christ. Has not this nation been constituted, through the power of the Gospel, a Christian kingdom, whose laws have been founded on the Word of God? Have we not entered into a solemn covenant with God that we would keep His commandments, His testimonies, and His statutes? What are we now? Just like Israel and Judah — covenant breakers, and trampling upon the laws of the Holy One of Israel. This nation is guilty of making new laws to profane the holy Sabbath of God, and other commandments, which they vowed to keep. The surest way of pulling down a house is to undermine the foundation. The law of God is the foundation on which our kingdom has been established; and when we see the rulers of the nation doing all in their power to undermine that foundation, we may expect that the superstructure will fall. Unless we as a nation return to the law of the Lord, as sure as the kingdom of Israel and Judah fell, we shall fall. The Bible has been the means of making the British Empire so great and powerful. The same book will make it small and weak, if national repentance prevent not.

(2) What is the state of our Church? I do not mean by the Church any one branch of the visible Church, but the visible Church as a whole, and especially the several branches of it in our own kingdom. We are interested in the cause of God throughout the world, but we must begin at home. Unless we are right at home little good can we do abroad. Then what is the state of the several branches of the Church in our nation? The state of any Church may be known by the place the fundamental doctrines of the Word of God have in its teaching. Now it is evident that in many denominations these important doctrines have not the same place in their teaching which they once had. Are the doctrines concerning the state of man by nature, as dead in trespasses and sins, the vicarious death of Christ in the room of His people, the work of the Holy Spirit in applying redemption, justification by faith through the righteousness of Christ alone, the final perseverance of the saints and the electing love of God from which all covenant blessings flow, are these doctrines held forth on the banner the Churches set up before the people? And what also of the infallibility and inspiration of the Scriptures as the word of the living God? On the

contrary, these are denied, and men are following on almost every hand Popish and rationalistic doctrines and tenets. "Remove not the old landmark: and enter not into the fields of the fatherless: for their redeemer is mighty; he shall plead their cause with thee." — (Prov. 23: 10, 11).

(3) What is the state of our souls? "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul." He that knew the value of the soul put this question to show how trifling all earthly things would appear when the soul is lost. Man's soul by nature is full of corruption and idolatry, and requires to be inwardly purged and renewed by the Holy Ghost. Let us ask ourselves seriously and in the sight of God, has this change taken place in us. If so, all shall be well at last. If not, now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"

"Jesus Christ, the same Yesterday, and To-day and for Ever"

by Rev. James S. Sinclair

These memorable words are suitable as a subject of meditation while we stand upon the threshold of a new year. They are suitable for meditation at all times, but none the less so at this season when we are reminded that "we spend our years as a tale that is told." The things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are unseen are eternal. It would be well that, amidst the changing currents of a passing world, we should cast anchor in the unseen and eternal. It is there the only sure anchorage is to be found, namely, within the veil whither the forerunner of the Church is entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. Men in their natural state are wholly engrossed with the fleeting things of time and sense, and have little thought of eternity. But when the Spirit of God comes in awakening power, the concerns of eternity become all-important. The soul, sensible of its lost and perishing condition, feels the overwhelming necessity of a sure and certain hope beyond death and the grave, and will not find satisfying and abiding rest until it is savingly united to Jesus Christ, the rock against which the gates of hell shall never prevail.

"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." These words proclaim the eternity and unchangableness of the great Head of the Church. He is the same in the past, the present, and the future, and He shall not fail nor be discouraged till He bring forth judgment unto

victory. He is eternal in His person, unchangeable in His power, and faithful in His promises at all times and under all conditions of the Church's history.

Jesus Christ is eternal in His person. He is called Jesus because He is the Saviour of His people. "Thou shalt call His name Jesus: for he shall save His people from their sins." — (Matt. 1: 21). It is also written, "They shall call his name Emmanuel; which being interpreted, is God with us." (v. 23). Jesus Christ is therefore God over all blessed for ever, and the words of the Psalmist may be appropriately addressed to Him, "Even from everlasting to everlasting thou are God." — (Psalm 90: 2). He is the same in the yesterday of a past eternity as He is in the to-day of a present time, and as He shall be in the forever of a coming eternity. He created all things at the beginning. "The Word was with God and was God." All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." — (John 1: 3). It was He who appeared as the angel of the covenant to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It was He who followed the children of Israel through the wilderness. "They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ." — (1 Cor. 10: 4). It was He who revealed Himself to Isaiah in the temple. There Isaiah saw His glory, and received his own prophetic commission. It is this same glorious Person to whom the prophecies and the promises, the rites and ceremonies of the older dispensation bear witness. He is the promised Shiloh unto whom shall "the gathering of the people be." He is "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." The law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms speak concerning Him.

It is the same eternal Person who appeared in the flesh. "When the fulness of the time was come God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." (Gal. 4: 4, 5). The eternal Word was made flesh. He veiled His Divine glory for a season, but still He was "the Son of man which is in heaven." He assumed a created human nature, but ceased not to be the Creator of heaven and earth. He lived the life of a substitute in the room of guilty sinners, and eventually died the accursed death of the cross. As God, He could not and did not die, and so was the same living, eternal Person at the very moment He offered up His holy humanity unto death. The body of His flesh was laid in the grave, but He continued to be the eternal, self-existent God. "Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh." It was not possible, however, He should be holden of death, and therefore He rose again the third day, living and triumphant over sin, death, and the grave. He was finally carried up into heaven, and is set

down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. He is the Lamb in the midst of the throne, both Priest and King, and shall reign for ever and ever. He saith to His Church as He said to John in Patmos, "Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and death." — (Rev. 1: 17, 18).

Jesus Christ is unchangeable in His power, "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." He is the Son of God, and it was by Him God made the worlds. The Son also upholds all things by the word of his power. It was by His Son as the eternal Word that God revealed Himself to the children of men from the beginning. The Son assumed the office of mediator in a past eternity. It was then the covenant of grace was entered into between Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The Son acted in His capacity as Mediator under the old dispensation as well as under the new, and during that period every display of God's power on behalf of His elect people came by the Son. The people of Israel were then the peculiar objects of the divine favour. The gracious power of Jehovah was exercised in countless ways on their behalf. He led them across the Red Sea with His mighty hand and outstretched arm, and destroyed their Egyptian enemies in the mighty waters. He preserved them in the wilderness for forty years, gave them bread and flesh to satisfy their hunger, and streams of water from the rock to quench their thirst. At the end of their pilgrimage they were safely carried over the Jordan, the waters receding before them. Jericho fell down at the noise of their trumpets. The Lord cast out the heathen nations before their armies, and gave them the land of Caanan for their possession. As in the case of the nations of Israel, so in the case of eminent individuals, we see the hand of God's power. We see it in the lives of Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, and many others. When faith was in lively exercise, these noble worthies would each be ready to say with Job, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth." — (Job 19: 25). The Redeemer did come in the fulness of the time, and revealed still more and more His unchangeable power. He healed the sick, opened the eyes of the blind, made the lame man leap as an hart, the tongue of the dumb to sing, and raised the dead to life. This He did both naturally and spiritually. He has now ascended up on high, entered within the veil, but His power still continues the same. "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour for to give repentance unto Israel and forgiveness of sins." (Acts 5: 31). "This man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood; wherefore he is able also to save

them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth, to make intercession for them." — (Heb. 7: 24, 25). Christ is as mighty to save

to-day as ever He was. He lives at God's right hand that He may plead the cause of poor sinners before the Father. His arm is not shortened that it cannot save, and His ear is not heavy that it cannot hear. In these dark and degenerate times we may be tempted to doubt the power and even existence of the risen and exalted Redeemer. The cry goes up, "By whom shall Jacob rise? for he is small." Many are the forces of darkness that would seek to destroy the feeble Church of God in these days, but let us never forget that her Redeemer yet reigneth above the floods. "The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea." — (Ps. 93: 4).

Jesus Christ is faithful in His promises, "the same yesterday and to-day and for ever." All the promises of God recorded in the Old Testament may also be said to be the promises of Christ, for He is one with the Father in them all. In not a few of them He would seem to be the principal speaker. Witness the twenty-second Psalm, in which Messiah speaks — "The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the Lord that seek him; your heart shall live for ever." — (Psalm 22: 26). We also hear Christ, as the heavenly wisdom, speaking in the eighth chapter of Proverbs, and extending the gracious promise — "I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me." He also speaks in these words — "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God and there is none else." These are a few passages out of many in the Old Testament. The promises they contain shall not fail in accomplishment to all who flee in truth to them for refuge. Christ also spake many words in the days of His flesh that shall be fulfilled in the experience of believers to the end of time. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." — (Matt. 10: 27). "Him that cometh unto me, I will in nowise cast out." — (John 6: 37). "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." — (John 14: 13). "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you." — (v. 18). The Lord Jesus shall not fail in fulfilling these promises to His believing people to-day, as He was wont to do in days of old. Let the poor and needy in Zion seek to take hold of them, that Christ's name may be magnified in their fulfilment. He says to all — "Ask and it shall be given you: seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you," and it will be found at the great day that he was as good as His Word. Many may even then say that they asked and

did not receive, they sought and did not find, they knocked and it was not opened unto them, but they will be found liars in that day. Let God be true, and every man a liar. Lastly, let the true Church not be discouraged if the promise seem slow in fulfilment, and the prospects seem dark and foreboding. Abraham was many years looking for the child of promise, and it was when all natural probabilities and possibilities had come to an end that the child came. And again, after all this, the Lord commanded him to sacrifice the child upon whose life depended the fulfilment of still larger promises to many generations. Abraham's faith shone brightly in the dread hour of trial, and resting with assured confidence in the faithfulness of God, he obeyed the painful command. But the Lord interposed with deliverance at the very moment that the child was at the point of death. May the Lord lead His people in these troublous times to have respect to His own commands, and to go forward in His own strength, knowing that Jesus Christ is a faithful promiser, "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

In conclusion, we would say: Let the eye of the struggling Church of Christ in these troublous times be fixed upon the risen and exalted Redeemer. He is not dead. He is alive and liveth for evermore. He is infinitely well acquainted with His people's case, has infinite sympathy with them in all their afflictions, and has infinite regard for the glory of His name and cause. He shall bring forth judgment into victory, and shall reign till all His enemies are made His footstool. He is mighty to save, and all things in heaven and in earth are in His hands. His promise shall not fail, but shall be fulfilled in due time. May "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day and for ever" be the foundation of our hopes and the strength of our hearts, so as to be able to say in some measure of true sincerity, I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only." (Ps. 71: 16).

Reflections of a Memorable Day in Edinburgh

by Rev J. A. MacDonald

Six months have now passed since that memorable day when on 25th May, 1993, almost 800 Free Presbyterians and friends gathered in the Assembly Hall in Edinburgh to record their thanks to the Most High for 100 years of His preserving mercy and goodness to us as a Church and people. We can truly say "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." My mind has been going back over the years. Days of rejoicing and days of sorrow

have coursed through my mind as I have been reflecting on the past history of Scotland and of our beloved Church in particular. We feel compelled therefore to share with our readers some of these reflections.

The beautiful city of Edinburgh has been the scene of many historic events down through the corridors of time. The many ancient landmarks are reminders to us of the struggle which our forefathers had in order to preserve for us the high privilege of having the pure gospel yet preached in our beloved land. The Grassmarket is one of these landmarks where many heroes and heroines of the Covenant laid down their lives for the Crown rights of King Jesus, also the nearby Greyfriars Churchyard where the dust of many of the Martyrs of Scotland awaits a glorious Resurrection Day. Coming up the High Street towards the Assembly Hall, St Giles stands as a reminder of the blessed servant of the Lord, John Knox, "who feared not the face of man," and preached the gospel to the everlasting good of both old and young — as the resurrection morning will make manifest. Across the street stands John Knox's house from which many prayers ascended continually to the God of Heaven for the reformation of Scotland from the power of Rome. He was heard to plead with God: "Lord give me Scotland ere I die".

School history books in my young days carried a picture which depicted John Knox presiding over the first Communion Service under the Protestant order, indicating Scotland's freedom from the idolatrous Mass.

One hundred years ago in Edinburgh the focus of attention was on the Assembly Hall where delegates were gathered to the Annual Assembly in the Jubilee Year of the Free Church of Scotland. In May 1993 as I sat in the same Assembly Hall and experienced the warm and friendly atmosphere — among friends, I could not help but weep tears of both joy and sorrow as I thought of Rev Donald Macfarlane, then a lone figure among a hostile crowd. Was there not a cause? Yes, indeed. It was a dark day for Scotland when none could be found in that gathering who would rise in defence of the truth of the Word of God against the iniquitous Declaratory Act. The Lord gave strength to Mr Macfarlane "in whose heart there was found some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel". As I looked on the table where the dear man of God laid his "heaven sent" protest, I felt that I would have liked to have a view of that document. It will no doubt be housed in the archives of the Church of Scotland.

Under the chairmanship of Rev Donald MacLean, Glasgow, Moderator of the Synod, who preached an appropriate sermon already familiar to readers of the magazine, the proceedings of the day were ably handled. As I listened to the various speakers there was a great cause for raising

our "Ebenezers" to the Lord as events of the past 100 years were recalled to mind. In the marvellous loving kindness of the Lord, men were raised up "in due time" throughout the years to defend the Cause of Christ against the wiles of the devil. The fact that the Lord was pleased to extend both our bounds was very much in evidence with representatives present from Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Zimbabwe.

We rejoiced in our souls to see the evidence of the fruit of the gospel preached in so many lands. "Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth." We felt that we could say with open arms, the words of Moses to Hobab: "We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you; come thou with us, and we will do thee good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel" Numbers 10: 29.

While we crossed the City to get to the place where a meal had been prepared for us, my thoughts went back to the many happy Communion seasons which I spent with the eminent servants of the Lord, Revs. Neil MacIntyre and Donald Campbell — both able preachers of the gospel and sincere and faithful men as the great day will manifest. Further "days of old" were called to mind while having our evening meal together. Friends from other denominations, who had come specially to be with us on the occasion of our centenary, reminded us of tokens of the Lord's goodness to us in the city of London in the early days of my ministry. This is the city where that eminent servant of the Lord Rev J. P. MacQueen laboured with much success, and was so vigilant in the defence of Protestantism against the inroads of the idolatrous Roman Catholic system which is leading millions astray for eternity.

Leaving these capital cities behind, let me draw your minds to a far more glorious city than any city of this world; the city of the Great King, the heavenly Jerusalem; the city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God. You and I reader shall be in the Eternal world before long. The question is: "Have we on the wedding garment?" If so, "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" 1 Cor. 2: 9.

At death when the sincere and true believers enter heaven, what glorious visions await them. They shall see God sitting upon his glorious throne while the holy angels veil their faces because of the view they have of His holiness. They shall see many "who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Rev Gillies, Stornoway preached in London on the words in Mark 7: 24, "but he could not be hid", and he quoted the above truth. Notice carefully, he said, how Christ is

addressing his Church as if it were they themselves that had washed themselves. Owing to His infinite love for them He speaks as if they had done it all themselves. No other reason for His saying this can be given, but precisely that — HIS INFINITE LOVE.”

Because of the afflictions of the Lord’s people in this vale of tears He, in His love and faithfulness to them as they are about to enter the cold valley of the shadow of death, whispers to them: “Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea I will help thee; yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness” Isaiah 41: 10. When the child of God, like another of old, asks the question in that blessed city: “What are these wounds in thy hands?” He shall receive the reply: “Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends” Zech. 13: 6. It would prove beneficial for us to think of the other glorious visions which will be revealed in heaven. Luther said: “I am longing for heaven, there to see the loveliness of Christ . . . also I long to see the angel that ministered to Christ in the garden . . . and to be where Satan cannot assail me ever again.”

Let me conclude with the touching words of that servant of God who stood shoulder to shoulder with Rev D. Macfarlane — Rev Donald Macdonald, Shieldaig, as he preached from Song of Solomon chapter 2 verse 1. This is what the Saviour said of Himself: “I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys” — notice of the ‘VALLEYS’ in the plural. The first valley he points out is the womb of the virgin. You should read the whole sermon in his book for your own benefit.

May the Lord bless our witness as a Church in the days which lie ahead. Days are dark and the forces of evil are on the rampage because the devil knows that his time is getting short. Let us be on the watchtower and encourage ourselves with the words of the whole of psalm 124 which proved such a comfort to the martyrs of Scotland in their hour of trial.

“Our sure and all sufficient help
is in JEHOVAH’S name.”

Popery Another Gospel

by Rev. John Willison, Dundee

(Continued from Vol 98, page 310).

“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel to you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.” Gal. 1: 8.

Seventh Argument. That religion which errs in the fundamental doctrine of justification, (being *articulus stantis aut cadentis ecclesiae*) and

overturns the doctrine of free grace in justifying and saving sinners by the obedience and sufferings of Christ in their room, and would ascribe the glory of man's salvation to man himself, is another gospel, which falls under the anathema of the text; but Popery is such a religion; and therefore, &c.

Protestants hold, according to the scriptures, that God freely justifies sinners, or pardons and accepts their persons as righteous, not for any thing wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone, and his obedience and suffering imputed to them, and rested on by their faith, which faith also is freely given; so that their justification is only of free grace: and there is no place left for glorying or boasting in the creature, or in a man's own works or doings; all our glorying and rejoicing should be in the Lord Jesus only, and in God's free love through him; see Rom. 3: 24, 25, 27, 28; Tit. 3: 5, 7; Eph. 1: 7, 2: 9; 1 Cor. 1: 31, 32; Phil. 3: 3; Jer. 23: 6.

But this scripture-way of free grace in justifying sinners doth not please the Papists; they will needs have man to have something to glorify of in himself, expressly contrary to the will and mind of the Spirit of God: and therefore they will add their own merits and satisfactions to Christ's merits; their own sufferings; their own daily sacrifice of the mass, to Christ's one sacrifice on the cross; the mediation of saints and angels, to Christ's mediation and intercession. And though they speak of Christ's merits, yet they lay the main stress on the man himself; for they deny the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us for our justification, and assert that a man is justified by his own inherent righteousness, and that his own good works merit eternal life, and that in a proper sense, not only *de congruo sed de condigno*; that is, not only by virtue of God covenant and acceptance, but also by reason of the work itself, and its intrinsic worth.

Quest. "Seeing Papists speak much of the merits of Christ in obtaining our salvation, how make they Christ's merits and their own consist together?"

Ans. Moderate Papists take this away: they say, Christ by his merits procured God's promise to give life and salvation to our merits; in short, that Christ merited a new covenant of works to us, and also new grace and strength to us for to keep it, providing that by our free will we duly improve it. And thus every man is to stand or fall, in obtaining the promised life, according to his fulfilling the condition of works in the use of the grace given him. So it is not Christ's Surety righteousness that is imputed to us for our justification and salvation; no, it is the man's own inherent righteousness, and his right use of his own free will in improving

the grace given him, that merits salvation to himself: and so a man's hope of salvation is properly founded upon his own merits and doings. By this scheme, Christ is spoiled of his glory, and men bring guilt and wrath upon themselves.

Object. "But," say Papists, "we acknowledge Christ's merits in obtaining a new covenant and new promises to us, and in procuring the first grace to us, in order to our justification and salvation."

Ans. This is nothing but a sly way, under pretext of paying a compliment to Christ, to deprive him of the glory of our salvation, and to ascribe it to man: for it is by the right use of his free will, and his performing a righteousness of his own, that he is to merit and purchase life for himself, so that a man may still boast of his own doings. "But", say some Papists, "it is God that gives us," upon Christ's account, "the inherent grace and righteousness whereby we are justified." They may as well say, that God gives us wherewith we may redeem ourselves; for we are both redeemed and justified by the same price, namely, Christ's Surety-righteousness and blood. As our inherent righteousness cannot redeem us, so neither can it justify or acquit us before God. It is only Christ's perfect righteousness and satisfaction, imputed to us, that can do this. By grace we are justified, and saved through faith, not of ourselves, but of and by him alone who is the Lord our righteousness. It is in him only that all the seed of Israel shall be justified, and in him that they shall glory, Isa. 45: 25. So that, by the revealed gospel-scheme of salvation, Jesus Christ is immediately made our righteousness by imputation, in the merit whereof only, we can have confidence to appear before God, and expect pardon and salvation from him; according to 1 Cor. 1: 30, "He is made to us of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." 2 Cor. 5: 21, "He hath made him to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Col. 3: 11, "Christ is all and in all."

We see then how dangerously Papists err in this cardinal point of justification, which of all others is most important to our salvation; and how carefully we should avoid all Popish doctrine in the matter of justification, though even some called Protestants should teach it. Popery quite perverts the gospel of Christ, and overturns the covenant of grace, the only way now to be saved, and lays down a way of salvation upon the same terms as it stood in the covenant of works, though this way of access be for ever blocked up by the fall. Yet, say Papists, obedience to the commands, and the merit of good works, is the only way to life still; and for this they cite Mat. 19: 17, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the command-

ments.” But it is plain, that Christ there intends to convince and humble a self-righteous Pharisee, by holding him to the covenant of works to which he leaned, in order to bring him to an affecting view of his impotency to keep it, of his miserable and hopeless case while under it, and of his absolute need of a surety to fulfil the demands of that covenant in his stead. Thus God makes the law a schoolmaster to lead sinners to Christ.

Popery then is evidently another gospel; and a damnable one it is: for it draws away sinners from the true remedy for sin, to a false one; from the only ground of their justification, the imputed righteousness of Christ, to their own inherent righteousness which is naught. It takes them from the lowly self-denying way of salvation of Christ’s teaching, to the proud self-exalting way of antichrist’s devising. Christ will have the creature humbled, but antichrist will have him puffed up. Now, whether shall Christ’s word or his enemy’s stand? “Let God be true, but every man a liar.” O how damnably do Romanists err in the way of justifying and saving sinners! They are guilty of dreadful blasphemy and abominable idolatry, and have no solid way for removing such heinous guilt; nothing but their own merits, filthy rags! Alas! when the disease is deadly, and the remedy naught, what can be looked for but death to follow? God saith, it is only by a covenant of grace and a Mediator’s righteousness we must be saved. No, say Papists, it is by a covenant of works and our own righteousness. Now, if they live and die in such a belief and dependence, they make their salvation impossible. Why? They are “fallen from grace, and Christ shall profit them nothing,” Gal. 5: 4. Which awful consideration should make every thinking Christian tremble at the remotest approach of Popery.

My friends, let me then exhort you to have your hearts sound, and your minds well instructed, in this great article of a sinner’s justification, seeing it is of the utmost importance to your salvation; it is highly provoking to God, and dangerous to your souls to err in this matter. O has God in his wonderful love given the world his dear Son, as their only surety, to save them when perishing; and will men slight such a glorious gift, and pretend to save themselves? How is it possible they can do it, after God hath declared there is no salvation in any other, and none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved, but that of the blessed Jesus? Will any that names the name of Christ be so foolish as to betake himself to another way of salvation than what he hath proclaimed to us in his gospel? Let me beseech you, as ye love your souls, to believe the Lord Jesus, and go not back with Papists to a covenant of works for salvation; for your salvation that way is impossible, your damnation inevitable.

You have need to guard with great caution and care against such a dangerous and damnable mistake, and the rather that your hearts are all naturally inclined to it. There is ingrained in every man something of a natural Popery; we would all fain stand upon our own legs, and have something of our own to found our hopes of heaven upon. This was the first way of salvation when we were in Adam's loins, and hence all his posterity have a natural hankering after it, and are with great difficulty brought off from going about to establish their own righteousness, and persuaded to submit to the righteousness of God, Rom. 10: 3.

But however backward men's hearts are to it, God will have all the seed of Israel brought to this humble submissive way, and made willing to quit all dependence upon any righteousness of their own, and betake themselves entirely to an imputed righteousness for justification and acceptance with God. This is the way that God hath fixed for saving fallen sinners of Adam's race; and all the elect of God will go into it, yea, rejoice in it, as a noble contrivance for advancing the glory of the Creator, and securing the happiness of the creature. And seeing God declares himself well pleased with the righteousness and satisfaction of Christ for sinners, it is highly our wisdom to declare ourselves well pleased with it too, and so put honour upon his dear Son; for God will never accept of those who dishonour him, by seeking to join their merits with his, or their polluted duties with his most perfect obedience, as if they would add perfection to Christ's sacrifice and blood, which is infinite. What is it else but blasphemy, to charge his sacrifice with lameness, or his satisfaction with deficiency, and to think to make it up by adding something of ours? yet this all do practically, who would mix their own righteousness with Christ's in the point of justification: but this will never do; Christ will either be our whole Saviour, or no Saviour. Blessed be God for Jesus Christ. Amen.

Notes and Comments

Sabbath Trading

Over many years efforts have been made to break down the safeguards against Sabbath trading. In Scotland the safeguards which previously existed to prevent Sabbath trading were largely swept away at the time of regionalisation. But those in England and Wales still remain. Nehemiah, in his day, understood the evil nature of this trafficking and forbade any burden to be brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath Day. When the merchants and sellers of all kind of ware lodged outside Jerusalem on the Sabbath, he warned them that if they did so again he would lay hands upon them. So ended at that time the selling and buying at Jerusalem.

Our Government is of a different mind and wishes to remove all barriers to Sabbath trading. The Lord Chancellor has spoken out against this and has defended the Sabbath as a day of rest and of worship. It would be good if the Prime Minister and other Government ministers would follow suit though this seems unlikely as they have expressed themselves in favour of total deregulation.

The House of Commons were given three options on which to vote but none of these was acceptable in the light of the Fourth Commandment. How sad it is that although God has given men six days of the week for their own employment, yet they must steal from God that one day which He claims as His own. The consequences of such action will very soon appear. May the Lord graciously intervene to deliver our land from those who would trample His Day under their feet and bring us back to a right observance of His holy day. (Sad to say, a Bill was passed in the House of Commons on 8th December, permitting opening of shops on Sabbath).

Northern Ireland

The situation in Northern Ireland has once again been brought to people's notice through the revelations which have come out regarding our Government's contacts with the IRA. As a result of these and other matters the loyal community in Northern Ireland may be excused for losing confidence in the British Government and its professed intention to maintain the status quo in that part of our country. Talks of peace, when they come from IRA sources and Eire Government sources, are suspect. Both of these parties want a United Ireland and therefore should have no place in discussions of the future of Ulster. The murderers of the IRA, who have slain so many in Northern Ireland and elsewhere, cannot be trusted and our Government should recognise it. The Protestants of Northern Ireland will not be deluded by false promises of peace to surrender their dearly-bought liberties and privileges which they enjoy as part of the United Kingdom.

Children Found Guilty of Murder

Two boys of eleven years of age were found guilty of abducting and killing a two-year-old boy and were ordered to be detained during Her Majesty's pleasure. This awful case has aroused much questioning throughout the nation as to how children of that age could be guilty of such a horrendous crime. Many suggestions have been put forward to account for this, such as, the possibility of watching horror videos. It is a commonly held belief that man is inherently good. Yet surely

we have proof in this instance, if proof is needed, that man is fallen and depraved at heart. It is plain that if man is left to himself there is no limit to which he will not go in sin. We go astray from the womb following lies. The real question is how is it that all men do not run to the same length in sin. This is due solely to the restraining grace of God. How much we owe to the restraining grace of God, else the world would be a place in which men could not live together.

If children are to know the restraints which the word of God and the Gospel of Jesus Christ put upon them, what need there is that the young would be brought under the influence of the truth in their formative years. How much the young, as well as the old, need to hear the warnings of God's Word against the ways of sin. To many of the young in our day, the commandments of the divine law are completely unknown. May this tragic case bring men to see that the evil influences, to which many children are exposed in our day, have a corrupting effect upon them. If this was properly realised, then action would be taken to remove such evil influences from children in their tender years.

European Union

After the passing of the Single European Act in 1986, the European Economic Community (E.E.C.) became known as the European Community (E.C.) with the passing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1993, the E.C. is now known as the European Union. This is not surprising. It is quite clearly the name used in the *Treaty on European Union*, which is the proper name for the Maastricht Treaty. Its Preamble states that the member states are "resolved to mark a new stage in the process of European integration undertaken with the establishment of the European Communities, . . . in view of further steps to be taken in order to advance European integration, (they) have decided to establish a European Union. . . ."

The former Prime Minister, Baroness Thatcher, admitted in her maiden speech to the House of Lords that, at the time of the passing of the Single European Act, she had not realised what this Act involved. I wonder if our present Prime Minister, if he is spared to have a maiden speech in the House of Lords, will say that he did not realise the implications of the Maastricht Treaty when it was passed. There is a saying that we get the leaders which we deserve.

D.M.B.

Eastern Europe Mission

The mission journey of approximately 5000 miles to Eastern Europe by myself and Rev. N. M. Ross was in the merciful providence of God accomplished without too many problems.

Thankfully we had the opportunity of preaching on four occasions in the home of one of those with whom we had made friends since our first coming to the Kiev region. The gathering was small, but there appears to be a genuine desire for the teachings of the Word of God. In fact on our next visit, God willing, we hope to preach in two different homes at the request of those to whom we have already preached.

As well as having had the opportunity to preach the gospel, we delivered our load of Bibles, calendars and Reformed literature and goods at various places. We distributed to churches and homes in Hungary, Ukraine, Moldovia and Romania. The bulk of our distribution was in the capital of Ukraine, Kiev. A number of homes were visited and literature left. These visits were a follow up of letters sent to Scotland requesting literature.

It was most gratifying being able to hand out the Westminster Shorter Catechism now printed in Russian, along with scripture proofs. The translation was done by the Russian Reformation Foundation in Colorado, and the Catechism printed by Settle Graphics, Yorkshire, and the cost of printing borne by the Church. A quantity of these were sent to Colorado and a considerable amount taken with us to the Ukraine. We hope God willing to proceed shortly with a further print of the Shorter Catechism but with Rev. R. Lawson's notes.

It is not an easy matter to obtain translators. Of two translations of the Shorter Catechisms, one done in Kiev and another obtained through the good service of friends in Scotland, were sent to a Russian Christian, Mr Andrei Valtsev, in St. Petersburg, for his assessment. He concluded that it would be more practical to re-do the translation of the Shorter Catechism as well as Rev. R. Lawson's commentary and scripture proofs. Funds permitting we hope to proceed with the printing of this Catechism.

We have also, with the labour of a translator in Essex, England, Miss Mollie Robertson, improved the translation of the Mother's Catechism and intend to go to print as soon as possible.

It becomes more and more evident that there is as great need as ever for spreading the Word of God in the places we visited over the past years. Previously there was the suppression of religion and people could not worship freely, now with freedom to worship, there is great interest in religion

and a situation which the cults use to great advantage. The Jehovah Witnesses had their world conference in Kiev when 70-100 thousand Jehovah's Witnesses descended on Kiev. They are only one of the many cult groups that are busy in the city of Kiev. Our tract by ERGATEES exposing the errors of Mormonism and translated into Russian by Miss Margaret Campbell, Inverness, was well received by those who are fighting against the errors of the cults. One young friend in Kiev, used this tract to good effect, delivering her companions from continuing in the Mormon Church.

There is great need to continue with our Mission work in Eastern Europe and this cannot be without the support of all those who so liberally contribute to this work. The Orthodox Church is antagonistic towards Protestantism and the spreading of anything that sounds like evangelical, while the Arminians are opposed to Calvinism. It is our intention therefore, by the grace of God, to continue with the work of our Church in Eastern Europe, spreading reformed teaching as it is based on the Word of God; praying and waiting for that day when the Lord will open the minds of those to whom we send His Word, that it may be received in its fulness.

D.A.R.

Mission News

It was a pleasure to have a glimpse of Mr Donald Macdonald and his wife, Christine, at Edinburgh Communion despite a feeling of sympathy for them in having to return to Scotland earlier than they had anticipated. Mention has already been made of the fact that Dr Christine has had three attacks of malaria during six months in Kenya and medical opinion there and in this country is that she should remain in the UK until May or June 1994 (D.V.). Donald returned to Kenya after two weeks here.

There is great need for a volume of prayer to arise in our midst on behalf of our hard-pressed brethren in Kenya, Malawi and Zimbabwe. It is a cause of great anxiety to all that the Rev. Z. Mazvabo's sight has deteriorated during the past few months. We send Mr Mazvabo our warm sympathy.

Mr Sipho Nxusani, brother-in-law of the Rev A. B. Ndebele, is in hospital suffering from heart trouble. We wish him a complete recovery, if that be the Lord's will.

Mr Mziya has had a time of great anxiety as his wife, Otiliah, has had surgery in Harare to remove a tumour from behind her eyes. She is at present having radio-therapy treatment in Bulawayo. We trust the Lord will answer prayer for all our friends in Africa.

The shortage of water at Ingwenya still remains a problem. The school is at present closed for the summer holidays. It was interesting to learn that the water level in the old well at the Jigajane River had risen somewhat over the past years. Further up the river a small dam had been constructed by the late James Tallach. It was known as the Vancouver Dam as kind friends there had contributed to its construction. The fact that the dam conserved a certain amount of water each rainy season had caused the water level to rise in the well down-stream.

It was a great pleasure to have Miss Katie Macaulay with us at Edinburgh Communion. She is at present in Lewis but intends to return to Zimbabwe in January, 1994 (D.V.). 'Pray ye therefore the Lord of the Harvest that He send forth labourers unto the harvest.'

J.N.

Church Notes

The New Year

Once again in the providence of God we enter another year and take this opportunity of wishing our readers at home and abroad the Lord's richest blessings during this year which has now opened. This ought to be a time of sober reflection as to how we have used the year that has now passed into history but which has gone before us to judgment. Whatever may be true of the year that is gone, what need we have of the grace of God if we are to serve the Lord during the year which has begun. If we are yet without Christ, may the New Year be to us a time to seek the Lord while He may be found. If we are in Christ then may it be to us a time when we dedicate ourselves anew to Him and to His service. May this year prove a time of blessing to the Church of God through an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in awakening and reviving grace. May the Lord be pleased in the midst of deserved wrath to revive His work, throughout the whole world.

Presbytery Meetings

Northern: At Dingwall on 25th January, 1994 at 2 p.m.

Australia and New Zealand: At Auckland on 28th January, 1994 at 2.30 p.m.

Zimbabwe: At Bulawayo on 8th March, 1994 at 2 p.m.

Western: At Laide on 8th March, 1994 at 6 p.m.

Canadian: At Inverness on 22nd March, 1994 at 9 p.m.

Centenary Volume

The price of the Centenary Volume has been set at £13.00. The volume may be obtained through Congregations at the special price of £8.00.

Acknowledgment of Donations

The General Treasurer, Mr R. A. Campbell, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LE acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:—

Canadian Presbytery: From Estate of Katherine Mary MacDonald (dec'd), Vancouver, Can \$46,476.33.

Eastern Europe: Providence Strict Baptist Church, Wellingborough, £75.

Foreign Mission: Providence Strict Baptist Church, Wellingborough, £150; Anon., (Canada) Can \$100; Anon., per K.M.M. Z \$500; Inverness Friends, £38; R.J.M., Sussex £25.

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

Beauly: Anon., Inverness Postmark £10 for Sust. Fd.

Duirinish: Anon., £30 for Vatten Church Repairs (envelope in plate).

Edinburgh: M. & E.N. £30 for Comm. Exps.

Flashadder: Friend, Portree £10; A Friend, £50, both for Congr. Fd.

Gairloch: From the Estate of the late Mrs MacPherson, Opinin £500; From the Estate of the late Miss C. A. MacKenzie, Inverasdale £3537.66; Anon., Gairloch £150; Friend, £25; Anon., £30; I.M. North Uist, £20; A.C., North Tolsta £40; Friend, Lochcarron, £20 all for Congr. Funds; M.B. £5; M.B., £10, both for Sust. Fd., last eight per Rev. A. E. W. MacDonald.

Glasgow (St. Jude's): Harris Friend, £10 for Tape Fund; Tarbert Friend, £10; Mr and Mrs G. £25; Mrs MacL. £40, last three for Congr. Fd., all per Rev. D.M.; M.M. £10 for Bus. Fd.; Anon., £7; Anon., £15; Anon., £20; Anon., £35 all for Sust. Fd.; Anon., £6 for Home Mission; Anon., £50; Anon., £150, both for T.B.S.; Anon., £20 for Bibles for E. Europe; Anon., £100 for Sponsor a Blind Child.

Laide: Friend, £20; Friends, Gairloch £20; J.C. & M. £10 for Bibles; M. & K. McD. £20 for Bibles; Friend, N.Z. £200; A.N. £100; Anon., Aultbea £30; S.C.F. towards expenses to E.E. £15; Anon., Shieldaig Congr. £25; Friend, Port Henderson £10; Anon., Shieldaig Cong. £30; Raasay Friend £100 for Bibles and travel; E.D.F. CO EE Travel £100; D.T.R. £130; Lairg Friends £20; Friends, Lochcarron £10; J. & I. £50; R. McG, £10 for travel to E.E.; M.U. £10 for Bibles; Anon., Friend £200; I.L. £70; M.M. £10 for travel to E.E.; D.M.K., Laide £20; Anon., Applecross £150 for travel exps.; A.D.R. £100; Friend, Edinburgh £30; From a Friend £30 for spiritual needs in E.E.; Northern Ireland £10; Friend of the Cause £80; wherever needed; N.H.R. £50 for the needy; D. & A. £100 for travel exps.; Friends, Gairloch £20 for Mission Work; Lochcarron Friend, £30; Isle View Nursing Home £3.50 & £6.55, all above for Eastern Europe Mission and all per D.A.R.; in collection box £20; M.M., Inverness £30, both for Eastern Europe Fund; In coll. box £40 for Romania; Inverness Friend for Sust. Fd. £20 returned; Aultbea Friend £20 for Church Fds.; Laide Friend for Comm. Exps., £350.

Lochcarron: Sept., Anon., £400; Anon., £100, both for Eastern Europe; Oct. Friend, Carnoustie £20 where most needed; Nov. E.M. £50 for T.B.S.; envelope in plate £10 for T.B.S.

North Harris: Anon., £10 for door coll (envelope in plate); In Appreciation £20 for Church Fds., per J. Nicolson; Anon., £10 for Comm. Exps (envelope in plate); R.M.L., Cluer £4, for Bus. Fund.

Perth: M.McL., Aberfeldy £20 for Congr. Funds per Rev. A. McP.

Portree: Friend, £20 for Sust. Fd., Friend £14, where needed, both per F.M.; Friend £20 where needed per S.Y.M.

Raasay: M.D. £10; Friend, Stornoway £5, both for Church Fds., both per Rev. J. R. Tallach; J.M.M., £25 where most needed; Friend £100 for Congr. Fds.; Anon., Inverarish, £20 for Comm. Exps.; C.F. £50 for Church improvement; Friend, Inverarish £10 for Tapes per M.T.; Anon., Inverarish, £30; Envelope in plate £5; Anon., Inverarish £40; Friend, Inverarish £25; Envelope in plate £5, last five for Car Fd.

Stornoway: Miss K. A. MacLeod, The Cottage, Callanish £60 for Sust. Fd.; Friend £10 for Sabbath School Outing; C.M. £6 for Congr. Fds.; all per Rev. J. MacLeod; K.M.S. £380 for Foreign Miss. Fd.; Anon., £200 for Jewish and Foreign Miss. Fd.; Anon., £10 for Sabbath School Outing, all per church plate.

Stratherrick: Friend £10 for Sust. Fd.