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Brethren, Pray for us

The Apostle, at the end of his first epistle to the Thessalonians makes this request — “Brethren, pray for us.” We may be certain that it was a necessary request or it would not have been left on record in Holy Writ. The Apostles had need of the prayers of the brethren. Paul, himself, though an eminent Apostle, did not think it beneath him to ask for the prayers of the brethren. He understood full well what James left on record in his epistle, that is, that “The effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

How often is the subject prayer alluded to in the word of God. The godly in all ages were men of prayer. The Saviour Himself in the days of His flesh resorted oftentimes to prayer. What wonderful petitions the Saviour gave utterance to is clear from the seventeenth chapter of John, where His intercessory prayer to the Father before He suffered is recorded. So, too, can it be said of His utterances in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross of Calvary. With what a depth of agony He cried to the Father in the garden that, if it was His will, the cup of his sufferings and of His people’s damnation might pass from Him. What an amazing petition came forth from His holy lips on Calvary when He said: “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” What compassion filled the heart of the compassionate Redeemer to make such a request for those who had nailed Him to the accursed tree and had put Him to an open shame. It was from these very same lips that the awful cry of dereliction was wrung so shortly afterwards: “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me.” Can we wonder then at the disciples, on one occasion, when the Saviour had ceased praying, making the earnest request: “Lord, teach us to pray.”

To the exercise of prayer the people of God are called in every age of time. So long as they are in the world the tried, afflicted and tempest-tossed children of God need to make known their requests to God. They have discovered that God is the God-hearing and God-answering Jehovah

— that His ear is open to the cry of the poor and the needy — and that He will send relief. His people will not betake themselves to Him in vain. Baal could not answer the cries of his deluded votaries in the days of Elijah, but it was not so with the God of heaven to the petitions of His servant. The God that answereth by fire, let Him be God, was Elijah's plea, and God made Himself known to the assembled multitude. To show the power of prayer, James has to say of Elijah in his epistle: "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit." Such was the power of prayer in Elias' day.

For whom are we to pray? We are to pray "for all men; for kings, and for all in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty". We are to pray for all to whom we are knit in bonds of earthly ties, that they may be blessed with the rich blessings of divine grace and mercy and love. We are to pray for the city or town or place where our lot is cast. Our nation needs our prayers and those who rule over us, as we have already seen. But we are not to confine ourselves within the bounds of our own nation. Our prayers ought to reach out to the nations of the earth with the plea that the kingdoms of the world might become the kingdoms of God and of His Christ. We are to remember the Church of God. What need the Church of God has of our prayers in such an age of apostasy as is our day. We ought to plead for the children of God that they might be upheld in such a dark day as this and that they might enjoy much of the comforting Presence of their Lord and Master. We are to plead for the multitudes still in the darkness of sin and unbelief that they might be brought to the light of the Gospel and to the light of the knowledge of the glory of God revealed in Jesus Christ.

But the apostle in writing to the Thessalonians is making a special plea for the Apostles themselves and for all the true servants of Jesus Christ when he says: "Brethren, pray for us." Is this a selfish request he makes? Verily, no. Because of the relationship in which the people of God stand towards the servants of Christ, and the servants of Christ to them, they have a special duty towards them. The people of God are exhorted in the Word of God to remember them which have the rule over them, and surely one way to remember them is to bear them on their spirits before God at a Throne of grace. In his second epistle to the Thessalonians he says: "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you: and that we may be delivered

from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.' Have not the servants of Christ then a right to plead with the people of God for a place, not only in their hearts, but in their petitions at a Throne of grace? Again, if the people of God when they are sick have a right to call for the elders of the church to pray over them so that the prayer of faith may save the sick, have not the servants of Christ a reciprocal right to the prayers of God's people?

What makes the needs of the servants of Christ so imperative? One answer is that they are but men, men who need to be kept by the power of divine grace. Therefore it becomes the people of God to add their petitions to the petitions of the servants of Christ for their preservation. Another answer is that weighty burdens are laid upon them which they cannot bear in their own strength. Therefore, brethren, pray for us. They have a task laid upon them under which angels might be bowed down — to proclaim the Gospel to a people whose ears are largely closed to hearing the truth. Under what discouragements and under what despondency they might sink were it not for being upheld by the prayers of the living saints. How hopeless their task would be in making inroads in Satan's kingdom unless their hands were supported as Moses' hands were in overcoming the Amalekites. If the prayers of one saint — Elijah — were so effectual, what will be the effect of the concerted prayer of many saints? Seeing it is so, brethren, pray for us.

There is much to discourage fervent and effectual prayer. Satan, the world and the flesh all combine to hinder in every way possible the prayers of the saints. Satan will tempt them that their prayers will never be heard, that they are rising no higher than the ceiling and that, therefore, they may as well give them up. If this will not succeed, the enemy of souls will come and point out to them how poor and lame their prayers are and will say to them, Do you think God, a great God, is to hear such poor prayers as these? And the child of God, only too conscious of the poverty of his or her prayers will be ready to be discouraged. But Satan is a liar. If he thought that these prayers were not being heard he would leave the soul to pray on. He would not trouble a soul whose prayers are dead prayers. The world also will bring its influence to bear upon the prayer life of the believer in such a way that he or she is so taken up with the things of the world that little time is left for prayer. The whole spirit of the world also is a deterrent to prayer, for the spirit of the world is one of self-sufficiency and not dependency upon God. The flesh, too, will never encourage the soul to the exercise of, or in the exercise of prayer. The old nature has no delight in prayer to God but says, Who is God that I should

obey Him? It is the new nature that delights in drawing near to God, therefore there is always a conflict within, ere the soul can engage in this holy exercise of calling upon God. Notwithstanding all these discouragements, let the people of God continue importunately in prayer for the servants of Christ. "Brethren, pray for us." Let us ever remember that the servants of Christ are in the vanguard as standard-bearers and therefore are pre-eminently in need of the prayers of God's people. Often they can tell on their spirit while proclaiming the truth whether or not they are being remembered at a Throne of grace. Seeing that their role is so vital to the prosperity of Christ's kingdom, do not be the cause of discouragement to them by restraining prayer before God. Be earnest in secret for them and God who sees in secret will reward openly. Brethren, pray for us.

Sermon

By Rev. Neil Cameron, St. Jude's, Glasgow

(Continued from Page 36)

"Ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

— JUDE 3.

II. — Let us therefore review the contending parties.

1. The party against whom the contention must be sustained. Satan has kept up a continual warfare with the seed of the woman since God revealed His purpose of mercy contained in the first promise, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." As the servant of the Lord must not contend without the direct command of the Captain of the Lord's hosts, he must carefully read his orders. Were he to take as his enemies such as might be called bigots, narrow-minded, and infatuated men, he might be, all the while, slaying his best friends. Therefore the enemies are brought into the field in their true colours. "By their fruits ye shall know them." They are such as have crept into the church unawares, and were not detected until they began to air their thievish propensities. They vowed to assert, maintain, and defend her doctrines and principles, and to follow no divisive courses contrary to these, but their entire destruction was their intention. This was what we understand by their having "crept in unawares." Are there not many who make this their boast, that though they bound themselves by the most solemn vows, both

to the Most High and to their fellow-sinners, to contend for the faith, they had in their hearts a secret purpose to destroy the whole work of Reformation in Scotland? "The Confession of Faith," which, by the "Questions and Formula," they have avowed to be based upon the infallible Word of God, and to be the confession of their faith, they scout as a thing which none ought to hold or believe. Is it against the Confession alone they contend? No, for all their complaints are clearly against the Word of God, but they endeavour to screen their impiety from the eyes of the people. Some have been so bold as to have distinctly stated that the most of the works of both the Old and New Testaments are writings of doubtful human authorship. This is perjury of the deepest dye, and will not escape its due punishment from the Judge of All. The Spirit distinctly states in the words before us, in the context, that "they were before of old ordained to this condemnation." "Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!" They are further characterised as "ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness." What are the most of the office-bearers of the churches in this land doing but this? Churches are almost converted into theatres. Concerts, soirees, vain songs, and dancing are carried on under the guise of religion. Instrumental music, secular hymns, and lectures upon profane subjects on the Sabbath day, and in the place where they pretend to worship God, have driven the Word of God out of both pulpit and pew. The poor, deluded people are lulled asleep with false prophesyings. They are taught that man is not the lost, dead, guilty, and wretched sinner the Word of God declares him to be; that God is nothing but love and mercy; and therefore that they have nothing to fear. These spiritual thieves still go further, "they deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ." Many hold the doctrine of the Socinians — "That Jesus Christ is only a creature, and therefore is not God." Did not some affirm that one might be a good Christian, and not believe in the divinity of Christ? Is that the doctrine of the Church of Scotland or of the Word of God on the most essential tenet of our faith? The Word of God reveals the great mystery of the incarnation, "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." In our context Jude says of them, "But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves." How different their views of the person of Christ are from those held by the apostles! Let us turn to the Epistle to the Hebrews, and look at the first chapter, and listen to the voice of

God's Spirit as to who Christ is: "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Again, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." And again, "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thy hands; they shall perish, but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture thou shalt fold them up, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." This is the Christ that was born in Bethlehem of Judah, and laid in a manger there. From the stable of Bethlehem to Calvary's Cross the Son of God, in human nature, was under the law, its curse, and the penalty due to the sins of the elect. The obedience and sufferings were not that of a creature, but that of the Second Person of the Godhead. There never was such a sight as God veiled in flesh to obey His own law, and to make it honourable; and to atone for the guilt of sinners who had rebelled against Him, ruined themselves, and could never have saved themselves. His sacrifice is all-sufficient to satisfy divine justice, and to cleanse the sinner from the guilt and corruption of sin. This is the Christ held forth by our godly fathers in this land. This is the Christ of the Confession of Faith, because He is the Christ of the Word of God. If any other Christ be preached or declared in the confessions of men and churches he is only an idol of their own making. One thing is clear, that when men change their God they must of necessity change their creed to suit their new god. But as the Holy Ghost gives us three examples taken from the Old Testament Scriptures, we shall briefly consider them in their order.

(1) "Woe unto them! for they have gone the way of Cain." What way did Cain go in worshipping God? "Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering; but unto Cain, and to his offering, he had no respect. And Cain was very wroth and his countenance fell." This mode of worship was instituted by God in the garden of Eden, before he drove our sinful parents out. Therefore Abel worshipped in accordance with "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." "Cain brought of the

fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord." He did not worship God in accordance with the revelation He had given as to the worship He would accept, and therefore the Lord had no respect unto the inventions of Cain's wisdom. He came to God, not looking by faith unto the one sacrifice and shedding of the blood of the Son of God on Calvary's Cross, as godly Abel did. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and by it he, being dead, yet speaketh." Cain thought he had a right to bring innovations into the worship of God. As God had respect unto Abel, and unto his offering, but had no respect unto him, nor unto his offering, he immediately began to premeditate murder. He found fault with Abel for worshipping differently from him, and as Abel earnestly contended for the faith, he rose up and slew him. Many worship nowadays after Cain's fashion. They worship God by hymns of human composition and human authorship, instead of the inspired psalms of David. They may be coming with the best of the fruit of the earth (in their hymns), but they are only the fruit of that which is earthly. Let them consider Cain. "Is any merry? let him sing psalms." They worship with organs, instead of "By him (Christ), therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name." They deny man's total depravity, and, therefore, have no need of the atonement made upon the cross. Cain-like, those who will not submit to their unscriptural mode of worship, and declarations of faith, are made the objects of their hatred and envy. Were the law of the land favourable to their projects, the blood of their brother would have fouled their hands before this time. "For this is the message that ye have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you." No works are more wicked, in the sight of God, than those which lead immortal souls away from worshipping God, as He has appointed in His own Word. Satan's aims are to get this nation to disbelieve the truth of God, to pull down that which our godly fathers built upon Christ, the rock, and to set up idolatrous worship, and he finds too many Cains willing to assist him.

(2) The next class composing the enemies' forces are described — "Woe unto them! for they ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward." The error of Balaam is recorded in the Word of God. Balak, king of Moab, sent elders to Balaam to come to curse Israel, so that he might destroy them. "And God said to Balaam, Thou shalt not go with them: thou shalt

not curse the people; for they are blessed. And Balaam rose up in the morning, and said unto the princes of Balak, Get you into your land; for the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you." Balaam refused to go with idolaters to curse the people of God, but hints that had God allowed him he should go. It does not appear that he abhorred the very idea of complying with Balak's request. So Balak sent him princes more honourable than the first, saying — "Let nothing hinder thee from coming unto me; for I will promote thee unto very great honour. . . . And Balaam answered, and said unto the servants of Balak, If Balak should give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more." How many are there in Scotland who said the same words? When the Moabites of this land desired to unite with a body who hold doctrines and principles antagonistic to the crown rights of the King of kings and Lord of lords, and to the teaching of the Bible and the Confession of Faith about the atonement, many said — "My congregation and others will not allow me to go with you." Others said — "We cannot commit so terrible a crime against God, His Word and people, and our own consciences, as to go with you." The latter stood boldly till death removed them one by one. The Moabites came back again with a Declaratory Act to sweep away, by one stroke, all the blessings of the true Israel of God. At first, men declared that this Act meant "Bible or no Bible, atonement or no atonement," and that nothing could ever prevail upon them to go with these men in their accursed work of destruction. When the time came to act, they — like Balaam — went with the Moabites to take part in their idolatrous worship, and to curse Israel. Who could believe a few years ago that the men who lectured to the people, in towns and country throughout Scotland, against such sacrilege, should be now fighting against the Word of God, the subordinate standards of the Church, their own statements in the past, and the few who could not follow them in their traitorous conduct? Wherein lay the secret of all this? The words of our text are very explicit on this point, "ran greedily after the error of Balaam *for reward*." We have no doubt but promotion and the desire for being popular weighed much with some, but the love for reward was at the very root, and caused their contending for the faith to wither and die. The Apostle Peter, in warning the true Church against such men and their pretensions, points at this same thing. "Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness." Let men say what they choose to the contrary, but the greed for reward, or the love of the wages of unrighteousness, and of a great place among men, were

at the root of all the disgraceful compliance and most sinful compact formed between prophets and Moabites in Scotland. When men trample upon the conscience of the godly, break their vows to God and men, and are teaching Israel's enemies to lay stumbling blocks before the people, their case is very desperate. Had Israel kept aloof from the Moabites, Balaam's snares could not hurt them; but, going after strange flesh, twenty-three thousand of them fell of the plague. Let us therefore take the warning — "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning; that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope." "Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

(3) The third company appear with Core as their leader. "Woe unto them! for they perished in the gainsayings of Core." In the 16th chapter of Numbers the conspiracy of Core, &c., is recorded. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, with two hundred and fifty of the renowned princes of the congregation "gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, everyone of them, and the Lord is among them: Wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord? And when Moses heard it he fell upon his face." Notice the creed of these men. Moses spake much by the Word of God about the exceeding sinfulness of the congregation; but these men declare, "the congregation are holy, everyone of them." There are many Korahs who hold this creed in our day. Moses and Aaron were set apart by God to lead the people — the one their lawgiver, the other their high priest. The Church of Christ must not lose a pin of either law or gospel. These two men took no undue honour to themselves; for the truth distinctly states that both were called of God. Why did these men raise such a cry against them? Probably they thought that they were abler leaders themselves. At any rate their creed was too narrow for them. They endeavoured before the whole congregation to ruin the influence of God's servants. Had they attained their wish Moses and Aaron would not have had a single follower. The Lord can make of the lump of sinful clay one vessel to honour and another to dishonour. "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; that he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness where there is no way." When He takes the worm Jacob by the hand, mountains are threshed like chaff before him, and carried away with the wind. Men say, "Do you take upon yourself to say that such an one is not more godly than any of you?" That sounds like the gainsayings of Core. Does that

man of yours contend earnestly for the faith? Is he appearing against the enemies of the faith? or is he helping them, and causing them to succeed in leading the people astray better than they could otherwise do? Does he continue to warn the people against the destroyers of the faith now, as he did in the past? "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them." Allow the truth of God to be doubted and carved by ungodly men at their pleasure, and you cannot be guiltless in church fellowship with such. The master mariner in mid-ocean who should throw his chart and compass overboard in a storm when neither sun, moon, nor stars could be seen, would not be so infatuated as the most of the so-called divines of Scotland today. The truth declares the need of "holding faith and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck." This is metaphorical language, but very suggestive. A shipwreck is a most dangerous thing, as the apostle could certify by experience. Now, when some make shipwreck of the faith, and do all in their power to keep immortal souls in the wreck to ruin themselves and their posterity, who could find fault with the man that would "command the people that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea and get to land. And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship."

2. The defending party. As I have taken up so much space already these can only be mentioned by quoting a text or two of the Word of God. "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them: for he is Lord of lords and King of kings; and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful." That is the Captain of the Lord's hosts, with a part of His followers, and who can doubt the issue of the fight? The Lamb alone shall overcome them. Christ alone is more than a match for all His enemies. His soldiers overcame also as we are told, "And they overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto death."

III — The method prescribed for the saints in the contending, "That ye should *earnestly* contend."

1. The soldier must obey the orders of his captain. "Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." This soldier must disentangle himself from earthly things, and set his face against wind and rain to make sure of fighting to the last. Demas stood many a battle, but the love of the world conquered him at last. Phygellus and Hermogenes turned away from "holding fast the form of sound words, and all they which are in Asia"

followed them. Therefore Timothy must contend the more earnestly. Like Gideon's army, the Lord's orders are, "Whosoever is fearful and afraid let him depart early from Mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand. . . . And the Lord said unto Gideon, By these three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand." The man who has got one eye towards the world, and the other towards the cause of Christ is in great danger. He may be compared to one holding a rope in each hand. While the tension is easy he can hold the two equally well, but let the tension become strong, and he must immediately let one of them go. He will act according to the value he sees in them respectively. If the Word of God be more precious to him than gold or silver, he will let the world go, and cling to the cause of Christ; on the other hand, if the world be greater and more precious in his estimation than the cause of Christ, he will let it go, and stick to the world.

2. The good soldier of Jesus Christ should do all in his power to get rid of the strength of the flesh with its weapons of warfare. Like David when "Saul armed him with his armour, and he put a helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with his coat of mail. And David girded his sword upon his armour, and assayed to go; for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them. And David put them off him." David slew a lion and a bear in the strength of the God of Israel, and he would now do in His name what Saul, with his armour, and the whole army failed to do; he would slay Goliath, and pull down the insulting pride of the Philistines. "This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; holding faith, and a good conscience." The righteous is bold as a lion. He sees the power of carnal weapons extremely weak, whether they be for or against him. The strongholds, which he has to attack both outwardly and inwardly, are impregnable without the perfect strength of Christ. "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh; (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;) casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." In order to accomplish his arduous task, this soldier must make up his mind to overcome all his spiritual and carnal enemies, or rest assured that he shall be overcome by them. There are no quarters in this fight. "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."

3. Christ's promise is, "I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" Sin causes many bitter tears, hard words and thoughts, and much strife even among the true followers of Christ. Therefore, "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you, let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envy and strife is there is confusion and every evil work." The Apostle Paul found Christ as good as His promise, and so will we if we hold fast the confidence of our hope, steadfast unto the end. He had to say, "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me; I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me." "I have fought a good fight, I have finished by course, I have kept the faith." May the Lord grant us grace to contend earnestly for the faith, so that, when the hour of our departure comes, we may have a conscience clear from the blood of all men, and that it can be said of us, "All these died in the faith." To God be all the praise for ever and ever. Amen.

Notes of Address

By the Late Rev. D. Macdonald, Shieldaig

Delivered at Fellowship Meeting, Wick, on Friday, 27th April, 1894.

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Rom. 8: 14).

Adam was taking great delight in God, but the devil led him captive. Man ever since delights in sin, and in the lusts of the flesh; but has no

delight in God, or holiness. He hates both. "The fool saith in his heart, There is no God." That is man's condition by nature, and he does not feel it, as he is dead and spiritually blind. In that state he is ignorant of his condition, and is led by an evil spirit — the devil. Man delights in sin, and the devil knows the sin you delight in, and he tempts you the more easily to commit it.

Those who are led by the Spirit of God were convinced of sin, when they were effectually called, and many are satisfied with that. When the soul is awakened, he knows God as a consuming fire. Job said: "The arrows of God are within me." God's people are stript of all their self-righteousness, and good works; they are led from the works of the law to delight in Christ, and they have this cry: "Oh! that I knew where I might find him." There are many who confess they are sinners, who yet love sin; but God's people do not love sin. They are chastised by God, and sometimes when He has a great work for a soul to do, He leaves that person for years without comfort. "The pains of hell took hold of me, I grief and trouble found." The people of God know the testimony of Christ about their own evil hearts to be truth, and that is a great mercy, for it keeps them humble. The people of God know Satan, and it makes them realise their need of the whole armour of God. They also know the world, and though Satan tempts them with his pleasant baits, they perceive that everything on earth is perishable; and therefore some of them have been led to say: "I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ."

God's people are led into the mystery of divine truth. Many know the truth by head knowledge, but never had Christ dwelling by faith in their hearts. This people are led into the mysteries of the covenant of grace: "He hath made with me an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure." They have an interest in the Lamb's book of life. The Holy Spirit enlightens their minds, gradually, about the knowledge of these things. Before they were converted, they were dark and ignorant: "I am come," saith Christ, "that they might have life." The Holy Spirit leads them to behold Jesus Christ, as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. They are led into the mystery of godliness and the Spirit makes them able and willing to embrace Christ, and immediately they begin to enjoy Him.

If you have been long under law-work, the joy it will be when you get deliverance. Dr Love said when Christ was first revealed to him: "I am afraid I shall never enjoy so much happiness again till I get to heaven."

What a privilege it is to be the sons of God! Why is it so? Because so many are sons of the devil. You are eternally indebted to God for His

goodness in making you His sons. Oh! says one: "He plucked me as a brand out of the burning. What a wonder that He called me, and passed by the rich and the learned." "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" — "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day." He breaks in upon their souls, and their bands are loosed. They know when they are in the Spirit; for then they like to turn their thoughts from the world away to Jesus. He is the object they love most, and they behold the glory of God in His blessed face. "My beloved is mine, and I am his." Your mind and contemplations are then absorbed in Christ: none but Christ. George Wishart cried out when he was being burned: "Oh! Christ — none but Christ." If we suffer worldly loss for His sake, He will make it up. John Bunyan says: "There is a devil of false peace in the soul; but whosoever has peace in this life the child of God has not." There is a fight continually going on in the souls of the Lord's people — the spirit fighting against the flesh, and the flesh fighting against the spirit; for the carnal mind is enmity against God. Are you cherishing pride? It is a bad companion. The people of God are fighting against the hosts of darkness: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." They have, in our day, to fight against graceless Professors, who are worse than the devils. The high priests were the most bitter of Christ's enemies.

Oh! some one says: "Would that I might say I belong to God — Oh! that I might get a place in the favour of God — Oh! that the Holy Spirit would sprinkle my soul with the blood of Christ — Oh! that I might find Him." If you are a child of God you will hunger and thirst after the promise, and when you get it, the devil will try to take it from you. The great privilege of the Lord's people is, that they are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. Others are not in the Spirit but they think that they are, because they heard so much of the gospel; but they do not love God or His people, and they read novels instead of the Bible. There are millions of such in this land, who go to the Lord's table to eat and drink damnation to themselves. They drink up every doctrine — every contaminating heresy — that comes from the godless Professors' chairs. That is a very sad state of matters. Think you on the doctrines that are being taught the rising generation, and it is enough to cause you to shed tears of blood.

"The days of old to mind I call'd,
And oft did think upon
The times and ages that are past
Full many years agoe."

Jehovah Tsidkenu *

I once was a stranger to grace and to God;
I knew not my danger, and felt not my load;
When friends spoke in raptures of Christ on the tree,
Jehovah Tsidkenu was nothing to me

I oft read with pleasure, to soothe or engage,
Isaiah's wild measure, or John's simple page;
But e'en when they pictured the blood-sprinkled tree,
Jehovah Tsidkenu seemed nothing to me.

Like tears from the daughters of Zion that roll,
I wept when the waters went over His soul;
Yet thought not that my sins had nailed to the tree
Jehovah Tsidkenu; 'twas nothing to me.

When free grace awoke me with light from on high,
Then legal fears shook me; I trembled to die.
No refuge, no safety, in self could I see;
Jehovah Tsidkenu my Saviour must be.

My terrors all vanished before the sweet name;
My guilty fears banished, with boldness I came
To drink at the Fountain, life-giving and free, —
Jehovah Tsidkenu is all things to me.

Jehovah Tsidkenu! my treasure and boast;
Jehovah Tsidkenu! I ne'er can be lost;
In Thee I shall conquer by flood and by field, —
My Cable, my Anchor, My Breastplate, and Shield.

Even treading the valley, the shadow of death,
This "watchword" shall rally my faltering breath;
For while from life's fever my God sets me free,
Jehovah Tsidkenu my death-song shall be.

* The phrase, Jehovah Tsidkenu, is a Hebrew phrase, and means the Lord our Righteousness.
See Jer. 23: 6.

Popery Another Gospel

by Rev John Willison, Dundee

(Continued from page 26)

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed, or be under an anathema." Gal. 1: 8.

Besides what I have said to prove Popery another gospel, let me add, in the next place.

An *Eighth argument*. That religion which teacheth men to make graven images, to worship and bow down before them, or directs men to worship any other but the one only living and true God, is another gospel than Christ's, and falls under the anathema of the text: but Popery is such a religion; therefore, &c.

The holy scriptures teach us, that religious worship is only due to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and to him alone; but not to any creature whatsoever, Exod. 20: 3; Mat. 4: 10; John 5: 23; 2 Cor. 13: 24; Rom. 1: 25. They teach us, that God is not to be worshipped by images, or under any visible representation; nor in the mediation of any other, but of Christ alone, the one Mediator, Exod. 20: 4; Deut. 4: 15; Rom. 1: 23; John 16: 6; 1 Tim. 2: 5; Col. 3: 17.

But the church of Rome, in direct opposition to God's command, pay religious worship to images, angels, saints' relics, the cross, Pope, and bread. I shall say a few things of each of them.

1. *Of Image-worship*. They make images for religious worship, bow down and kneel before them, pray, confess, burn incense to them, &c. And they are so sensible that all this is against the second command, that they leave it out in their catechisms and books of devotion, alleging that the second is only a part or pendicle of the first command; and therefore they call the third command the second, and the fourth the third and so on. And because the people had always heard there were ten commands, they, to blind them, would keep up the number, by splitting the tenth into two: and so with them the ninth commandment is, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house;" and the tenth is, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife," &c. A poor blind indeed! Our Lord, not only in the second command, but in several other texts, forbids all idolatry and image-worship, and tells us, that God is a Spirit, so he must be worshipped in a spiritual manner, and not by images. The primitive church, for six hundred years after Christ, abhorred image-worship and all appearance of idolatry; and there was nothing of it in the church, until the man of sin brought it in near the end of the seventh century: soon after that, images

of all kinds were introduced, as of the blessed Trinity, of angels, the virgin Mary, apostles, martyrs, saints, &c., all which images men were enjoined by the church of Rome to worship and bow down to. They blasphemously pictured the glorious Trinity: the Father as a reverend old man; the Son as a man on a cross, or as a lamb; and the Holy Ghost as a dove; and these do Papists fall down before, contrary to God's express prohibitions; see Deut. 4: 15, 16. "Take ye good heed unto yourselves, for ye saw no manner of similitude in the day the Lord spake unto you in Horeb: Lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of any beast," &c. Since God chose no similitude to appear in, to the people of Israel, they must not presume to make one for him. Why? The making of such images or similitudes is highly disparaging and injurious to an infinitely glorious God: "For this," saith the Spirit of God, "is to change the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image, like unto corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts," &c, Rom. 1: 23. It is very remarkable how closely the Papists have imitated the Pagans in this matter, and yet are not ashamed.

"But," say Papists, "the Pagans made images of false gods, and worshipped them."

Ans. The making and worshipping images of the true God is forbidden, as well as those of false gods. The Israelites did not design the worship of a false god, when they made the golden calf, Exod. 32: 5. Nor did Micah and his mother design it in the graven image they made; Judg. 17: 3, 17; nor did the ten tribes in worshipping the calves of Dan and Bethel: yet God was highly provoked against the worshippers of those images.

Romanists would excuse themselves, by saying, "They do not worship the images; they only worship God, and pray to him before them."

Ans. The idolatrous Jews had the same excuse for their worshipping before the golden calf, Exod. 32: 5, "Tomorrow is a feast," said they, "to Jehovah." But God discharges us to bow down before an image; see 2 Chron. 25: 14.

II. *Of Angel-worship.* As Papists worship the Trinity by images, so they worship angels and saints before images which they make for them, and all this contrary to God's repeated commands and threatenings. Yea, God so much abhorreth idolatry, that he is jealous of every thing that hath a tendency to it; therefore he forbiddeth us so much as to set up an image, Deut. 16: 22, "Neither shalt thou set thee up any image, which the Lord thy God hateth." Yet Papists, in spite of all these prohibitions, set up many images, and commit idolatry with them too, in defiance of the authority of the great and dreadful God. But to screen themselves a little

from the charge of idolatry, they would make a distinction between Latria and Dulia, two Greek words used in scripture for worship. Latria, they say, is the worship they give to God; and Dulia is the worship they give to angels and saints. But it is well known that the vulgar make no distinction between the worship they give to one or other of them, and the learned of them are at a loss to show wherein the difference lies: nay, we see the scriptures make none, for they use the two words promiscuously for the worship due to God, and condemn the giving either Latria or Dulia to creatures. Look to the original language in Gal. 4: 8; Rom. 1: 25.

As for angels, the Papists teach and direct men to worship them, and pray to them, as they undertake the care of our salvation: and as every man, say they, hath a guardian angel, so it is fit that he commit himself more particularly to him. But though we are to honour angels, as they are God's ministers sent forth to minister to them that shall be heirs of salvation: yet we dare not worship them, seeing our Lord expressly forbids us to worship any but God, Mat. 4: 10, and condemns angel-worship, Col. 2: 18. We see also, angels, when worship hath been offered to them, reject it with abhorrence, because derogatory to God the only object of worship; which is recorded for our direction, Rev. 19: 10, "See thou do it not; worship God." Yet, in defiance of all these prohibitions, Papists will have men to worship both angels and saints.

III. *Of Saint-worship.* They worship saints departed, pray to them, offer incense, make confessions and vows to them; and so fond are they of this worship, that they make many more applications to saints than to God, and have many ave Marias for one pater noster. They even put the Virgin Mary and other saints in Christ's room, by praying to God to hear them for the merits and intercession of the saints. Also they say mass for the honour and memory of saints, as of the blessed Virgin, the apostles, &c. And the Council of Trent pronounce an anathema against them who blame them for it. What an impious perverting of the Lord's supper is it, to celebrate that in remembrance of saints, which our Lord instituted in remembrance of himself! Yea, they conclude the service with praying that this their sacrifice of the mass may be accepted and made effectual for the merits and intercession of saints. O horrid blasphemy! to plead that the sacrifice of Christ's body and blood, as they make it, may be accepted and made effectual for the merits of saints! But all this blasphemy is the more easily swallowed by the people, that the service is performed in a language they do not understand.

But to what a blasphemous height do they carry their worship to the Virgin Mary! They call her, in their public litanies and prayers, the mother

of grace and mercy; the queen, the gate of heaven; the refuge and advocate of sinners, &c. And in their prayers to her, they have these words, That by thy intercession and merits, all our works may be directed according to Thine and thy Son's will; where they put her will before our Saviour's will: — yea, they use these blasphemous words, By thy authority as a mother, command thy Son; which cannot but fill Christian ears with horror.

“But,” say Papists, we only address saints as intercessors to pray for us.

Ans. 1. Even this is unlawful, seeing we have no command, example, or warrant for such addresses in the bible: but, on the contrary, we are told that God only is the object of worship, and are commanded to call upon God in the day of trouble, not upon saints; when we want wisdom, to ask it of God, and to put our trust in God, and pour out our hearts before him, not before departed saints; see Psal. 50: 15; 62: 8; Jam. 1: 5. It is but a voluntary humility, Col. 2: 18, not required nor accepted of God, to pretend unworthiness to come into his presence, and, as it were, from a sense of this, to go about to employ creatures to be our mediators with God, when God requires us to come immediately to himself. Should a king think fit to command his subjects to come straight to himself with their petitions, and not to any of his courtiers; graciously assuring them that he was delighted with them, always at leisure to hear them, and a thousand times more compassionate than any about him: what would be thought of a man that would despise the king's command and gracious assurance, and would spend his time in addressing this and the other servant to introduce him to the king? Every one would judge him guilty of great folly, as well as contempt for authority.

2. To choose creatures for our mediators is sinful, because God hath appointed his eternal Son for that office, who is every way fit for it, and infinitely preferable to all others; being one with God: and it must be highly disparaging to this great Mediator, to pass by him, and employs others not authorised for that office. It is in vain for Papists to make a distinction between a mediator of redemption and intercession; for the scripture makes none, but asserts that he is the one Mediator between God and man, who gave himself to be a ransom for us, 1 Tim. 2: 5, 6, and that he only is our intercessor with God, who died and rose again, and sits at the right hand of God, Rom. 8: 34. So that there is no other mediator that hath right to our addresses, but Jesus Christ alone.

“But,” say they, “what more idolatry or sin is there in addressing saints departed, than for one to employ his friend in this life to pray for him?”

Ans. 1. It appears from Popish missals and books of devotion, that

they not only address saints to pray for them, but that they also pray directly to them, to bestow blessings on them both spiritual and temporal.

2. We have both scripture-precepts and examples for addressing living saints to pray for us, but none of these have we for addressing the dead.

3. We know the living hear our requests, but have no ground to think the dead do so, but that they do not, from Isa. 63: 16, "Abraham is ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledgeth us not." Nay, we are assured that it is God's incommunicable prerogative to know the heart, and to know and hear secret prayer, 2 Chron. 6: 30; Mat. 6: 6, and it must be sinful in any to give his glory to another.

4. We do not address the living in such a manner as the Papists do the dead. They kneel, and invoke an absent invisible being, a being in another world, in an adoring posture and disposition, and with the same abstraction of thought as they worship God, and to pray to him: which is nothing like our desiring living saints to pray for us.

5. What else is it but a deifying of creatures for men to worship them, as if they could search their hearts, know their own secret desires, hear the petitions of thousands or millions at one time, who may be thousands of miles distant from one another! Should all the world address one saint at once, as possibly the Popish world may do the Virgin Mary, it would require omniscience or ubiquity in that creature to know and hear all their requests. Which plainly shows us that Papists by their practice make gods of men, and so are guilty of idolatry.

(To be continued)

Reformation Remembrance

by Rev. J. A. T. van Dorp

The Challenge religious newspaper (NZ) for 3rd November 1993 contains a supplement prepared by the Reformed Church of New Zealand to mark Reformation Day, October 31st, in remembrance of the Reformation.

Many excellent statements are made in it that would make the readers believe that the writers are thoroughly attached to the Reformed Faith. The following are some samples: "Today, as much as at any other time, there is a great need for a clear proclamation of a Christian world view and a reformation in the Church and in our society." "When claiming to be 'Reformed' we are simply claiming to be biblical." "We believe that the Reformed confessions and catechisms are an accurate statement of biblical truth" and "the Reformed faith to be a clear and faithful

explanation of biblical truth.” “It is not too much to say that the Reformation restored the gospel to the world”; “the study of the Reformation and its development should be mandatory for the modern Christian”; “have we anything to learn from the Reformation that we can apply today?”; “Calvin is well-known for his concern for unity”. The Confessions and catechisms are quoted approvingly, including the Westminster Confession of Faith. Even the need of self-examination.

Sadly, the reality is not as stated.

If these things are so as they are stated in these articles why is it that the reality is so different? I mean not in the world but in the church that presents itself to the world as being “Reformed”. For that is the claim that is made when a church assumes that name.

Such a claim needs to be put to the test and a church needs to be able to stand such a test or else the claim is false. The saying is — It is not all gold that glitters.

Now let us examine these claim a bit more particularly. The Rev. John Haverland states; “that today as much as at any other time, there is a great need for a clear proclamation of a Christian world view and reformation in the Church and in our society.” In the notes he describes a world view as the basic beliefs people have about who they are and their place in the world. The Christian world view then is the way the Christian looks at these things from a biblical perspective, and of course the way he acts as a result of believing the truth. He says in claiming to be “Reformed” we are simply claiming to be biblical. “We believe that the Reformed confessions and catechisms are an accurate statement of biblical truth.”

The Establishment Principle

If that is so why does he subscribe to a Westminster Confession of Faith that has been changed? The Westminster Confession that Mr Haverland is talking about is not the Confession of the reformers at all. He is talking about a Confession from which has been removed the sections that recognise Christ as King of nations as well as King of the Church. The reformers and all that adhere to the Reformed Faith recognise that Christ is King of nations. That glory is due to Christ as the one who reigns and must reign until all enemies are made His footstool. It is the bounden duty of rulers to recognise His claims and therefore to recognise the Church. That is why paragraph III of Chapter XXIII of the Confession states: “The civil magistrates may not assume to himself the administration of the word and sacraments, or the power of the keys of the kingdom of

heaven: yet he hath authority, and it is his duty, to take order, that unity and peace be preserved in the church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed, and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered, and observed. For the better effecting whereof, he hath power to call synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God." This is called the Establishment Principle, one of the grand truths of the Reformation and of the word of God. Ps. 2: 10-12: "Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way." Isa. 49: 23: "And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers." Isa. 60: 12: "For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted." Jesus Christ is not only the faithful witness, He is also the "Prince of the kings of the earth." (Rev. 1: 5).

The Voluntary Principle

The principle obviously practised by the Reformed Church of New Zealand is the Voluntary Principle. That is no doubt why the Rev. Graham Capil of the Christian Heritage Party has as one plank of the Party manifesto Freedom Of Religion. Of course that sounds plausible, but in practice that would mean that, if ever he became Prime Minister of NZ, he would not feel obliged to do anything in his official capacity to favour the Christian religion. According to their policy all religions are the same, whether Mohammedan, Buddhist, Hindu, Roman Catholic or Christian. In fact he would consider the Roman Catholic Church as another Christian denomination as a matter of Christian principle, as the Reformed Church of NZ leaves the article on the Antichrist in the Westminster Confession of Faith an open matter as far as subscription is concerned. The Rev. William MacLean commented that "churches and bodies which have renounced the Establishment Principle have fallen from the Reformed and scriptural position taken by the Churches at the Reformation. That sacred unity with which they upheld the Supremacy of Christ as King of Nations, with the consequent duty of nations, as such, and civil rulers in their official capacity to honour and serve Him by recognising His Truth and promoting His Cause, Voluntarism has shamefully violated. It has cast to the ground that royal diadem of glory and beauty, and under the banner of a spurious sanctity it has confounded 'the state' with 'the world', and has allured

its devotees into the jungle of sectarianism. However divergent the sects may be in doctrine and practice, from the ultra orthodox to the false and the fantastic, they all with one accord pay homage to the great Diana of Voluntaryism". Continues Mr MacLean; "Let us turn a deaf ear to the siren voices of Voluntaries, however Calvinistic they may claim to be, and not be drawn by them into the wilderness of the sects.

The Antichrist.

With regard to the Antichrist the first person to identify the Antichrist was Peter de Bruys who was burnt to death by the papacy in the year 1126 near Toulouse. The leading doctrines of his teaching were thoroughly biblical: (1) that baptism does not profit apart from faith; (2) that Christ is only spiritually present in the sacrament; (3) that prayers and alms do not profit the dead; (4) that purgatory is a mere invention; and (5) that the church is not made up of stones but of believing men. After Peter de Bruys, The Waldenses and the Albigenses pointed to the papacy as the Antichrist. Then John Wicliffe appeared on the scene, the morning star of the Reformation, and he pointed to Rome to identify the Antichrist. Then came the Bohemians, John Huss and Jerome of Prague and they spake with the same voice and were called on to seal their testimony with their life at the stake. By the grace of God they were enabled to be faithful unto death. Then came the monk Martin Luther and, when the light of truth dispelled the darkness of the Church of Rome out of his benighted soul, he thundered through Germany; "The papacy is a general chase led by the Roman Bishop to catch and destroy souls." He was excommunicated by the Pope. All the reformers spoke with one voice regarding the Antichrist.

(To be continued)

Book Review

SERMONS ON JOB by John Calvin, Banner of Truth Trust, Special Introductory Offer, £24.95.

A facsimile of the 15th Edition.

Few would deny Calvin's primacy as an expositor of the Word of God. A close study of the sermons in this volume would help to verify that assessment. The Table of principal matters contained in the book in alphabetical order, is in itself daunting, yet indicative of the systematic expositor. It affords us some idea of the vast scope of the subjects explained and expounded by the man of God. We cannot always agree with the 'master',

but his deep reverence for God's Word, together with his profound emphasis on the frailty and limitations of man, give a peculiar stamp to his remarks. A burning desire to be of service to the people of God, plus scholarship of the right kind, and the disciplines entailed therein combine to produce the clarity and thoroughness which characterises all his works.

It is a pity however, that the Volume is so bulky, and that it is so difficult, at least for some to read Elizabethan English with a degree of fluency. Patience and perseverance are required if we begin to read, but once the archaic form of the language is mastered, we reach the rich veins of thought, and are amply rewarded for our pains.

The book is more likely to appeal to ministers and students rather than to laymen.

F.M.

Notes and Comments

The Duchess of Kent joins Roman Catholic Church

The Duchess of Kent is the first member of the Royal family to leave the Church of England and join the Roman Catholic Church. She did so when she knelt at the altar of Cardinal Hume's private chapel and declared: "I believe and profess all that the Holy Catholic Church believes, teaches and proclaims to be revealed of God." Her husband, the Duke of Kent, and the other members of her family were present for this event. The Duchess was the daughter of a high Anglican Yorkshire family so the step to Rome might not be so great as it appears. Her husband is a Freemason and Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England. All true Protestants will feel saddened that the Duchess has chosen the spiritual darkness of the Church of Rome as her new home. Had there been more of the light of the Gospel in the Church of England which she has abandoned this sad event might never have taken place. Protestants can only pity her from the depths of their heart as they see her enslaved by the delusions of Rome. No doubt she may feel comforted in entering a Church which falsely proclaims that out of it there is no salvation, yet she will find out, if the Lord does not have mercy upon her soul, that embracing the false tenets of Rome will shut her out forever from the salvation that is in Christ.

So far as the nation is concerned, there is no doubt that the Romanist Church will do all in its power to use this event to bring pressure to bear on the Government to repeal the Act of Settlement of 1701 which excludes Romanists from the succession to the Throne. Protestants will need to

be vigilant concerning this, as our land had sound reasons for passing that Act. The nation had suffered enough from the House of Stuart to ensure that Romanists would be excluded from the high places of the land. Although the Times attributes the passing of the Act of Settlement to the religious paranoia of the 17th Century, yet our forefathers knew well what they were doing. They recognised the Romanist church for what it was and regarded it as an enemy of the State. So it remains to the present day, as the machinations of the Church of Rome in the troubles in Ireland eloquently declare. If it should once again gain the upper hand in our land — and this is not beyond the bounds of possibility — then will the Church of Rome come out in her true colours with the same savagery as she showed to the saints of God in time past. May the Lord in His mercy prevent it.

Sodomy Bill

The House of Commons was due to vote on a proposal to lower the age of consent for homosexuals from 21 to either 18 or 16. The lower age limit is being supported by Neil Kinnock, former Labour leader, Robert Maclennan, Liberal Democrat Home Affairs spokesman and Edwina Currie a Conservative MP. They will endeavour to carry this in the House by an amendment to the Criminal Justice Bill.

The moral degeneration of the nation with regard to sodomy began in the nineteen sixties when this unnatural sin was legalised. Britain was the first nation to take this step. It meant putting on the Statute Book of the land a law which no civilised nation had ever enacted. Before such a step could be taken the spiritual state of the nation had fallen to an alarmingly low level. That it could obtain a majority in Parliament was evidence of the spiritual and moral blindness of those who were entrusted with the government of the land. The lowering of the age of consent for this abominable sin is a further aggravation of our guilt as a land.

The Word of God leaves us in no doubt as to the mind of God with regard to this perverted behaviour. Not only do we have brought before us in the early history of the world the account of God pouring down fire and brimstone from heaven upon the cities of the plain but there is reference to it in other parts of the Bible. Jude refers to it when he says, "Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." And the Apostle Peter in his second Epistle makes it plain that this was done to make them an example to those that after should live ungodly. What reason we have to fear us a nation that the Lord will come out against us in His wrath.

Video Censorship

Calls for censorship of video violence have been addressed to the Home Secretary. The Home Secretary is said to be sympathetic to the need for tighter restrictions on violent videos but is unready to introduce laws that might prove unenforceable. It is to be hoped that a way will be found to curb this trade in violent videos and so protect, particularly, young and impressionable minds from the detrimental effect of these videos. If the Home Secretary takes up the matter whole-heartedly surely he will find that where there's a will there's a way.

Mission News

Thembiso Children's Home

Thembiso Children's Home is a delightful place to visit. It is situated in Luveve Village, and is run very efficiently by Mr and Mrs Moyo, with the assistance of staff and the supervision of Rev A. B. Ndebele. 'Thembiso' has had a varied history but has fulfilled its original purpose, by the grace of God, of being a place of Christian refuge for homeless or neglected children.

Thembiso Home was begun as a Christian Home for homeless or neglected children, in order to bring them up in the atmosphere and instruction of the Gospel. After years of negotiation and consultation with the Government Social Services Department a site was provided in Luveve Village and a large, handsome building was erected, amid much rejoicing and thankfulness.

There were many children living in Bulawayo in very unhappy circumstances where their parents lived in miserable accommodation in the midst of a degrading environment, peculiar to city life. While African parents lived in the rural areas, there was no question of children being neglected for there was an extended family in every community, where little children left without parents or uncared for were welcomed into the family, but in the city circumstances were very different.

In 'Thembiso' there is a range of children from infants to sixteen-year-old boys and girls. The pre-school children are taught in the Home by their own teacher, but the older children attend the local Primary School. Some little local children are admitted to the class for pre-school children by arrangement with their parents and the Social Services Department. These little local children come from normal families and it is good for the little residents to come in contact with children from normal homes.

Worship is taken night and morning with the children and staff. It gave great pleasure to the staff to find how quickly the children memorised

the psalms and portions of Scripture, hoping, as they expressed it, that 'the Lord would in His own time turn the water in the water-pots into the wine of His Saving Grace'.

In the early days of running the Home young trained Dutch nurses came out to help in the care of the children. Among those were Truus Ringelberg (who is now in Kenya assisting the work there), and Peta van der Ridder and other delightful girls whose presence in Bulawayo, and their visits to Ingwenya and Mbumba were much appreciated. Rev Zororai Mazvabo and his wife were very much engaged in the Mission work in Bulawayo before Mr Mazvabo trained for the ministry.

The staff and children attended the services at Lobengula Church which they still do. A Dutch Committee gave generously to the work. In 1977 they took over the running of the Home. A few years ago the Dutch Committee entrusted the care of the Home to the Free Presbyterian Church.

Nota bene

While Miss Marion Graham was in Scotland recently she discussed with the Foreign Mission Committee the possibility of sending out to the Mission a large container with used typewriters (manual or electric) and not too old, sewing machines, and computers. If any reader has such machines which they do not use would they please get in touch with our Treasurer, Mr Roderick Campbell, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LE. Tel: 041 332 4271.

Mission Work in Eastern Europe

Rev. D. A. Ross

The time has come again to plan and organise another mission visit to Eastern Europe. We hope this will be possible, God willing, in May of this year. It is intended that, subject to Presbytery permission, myself and Mr Alasdair MacRae, Inverness, will go on this occasion.

Were it not for the constant support given for this essential work there could be no mission. There is no doubt from the Scriptures that the Church as enabled is duty bound to spread the Word of God to all nations. Without financial resources this cannot be done.

The Dominion and Overseas Committee has the oversight of Mission work in Eastern Europe. This committee agreed that visits be undertaken

twice yearly, depending on funds. We trust that this necessary work will have the prayerful and practical support of our people.

The following letter extracts indicate the appreciation for the churches work in Eastern Europe. These are only two of a number of such responses to the liberality of people in the Church.

“... Thank the Lord for your work, for your kind Christian hearts of sisters and brothers of your church. By your life you show to people how to live in harmony with the Bible. (Isa. 1: 17). We are very thankful to you for the literature: your calendars, (Trinitarian Bible Society, Golden Thoughts Calendars), witness to thousands of people in their houses, institutions, schools and children's hostels. Many unbelievers began reading the Bible, using the 'Golden Thoughts'. Especially gratitude for the children's catechisms. It is used not only in our schools, but in all Sabbath schools in Evangelical churches of Moldova.”

“... Thank you very much for visiting our city (Kiev) and bringing literature ... people who need God and do not have the Truth can be mistaken and go in the wrong direction along with the Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses and the White Brotherhood which was widely spread in Kiev during these last days. Praise the Lord this last movement was stopped.”

May we continue by the help of God to send out literature which exposes error and brings sinners to submit to Christ Jesus the King of nations. “The whole earth let His glory fill”. It is only the Holy Spirit who has power to make the Word of God effectual to sinners for their salvation. What need therefore that all our activity would be attended to with prayer for this sanctifying power.

Church Notes

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

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

Northern: At Dingwall on 8th March at 2 p.m.

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

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

Australia and New Zealand Sustentation Fund

The Sustentation Fund figures for this Presbytery are as follows:-
Gisborne NZ\$14,910; Auckland NZ\$6219.40; Wellington NZ\$2594;
Hastings NZ\$1500; Sydney, Aus. \$600; Grafton Aus. \$16,840.60.

(Rev.) J.A.T. van Dorp, Presbytery Clerk

Committee Meetings (D.V.)

Committee Meetings will be held at Inverness Church D.V.:

Tuesday, 22nd March

- 9.00 a.m. - 10.00 a.m. Church Centenary Committee
- 9.00 a.m. - 10.00 a.m. Outreach Committee
- 10.00 a.m. - 11.00 a.m. Training of Ministry
- 11.00 a.m. - 11.45 a.m. Church Magazines
- 11.45 a.m. - 12.30 p.m. Publications
- 12.30 p.m. - 1.15 p.m. Sabbath Observance
- 2.00 p.m. - 3.00 p.m. Welfare of Youth
- 2.00 p.m. - 4.30 p.m. Finance
- 4.30 p.m. - 6.00 p.m. Religion and Morals
- 4.30 p.m. - 5.30 p.m. Dominions and Overseas
- 7.00 p.m. - 9.00 p.m. Foreign Mission

Wednesday, 23rd March

- 9.30 a.m. - 11.30 a.m. Church Interests

Return of Church Deputy

At the request of the Dominions and Overseas Committee, Rev Neil Ross, accompanied by Mr Marco Reale as his interpreter, went to Fornaci di Barga in Italy for 10 days in January to preach to, and teach the group of people to which our Church has ministered for the past 24 years. In the kind providence of the Lord he was able to conduct four services and three meetings and returned safely on 17th January. He hopes to present his report to the meeting of Synod in May.

Visit to Africa

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the Editor was asked by the Foreign Missions Committee to pay a short visit to Kenya. He left on 7th February and expects to return early in March. He is also to visit Malawi for one week. The people of the Church are reminded of the need of bringing before the Lord at a Throne of grace the needs of the Mission Field and particularly, that the Lord would be pleased to raise up men, called by Him, to preach the everlasting Gospel.

Correction: In last month's issue the item Notices re Synod Agenda which appeared at the foot of page 61 ought to have appeared on page 64.

CONGREGATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS — 1993

	Sustentation Fund	Home Mission Fund	Jewish and Foreign Mission Fund	College and Library Fund	General Building Fund	Dominions and Overseas Fund	Publications Fund	Centenary Funds	Eastern Europe Fund	TOTAL
NORTHERN PRESBYTERY										
Aberdeen	£800.00	£86.50	£97.00	£40.00	£35.00	£75.00	£57.50	£100.00	0.00	£1,291.00
Creich, Dornoch)										
Lairg, Rogart,)										
Fearn & Tain)	3,252.91	299.67	346.67	74.33	109.33	147.33	52.33	0.00	0.00	4,282.57
Beauly	2,200.00	90.00	110.00	80.00	55.00	90.00	95.00	0.00	0.00	2,720.00
Dingwall	6,326.68	371.00	400.33	240.00	179.00	299.00	243.40	100.00	21.00	8,180.41
Halkirk)										
Strathg)										
Thurso &)										
Wick)	1,040.50	150.00	215.00	100.00	50.00	40.00	40.00	200.00	0.00	1,835.50
Inverness	15,397.62	2,242.68	3,453.34	733.81	614.44	897.94	740.72	244.00	0.00	24,324.55
Kinlochbervie)										
& Scourie)	1,344.20	343.00	530.00	61.50	100.00	100.00	75.00	0.00	0.00	2,553.70
David, Tomatin)	6,088.33	408.14	671.69	147.66	209.76	240.99	158.66	120.00	0.00	8,045.23
Stratherrick)										
	£36,450.24	£3,990.99	£5,824.03	£1,477.30	£1,352.53	£1,890.26	£1,462.61	£764.00	£21.00	£53,232.96
SOUTHERN PRESBYTERY										
Barnoldswick	1,275.00	400.00	625.00	75.00	300.00	300.00	150.00	75.00	75.00	3,275.00
Dumbarton	2,196.66	193.00	281.00	71.00	74.30	86.00	49.33	100.00	0.00	3,051.29
Edinburgh	3,400.33	140.00	717.00	75.00	53.00	100.00	51.00	20.00	0.00	4,556.33
Fort William)	651.00	40.00	24.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	755.00
Oban)										
Glasgow	17,456.00	1,947.51	3,211.01	1,012.16	922.01	1,131.33	816.67	2,075.00	303.33	28,875.02
Dunoon)										
Greenock)	2,800.34	159.00	399.00	63.00	82.50	112.00	67.00	310.00	10.00	4,002.84
Kames	175.00	0.00	205.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	75.00	455.00
Larne	5,000.00	100.00	350.00	100.00	150.00	160.00	100.00	50.00	35.00	6,045.00
London	5,480.02	392.99	599.49	219.34	166.51	461.34	157.01	346.00	300.00	8,122.70
Dundee, Perth)										
& Stirling)	3,076.00	455.99	654.00	99.00	99.00	138.34	105.00	247.00	175.00	5,049.33
	£41,510.35	£3,828.49	£7,065.50	£1,724.50	£1,857.32	£2,499.01	£1,506.01	£3,223.00	£973.33	£64,187.51
OUTER ISLES PRESBYTERY										
Achmore	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Stornoway	12,917.50	706.00	4,615.50	536.00	411.50	801.00	619.50	195.00	0.00	20,802.00
North Uist	3,454.66	216.00	195.00	41.00	97.00	69.00	69.00	0.00	0.00	4,141.66
Breasclete	1,006.00	69.00	221.00	50.00	60.00	90.00	70.00	400.00	0.00	1,966.00
North Tolsta	8,000.00	517.00	532.00	234.00	272.50	263.50	255.50	440.00	0.00	10,514.50
North Harris	4,365.00	437.66	414.16	230.85	124.34	132.34	147.84	620.00	0.00	6,472.19

South Harris	9,377.00	574.00	751.34	170.66	126.50	172.67	148.00	600.00	158.67	12,078.84
Ness	2,391.00	121.00	77.00	30.00	28.00	46.00	24.00	0.00	0.00	2,717.00
Uig	5,000.00	40.00	290.00	116.00	0.00	0.00	110.00	20.00	0.00	5,576.00
	£46,511.16	£2,680.66	£7,096.00	£1,408.51	£1,119.84	£1,574.51	£1,443.84	£2,275.00	£158.67	£64,268.19
WESTERN PRESBYTERY										
Applecross	2,298.15	216.00	141.00	65.50	0.00	113.00	88.50	100.00	0.00	3,022.15
Assynt	3,091.67	474.34	861.00	157.34	180.66	155.36	139.34	0.00	0.00	5,059.71
Gairloch	5,565.00	311.00	335.00	108.50	141.50	117.00	0.00	80.00	0.00	6,658.00
Lade	3,882.00	189.34	231.34	91.34	88.34	111.34	81.34	25.00	5,149.90	9,849.94
Kyle of Lochalsh)										
Plockton)	898.00	51.00	43.50	16.00	13.00	20.00	23.00	35.00	105.00	1,204.50
Lochbroom	5,452.89	390.22	572.22	181.00	175.00	285.00	156.00	0.00	0.00	7,212.33
Lochcarron	4,066.00	441.99	441.99	225.33	231.99	225.33	228.66	0.00	890.00	6,751.29
Shieldaig	2,270.00	65.00	155.00	40.00	35.00	40.00	40.00	132.00	18.00	2,795.00
	£27,523.71	£2,138.89	£2,781.05	£885.01	£865.49	£1,067.03	£756.84	£372.00	£6,162.90	£42,552.92
SKYE PRESBYTERY										
Bracadale)										
Strath)	3,770.00	233.50	576.50	102.50	137.60	136.00	107.80	50.00	0.00	5,113.90
Duirinish	2,636.32	268.02	282.02	110.66	124.67	116.00	100.67	0.00	0.00	3,638.36
Flashadder	175.00	70.00	55.00	0.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	0.00	0.00	350.00
Portree	12,225.00	1,080.00	1,000.00	300.00	200.00	250.00	284.00	120.00	500.00	15,959.00
Raasay	5,493.00	308.00	841.00	138.00	109.00	161.00	119.00	100.00	0.00	7,269.00
Stallin	2,497.90	223.50	288.50	99.00	100.00	118.00	101.00	0.00	0.00	3,427.90
	£26,797.22	£2,183.02	£3,043.02	£750.16	£671.27	£806.00	£737.47	£270.00	£500.00	£35,758.16
AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND PRESBYTERY										
Auckland	0.00	0.00	449.51	0.00	0.00	259.92	0.00	0.00	0.00	709.43
Gisborne	0.00	0.00	384.10	0.00	0.00	309.75	0.00	85.85	185.85	965.55
Wellington	0.00	0.00	35.00	35.00	19.60	40.00	0.00	103.26	0.00	232.86
Grafton	0.00	0.00	212.40	0.00	0.00	309.75	0.00	0.00	185.85	708.00
Sydney	0.00	0.00	0.00	42.46	21.23	106.16	0.00	219.33	63.69	452.87
Brisbane	0.00	0.00	466.20	0.00	0.00	1,165.50	0.00	0.00	233.10	1,864.80
	0.00	0.00	£1,547.21	£77.46	£40.83	£2,191.08	0.00	£408.44	£668.49	£4,933.51
CANADIAN PRESBYTERY										
Chesley	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	22.10	204.41	27.62	254.13
Toronto	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Vancouver	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	22.10	204.41	27.62	254.13
SUMMARY										
Northern Presbytery	£36,450.24	£3,990.99	£5,824.03	£1,477.30	£1,352.53	£1,890.26	£1,462.61	£764.00	£21.00	£53,232.96
Southern Presbytery	41,510.35	3,828.49	7,065.50	1,724.50	1,857.32	2,499.01	1,506.01	3,223.00	973.33	64,187.51
Outer Isles Presbytery	46,511.16	2,680.66	7,096.00	1,408.51	1,119.84	1,574.51	1,443.84	2,275.00	158.67	64,268.19
Western Presbytery	27,523.71	2,138.89	2,781.05	885.01	865.49	1,067.03	756.84	372.00	6,162.90	42,552.92
Skye Presbytery	26,797.22	2,183.02	3,043.02	750.16	671.27	806.00	737.47	270.00	500.00	35,758.16
Australia/New Zealand Presbytery	0.00	0.00	1,547.21	77.46	40.83	2,191.08	0.00	408.44	668.49	4,933.51
Canadian Presbytery	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	22.10	204.41	27.62	254.13
	178,792.68	14,822.05	27,356.81	6,322.94	5,907.28	10,027.89	5,928.87	7,516.85	8,512.01	265,187.38
Donations	335.00	40.00	9,688.21	5.00	10.00	682.46	0.00	5,791.55	7,187.00	23,739.22
GRAND TOTAL	£179,127.68	£14,862.05	£37,045.02	£6,327.94	£5,917.28	£10,710.35	£5,928.87	£13,308.40	£15,699.01	£288,926.60

Acknowledgment of Donations

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

College and Library Fund: H. M. £821.

Eastern Europe Fund: For Bibles per J. F., Larne, £5 and £10.

Foreign Mission: "For the Lord's work" in Kenya £7, in Malawi £10; Anon., for Mozambique £10; where most needed £5, all per J. F. Larne; R. & M. B., Aberdeen, £10.

Legacy Reserve Fund: Estate of Peggy Beaton, Dunvegan, £1000; Estate of Francis Coxon, Long Eaton, £100.

Other Donations: To advance the Gospel in Scotland, from South Edinburgh Friend, £60; Anon., Glasgow, where most needed, £20.

Italian Mission Fund: From the families in Fornaci di Barga, £186.04, per Rev. N. M. Ross; A friend, £12; per Rev. N. M. R.

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

Beauly: A. F., Muirton, £10 for Foreign Mission, per I. McD.

Bracadale-Strath: Harvest Thanksgiving Collection for T.B.S., £111; New Year's Day Collection, £111.20 for Eastern Europe Fund, both per D. G. B.

Breasclete: Anon., £30 for collections; Friend of the Cause, £50 where most needed; D. McD, £70 for Sust. Fund; Friend of the Cause, £20 for Door Collection; Anon., £80 for Sust. Fund; Friend, £20 for Door Collection.

Duirinish: Legacy from late Mr Duncan MacKay, Missionary, £500 for Glendale, per Rev. G. Hutton; Envelope in plate, £100 for Vatten Church Repairs.

Edinburgh: C. F. £2; I. McD. £5 for Foreign Mission; Friend, Dingwall, £20 for Church Funds, all per Rev. D. B. M.

Flashadder: From the Estate of the late Mr D. MacKay, £200 for Congregational Purposes, per F. M.

Kames: Anon., £20 for General Funds (by post).

Leverburgh: South Harris Friend, Northton, £100 per D. McK.; South Harris Friend, Home of Rest, £40 per Rev. K. D. M.

Ness: Mr and Mrs G., Sy, £100; D. MacL. Borge, £5; Wellwishers £20; Friend, Sy, £20; Friend, Sy, £10; Mrs C. M., Cross Skig, £10; Miss A. F. £10; Mrs M. MacK, Cross Skig, £50; J. MacL, Cross Skig, £30; Mrs G. Cross Skig, £30; N. F. Cross, £30; Friend, Sy, £200; also envelopes without names amounting to £1,143, all above for New Manse Fabric Fund; Mrs G., Sy, £20; Friend, Sy, £20, both for Communion Expenses; A. G. £12; From Estate of Mrs MacPhail, Bearsden, £100, both for Church Funds.

North Uist: P. McD. £30; C. McD. £30; M. M. £20, all for Car Fund; Friend, Inverness, £20 for Sust. Fund, per Rev. A. M.

Portree: A. C. £120; Friend £50, both for Sust. Fund, per F. M.; Friend £15; Friend £10; Friend £15, last three "where needed", all per S. Y. M.; Tolsta Friend £10; Tunbridge Wells Friend £20, both for Congregational Purposes, both per F. M.; Anon. £10; Anon. £10, both for Bus Fund, both by envelope in plate; Trinitarian Bible Society £200; Bibles for Eastern Europe £450.

Shieldaig: Anon. £100, where most needed.

Staffin: Anon. £50, where most needed, by envelope, per N. McD.