

THE
Free Presbyterian Magazine
and **Monthly Record**

Vol. 99

DECEMBER 1994

No. 12

Britain Today — a Nation in Spiritual and Moral Decline

It pleased the Lord in other days to raise up our nation religiously and morally, so that she became an example to the nations of the world. That day, however, has long passed, and she is now found grovelling in the mire of her own corruption. Standards, in public and private life, which other nations envied, have long since disappeared and the nation is sinking down lower and lower in religious and moral standing. The question must arise in the mind of everyone who is concerned over this spiritual and moral decay — What is to become of Britain? If the present slide continues the end must be obvious to all who are not wilfully blind — we must inevitably destroy ourselves as a nation. To Israel the Lord had to say: “O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself.” So will it be said about Britain before long, if it cannot be said already.

How is it that a nation so highly favoured as our land has been, has come to such a pass? There must have been at least one cause, though many factors may have been involved in bringing this about. It is often possible to isolate one main cause where such a change has taken place. In our case as a nation it should not be difficult for us to isolate that one significant cause of our decline as a nation and as a people. Our moral decline is intimately bound up with our spiritual decline, and the cause of our spiritual decline cannot be other than our rejection of the Word of God. It was said to others: “Lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord; and what wisdom is in them?” So it can be said of us as a nation. In rejecting the Word of God we have rejected God Himself. Is it any wonder then that we have brought ourselves so low?

After the dark night of popery had passed, the Lord favoured our land with the light of the truth of His own Word. It was through the light of that Word that the nation was established in righteousness. Righteous laws

were set up, founded upon the Word of God. The glorious gospel of the blessed God was proclaimed throughout the length and breadth of the land. Men and women heard that gospel to their eternal profit, because it was accompanied with the power of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Churches were established in a measure of purity, some more and some less. People sat under the Word of God and heard it proclaimed in their ears. To some it was savingly blessed. On others it had a restraining effect. Order to a large extent prevailed in the land. People could go about their lawful business without being afraid. So it continued until men became wiser than their Maker in their own eyes and began to reject the revealed truth of God's Word.

Sad to relate it was in the Churches that the decline began. The Bible which, for many generations, had been valued in the nation, came to be questioned. Was it indeed the Word of God as had been thought? Satan injected the same poison into the minds of religious leaders at that time, as he did into the mind of Eve when he said to her: "Yea, hath God said?" The infallible revelation of God's will in the Bible was counted to be no longer infallible. The Bible ceased to be the standard by which the beliefs and actions of men were to be weighed. As a result men adopted their own standards of belief and practice. Every one could adopt his own standard, for man was now without any compass to direct him in the way he should go. Man being fallen, what standards could he adopt but those corrupt standards which were suited to his carnal nature?

But things do not remain static, and accordingly there has been progression — but it has been on a downward track. We have been falling lower and lower, but we are unable to lift ourselves up from the morass into which we have fallen. Yet we remain so blind to it all. Men hold up their hands in horror at what has overtaken us as a nation and wonder how it has come about, so ignorant are they as to its cause.

It is one thing to diagnose the cause of the present spiritual and moral decline of the nation, but it may be more difficult to propose a remedy. Can the present spiritual and moral decline be remedied or alleviated in any way? Leaders in Church and State propose many remedies to try and arrest the present decline and still the situation seems only to grow worse. Is there no hope then for our land? Must we continue on this slippery slope until at last we perish as a nation, just as other nations have done before us? The answer must surely be that there is a remedy, that there is hope, even for a nation that has fallen so low as ours.

Where then are we to find the solution to our present state as a nation? The answer is to be found in the Word of God. The One who declared

to Israel — “Oh Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself” — is the One who also declares — “But in Me is thine help”. It is not to man we are to look for help in our present situation — for our situation is beyond the help of man — but to the Lord Himself, who is able to deliver the nation that looks to Him in her time of need. The history of Israel and Judah teaches us that when they looked to the Lord they were delivered, but when they relied upon their own wisdom and strength they were overcome by their enemies. There is hope for Britain yet, if only the nation will turn to the Lord in repentance. But before she will do this, she must be brought to an end of her own resources. Our leaders today are looking to Europe to save us — poor blinded Europe that cannot save herself! How long are these vain thoughts to lodge within us? There is a remedy provided. There is One who has an arm of power, and who is able to lift up the nation from the dunghill, and restore righteousness and truth and peace to her once again.

What a day it would be in Britain, if the leaders in Church and State were found confessing their own helplessness, and their need of divine help and deliverance. A change of government cannot remedy matters. Things have gone too far for that. We need divine help — the help of the Most High in our degenerate state. But is He ready to help such a nation as ours? What did He say to Israel of old? It was this: “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.” And is the Lord not as true to His Word now as He was when he uttered these words to Solomon? He is the same God still, merciful and long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth? And does He not hear the groanings of His people still, who cry day and night to Him? “He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.” Has He not a remnant yet in the land who fear His Name, and who plead with Him not to remove His candlestick out of the land? His ear is open to hear the cry of the poor and needy who call on Him to build up His Zion in their midst and who plead His own promise of a time when He will arise and have mercy upon Zion. In her present low state she is a reproach, but the Lord will yet build her up and make her glorious.

Let us not despair, notwithstanding the low state to which we have fallen as a nation. The Lord can take glory to Himself in restoring to our land the years that the locusts have eaten. When the Lord shall build up Zion, we are told in His holy Word that He shall appear in His glory. What a day it will be when Britain as a nation is brought to the feet of Immanuel,

to be found there learning of Him. How glorious will His Church be then in Britain — in Scotland and England and Ireland and Wales! What times of refreshing will be experienced from the presence of the Lord. For such times we are to look and pray, remembering what the Psalmist said: "Thou art the God that doest wonders." Let our eye be on Him who commands the blessing for His Jacob, and we will not look in vain. With man it is impossible but with God all things are possible. As one year is about to close and another about to open, may it please the Lord to turn our captivity as the streams in the south, and pour us out a blessing that there be not room enough to receive it.

Sermon

by Rev D.A. Ross

"The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up," John 2: 17.

What I wish to show from this part of the Word of God is the holy zeal and fervour which Christ, the Head of the church, has for purity of worship in His church, and how we should seek to emulate Him. Christ Jesus is spoken of in the Scriptures as "leaving us an example", 1 Peter 2: 21, and there is no higher example to follow.

The words, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up," are part of Psalm 69. The disciples, who were familiar with the Psalms, remembered these words, as we see in verse 17. This shows us the benefit of being familiar with the Word of God. These words, coming back to their minds, confirmed to them that Jesus was the Messiah. Familiarising ourselves with the Word of God will prove beneficial to us also. For example, in the varied experiences and trials of the children of God, familiar portions of scripture coming to their remembrance by the prompting of the Holy Spirit, confirms to them again and again the reality of God, His goodness, His power and His glorious provision in Christ Jesus, so suited to them on their wilderness journey.

When the disciples remembered the words of our text, the Saviour was at the beginning of His ministry, and sadly He was confronted with corruptions in the church. It was the time of the Passover, and He was in the temple in Jerusalem. He refers to the temple as His "Father's house"; and there He found not only money-changers but also merchants selling oxen, sheep and doves. This scene angered the Saviour, and making a whip of small cords, he drove all these merchants and money-changers out of the temple, and the oxen and sheep, overturning the money-changers' tables and pouring out their money.

One may wonder how one person could scatter so many merchants and

money-changers? The answer is that He was the Son of God; and those who fled from Him, seeing Him take action as one that had authority, must have realised that this was no ordinary person. Also we may enquire, Was it such a great evil that merchants and money-changers should make this provision for the people who needed these animals for offering as sacrifices? The very long distance some Jews had to travel for the Passover made it inconvenient or impossible to take animals from their homes. What the Saviour was objecting to, of course, was the fact that these men made the place of God's worship a place of merchandise. There were many other places which could have been used for the selling of animals for sacrifices; the House of God most certainly was not the place. Consequently, the Saviour cast out these covetous merchants and money-changers, saying, "Take these things hence: make not my Father's house an house of merchandise."

It is evident from this incident that the house of God was reserved for worship only. By permitting this merchandising in the house of God the priests were putting a veneer of respectability on what was unscriptural. In our own day there are church leaders who take into the public worship of God what is contrary to His will, and in this way give an appearance of respectability and rightness to what is forbidden by God. The Saviour's response to these evils today is the same as it was at the Passover in Jerusalem: "Take these things hence."

By this statement, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up," we are solemnly reminded of the Saviour's zeal for purity of worship. His response to false worship in His Church is righteous anger; and eventually He will punish such as defile His worship. Also He will expel them from His house and establish His pure worship in this world. We believe that this was what He did when He brought about the great Protestant Reformation throughout Europe. It is deplorable that many Protestants today are in the process of departing from biblical worship and returning to the idolatry of Romanism.

We will now consider two points in connection with our text, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." First: The house referred to. Secondly: The zeal Christ Jesus had for His Father's house, and how we should seek to emulate this zeal.

First: the house referred to. It is the temple, as we see in verse 14; and the Saviour refers to it as His "Father's house", as verse 16 shows. The temple was the special place established by God during Old Testament times for His own worship. In fact, as I mentioned at the start, at the time of Jesus casting out the merchants and money-changers, the passover

was taking place. This ordinance was part of the worship then appointed by God. The passover was exceedingly important because it was a figure of the Lamb of God, Christ Jesus, who was to be slain as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of His people. The other ordinances of the temple worship were also very important because they also foreshadowed Christ in His person and work as the Mediator. So when Christ said, "My Father's house," He meant the temple and its courtyard and all the worship which was connected with that holy place.

The point I wish to emphasize, however, is that all these ordinances of worship were appointed by God. The priesthood, the sacrifices, and the ritual to be observed were all given by God. By these, God was to be worshipped in the way He required. The doctrines to be believed were those which He gave. The religious practices to be observed were those which He prescribed. The ordinances to be maintained were those which He appointed. For example, as we see in Numbers, chapter 9, verses 2 and 3, God spoke to Moses saying: "Let the children of Israel also keep the passover at his appointed season. In the fourteenth day of this month, at even, ye shall keep it in his appointed season: according to all the rites of it, and according to all the ceremonies thereof, shall ye keep it." The children of Israel were not allowed to add to or take from these ordinances. To do so was a serious error, and invariably brought the displeasure of God upon them. Alas, in the scene before us in the context of our text, the Jews had done this very thing. They added to the worship of God by making the house of God a "house of merchandise", and consequently they brought the displeasure of the Son of God upon them.

Of course this Old Testament form of worship has now ceased. Christ Jesus, who was prefigured and typified in that worship, has come and made atonement for sin at Calvary, and has finished the work which the Father gave Him to do. So it is obvious that because He has fulfilled these types that there is no reason for continuing these ordinances. Paul, in writing to the Hebrew believers, deals with this point, when he says about the temple and its ordinances: "Which was a figure for the time then present in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, . . . which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation", Hebrews 9: 9,10. This "time of reformation" was the time of the appearing and redemptive work of Christ Jesus, who "offered Himself without spot to God," Hebrews 9: 14, for the sins of His people.

Although the Old Testament form of worship has ceased, this does not mean that God has left us without regulations as to how He is to be

worshipped. We see from the example of the Apostles and the teachings of Scripture that the New Testament form of worship, having no Old Testament rites, is a simple form. It consists of reading the Scriptures, preaching, prayer and the singing of God's praise as expressed in the Psalms of David. There are also the two sacraments to be observed: the Lord's Supper and Baptism. The high-light of this worship is the setting forth of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, now exalted a Prince and Saviour at the right hand of God the Father.

Further, when the Saviour referred to the temple and its form of worship as "my Father's house", He included, by implication, the New Testament church and its form of worship. As the former was instituted by God so is the latter. The New Testament condemns "will worship", that is, worshipping God "according to the imaginations and devices of men", as our Confession says. In His worship we are to observe all things which He commands, Matthew 28: 20. His house, therefore, continues with us in New Testament times. It is only the doctrine, worship and practice stipulated by God which is to be received and observed. These are the God-appointed means whereby Christ, His beloved Son, is held forth as our only hope of salvation from the eternal ruin due to us for our sins.

With regard to His worship, God is jealous with a holy jealousy. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments," Exodus 20: 3-6.

By these few remarks I hope I have made it plain what the house of God is, and that God has appointed and prescribed how He is to be worshipped. He will have none compete with Him, nor will He have His worship added to or taken from. For this house, with its God-given worship, the Saviour had a great zeal. "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up."

We shall now notice our second main point: the zeal Christ Jesus had for His Father's house and how we should seek to emulate that zeal. Zeal for God is a warmth of love for the things of God, and a righteous anger against anything which demeans the name of God. Zeal is great earnestness; a gracious fervour and eagerness to promote and maintain the cause which belongs to God. When we have zeal for something which interests us, we do everything possible to promote that interest, and will,

at times, even forget friends, food and rest, in our devotion to that interest. How much more should we be zealous for the things of God. The Saviour's zeal consumed Him. He was, as it were, on fire with fervour for the cause of truth; and He is our example.

In the Scriptures we have several examples of godly people who had a warm zeal and holy enthusiasm for the things of God, but none can compare to Christ in His having pure, holy zeal for the business of His Father. What zeal Moses had, for example, in doing all things according to the instructions given to him on Mount Sinai. What zeal David had when he said, "My zeal hath consumed me," Psalm 119: 139. Yes, godly men and women in the Scriptures are to be our example, but only so far as they follow Christ. In those instances where they veered away from the commands of God we cannot follow their example. Some people do indeed use the faults and sins of the godly as an excuse to go on in certain sins. The godly cannot do this. They desire and strive to follow Christ, who has left them an example, that they should follow His steps. In Hebrews, chapter 12, the godly are referred to as a cloud of witnesses insofar as they lived an obedient life of faith upon God. But we are called to look even beyond them; even to Christ, who is far above all others. "Looking unto Jesus . . . for consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." He is a perfect example indeed; a flawless, sinless example in His zeal for the things of His Father's house.

The godly, we believe, must seek always to emulate Him. His example is one which we come far short of, yet we must ever aim up to it. His example is one which we obviously cannot attain to, yet we are required to strive in this direction. Any little attaining to this example, is by the grace of God; and if there is a continuing in any small degree in this way it will be by the continued grace of God.

David the Psalmist speaks of his own zeal consuming him, "My zeal hath consumed me." This tells us of the hot fervour of soul he had for the Word of God. When this was the case with David, the man of God, how much more is it so with the Son of God. "The zeal of thine house has eaten me up." What pure, holy zeal stirred Him in His holy soul to be constantly engaged on the behalf of His Father in the propagation and defence of His Word and worship. In fact He wearied Himself in the work. He is our example.

David also tells why his own zeal consumed him: "because mine enemies have forgotten thy word." How much more the Saviour's zeal consumed Him when He witnessed the evil work of the enemies of God in the tem-

ple. He was deeply moved in His holy soul with a burning fervour for the maintaining of the purity of the word and worship as given by His Father. When likewise we are confronted with the evil work of the enemies of Christ in the Christian church, it ought to stir us to a zealousness for the maintaining of the doctrine, worship and practice prescribed by God in His Word. Christ is our example and we are required to follow Him.

Moreover, it is evident that the zeal Christ had for His Father's house necessarily included zeal for the Word of God. One part of worship in Old Testament times was the reading of the Scriptures. The Saviour during His ministry constantly referred to the Word of God, and read it in public. It was through this Word that the doctrine, worship and practice prescribed by God were conveyed to the children of Israel; and so we today are directed in the same way. As the Saviour ever showed a deep regard and a burning zeal for the Scriptures, so must we.

If this stream of scripture truth is polluted how can we know the mind of God? How can we possibly know the doctrine, worship and practice God requires of us? We cannot! What zeal then we should have for this pure word, and what righteous indignation against all that tends to pollute these pure streams.

In the English language, the Authorised Version is a faithful translation of the Word of God as it was originally given by God. Faithful translations there will always be, because God preserves His Word for His Church in all ages. The modern translations in the English language are not faithful translations of the Word of God, and are therefore to be avoided.

Moreover, a faithful translation, from the original languages of the Word of God, is not something less than the Word of God, or something not quite so dependable as that originally spoken by God. A faithful translation continues to be the Word of God; the inspired, inerrant, infallible Word of God. Faithful translations do not take away from the inspiration, inerrancy, and infallibility of Scripture; these are inherent qualities which will always belong to it. What zeal we should have for this infallible and precious Book.

Moreover, what zeal we should have for the Word of God when God has bestowed upon His Church the honour of being the custodians of His Word. Certainly, Bible Societies have a binding obligation to propagate faithful translations of the Word of God, but it is His church especially and peculiarly which God has appointed to be the guardian of His Word. Paul, writing to the Roman believers, reminds them that to the Jewish nation and church in Old Testament times were "committed the oracles of God," Romans 3: 2. Also in Psalm 78, verses 5-7, we read that God

“established a testimony in Jacob,” (that is in the Old Testament church) “and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments . . .” Having this same responsibility, what fervency of soul we are required to have for the preservation of the Word of God among us, unpolluted by the impure streams of unfaithful versions of the Scriptures.

Also the Saviour’s zeal was at no time a misguided zeal, that is, a zeal for what was dishonouring to the Father and not to His glory. That was impossible. It was for his Father’s house that His zeal truly was. Likewise, our zeal must be truly for God’s house, His word and His worship. It is so easy for us to err and to have a zeal for the doctrines and commandments of men, a zeal for religious things pertaining to merely man-made traditions. We are easily motivated by this kind of zeal. This will not do. Our zeal must be for the doctrines, worship and practice prescribed by the Word of God. Paul writing to the Galatian believers complains about those among them who were zealously affected, but it was not in a good cause. “They zealously affect you, but not well,” Galatians 4: 17. He also speaks of his own zeal prior to conversion, “Concerning zeal, persecuting the church,” Philipians 3: 6. Sadly, it was misdirected zeal in a most evil cause. There was also Jehu, who said, “Come with me and see my zeal for the Lord,” II Kings 10: 16. While he was indeed in pursuit of the Lord’s work, his zeal was, it seems, more for his own glory than for God’s glory. Let us, dear friends, be true imitators of Christ’s example. His zeal was not misguided zeal. It was truly for those matters which pertained to His Father’s house and glory.

Also, the zeal of the Saviour was, as we said, a holy, pure zeal. Alas, our zeal is so tainted by sin, and more often stained than tainted. But we must seek more and more to put away these sins which so defile this good zeal, and ask for grace to serve God with holy fervency.

I may add that, true thankfulness to God for our gospel privileges will manifest itself in zeal for the maintenance and continuance of these blessed privileges among us.

Let us remember that zeal is of the grace of God. Paul writes to Titus that Christ Jesus “gave Himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works,” Titus 2: 14. It is evident that true, God-glorifying zeal for His

Cause is of the grace of God.

Sadly, if left to ourselves, our zeal soon cools and grows cold. Backsliders will manifest a coldness and indifference towards the cause of truth. Poor Peter expressed such warm zeal for His Saviour at one point, to the extent that if necessary he would die for Him. Not long after this he shamefully denied His Lord and Master. Where was his professed zeal? If left to ourselves, our zeal will soon cool off. The church at Ephesus had left her "first love", Revelation 2: 4, and descended to a degree of coldness in her affection for Christ and His Cause. Other churches mentioned in Revelation chapters 2 and 3, had indeed lost their zeal when they tolerated idolatry in the Church of God. What need then for the grace of God to be continually in exercise in our souls, so that we may not only take note of Christ's zeal, but seek grace from the Most High to walk in His footsteps.

Zeal is a duty. It is offensive to God not to be zealous for His house. He complained to the children of Israel, when they neglected the house of the Lord and were careful to maintain their own homes, "Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste?" Haggai 1: 4. Paul writing to the Galatian believers says, ". . . it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing," Galatians 4: 18.

When we fall away from being zealously affected in the cause of truth, we are called to repent and to return to that earnest interest in, and pursuit of, the things of God. "Be zealous therefore and repent," Rev 3: 19.

By zeal we are fired in our minds and hearts to be up and doing for the cause of Christ, but if we have no zeal, we are sluggish and indifferent to the evils which ever threaten the cause of Christ.

May we then look to Christ as our example, mourn over coldness, and seek more and more of the grace of God to walk in the footsteps of Christ.

Popery Another Gospel

by Rev. John Willison, Dundee

"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.

Fourteenth Argument. That religion which is not instituted and authorized by Jesus Christ, the sole Head of the church, but devised and appointed by antichrist, his great enemy, must be another gospel, and liable to the anathema of the text: but Popery is such a religion; therefore, &c.

I have showed before, that Christ hath left us his religion or gospel in his word, and that we are to look to his word as our only rule of faith,

worship, and practice in religious matters, and to reject all human inventions inconsistent therewith.

I have also mentioned the Popish doctrines and practices which Protestants reject as contrary to the rule. And these have been gradually devised and brought in by the church and bishops of Rome, as is evident from the histories and writings of sundry Popish, as well as Protestant authors, who mention the particular times and years when these doctrines and practices were broached and introduced. Now, these being expressly contrary to the revealed will of Christ, and to his honour and glory, cannot be reckoned Christianity, but the reverse of it, or antichristianism, devised by antichrist, Christ's grand enemy. It is well known, that the body of sound Protestants hold the Pope and church of Rome to be antichrist, mentioned by the apostle John; 1 John 2: 18; and the man of sin and son of perdition, mentioned by the apostle Paul; 2 Thes. 2: 3, 4; and the seducing spirits spoken of, 2 Tim 4: 1. The doctrines and practices confuted in preceding arguments being so plainly antichristian, we may well conclude the broachers and propagators of them to be antichrist, namely, the Pope and his hierarchy. Likewise other scripture-marks of antichrist well agree to them.

In the first place, let us take a view of the seat of antichrist, or the city where he is to reside and govern. 1. The city is called mystical Babylon; Rev. 17: 5. Now, Rome may well get that name, because of her resembling old Babylon in her idolatry, and oppressing the true church of God. Sundry Papists hold, that Rome is meant by Babylon in 1 Pet. 5: 13, and why not also in other texts?

2. The city is situated upon seven hills; Rev. 18: 9. Now, Rome is the only city we read of that is famed for such a situation; the names of the hills being, Palatinus, Aventinus, Quirinalis, Celius, Viminalis, Esquilinus, Capitolinus.

3. It is a city that had seven kings, that is, seven forms of government, before antichrist called the beast, reigned in it, who is therefore called the eighth. Five of these were fallen before John's time, the sixth was then in being, and the seventh was to come; according to Rev. 17: 10, 11. All this agrees exactly to Rome with her seven forms of government; 1. Kings. 2. Consuls. 3. Tribunes. 4. Decemviri. 5. Dictators. 6. Emperors Pagan, then in being. 7. Emperors Christian, which were to come. And the beast, or antichristian monarch, is the eighth, ver. 11; and there he is said to be of the seventh, because of his having a mixed power, made up partly of the civil power of the seventh head, and partly of an ecclesiastical power super-added to it. And observe, it is said of the seventh, ver. 10, that he

was to continue a short space. Why? The Pope soon wrested Rome and Italy from the Christian emperor, and usurped his power.

4. This city, or great whore, where antichrist reigns, is said to "sit upon many waters, and to reign over the kings of the earth," Rev. 17: 1, 18, and these waters are expounded, ver. 15, to be "multitudes of people, nations, and tongues;" which agrees well to Rome, that hath many nations of different languages depending on her authority; and to the Pope, who hath had a mighty influence upon the kings of Europe, to make war against their neighbours, and to persecute their subjects at his pleasure; and sometimes hath caused them to do penance, resign their crowns, and receive them again as a gift from him, &c.

5. This city is called the "great whore, the mother of harlots, with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication," and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication; see Rev. 17: 1, 2, 5. These characters are most applicable to the church of Rome, because of her apostacy and gross idolatry, by which she hath gone a-whoring from God, and hath wofully ensnared the kings and nations of the world into it with her. I showed before why idolatry is called fornication and whoredom, and is compared to wine.

6. This is called the "beast that hath ten horns," by which are meant ten "kings, which were to receive their power with the beast, and give their power and strength to her;" see Rev. 17: 12, 13. This suits well with Rome! for, in Pope Leo X's time there were just ten kings submitting, namely, in Germany, France, England, Scotland, Denmark, Poland, Spain, Navarre, Hungary, Naples. And though these kingdoms have since undergone many alterations, yet still the bounds of the Roman empire keep pretty much about the number of ten kingdoms or sovereign states.

These characters being so plainly applicable to Rome, many Papists grant that Rome is to be the seat of antichrist; but, to save the Pope, refuse it to be Rome papal that is meant, but Rome Pagan, or Rome when she falls off from the Pope to Paganism. And they will have it that anti-christ is yet to come, and will continue only three years and a half; and that the two witnesses, Enoch and Elias, will come from heaven to destroy him.

But by what is said, and by the marks following, joined therewith, it is most evident that he is come already, and that the Pope who sits at Rome is the very antichrist described in the word of God.

Consider these things further. 1. The bible tells us, that antichrist was to rise by a great apostacy or falling away from Christianity, which was to come gradually to a great height, 2 Thes. 2. This apostacy is called the mystery of iniquity, 2: 7, that began to work in the apostles' days, namely,

by the antichristian ambition, like that of Diotrephes, then working under ground, and which at length made way for antichrist's open appearance.

2. The great let, which withheld antichrist's coming in the apostles' time, is now taken out of the way, 2 Thes. 2: 6, 7. That let was the heathen empire or Roman emperor, and so the primitive Christians understood it; which made sundry of the ancients wish for the continuance of the Roman empire, because of the terror they were under of that great adversary's appearing upon the destruction thereof.

3. That the Pope is antichrist, appears from 2 Thes. 2: 4, where he is said to "sit as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." Now, as God resided in the temple of Jerusalem, and was worshipped there, so the Pope sits in the Church at Rome, usurping God's prerogatives, titles, and honours, as I showed before; and the Papists ascribe divine power to him, to forgive sin, dispense with God's laws, make duty to be sin, and sin to be duty; to open and shut heaven and hell at his pleasure.

4. He is said, 2 Thes. 2: 4, to "exalt himself above all that is called God, or is worshipped." This the Pope doth sundry ways: 1. He exalts himself above the God of heaven, by annulling his commands, hallowing the very stews, and many gross acts of impiety, and demanding stricter obedience to his own laws than to God's laws: and by pretending to do things which Omnipotence cannot do, such as things sinful, or things which imply contradiction. He can make God of a piece of bread, a whole Christ of a thin wafer, a body without quantity, extension, weight, or colour; the same small body to be in millions of places, in heaven and earth, at the same moment of time. 2. The Pope exalts himself above magistrates who are called gods, by treading on the necks of emperors, kicking off the crowns of kings, deposing them, loosing their subjects from their allegiance, disposing of their dominions and lives, exempting his ecclesiastics from their jurisdiction, even in temporal causes, contrary to God's command, Rom. 13: 1. And he hath his Janissaries, the Jesuits, still going through the world, promoting plots and conspiracies against Protestant kings and kingdoms. By which ungodly practices, he hath filled the world with blood and confusion, with long and cruel wars, and with the secret murder of princes and others.

5. There is another prophecy that agrees with that before-mentioned, of a great apostacy under the gospel, which is most applicable to the Pope and his church, 1 Tim. 4: 1-3, when men shall receive the doctrine of demons, that is, doctrines which teach the worship of saints and angels, in imitation of the demon worship of the heathens, that is, a middle sort of deities between the supreme God and mortal men, whose office it is

to be agents or mediators between the gods above, and men below. Speaking lies in hypocrisy, that is, promoting their errors by lies and forgeries, fabulous legends, and lying miracles; professing honour to Christ, while they undermine his priesthood, disparage his sacrifice, and corrupt his ordinances. They forbid marriage to some, and encourage nuns' vows; which leads to manifold mischiefs, lewdness, and villany; and all this contrary to the mind of the Spirit of God; Heb. 13: 4; 1 Cor. 9: 5; 7: 2; 1 Tim. 3: 7. They command abstinence from certain meats, as from flesh on certain days, without any warrant from God, who on the contrary has freed Christians from such yokes under the gospel.

6. The whore is said to be arrayed in scarlet, Rev. 17: 4, which is literally true of the Pope and his cardinals, who wear hats, robes, stockings, and shoes of scarlet colour, and will not change their livery, though they know how we apply this text.

7. Their merchandise is gold, silver, slaves, and souls of men, Rev. 18: 12, 13. So the Pope and his clergy trade by enslaving men, redeeming souls out of purgatory for money, opening heaven by pardons for gold and silver; so that none go to hell but the poor who want money, or those who are not willing to part with it.

8. The whore is said to "make the nations drunk with her wine," Rev. 17: 2. So the Pope and his clergy so intoxicate people's minds with their superstitious doctrines and worship, that let them be guilty of never so many errors and blasphemies, or impose on them what they will, they believe they cannot err; and they are ready to kill and murder all who say the contrary.

9. The whore is said to be drunk with the blood of Christ's martyrs, Rev. 17: 6. This is true of the Pope and his church with a witness, as I showed before, &c.

What I have advanced amounts to a plain demonstration that Popery is another gospel, and the religion of antichrist, and therefore to be abhorred.

I shall touch at a common objection of Papists against the religion of Protestants, from its novelty. "Where was your religion," say they, "before Luther arose," anno 1517?

Ans. Our religion and doctrines were there, where theirs never was, namely, in the bible. And they were also with the universal Christian church for five or six hundred years after Christ's ascension, during all which time the Popish doctrine were not heard of. And, even in the most dark and corrupt ages, Christ had his faithful witnesses, long before Luther, to maintain these very truths we profess; such as the Waldenses, Albigenses

and Wicklifites, Hussites, and many others. But let us, in our turn, ask the Papists, "where was your religion for the first six hundred years after Christ?" Let them show, if they can, where all that time was the doctrine of transubstantiation: where was the Pope's supremacy or infallibility? Where image-worship, praying in an unknown tongue, communion in one kind? Where was purgatory? Works of supererogation, giving dispensations or pardons, selling indulgences? and many such things. They were not then conceived, nor come forth of antichrist's womb. Christ's church in those more early ages knew them not. No; these things are all Romish corruptions and Popish innovations, brought into the church since these times. So that the character of novelty properly belongs to their religion, not to ours. We have true antiquity on our side, the ancient records of the scriptures, and the ancient practice of the apostolic and primitive church, which they have no claim to.

The Close of the Year

Ebenezer.

- 1 The Lord, our salvation and light,
The Guide of our strength and our days,
Has brought us together tonight,
A new Ebenezer to raise:
The year we have now passed through,
His goodness with blessings has crowned;
Each morning his mercies were new;
Then let our thanksgivings abound.
- 2 Encompassed with dangers and snares,
Temptations, and fears, and complaints,
His ear he inclined to our prayers,
His hand opened wide to our wants:
We never besought him in vain;
When burden'd with sorrow or sin,
He helped us again and again,
Or where before now had we been?
- 3 His gospel, throughout the long year,
From sabbath to sabbath he gave;
How oft has he met with us here,

And shown himself mighty to save!
His candlestick has been removed
From churches once privileged thus;
But though we unworthy have proved,
It still is continued to us.

- 4 For so many mercies received,
Alas! what returns have we made?
His Spirit we often have grieved,
And evil for good have repaid:
How well it becomes us to cry,
“Oh! who is a God like to thee?
Who passest iniquities by,
And plungest them deep in the sea!”

5. To Jesus, who sits on the throne,
Our best hallelujahs we bring;
To thee it is owing alone
That we are permitted to sing:
Assist us, we pray, to lament
The sins of the year that is past;
And grant that the next may be spent
Far more to thy praise than the last.

Religious Education Today

by Rev K. D. MacLeod

Time was when religious education in Scotland was very firmly based on the Bible and the Shorter Catechism. There was widespread acceptance that God has spoken to mankind, that the Bible is the record of the revelation He has given, and that the Shorter Catechism is an accurate summary of the teachings of the Bible. Any other foundation for communicating religious ideas to children would have been, for most Scots at the time, unthinkable.

This has all changed. And the change is highlighted by a recent 40-page official report by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools in Scotland, which, while it approves of Christianity being “accorded appropriate emphasis as the main religious tradition in Scotland”, does not give it any unique status. This, I am sure, is typical of most professedly Christian countries. The USA, however, goes the length of prohibiting all forms of religious

teaching and observance in its public schools because of a spurious interpretation of the constitution, an interpretation which is only possible because the founding fathers of the nation repudiated the establishment principle — the doctrine that the state has a duty to promote the true religion by all means which are proper for it to use. So we have the absurd situation of a headteacher in Mississippi being suspended for a whole year because he allowed a pupil to read a prayer over the school's public address system. This is the result of decisions of the Supreme Court in the early 1960s, when it held that prayer in public schools contravenes the constitution.

But why is religious education today in its present sad condition? Sadly, the Church itself must bear a large measure of the responsibility. Churchmen who are committed to multi-faith religion must be equally committed to modern syllabuses. And churchmen who do not accept the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures cannot complain when their errors are taken to the logical conclusion. There were always some people in society who were prepared to question the authority of the Bible. But it was when, well over a hundred years ago, this way of thinking gained a place within the Church that it became really dangerous. If ministers doubted, first of all the accuracy of small parts of Scripture, and later the authority of the whole of Scripture, it is not surprising that the bulk of their congregations followed. Unconverted lay people were in no position to hold on to what was worthwhile in religion when their leaders were so desperate to throw it all overboard.

Where the Church went, society at large followed. And the schools, as part of society, took the same road, until all religions must now be accepted as having the same authority. No religion has any more right than another to be regarded as true. So every religion, Christianity included, inevitably comes to be regarded as having little practical value. Truth in religion is thus nowhere to be found, and authority has disappeared with it. So, instead of teaching the truth of Scriptural Christianity, the official line being promoted by the state today is that all religions are equal, which is only possible if one accepts that there is no ultimate authority in religion. Genuine Christianity is therefore ruled out of court, because true Christianity — the Christianity of the Bible — proclaims its own uniqueness, as it condemns all other religions as not only unhelpful and misleading, but positively dangerous and sinful.

Doubtless that is a statement which to most ears sounds like the most extreme intolerance. And one of the official aims in teaching pupils about other religions is to bring them to "acquire tolerance and respect for

others". This, of course, is to confuse respect for others with an acceptance of their beliefs as being equally as valid as my own. However, it is the same Bible that teaches me the doctrines of Christianity that teaches me also to love my neighbour as myself. But for me to tell my neighbour that it does not matter what he believes is certainly not to demonstrate my love to him, when there is an absolute difference between truth and error in religion. The fact is that if my neighbour cannot be sure that his religion is true it is quite unable to support him in times of trouble; more especially it cannot support him as he stares into what must be for him the unknown uncertainties of the afterlife.

One of the aims laid down in the official guidelines is that pupils would "recognise religion as an important expression of human experience". No one can argue with that proposition as it stands. But there is little doubt that there lies behind it the idea that religion is nothing more than an expression of human experience, that there is no possibility of a revelation from outside human experience. So the individual pupil is encouraged, after "personal search, discovery and critical evaluation", to develop his "own beliefs, attitudes, moral values and practices." Which is to ignore the uncomfortable fact that fallen man has a disordered understanding and a corrupt will, so that without divine intervention he cannot, and he does not want to, accept from the heart those religious beliefs which are true, and indeed are revealed for his good. He does not accept the truth because he cannot, and will not, from the heart accept the authority of God. Because he has a fallen nature he is in no position by the use of his unaided reason to construct a reliable set of religious beliefs and values; he cannot even with safety pick and choose among those which are already on offer; he can only be safe if he will submit to that set of religious beliefs and values given in the Scriptures by divine revelation.

Instead, the government is promoting that favourite tenet of natural religion: that men and women, youngsters included, are able by the use of their unaided reason to develop their own religious attitudes. The establishment principle has thus been turned on its head, for the duty of the state towards religion is not only to ensure that religious education is given in schools, but also that what is taught should be pure and true — in other words, Scriptural. One of the ways in which the folly of the last century United Presbyterians was seen — when they turned voluntaries and gave up the establishment principle — was that some of them even opposed the teaching of religion in schools.

No doubt they would find the present situation perfectly satisfactory. While religion is taught in our schools, no religion is to be seen as better,

or nearer the truth, than another. "It is also important", the inspectors declare, "that the pupils are given opportunities to think for themselves and make up their own minds about the religious and moral issues that arise from their studies. Planning (by teachers) has to ensure that the pupils' own opinions are explored and discussed, otherwise they are unlikely to see the meaning and relevance of religion or morality for real life." Far be it from me to suggest that the ideal situation is one where pupils do not think seriously about religious and moral issues. Without a doubt everyone should be persuaded in their own mind of what they believe.

What I am concerned about is that the study of religion needs a sure foundation, and man's unaided reason is a completely inadequate foundation. If someone intends to travel to a country which he has never previously visited he would almost certainly wish to learn something about it first, not from the unaided exercise of his own mind, but from someone who has been there before him. And if we wish to know what is beyond the grave it is from the God of eternity that we need to learn about it, not from the speculations of some sinful human mind — whether it be our own or someone else's. We should therefore be profoundly thankful that this great God has made known in the Scriptures a safe way through life, a way which leads to a blessed eternity — and that way is His own Son, Christ Jesus, the only Saviour of sinners. This is the sort of knowledge which is inaccessible apart from a submissive attitude to the Bible. Sin, we must remember, has brought a prejudice into the operation of the human mind, a prejudice which operates against the truth. In other words, unaided human reason can be relied on to accept false teaching of some kind.

What I have said so far has not touched the question of what form of Christianity is being taught. Even were it accepted that other religions are false, there is still the matter of the endless varieties of false Christianity. So Roman Catholicism is presented as being just as valid as Protestantism, but it is a Protestantism that is fundamentally flawed because the full authority of Scripture is not presented. And it is doubtful if the possibility of accepting the full authority of Scripture is ever to be presented as anything other than a relic of more primitive times.

The inspectors' report refers to one of the stranger trends in recent educational thinking: the implicit approach to religious education, advocated by some councils for the early stages of school. The idea is that there should be no use of what are called explicitly religious phenomena (for example, belief in God and Bible stories). Instead "the rich variety

of experiences which help young children develop awareness and sensitivity in personal and social relationships, together with a developing sense of awe and wonder at the beauties and mysteries of the natural world" must first be explored before the children are ready to listen to even the simplest of Bible stories. But to parents who have made the least effort to teach their own pre-school children any of the basic religious truths, such an idea must seem the most ludicrous nonsense. It is surely perfectly plain that children, even without saving grace, can grasp in their own limited way the fact, for instance that there is a God. The inspectors' report, it has to be said, does seriously question the implicit approach. And the 5-14 guidelines do recommend the use of explicitly religious material at the early stages, including, however, not only Bible stories, but stories from the Qu'ran (perhaps more recognisable as the Koran) and the Guru Granth Sahib (a Sikh holy book).

We are left with a serious and fundamental question, Who today would have the commitment to teach a satisfactory syllabus of religious education? It is a question which has no easy answer, although there are some teachers who do teach religious education with an eye to the authority of Scripture. But it is clear that those teachers who are the exceptions are not keeping to the spirit of the syllabus guidelines. So much the worse for the guidelines! Schools which do not teach religions other than Christianity have been the subject of unfavourable comment by inspectors in their reports on these particular schools. And, in the report already referred to, the inspectors state their view that "there is scope for extending this coverage" (of other world religions) in many schools.

It should be obvious that a system which has as its one fixed assumption the idea that no religion can claim absolute truth is highly dangerous. Thankfully Scotland is not altogether without true religion, but the sad fact is that religion, even where it is true to the Scriptures, has little power. But the God, who in His kindness has given that revelation of absolute truth which we know as the Bible, is a God who is still willing to listen to prayer. "The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (Jas 5: 16), is a statement which is as true today as it ever was. When prayer of that kind is answered, our schools will go back to using the Bible and the Shorter Catechism, and we will rest safe in the knowledge that our children are being given a sure foundation for their religious beliefs and values. May there then be much prayer of that kind in Scotland and throughout the world!

Obituary

Mr John Murray, Elder, North Tolsta

This worthy man passed away on the fifth day of May, 1994, in his ninetieth year. He was born and brought up in a home and within a family circle where parents endeavoured to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. It takes, however, more than parental teaching and example to bring children to a saving knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus and John Murray was to pass from childhood to manhood and even reach middle-age before passing from death to life.

Like many of his contemporaries in the village of North Tolsta he, on coming to years, followed a seafaring life, first as a fisherman, and then throughout the Second World War as a seaman in the Royal Navy. As a reservist he was called up in 1939 and was brought through many perils in the years that followed. On one occasion he was, in the Lord's providence, transferred from a ship which was shortly thereafter sunk and among those who lost their lives were three of his fellow islanders. On demobilisation he returned home to his wife and children in North Tolsta and obtaining employment he diligently provided for their needs and with the help of his like-minded wife, three sons and five daughters were reared.

John Murray was by natural disposition a peaceable and amiable man. Having come under baptismal vows, he faithfully endeavoured to discharge the obligations under which that action placed him. He was attentive on the public means of grace and his outward conduct was blameless, but what his inward exercise of soul was at this period is not known. The first outward evidence of his being under soul concern was manifested in connection with the death of his mother in 1956. Bereft of her, he was now left to bewail the fact that he had not paid better heed to all the counsels and words of advice which he had received from her with regard to the salvation of his never-dying soul. Over the next few years John Murray was increasingly to know that it was indeed an evil thing and bitter that he had sinned against the Lord and what he now sought above everything else was mercy for his guilty soul. In August 1964 he underwent major surgery in the Lewis Hospital. Complications rendered it necessary to perform a second operation on the following day and this further operation was to affect one of his legs, leaving him lame for the rest of his life. He was brought to a very low state but, as there is to everything a season and a time to every purpose under the heaven, so this proved to be the time appointed for the Holy Spirit to reveal Christ in His mercy and love to his soul. The particular portion of the Word of God which

brought life, light and liberty was: "For ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God". The first visitor to his hospital bed was his sister. Filled with anxiety and concern and anxious to know what his physical state was, she was greatly surprised to see a happy, cheerful countenance. To her he said: "Whether it's death or life it matters not now, my life is hid with Christ in God. All is well." The consistency of his Christian profession over the years that followed was to confirm that John Murray had indeed passed from death to life.

Although he was to remain a semi-invalid for the rest of his life, his recovery was nonetheless remarkable. In March 1966 he was enabled to profess the Lord publicly for the first time. Election to office followed in due course: to the Deaconship in 1968 and then to the Eldership in 1974. The duties of both these offices were discharged in an exemplary manner. The Cause of Christ came first with John Murray and within and outwith the bounds of his own congregation he did his utmost to uphold and advance it. While able, he attended communion seasons throughout the island. His home was well known for its hospitality and the reason for this was particularly evident at North Tolsta communion seasons when visitors from far and near were entertained under its roof. His wife, Murdina, who was also a communicant member in the North Tolsta congregation, was a true help-meet to him. Of one mind as far as the things of God were concerned, they were ideally suited to one another. In May 1989, when the newspapers and media generally made out that the Free Presbyterian Church was now finished and that the vast majority of its people had left to join the APCs, Mrs Murray's light on the path of duty shone from the words, "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high". On being thus encouraged she immediately turned to her husband and said to him "Cha chairich sinne, Iain", ("We will not move, John.")

Mr and Mrs Murray lost two of their sons, the oldest in 1976 and the second oldest in 1987. The latter's death occurred suddenly and unexpectedly on board his ship and his parents never really recovered from the shock. Mrs Murray predeceased her husband by four years and he felt her loss greatly. They are now together, we fully believe, in that land where sorrow and suffering are unknown, "with Christ; which is far better." They have left a fragrant memory behind them. Over these last years of his life John Murray was totally blind but otherwise he remained in full possession of his faculties right to the end. He was lovingly cared for by his daughter Isabel who was in the home with him and by his other equally devoted daughters as they were able. At the beginning of April,

1994, he was removed to the Western Isles Hospital seriously ill and, after much suffering, he, as already noted, entered the rest that remaineth unto the people of God on 5th May, 1994.

“Mark thou the perfect, and behold
the man of uprightness;
Because that surely of this man
the latter end is peace.”

To his son and daughters we anew express our sympathy and also to his three surviving sisters in North Tolsta, one of whom — Bella Murray — supplied us with most of the information which this short obituary contains.

J. MacLeod

Notes and Comments

Peace in Northern Ireland?

A cessation of violence has taken place in Northern Ireland. The terror campaign of the I.R.A. which has continued for twenty-five years has been called off for the present. The British Government in its naivety has made the working assumption that it is a permanent ceasefire. There is no doubt it would be permanent, if the I.R.A. obtained what they desired. However, nothing will satisfy them but the assurance of the incorporation of Ulster in Eire within the foreseeable future. For this end they were prepared to conduct a campaign of murder and destruction over a period of twenty-five years. How powerfully motivated such men must have been to conduct such a campaign for so long. That being so, did they consent to a ceasefire without being given some assurance that at least some of their claims would be met? It is astonishing that our Government is prepared to conduct talks with these murderers after only a short delay. “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?”

What motivated the I.R.A. in their murderous and long continued campaign? There is no doubt that there is a pathological hatred to Britain in the bosom of the Romanist Irish. Yet this in itself is insufficient to account for what has taken place over such a long period of time. Another motive is thought by some to be Irish nationalism. If this was the motive, then what an incongruous way to go about uniting the nation, by stirring up enmity and strife.

If we are ever to arrive at a proper assessment of the struggle in Ireland, we have to take account of the Roman Catholic Church's part in it all. The Romanist system has become adept at appearing as an angel of light and the purveyor of peace while secretly supporting men of violence and murder. For our own part, we do not believe that such a campaign, carried

on over such a long period of time, could be maintained without, not only the connivance of the Roman Catholic Church, but also its active support. It would not be something new for the Roman Catholic Church to be hand in glove with murderers. This being so, our Government are not dealing just with a bunch of murderers, but with a powerful politico-religious system which has its tentacles stretching out to almost all the countries of the world. Unless our Government is alive to this, it will succumb to the blandishments of that evil system and make concessions which would undermine the national integrity of the United Kingdom and expose the Protestants of Northern Ireland to the inroads of the Southern Irish.

We have no doubt that the Protestants of Ulster are aware of the dangers that beset them about at this time, and that they value too highly their Protestant liberties and privileges to allow them to be snatched from their grasp, yet constant vigilance is required if freedom is to be maintained. Better days will yet come to Ireland, North and South, but that will be when the Papacy is overthrown, and the deluded Irish Romanists are delivered from the thralldom in which they have been held so long. May the Lord hasten it in His divine providence.

Archbishop Winning to be made a Cardinal

The favours which the Pope of Rome bestows are curses on the head of those who receive them. The elevation of Archbishop Winning to the College of Cardinals is no honour to Glasgow or Scotland. The higher the Roman Catholic dignatories rise in the Papal hierarchy, the greater does their guilt become as deceivers of the people. Scotland had enough of Cardinal Beaton, of infamous memory, to welcome any other Romanist Cardinal, lest such turn out to be of the same ilk.

Violent Britain

The savage murder of a General Practitioner Dr Donald Mackay, in his surgery caused shock throughout the nation. How violent society has become when a doctor, engaged in the relief of the sick, is stabbed to death in the midst of his work. Our sympathy goes out to those who have been bereaved. Dr MacKay was originally from Strathpeffer.

Since then a young man operating a till at one of Woolworth's stores was stabbed to death, his assailant escaping with one pound in cash. This case, too, has shocked the nation. It is to be hoped that those responsible for these criminal acts will be brought to justice.

The National Lottery

The Government has given an additional boost to gambling by setting up a National Lottery. It has tried to give the lottery a respectable face by deciding that part of the proceeds will go to good causes. What these good causes will be has still to be worked out. In order to ensure the success of the lottery, it has been decided to dangle large amounts of money as prize-money before people. Already gambling has reached tremendous proportions in the nation and the National Lottery will only aggravate matters further. What misery has already been caused to individuals and families through the sin of gambling. Through gambling lives have been ruined. Apart altogether from the sin of it, it is a worthless industry tying up millions of pounds which could have been put to more productive use.

The Church of Scotland has come out strongly in opposition to the National Lottery. It is an indication of the moral decay which has set in on the nation that gambling is being promoted by people in responsible positions who ought to know better. When the nation is restored to righteousness no form of gambling will be permitted within its bounds.

School Assemblies

At a meeting of the Secondary Heads' Association in September it was proposed that traditional morning assemblies centred on Christian worship should be scrapped. It was thought that the emphasis on God, Christ, the Bible, prayer and hymn-singing was out-dated, impractical and irrelevant to thousands of pupils of non-Christian faiths.

The idea has been widely disseminated that Britain is now a multi-cultural society and that nothing should be done to offend the susceptibilities of those who do not adhere to the Christian faith. In some schools they want to introduce some kind of multi-faith assembly. A Church of England minister spoke rightly when he said that it is possible to hold a daily act of Christian worship, but the problem comes when people try to mix religions all together. Surely it is the least that can be done for children of alien faiths to bring them into touch with the Christian faith in school assemblies, if they wish to attend, as well as children of Christian parents. Why should a Christian nation abandon Christian teachings and practices to defer to false religions? Can we imagine a Mohammedan nation altering its religious practices to accommodate Christians who might come into their midst? Why then should a Christian nation act so spinelessly?

Church Notes

Day of Humiliation and Prayer

It was agreed at the Synod "that Wednesday 7th or Thursday 8th December, 1994 be held throughout the whole Church as a day of humiliation and prayer for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit to stem the tide of moral and religious corruption."

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Australia and New Zealand: At Auckland on 27th January 1995 at 2.30 p.m.

Skye: At Portree on 14th February 1995 at 11 a.m.

Zimbabwe: At Bulawayo on 14th March 1995 at 2 p.m.

Communion in Vancouver

A Communion Season was held in Vancouver, Canada in October. Rev John MacLeod, who officiated at the Communion, spent two weekends in Vancouver. Friends from Scotland and from Ontario were present for the Communion. We trust that this will prove an encouragement to those in British Columbia who have continued to adhere to the testimony of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Only the Lord can raise up His Cause there once again in connection with our Church which was so largely broken down by the A.P.C. secession. There is nothing too hard for the Lord.

Theological Conference

The Theological Conference will take place (D.V.) at Inverness Church on Tuesday 13th and Wednesday 14th December. (For fuller notice see November issue).

List of Communions

The list of Communions on the inside front cover of the Magazine has been corrected for 1995. The Editor would be glad to hear of any further changes which may be required.

Notice to Congregational Treasurers

The General Treasurer requests Congregational Treasurers to send their final remittances for 1994 in time to reach him by Wednesday, 28th December, 1994. All payments not received in time to be banked by the end of the year will be treated as receipts applying to 1995.

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:—

Dominions and Overseas Fund: Estate of Miss K. M. Macdonald (Balance), per Rev J.M., Can. \$5,305.06.

Eastern Europe Fund: Anon. "A" (May), £200.

Foreign Mission Fund: Anon., Canada (Oct), Can. \$100; Anon., Wilts. £200; Anon., "for Lord's work in Kenya" £200.

Legacy Reserve Fund: Estate of Mrs J.R.M. Matheson per I.A.M., Inverness £21,354.25; Estate of D. Campbell (Balance), £23.37.

Sustentation Fund: W.L. £40.

Thanks and great appreciation are also expressed to all who contributed the following supplies sent by container to the John Tallach Secondary School, Ingwenya, Zimbabwe and which have now been received there:—

Typewriters 53; sewing machines 25; copiers 4; computers 4; printers 3; T.V./computer monitors 7; video machine 1; adding machines 11; books 116 boxes; stationery 22 boxes; confectionery 50 boxes; clothes and miscellaneous 18 boxes.

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

Dumbarton: A Friend, Rutherglen, £5, for the Church; Anon., Glasgow £15.

Gairloch: Anon., £50; Friend, £50; Friend, £50; Friend, £200, all per Rev A.E.W.M.; Communion Friends £30; Anon., £100; Anon., £100, both by envelope in plate; Anon., £150 per J.M.K., all preceding donations for Congr. Funds; Anon., £260 for Comm. Exps.; Anon., £30; Anon., £50; Anon., £50 all for Sust. Fd., last two by envelope in plate.

London: Lochcarron Friends, £20, where needed; Raasay Friend £5 for Sust. Fd.

North Harris: Anon., Stockinish £100 for Church Funds; Anon., Stockinish £10; Anon., Stockinish £10, both "where most needed", all per Rev K.D.M.; Friend, Leacklee £40; Friend, Tarbert, £10; M.M. £10, all for Comm. Exps.; Anon., £10 for Door Coll.; M.M. Cluer, £10 for Bus Fund and £10 for Comm. Exps, last four by envelope in plate; Friend, Grosebay £15 for Comm. Exps; Friend, Grosebay £5 for Bus. Fd., last three per J. McL; Anon., £5; M.M. £6, both for Bus. Fund, last two by envelope in plate.

North Uist: Friend, Ness £100 for Car Fd.; Friend, Kyles Scalpay, £20; N. MacC, £50; Anon., £10, all per Rev A.M.; Friend, Stockinish, £10 for Car Fd, per Rev K.D.M.

Raasay: Friend of the Cause £5, where most needed; C.N. £10 for Sust. Fd; £5 for Car Fd; £5 for Church Door Coll.

Staffin: Envelope in plate £5000, in memory of dear departed ones; From the Estate of the late Miss Katie Ann MacDonald per MacLeod and MacCallum, Solicitors, Inverness £6215.62 for Congregational Fund; A Friend, in memory of a loving wife and mother, £100, where most needed, envelope per N.M.D.

Portree: A widow's thanks offering £100 per F.M.; Friend, £10; Friend, £10, both per S.Y.M.; all where needed; Anon., £50; Anon., £10, both for Church Bus., both by envelope in plate.