

THE
Free Presbyterian Magazine
and **Monthly Record**

Vol. 100

JUNE 1995

No. 6

Means to an End

The Bible makes very plain that the doctrine of the end justifying the means is abhorrent to the One who is declared to be a "God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he." It is a doctrine which has been associated with the Jesuits from the very founding of their order by Ignatius Loyola towards the middle of the Sixteenth Century right to this present day. "The key-note of their ethical code," Wylie tells us, "is the famous maxim that *the end sanctifies the means*. Before that maxim the eternal distinction of right and wrong vanishes. Not only do the stringencies and sanctions of human law dissolve and disappear, but the authority and majesty of the Decalogue are overthrown. There is no conceivable crime, villainy, and atrocity which this maxim will not justify. Nay, such become dutiful and holy, provided they be done for 'the greater glory of God', by which the Jesuit means the honour, interest, and advancement of his society. In short, the Jesuit may do whatever he has a mind to do, all human and Divine laws notwithstanding. This is a very grave charge, but the evidence of its truth is, unhappily, too abundant, and the difficulty lies in making a selection."

Georgetown University is a well-known American educational institution which is run by the Jesuits. Among its students in the past was one William Clinton, who is now the President of the United States of America and who has publicly declared his love to his mentors. He professes to be a Southern Baptist but is there evidence that he has been influenced by the Jesuits to the extent that he is prepared to follow their moral code when it is expedient for him to do so?

At the moment the President's very survival appears to be in the balance and his re-election to office for a second term next year must be the greatest of his concerns. To be re-elected he needs votes and to gain them he must employ all the means placed at his disposal. What better way of securing the Roman Catholic Irish-American vote than by inviting Gerry Adams, the chief representative of that murderous, terrorist organisation which

calls itself the IRA, to the White House and there join with others in treating him as if he were an honourable freedom fighter, a reliever of the oppressed, perhaps one even worthy of being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize! The Central Intelligence Agency would not have left him in ignorance of the true identity and character of his guest and some members of his own administration indicated their disapproval of his conduct as, also, did the British Prime Minister; but it was to no avail. It appears that the President, forgetful of his accountability to God, took the view that the end was important enough to justify the means and so went ahead and received this man to his bosom. "Woe unto them . . . that justify the wicked for reward." It did not escape the attention of some that Gerry Adams' constant companion throughout his American visit was a Jesuit priest.

This is no new phenomenon in American politics. R L Dabney traces the beginning of what he called "this dangerous and dishonest game" to an election that was held in the middle of the nineteenth century when a certain gentleman desiring to be the Governor of New York came to an understanding with the cleric, who was then the head of the popish hierarchy in the State, that he would give him the "Irish vote in return for certain sectarian advantages in the disbursement of State revenues". Dabney tells us that "neither Rome nor the demagogues have since forgotten their lesson, nor will they ever forget it. It would be as unreasonable to expect it as to expect that hawks will forget the poultry yard. It is the nature of the demagogue to trade off anything for votes; they are the breath in the nostrils of his ambition. The popish hierarchy differs essentially from the ministry of any other religion, in having votes to trade. The traditional claim of Rome is that she has the right to control both spheres, the ecclesiastical and the political, the political for the sake of the ecclesiastical. The votes of her masses are more or less manageable, as the votes of Protestants are not, because Rome's is a system of authority as opposed to free thought. Rome instructs the conscience of every one of her members that it is their religious duty to subordinate all other duties and interests to hers. And this is a spiritual duty enforceable by the most awful spiritual sanctions. How can a thinking man afford to disobey the hierarchy which holds his eternal destiny in its secret fist; so that even if they gave him in form the essential sacraments, such as the mass, absolution, and extreme unction, they are able clandestinely to make them worthless to him, by withholding the sacramental intention. Hence it is that the majority of American papists can be voted in 'blocks'; and it is virtually the hierarchy which votes them. The goods are ready

bound up in parcels for traffic with demagogues. We are well aware that numerous priests will indignantly deny this; declaring that there is a Romanist vote in this country which is just as independent of their priesthood and as free as any other. Of course there is. The hierarchy is a very experienced and dextrous driver. It does not whip in the restless colts, but humours them awhile until she gets them well harnessed and broken. But the team as a whole must travel her road, because they have to believe it infallible. We assure these independent Romanist voters that they are not 'good Catholics'; they must unlearn this heresy of independent thought before they are meet for the Romanist paradise. Men of secular ambition have always sought to use the hierarchy to influence others for their political advantage; the example is as old as history."

Three weeks after the White House feting of Gerry Adams the Oklahoma bomb was planted by evil and wicked men and the United States of America suffered what has been described as its worst ever terrorist outrage. Tragically, nearly 170 people, including many children, died and American families have now come to know something of the heartache and sorrow which, over a period of twenty-five years, was so often the lot of families in Northern Ireland and also on the British mainland, as a result of IRA terrorism. President Clinton, filled with righteous indignation, condemned those responsible and his Attorney General said that once those responsible were tried and found guilty, the State would seek the death penalty for them. "They have," the President said, "no right to kill innocent Americans. They have no right to violate the law." We whole-heartedly agree. But does Mr Clinton apply the same standards to IRA bombers and terrorists when he welcomes to the White House the very man who, not so very long before, honoured the terrorist who planted the Shankill Road bomb by leading his funeral procession and helping to bear his coffin to the grave? "Verily He is a God that judgeth on the earth."

A Fast Day's Sermon

Rev John Willison

Continued from the last issue (Page 144)

Consideration 1. Your soul's grievances can never be removed while God keeps at a distance from you; but they will still be growing greater; as for instance, while he is a stranger, you cannot have light for your darkness, but darkness will be increasing; you cannot have life for your deadness, but you will still be growing deader in spiritual things; you cannot

have appetite for our food, but you will always be turning the more indifferent about it; you cannot have protection from your enemies, but you will still be brought the more under their power. Things will still be growing worse, the longer God is a stranger to thy soul.

2. Ordinances can neither be pleasant nor profitable to thee, while God is a stranger to thy soul; you cannot see any beauty in them, while God is absent; for without the Lord's presence, ordinances are dead, and a dead thing can have no beauty. It is his presence that puts a lustre on ordinances, and makes them shine, so as to confirm the friends of the gospel, and make enemies ashamed of their opposition. It is his presence that puts life in communions, and life in communicants, and causes them to prefer a day in "God's courts to a thousand elsewhere." It is his presence that makes ordinances fruitful, and his people's souls to thrive under them. O! why have you such lean souls and barren hearts under ordinances? It is because the Lord is a stranger to them. Would you have your food blest, gospel-seasons fruitful, and your souls under the influence thereof, like watered gardens? Then seek the Lord's presence, 1 Cor. 3: 7, "It is not he that planteth, nor he that watereth, but God that gives the increase."

Quest. *Seeing God is setting a solemn appointment to meet with us at this occasion, and it highly concerneth us to make ready to meet with him: How shall we be exercised on this fast-day, so as to get distance removed, and breaches made up, that God may not be a stranger to us on the feast-day?*

Ans. I shall give you some advices, and draw to a close.

1. Make no harsh construction of God's dealings with your souls, whatever they be, but justify him; leave your complaints upon yourselves, and blame your sins, that separate betwixt you and your God, Isa. 59: 2. We have a challenge from God that may soon silence all our murmuring, Jer. 2: 17, "Hast thou not procured this to thyself, in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God?"

2. Be still restless, dissatisfied, and uneasy in our minds, till the distance and estrangement be removed: and be expressing your uneasiness by frequent sighs, complaints, and lamentations after God; sit as a widow in his absence, and let none have your love but him alone; refuse all other comforters, till he himself return; imitate the church's practice, Lam. 1: 16, "For these things I weep, mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water, because the comforter that should relieve my soul, is far from me."

3. Search diligently for the cause of the Lord's estrangement from you, as the psalmist did, Psal. 75: 6, "I communed with mine own heart, my spirit made diligent search." Oh! where is the idol? What is the sin that

hath been the Achan in the camp, and provoked God to turn his back? And as soon as you find it out, see that you cast out the accursed thing. Let not thine eye pity, neither do you spare it; for it has taken thy Lord away from thee. If thou canst not find it, then go humbly to God, and cry with Job, "Show me wherefore thou contendest with me," Job 10: 2. Lord, what is the evil, the sin, or lust which thou rebukest, and for which thou pleadest the controversy? Have I quenched thy Spirit? Have I neglected duty? Was I formal in communicating, or unthankful for former intimations of thy love? "Lord, what I see not, teach thou me; make me to know my transgressions, and my sin."

4. Seek to be deeply humbled for every evil and sin that you are convinced of; and particularly, for the heinous aggravations of them; say, O Lord! I am guilty in thy sight; I have sinned against more light, more mercies, more vows, and more proofs of thy loving-kindness, than others: I have gratified Satan, hardened the wicked, reproached religion, and dishonoured God more by my sins, than others do; so that thou mayest justly frown on me, and make the solemn day, which will be a day of feasting, rejoicing, and gladness to thy children, a day of darkness, gloominess, and distress to me.

5. Plead by faith the Redeemer's blood, for removing the estrangement, and bringing thy soul nigh to God; for nothing else can do it, according to Eph. 2: 13. Say, Lord, though I deserve not to taste of thy supper, but to meet with a frown instead of a smile, a breach instead of a blessing, a cup of wrath instead of the cup of the New Testament; yet behold the blood of my Surety, and be merciful to me. Lord! I have broken all thy commands; but has not my surety fulfilled them all? I have indeed affronted thy justice; but has not my Surety satisfied it? I have deserved thy wrath; but he has endured it. Remember not what I have done against thee, but what he hath done and suffered for me; and let me be accepted in him who is thy beloved Son.

6. While God carries as a stranger to thee, be not thou a stranger to the throne of grace, but continue instant in prayer for the return of his gracious presence; plead the great need you have of it, and the helpless case you are in without it. Beg, however he deal with you now, that he may not be a stranger to you on the feast-day. Say, "Lord, if thy presence go not with me, carry me not hence." What will a communion feast avail me without communion with thyself in it? I go not there for bread and wine, but I go to see Jesus: and what wilt thou give me, if I go from thy table Christless? O let Christ appear and be made known to me in the breaking of bread. Let me enjoy thy lightsome and reviving company

in this state of pilgrimage and trouble. Descend into my heart by the influences of thy grace, and quickenings of thy Spirit, and let me ascend unto thee, by the breathings of faith, love, and desire. Lord, grant the request of an importunate petitioner, and come over the mountains of my guilt. Lord, stand not at a distance behind the wall, but show thyself through the lattice of thy ordinance, and let me see the goings of my God and my King in the sanctuary. Oh! let me not go away empty from an inexhaustible treasure, cold from the sun, dry from the fountain, hungry, sad, and comfortless from the feast of love. But Oh! let me meet with my Saviour there, see his face, and hear his voice; and let me come from his table with my pardon sealed, my corruptions subdued, my graces quickened, my heart enlarged, and my soul refreshed and encouraged to run in the ways of thy commandments, and so inseparably united to thee, that no temptation may be ever able to dissolve the union."

Object. *Oh! saith some poor soul, I fear all my endeavours will be in vain; for I have communicated unworthily before; I have shed the blood of Christ, and sinned against light; so that I doubt and fear that my day of grace is past, and I am cast out of God's sight.*

Ans. However dark your case be, yet surely it is no darker than Jonah's was in the whale's belly; who, though he never read or heard of any in such distress: yet when he is concluding, I am cast out of God's sight, he aims at a believing look to God in Christ, "Yet will I look again toward the holy temple," Jonah 2: 4. Mind also Abraham's case, though he was a hundred years old, and his body as good as dead, yet he believed in God that raised the dead; yea, he believed and hoped against hope. Lord, help us to imitate him. Amen.

The Profanation of the Sabbath

The following is the substance of a sermon preached by one of the well-known ministers of the past — the Rev Gavin Parker. He was a minister in Aberdeen. His text was: "Will a man rob God". Malachi 3: 8.

To rob a person, is to deprive him unjustly of his property. In some instances, time becomes property. The time during which a servant is engaged to labour for his master, is the master's property. If the servant appropriates this time to his own use, or waste it in idleness, he robs the master of his property.

The whole human race are bound to serve God: He is the universal Lord; and has an unlimited right to their service. All time is His: He measures out a portion to each of us, according to His own will. This God is served by the love and obedience of His intelligent creatures: he has authority

to prescribe those services that are pleasing to Himself, and to appoint and arrange the times for performing them.

He has said to each of us, "Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work; but the seventh is the Sabbath of Jehovah thy God: In it thou shalt not do any work. Six days shall work be done; but on the seventh, there shall be to you a holy day — a Sabbath of rest to Jehovah. Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy." The words of God, by the prophet Isaiah, chap. 58: 13, have also all the authority of a Divine injunction — "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord and honourable, and shalt honour him — not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words," &c.

He who determines the bounds of our habitation has an unquestionable right to dispose of our time. He claims our time upon earth as His property. He has clearly and forcibly revealed the manner in which it ought to be employed. He demands that the Sabbath be set apart for Himself, to be employed more immediately in the exercises of religion. To appropriate any part of the holy Sabbath to ordinary or common purposes, any further than duty requires, or to waste any part of it in idleness, is to rob God.

In the sequel of the discourse, it is intended to consider the evil of profaning the Sabbath by wordly or common conversation, and to show that this violation of the Divine law is more criminal than common robbery.

Duty requires that some words be uttered respecting common objects and events, even upon the Christian Sabbath. But the worldly conversation by which the Sabbath is profaned, is occasioned neither by duty nor necessity: It is a voluntary or deliberate prostitution of holy time, to common, and, in many instances, to trivial and useless purposes. Those who trifle away any of the sacred hours of the Sabbath in this manner, are chargeable with robbing God. This, we say, is a crime more aggravated than common robbery.

It is readily admitted, that there may be instances of robbery more aggravated than the other crime in certain circumstances. But the comparison is not to be made between flagrant cases on the one side, and more ordinary cases on the other, but between the sins in themselves.

It is a very heinous crime even to rob a man: it betrays a mean sordid disposition — a hateful excess of selfishness, and a vile contempt for the right of others. It evinces a mind dark, envious, malignant, and ferocious: it discovers a heart deeply depraved and awfully hardened by long-continued habits of impiety and wickedness. The man who can perpetrate

such a crime is an object of abhorrence to the wise and the virtuous, and a source of general fear and anxiety: he attempts to nullify those useful regulations which connect society together; and to disseminate sorrow, disorder, and misery, among men. The crime he commits is very daring rebellion against the Most High: it brings disgrace upon his own character, renders him wretched upon earth, and it brings everlasting ruin upon his immortal soul. We cannot depict a character so base, in all its blackness, and all its horror: we cannot describe all the miseries to which such a transgressor may give rise: he may spread calamity, desolation, and destruction, wherever his influence extends: he may be a terror to thousands, and ultimately a terror to himself; for the way of such transgressors is hard. But to rob God is a crime still more aggravated: And this greater crime is committed by those who voluntarily, and in opposition to the revealed will of God, take part in secular conversation on the Christian Sabbath.

This crime is direct rebellion against God, and an avowed contempt of His law. The command is explicit — “Remember the Sabbath, to keep it holy.” The words were uttered by God Himself. They form a part of that law which shall remain in force after the heavens and earth shall have passed away. This law, all of us are bound to observe: by it we must be judged. The meaning of this part of it is easily understood. “Remember” — be attentive, be careful — “to keep the Sabbath holy;” set it apart from common exercises to the exercises of religion. It is God who issues the mandate: He attends to the manner in which it is received. “God looks upon man. His eyes are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.” Disobedience to this mandate is rebellion against Himself. The rebellion is direct, and peculiarly daring. The transgressor says, by his conduct, “I know the words of the law, but I disregard their meaning, and their authority. No, I will not sanctify the Sabbath; I will make a part of it common: I will speak about the trifles or business of the world; I will please myself, and endeavour to please others. I know that awful threatenings are denounced against those who profane the Sabbath; but I fear them not; I know that God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, but I will compel Him to look on my rebellion; I will do what is pleasing in mine own eyes, in contempt of all that God has commanded or threatened, and in defiance of all that He can do.”

The species of Sabbath-profanation is a rejection of offered grace. All mankind are guilty and depraved. All are justly condemned to perdition. None can save himself. “Jesus Christ came to seek and to save the lost.” The blessings of His salvation are offered to all: but, to obtain a personal

interest in them, faith and repentance are indispensably necessary. Without the knowledge of God, and of salvation through Jesus Christ, there can be no saving faith. Without a change of nature, there can be no genuine repentance. All these are the gifts of God's free grace. An earnest and humble waiting on God in all the ordinances of religion is the appointed means of obtaining them. The Sabbath is one of these ordinances. If any part of the Sabbath is wilfully squandered away in idleness or in worldly conversation, the person cannot be earnest in seeking after God; he cannot feel much concern about his own salvation. But Jesus said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life. Ask, seek, knock: Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." These injunctions require great concern and activity. But those persons who can profane a Divine ordinance, by common conversation on a Sabbath, show that the precepts and invitations of the gospel have had little influence on their minds. They neglect the appointed means of salvation; they also neglect salvation itself: and thus their trifling with the Sabbath amounts to a rejection of the offered grace of God.

This manner of profaning the Sabbath presents a strong resistance to the progress of Christianity. It is the opinion of many — and the opinion is well founded — that, were it not for the appointment of the Sabbath, a regard for God and for religion would soon be obliterated upon earth, and the great bulk of mankind would sink into atheism and utter profanity. But the great utility and excellence of the institution must be sought for in the strict and spiritual observance of its duties. When the practice of worldly conversation, during a considerable part of the Sabbath, becomes prevalent, the religious exercises performed on any other part of the day can do very little — perhaps nothing at all, perhaps even less than nothing — to maintain the honour of Christianity in this country, or to extend its influence to other countries. This manner of spending the Sabbath, by those who profess Christianity, is sufficient to prove that they know not the spiritual glory and excellence of religion — that they have never felt its power upon their own souls — and that they have no ardent desire to see its influence and its blessings extended to others. Thus it frequently happens, that much more injury is done to the cause of Christianity upon earth by its pretended friends than by its avowed enemies. The openly impious, the profligate, and the infidel, may habitually and daringly profane the Sabbath; but their practices and their example are not so pernicious to the progress of the gospel as the conduct of those who profess, on one part of the Sabbath, to reverence His sanctuary, and yet

trifle away the remaining hours in common and useless conversation. The young and the ignorant are thus tempted to think that religion is a mere system of forms and of services, that have no influence upon the heart of conduct; and the openly profane are thus tempted to make vital Christianity and those who profess it the objects of contempt and derision. Thus the progress of Christianity is prevented and resisted by the hypocrisy and profanity of its pretended friends.

By persevering in this practice, the everlasting ruin of the soul is rendered inevitable. No rational hope of salvation can be entertained by one who voluntarily and presumptuously persists in violating any statute of God's law. He who pollutes the Sabbath, by habitually employing any part of it as a common day, is chargeable with self-destruction.

This practice manifests a contempt for heaven. Sinners may speak and think of heaven, and express a feeble wish to enjoy its pleasures: But, by neglecting the duties of the Sabbath, they afford sufficient evidence that the exercises and enjoyments of heaven are not adapted to their taste. Heaven is an everlasting Sabbath: there God dwells: there His servants see His face, and enjoy satisfying communion with Himself. The same God is to be enjoyed upon earth. The exercises of the Sabbath are the means of communion between Him and His people. If these exercises be neglected the favour of God is not enjoyed, nor even desired. Communion with Him, which constitutes the highest felicity in heaven, is not esteemed; and thus heaven itself despised. The sinner thus prefers earth to heaven — the pleasures of the world to the enjoyment of God — an imaginary, transient, an unsatisfying good, to that magnificent and everlasting good which God has laid up for them that love Him. If it was an evidence of base ingratitude and aggravated wickedness in the Israelites to despise the pleasant land of Canaan, how much greater insensibility and wickedness must there be in despising heaven itself — that better country, of which the earthly Canaan was only typical!

These observations might suffice to prove that the species of Sabbath profanation already mentioned is a more aggravated crime than common robbery; but let us now attempt to bring the two in more direct comparison with each other.

Let us compare them according to those statutes of the law of which they are violations. Sabbath profanation is a transgression of the First Table, which prescribes our duty to God; robbery is a transgression of the Second, which prescribes our duty to man. The most able and judicious theologians agree with the standards of our Church, in affirming that sins committed more immediately against God are more heinous in their own

nature than sins committed more immediately against man. All sin is committed against God; but Sabbath profanation is more directly against Him than robbery. He who knows the law, "Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy," and yet employs a part of the day in common conversation, offers a direct insult to God, and provokes Him to anger. The robber seldom thinks of God: what he intends chiefly is, to appropriate to himself, by injustice or violence, that which belongs to his fellow-creature. It is surely the more aggravated offence to violate the rights of Deity, and to prostitute his peculiar property to the purposes of self-gratification or of vanity.

Compare the places they hold in the graduation of crimes. One sin leads to another; evil men become worse and worse; the first departure from comparative innocence is in many cases the most daring; the crime of our first parents in Paradise was perhaps the most aggravated that ever was committed upon earth; the sins that follow are partly the result of the former. Sabbath profanation is nearer the commencement of a course of sin than robbery; Sabbath profanation naturally leads to robbery; many who have brought themselves to a disgraceful death have made this acknowledgement; but who can say that robbery leads to Sabbath profanation? The robber's heart has been hardened by profaning the Sabbath before he ventures to do such violence to man. Sabbath profanation has not become so common in Dundee because the town was formerly infested with robbers; but robberies have recently become more frequent, because the profanation of the Sabbath has long prevailed. Sabbath profanation is a radical crime; robbery is one of its remotest and wildest ramifications. Although the branches were lopt off, a root may remain in all its vigour, and may still send forth luxuriant shoots; but destroy the root, and all the branches will quickly fade, to revive no more. While Sabbath profanation abounds, it is almost vain to expect any considerable improvement in the observance of social duties; but were the sanctification of the Sabbath to become general, an act of robbery would seldom be heard of in our land.

An act of robbery may be done by an individual, and no other be concerned in the crime. Worldly conversation on Sabbath involves more than one in deeply aggravated guilt; it may bring whole families and communities under its corrupting influence.

Robbery occasions to the individual injured the loss of property of a worldly kind; the profanation of the Sabbath occasions the loss of souls. The robber, indeed, brings destruction upon his own soul; but he may do no injury to the souls of those whom he deprives of their property:

they only sustain a temporal loss; their present misery is increased, but their guilt may not be augmented. But worldly conversation on Sabbath may ruin the souls of all who may take part in it, and of all who may give it encouragement and approbation.

We should also take into consideration the different circumstances of the parties. Common robbers, for the most part, are the very refuse of society: they have received little education, and have never been taught Christianity; they are ignorant of God and His laws — ignorant of their own guilt and danger — and as ignorant of the way of salvation. No man has cared for their souls. Perhaps they had no friend, no teacher of religion, to warn or admonish them; they are outcasts from the abodes of virtue and of decency. From them little good can be expected. But many of those who profane the Sabbath by common conversation, have been well educated — have enjoyed the advantages of friendly attention from the wise, the virtuous, and the good — have been taught the doctrines and duties of Christianity; not a few of them even call themselves Christians! These should know God and His laws: they ought to stand in awe of His judgments, and to believe that He is highly displeased with their crimes. How hateful to profess love to God, and to promise obedience to His commandments, and yet to mock and insult Him by a voluntary profanation of the Sabbath! Might not such hypocrisy, such wickedness, appear shocking even to the hardened mind of a barbarous ruffian?

In some instances, the comparative atrocity of crimes may be determined by the temptations which induced the different parties to commit them. From the habits of idleness acquired by the robber, it is difficult for him to submit to honest and regular industry; from his habits of dissipation, it becomes difficult to learn sobriety; his temptations to prodigality and dishonesty acquire a fatal influence; his propensity to live by plunder gathers strength by practice of injustice, and he ultimately appears the confirmed slave of vice: he makes his living by the wages of unrighteousness; he is thus entangled by the bond of iniquity: his present enjoyments and his future expectations upon earth, seem to him dependent upon his nefarious achievements. But little good of any kind is obtained by worldly conversation upon Sabbath: the temptations to this crime are comparatively feeble. Few individuals in this country can add anything to their riches, or honours, or respectability, by this practice — very little is added even to their pleasure — very meagre and sordid is the enjoyment it affords. The robber obtains a reward for his wickedness; the other is a volunteer in the service of sin. If, then, a person will not restrain himself a little, that he may keep the laws of God, he must surely feel very little

regard for the Divine authority; his rebellion must be peculiarly daring. Very few sins are so easily avoided as worldly conversation upon Sabbath. Almost every one has this in his own power. If any deal unfaithfully toward God in this which is least, they will be unfaithful also in much. If they will not bridle the tongue during one day in the week, how can they be supposed to keep the heart every day, and with all diligence? How can they keep themselves in the love of God? How can they be in the fear of God all the day long? How can they resist, and obtain dominion over sin in the heart? How can they purify themselves as Christ is pure? If the easiest duties are habitually neglected, there is sufficient reason to conclude that the more arduous are never seriously attempted.

Let us also compare the influence of these crimes upon society. The moral consequences of robbery in this country must be very limited. Robbers are comparatively few in number; their character is not esteemed but deserted. Robbery can never become fashionable among us; it can never appear innocent; the practice of it can never become general; and those by whom it is committed will always be regarded with abhorrence. But secular conversation upon Sabbath is a common and a fashionable vice. The decent and respectable are not ashamed of it; many have the presumption to pronounce it harmless. In many families, the man would be accounted rude, or austere, or a hypocrite, or a fanatic, who would venture to reprove it; the impious practice has gained firm footing among us, and has extended its baneful influence over all ranks of society. The rich and the poor have been brought upon a level by this powerful destroyer; all classes are vitiated by this moral pestilence. Injustice, oppression, and violence, can never appear harmless; but it has been considered a trivial crime to rob God and to trample His glory in the dust. Misery, desolation, and destruction, may be spread far and wide by the unfeeling cruelty of the robber; but an evil more awful than all these has been disseminated among all ranks of society — the voluntary pollution of the Sabbath. This is the cause of many evils; it is more to be dreaded than misery in any form, in any degree. Sin abounds in our land; it rears its odious head in many terrific and disgusting forms, and it will continue to hold a conspicuous place as long as worldly conversation upon Sabbath prevails.

Are not these observations conclusive? Do they not sufficiently prove, that the profanation of the Sabbath, in the manner already stated, is a more aggravated crime than common robbery?

The voice of conscience, if not corrupted, would decide in favour of these statements: For, if there is a God at all, He is infinitely great and

glorious; He is to be feared more than man; His rights are more sacred than those of man. Is not sacrilege pronounced the most aggravated species of robbery? If to rob a temple of God be reckoned more criminal than common robbery, must it not be still more criminal to rob God Himself? Conscience attests that God ought to be honoured and esteemed and feared more than man; conscience will also pronounce an insult offered to God, that it is more criminal than any insult offered to a fellow-creature.

God is good: His mercies and His benefits are great and numerous, even to the evil and unthankful. Never can one man do so much good to another as God has done to each of us. Conscience attests that we should feel and express gratitude to this God; it also pronounces ingratitude towards the greatest benefactor upon earth a crime not nearly so base and wicked as ingratitude towards God; but when God receives direct insults and avowed rebellion from the objects of His compassion and kindness, conscience must attest that such wickedness is peculiarly aggravated.

But let God Himself decide. Let us listen to His voice; His words must be conclusive. In the text the prophet asks, with a feeling of astonishment at one man robbing another — the act is not uncommon — the crime is not too great to shock a depraved heart — the person injured may be nearly on a level with the robber. But will a man, a feeble, dying man, venture to rob the omnipotent, the immortal God? Can there be so much ingratitude and so much wickedness in a human being as will permit him thus to mock and insult his great Creator, his bountiful benefactor?

The words of divine inspiration uttered by Eli convey the same idea. "If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against Jehovah, who shall entreat for him?" It is possible to make up the loss to an injured individual, and to inflict a punishment upon the offender commensurate to the evil done against man; but sins against God are so great that no earthly judge can inflict a punishment adequate to their guilt.

The same doctrine is taught by the great Founder of Christianity. Jesus said to an impious and insidious lawyer, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind: this is the first and great commandment." The duty of the first and greatest importance is to love God; the neglect of this duty is a greater crime than the neglect of any other. It is a great evil not to love man — it is a greater evil to do injury to man; but it is a greater evil than both not to love God, and still greater to violate His laws, to rebel against His authority. To profane the Sabbath by worldly conversation is rebellion against God. All who voluntarily and deliberately do so give sufficient proof that the love

of God is not in them. The thing is impossible. All who love God love His commandments and keep them. It is their aim, it is their pleasure, to do whatsoever He hath commanded them. But if one of the easiest commandments is habitually violated, it is quite impossible that the same persons should even attempt to keep the whole law. The Scriptures and the dictates of reason direct us to say, "The love of God is not in them. They have therefore violated the first and great commandment. They have not loved — they have offended, they have insulted — the Lord their God."

The respective punishments which God, as the legislator of Israel, adjudged to the two species of crime under review, may also assist us in deciding upon their comparative aggravations. "If a man shall steal an ox or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep. Ye shall keep the Sabbath; for it is holy unto you. Every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death; for whosoever doth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from amongst his people." The greater punishment was adjudged to the profaner of the Sabbath. Nor was this an unmeaning or empty threatening, intended only to alarm. The punishment was actually inflicted. A man was found near the camp of Israel, in the wilderness, who had gathered sticks on the Sabbath day. He was brought to Moses and Aaron, and to all the congregation. He was kept in ward till the divine will should be ascertained. Jehovah said to Moses, "The man shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp." And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died; as Jehovah commanded Moses. Although these laws were given to the people of Israel while under a theocracy, the holy God could not be more severe in punishing moral evil while He acted as King over a peculiar people, than while He acts as "the Judge of all the earth". Whatever changes have taken place in the dispensations of God upon earth, there is no change in His nature, in His law, or in His counsel. The precept concerning the Sabbath belongs not to the ceremonial but to the moral law — even to that law which God hath "founded for ever". Jesus, the Son of God, that infallible teacher from heaven, confirmed the authority and the permanent obligation of this precept when He said to His followers, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from *the law* till all be fulfilled." These words assure us the sins against the moral law, which God punished with the greatest severity during the Jewish dispensation, must still be the most heinous in His sight.

(To be continued in next issue)

John Welsh

Rev. K. D. MacLeod

Continued from the last issue (Page 149)

2. Ministry in Kirkcudbright

Welsh was one of the 400 commissioners to the General Assembly of 1596 and so he would have joined in their solemn confession of the sins of all ranks within the realm, and especially of the sins of the ministers. They renewed with uplifted hands their covenant with God, engaging thereafter "to walk more warily in their ways and more diligently in their charges". "While they were humbling themselves," declares David Calderwood, the Church historian, "for the space of a quarter of an hour there were such sighs and sobs, with shedding of tears, among the most part of all estates that were present, everyone provoking another by his example . . . that the kirk resounded, so that the place might worthily have been called Bochim; for the like of that day was never seen in Scotland since the Reformation, as every man confessed."

Welsh saw this Assembly as the high point of the prosperous course of the Reformed Church in Scotland. "O Scotland," he exclaimed, "what nation was like unto thee, that had the gospel so freely preached, Christ's sacraments so purely ministered, His censures and all the privileges of His kingdom in such liberty executed, as thou has had? For what one nation under heaven has God done so great things as for thee? What one kingdom is to be found in the whole earth where idolatry was so fully rooted out, where all the means of His glory and all the privileges of His kingdom were so fully restored to their own integrity and perfection, as they were first instituted, wherein all these means of the Word, sacraments and discipline have continued for so long a space in such peace, in such purity, in such liberty, without heresy or schism, as in thee, O Scotland?"

The Assembly appointed Welsh a member of a "Commission for the Visitation of Kirks", whose duty it was to visit the most spiritually destitute parts of the country, for there were large areas where the impact of the Reformation was very limited, to say the least. Welsh was assigned to a large district of the Borders, along with five other ministers who included John Davidson of Prestonpans, Moderator of the 1596 Assembly.

From that time the King interfered more and more in the affairs of the Scottish Church, with drastic consequences for her purity, liberty and peace. The change followed the death of Chancellor Maitland, declared by James Melville to have been "a great instrument in keeping the King out of the Church and from favouring of Papists". The King took the

opportunity to begin putting into effect that project which was so close to his heart — of removing the Presbyterianism of the Church of Scotland and replacing it with Prelacy, which, he rightly judged, would be more amenable to his desire to have everything in Church and state under his control. And in that he was correct. To take Maitland's place in the government of the country he appointed eight men — hence called the Octavians — of whom, said James Melville, "the one half were suspected Papists, and the rest little better." Yet it was only six years earlier that the King had declared that he "praised God that he was born in such a time . . . to such a place as to be King in such a Kirk, the sincerest Kirk in the world. . . . And I . . . so long as I possess my life and crown, shall maintain the same against all."

The first victim of the King's new policy was David Black, minister of St Andrews, "a man", we are told, "mighty in doctrine and of singular fidelity and diligence in the ministry". After Black was summoned to appear before the King and the Privy Council for allegedly abusing the freedom of the pulpit, the Commission of the General Assembly decided that it would be their wisdom to continue to meet in Edinburgh to keep an eye on proceedings. They were afraid that "the free preaching of the Word and the doctrine of all ministers" would be brought "under the same censure and control" (of the King). The commissioners were soon ordered out of Edinburgh. They disobeyed the order the first time it was given, but when it was repeated they decided that it would be wiser to submit, knowing that other faithful men would take their place. Welsh was one of those who stepped into their shoes.

Shortly afterwards Welsh was appointed to preach on the Sabbath in the pulpit so long occupied by his father-in-law — that of St Giles'. One of Welsh's fellow-ministers, John Forbes of the Aberdeenshire town of Alford, a man who is yet to appear prominently in our story, reported, "Mr John Welsh both gravely, wisely and solidly, in great liberty and freedom of the Spirit . . . uttered the counsel and will of God to His Majesty and his counsellors, not sparing to rebuke their known enormities". This could not have been meant to imply that the King was present, for at the time he was resident in the palace at Linlithgow.

News, however, reached him the following day that Welsh had asserted "that His Majesty was possessed with a devil, and that after the outputting of that devil, there joined to His Highness seven devils, which were His Majesty's Council, using this example, that as it was lawful for sons having a frantic father to bind him, so it was lawful for His Highness's subjects to bind His Majesty, who was in the like case." Welsh's biographer

assumes that this report was made "by one of the court spies, who were employed at this crisis to take notes of what was said in the pulpits and who, it may be presumed, were more disposed to please their masters than scrupulous about accuracy". Orders were at once given for Welsh's arrest, but he fled in time to some now-unknown hiding place.

The Privy Council soon despatched a messenger to Kirkcudbright to summon him before the King and Council, charged "touching certain speeches given out by him in the pulpit" of St Giles'. He was also charged with involvement in a disturbance which had taken place the day before Welsh preached that sermon. Welsh could not expect justice in these circumstances, so he did not appear. Accordingly he was put to the horn, that is, he was proclaimed an outlaw, and his possessions were confiscated and given to a relation of his wife. Six months later he was declared to be no longer an outlaw after a painstaking inquiry — in the course of which many statements were taken from witnesses — had shown that no conspiracy whatever lay behind the disturbance in Edinburgh.

At some time in 1598 a man in Welsh's congregation was in discussion with a Roman Catholic who declared that, if Welsh could prove that anyone had professed the Reformed faith before Martin Luther, then he himself would give up his religion. The man told Welsh about the conversation and asked him to put down in writing what might convince the Roman Catholic, who seemed to be sincere but ignorant. Welsh gladly drew up a document to demonstrate what the man wanted to know, something which was not particularly difficult to prove: that the Reformed faith is as old as the New Testament. When he sent it on to the Roman Catholic it somehow fell into the hands of Gilbert Brown, Abbot of the nearby Newabbey. Brown was one of the more able controversialists that the Roman party possessed at the time, but when Welsh saw the reply to his paper he quickly realised that the Abbot's arguments were weak. "I thought it surely the Lord's good providence", Welsh later declared to Brown, "that . . . now by writing you have set your foot into the battle, who have been such a sore enemy to the gospel of Jesus Christ in the country of Nithsdale and Galloway and have resisted the preaching of it vehemently, that it may be seen that but darkness was your strength, and lies (were) the foundation of your religion."

Welsh felt that the easiest way of carrying on the controversy was to engage in personal discussion, and so one day he and another minister made their way to Newabbey, but the Abbot made an excuse and declined to debate. Instead Welsh devoted what time he could spare from other duties during the next 15 months to preparing a detailed *Reply to the*

Abbot's Answer. No less a person than King James strongly encouraged Welsh to have the volume printed; he examined the manuscript and in a friendly spirit suggested some corrections and improvements.

Printed in 1602, it was the first handbook against Roman Catholicism published in Scotland. It is worth noticing God's providence at this point, for if Brown had been willing to stand against Welsh in debate it is unlikely that this book would ever have been written, and Scotland would have been for some time longer without a reference book for the points at issue in Romish controversy.

The book does show some signs of the hurried way it was put together, but we can quote W K Tweedie's assessment in 1845: "The work indicates both Welsh's acuteness as a controversialist and his learning as a theologian. . . . Divested of some of the peculiarities of those times, it would still form an admirable handbook of the whole Popish controversy. The amount of Welsh's learning, as indicated by its frequently subtle (in the old sense of ingenious) and elaborate treatise, is a matter of surprise. . . . He underrated his antagonist when he speaks of him as unlearned; for though Brown was no match for him, either in acuteness or in learning, he must have been one of the most respectable men of his order as a scholar. Perhaps with a few retrenchments, this treatise, embodying the arguments of Brown, would, if republished, afford as complete a view of the Popish controversy on both sides of the question, as could be found in any single volume of the same size." The work was indeed republished before the nineteenth century was over, in 1878, under the new title *The Morning Star*.

Welsh sent a copy of the *Reply* to the Abbot with a letter dated 6 August 1599, begging him to come out of Babylon so that he would not be partaker of her woes. He went on, "I desire of you that, if you are ever able to put to your hand to make an answer, you set down mine word for word and answer every point thereof severally as I have set your's down here. . . . Otherwise I will take it for . . . a manifest demonstration that you are convicted in your conscience of the truth of our doctrine and of the falsehood of your own." The Abbot did not continue the controversy; one assumes he felt unable to do so, although he had earlier been confident enough to describe himself as a "defender of the Catholic faith."

The General Assembly which met at Montrose in March 1600 appointed Welsh and his friend Robert Wallace of Glenluce to visit Nithsdale "to inquire into the life, doctrine and qualifications of the ministers within the said bounds; to try the sayers and hearers of the mass within the same; and to plant and transport ministers into such places as they shall think

most expedient for the glory of God, and the weal of the Kirk''. The two ministers discharged their responsibilities as well as they could, but in a district where Roman Catholics were so numerous and powerful, and where Welsh's predecessor, David Blyth had been one of the two ministers who had met a violent death only a few years before, it was quite out of the question to attempt anything against the supporters of the mass without an armed guard, which of course they did not have.

It was this General Assembly of 1600 which appointed commissioners to investigate whether a call to Welsh from Ayr should be placed in his hands. After visiting Kirkcudbright the commissioners decided that Welsh should be translated to Ayr as quickly as possible. They would have recognised the great significance of Ayr, for at that time it was second only to Glasgow in importance in the west of Scotland. Welsh mourned over how little he had achieved in Kirkcudbright. In his letter to Gilbert Brown he had expressed himself thus: "It is a lamentable and pitiable thing to see the glorious gospel of God's dear Son, our Saviour, so obscured and darkened in this country of Nithsdale and Galloway with the smoke (see Rev. 9:2) of the kingdom of darkness of yours, that has ascended . . . out of the bottomless pit, to their eternal damnation who are blinded and deceived thereby. I have sorrow in my heart for it, and it is my earnest desire to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that once in His mercy the smoke of that furnace may be scattered by the light of His glorious gospel."

However, it is indeed recorded that in Kirkcudbright Welsh's "labours were singularly blessed of God, for many were brought by his ministry to see the error, superstition and idolatry of Popery, and to embrace the truth; and many were really converted to God, and others were edified and built up, confirmed, comforted and strengthened; so that he, as a shining and burning light, did enlighten that whole country, which at that time was in many places destitute of pastors''. And when in 1627 Samuel Rutherford commenced his ministry in nearby Anworth he began to find among his hearers some who had once been members of Welsh's congregation in Kirkcudbright. Many were the letters which Rutherford wrote to them from his northern prison of Aberdeen, for besides his correspondence with Marion M'Naught there were letters to people like the Gordons of Earlston and Cardoness.

It was when he was about to leave for Ayr that Welsh met young Robert Glendinning, just back from his travels on the Continent. A thoughtless young man, Glendinning was fashionably dressed in scarlet and silver lace. Welsh told him that he must give up his gay clothes and his present way

of life, which was so lacking in true seriousness, and he must begin to study the Scriptures. And he is said to have added, "You will be my successor in Kirkcudbright". Glendinning did in fact become in due course minister of Kirkcudbright, and was, we are told, "eminent for grace and gifts, for faithfulness and success". Then it was no longer his great concern that others would look up to him and admire him, but that God would look down upon him graciously.

(To be continued)

Gleanings from Dr Owen

The 'gleanings' which follow were selected by the Rev Donald Beaton when he was Editor of the Free Presbyterian Magazine and they are taken from Owen's discourse on "The Glory of Christ".

Let us consider well what is our present state with respect to God and eternity. This, Moses wished for the Israelites, Deut, 22: 29. It is the greatest folly in the world to leave the issues of these things to an uncertain hazard. The man who cannot prevail with himself to examine strictly his state and condition with respect to eternity never does any good.

Consider what it is to live and to die without an interest in Christ, without a participation of Him. Unless we are thoroughly convinced that without Him we are in a state of apostasy from God, under the curse, obnoxious to eternal wrath, as some of the worst of God's enemies — we shall never flee unto Him for refuge in a due manner. The whole have no need of a Physician, but the sick have. Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance. While we are uninterested in Christ — not ingrafted into Him by faith — we run in vain, all our labour in religion is lost, our duties are all rejected, we are under the displeasure and curse of God, and our end is eternal destruction. Yet how many of us let these things pass by without consideration?

Unless there be a full conviction of the woeful, deplorable condition of every soul, of whatever quality, profession, religion, or outward state — who is not yet made partaker of Christ — all will be of no signification. Remember, then, that the consideration of your state is your chief concern in this world and be not afraid to take in a full and deep sense of it. The work of this conviction is the first effect of true religion.

Consider the infinite condescension and love of Christ — in His invitations to come unto Him for life, deliverance, mercy, grace, peace and eternal salvation. Multitudes of these invitations and calls are recorded in the Scripture. They are all filled up with those blessed encouragements, which divine wisdom knows to be suited to lost, convinced sinners in their

knowledge, above what the nature of man is capable of in this world. Men, therefore, must sin in some instance above the devil, or God would not give them their eternal portion with the devil and his angels — this is unbelief.

What, then, shall we do? What shall we apply ourselves unto? What is it that is required of us?

Take the advice of the Apostle (Heb. 3: 7,8,13). This day, even this is unto you in the tender of grace the acceptable time, this is the day of salvation. Others have had this day as well as you, and have missed their opportunity — take heed lest it should be so with you also. Now, if any one would write down or commit to memory — “This day there was an offer of Christ and salvation made unto my soul.” From this time I shall resolve to give myself up to Him” — And when you form this resolution, charge your conscience with it, and make yourself to know that the breaking of this vow will be a token of your going to ruin.

Some will say that they can make nothing of this work they have tried to believe, but still fail in what they design, and make no progress. Therefore, they think it better to let things go, in general, without further trouble. This is the language of the heart, but not of the mouth. Remember how the disciples, when fishing, had toiled all night, but caught nothing. When Christ came, He told them to cast out their nets once more. Peter made some excuse, that they had toiled all night in vain; however, he would venture once more at the command of Christ, and was rewarded with an astonishing draught of fishes. Have you been wearied with disappointments in your attempts and resolutions? Cast in your net this once more, upon the command of Christ, venture once again to come unto Him upon His call and invitation, you know not what success He may give you.

It is not the failing in your attempt at coming to Christ, but the giving up of your endeavours that will be your ruin. The woman of Canaan, in her outcry to Christ for mercy, had many repulses. At first He answered her not a word. His disciples desired Him to send her away. Then He gave her a reason why He should pass her by and not regard her — she was not an Israelite to whom He was sent. Yet she does not give over, but presses into His presence crying for mercy. Then He draws out her faith to the utmost, which was His design from the beginning. He reckoned her among the dogs, unworthy of the children's bread. Had she given over at last, upon this severe rebuke, she would not have obtained mercy; but persisting in her request, she prevailed at last. Perhaps you have prayed and cried, and resolved and vowed, all without success, as you suppose. However, if you do not give up, you also shall prevail at last. You do

not know when God will come with His grace, and Christ will manifest His love, to you, as He did to the poor woman, who suffered so many rebukes. It may be He will do it this day, and if not, He may do it another day; do not despond. Take that word of Christ Himself for your encouragement, Prov. 8: 34, "Blessed is the man that heareth Me, watching daily at My gates, waiting at the posts of My doors." If you hear Him, and wait, though you have not yet admission, but are kept at the gates and posts of the doors, yet in the issue you shall be blessed.

The Darling of Heaven

The following lines were written by Miss Marjory Urquhart who was resident in our Ballifeary Home of Rest at the time of her death on 18th October, 1994. She was a native of Gairloch. A fellow resident who sent on these lines and who knew her well had this to say of her: "A Christian of rare attainments; of knowledge and grace and gifts." She left a letter which was to be given to the members of staff of the Home after her departure from time to eternity. All who knew Miss Urquhart believe that that departure was "to be with Christ; which is far better." We hope this letter will, in due course, be printed in the Magazine as well as another poem.

Oh Darling of Heaven my love is on Thee;
Oh Darling of Heaven who suffered for me;
Jesus my Saviour, the blood ransomed me;
Oh Darling of Heaven I'll ever praise Thee.

Thou showed me Thou lovest me on Calvary's tree;
In a special manner revealed it to me.
Thy Word ever faithful, unchangeable, sure,
By Thy Spirit confirmed it, my heart is assured.

Beloved of the Father, there's no words can tell,
The anguish Thou suffered to save me from Hell;
The weight of the curse when Thou wast made sin;
Darling of Heaven Thou bore it alone.

Yea, I saw in Thy cross 'twas atonement for me;
How precious then Thou wast made unto me;
There my heart it was broken, by the love Thou showed me,
And my soul Thou betrothed it forever to Thee.

Oh Darling of Heaven 'tis a wonder to me;
Thy death, resurrection, ascension for me.
All glory and honour and praise be to Thee,
Interceding while sin is present with me.

Oh Love Everlasting 'tis strange that I've heard,
Sweet language of Heaven, sweet melody heard;
Thyself in the midst, appearing to me;
What can I render for such favour to me?

Oh Darling of Heaven be ever adored;
Who bore the penalty of my sins in Thy soul,
And cried, "It is finished", redemption was wrought;
The grave could not hold Thee, the third day Thou rose.

For the brief, little while in this world I may be,
I pray Thee to help me bring others to Thee;
And say with another, in commending of Thee,
The half is not told of the beauty of Thee.

Notes and Comments

Fraternising with Antichrist

The spectacle of leading politicians vying with one another in currying the favour of the Roman Catholic Church is now coming to be a common sight. The reason for this, of course, is that no political party dare antagonise or ignore its leading clerics as they are able to deliver thousands upon thousands of votes at times of Local and General Elections. In Scotland this was particularly evident in recent times. We have the Rt. Hon. Ian Lang, the Secretary of State for Scotland, entertaining Cardinal Winning at his official residence in Edinburgh, an event which the largely Romanist-dominated Press corps were not to let pass without giving it maximum publicity including, as might be expected, a photograph of the two shaking hands on the steps of Bute House. The two-and-a-half hour meeting was also attended by Lord Fraser of Carmylie who is a Minister of State at the Scottish Office. Now what were these two prominent members of our Government — one of them a Cabinet Minister — discussing with the Cardinal? We are, apparently, not entitled to know that. Mr Lang said it was a private visit; the Cardinal said that it had been a social visit and that both sides had agreed not to discuss details of it.

He did, however, say that Mr Lang “was someone he could do business with.” Whatever the matters discussed were, it is certain that such a meeting with this representative of Antichrist was neither in Mr Lang’s, nor in Scotland’s interests. The Roman Catholic Church will hitch its chariot to that of the political party which is most likely to advance its interests and widen its sphere of influence; that is all that matters. This politically-astute Cardinal will, meantime, be keeping all his options open.

Scottish Nationalist View of Roman Catholicism

Mr Alex Salmond, the Leader of the Scottish National party in a speech delivered at Stirling University has described the debarring of “*every person who is or shall be reconciled to, or shall have communion with, the See or Church of Rome*” from the British throne “a scandal of immense proportions”. He did not quote the Act of Security word for word, as we have done, but it is plain that he had its terms in mind and that this is what he thinks of that part of our nation’s Constitution which is in written form and fully ratified by law. Mr Salmond must surely know that this prohibition was enshrined in our Constitution in 1688 only because it had been found “by experience” — as the Bill of Rights expresses it — “that it is inconsistent with the safety and welfare of this Protestant Kingdom” to be governed by such as owe their first allegiance to the Pope of Rome. The martyrdom of the many thousands who suffered and died in Scotland between 1660 and 1688 means very little to him when he speaks in this manner of a matter that was of paramount importance to them. It still remains a matter of great importance to us and it is thus with grave apprehension that we view the prospect of the restoration of a Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh. It would be a smaller pool for Alex Salmond to swim in than the one in Westminster but the way things are going he would be a much bigger fish. So desperate is Mr Salmond to secure the favour and, hopefully, the votes of Roman Catholics in the central belt that he labours to project them as being discriminated against. We find that astounding. He also called for “an important Catholic grotto at Carfin in Monklands to be made into a national shrine”! And all this uttered in Stirling near the very spot where the first Covenanter martyr James Guthrie died on the scaffold in 1661! Guthrie was a true-hearted patriot and a martyr for Christ, whose famous last words were: “The Covenants! The Covenants! shall ye be Scotland’s reviving!”

APCs — Update

Who would have imagined seven years ago that ministers and elders then sitting in the Free Presbyterian Church's Synod and approving reports and resolutions which set out the Church's position *vis-à-vis* other Churches in the land and which shed light on the "old paths", would so quickly depart to follow their own ways. We notice that the Aberdeen APC minister, who seems to be in the *avant garde* of those who are given to change, now refers to the first day of the week by its heathen name "Sunday" — something he and his companions would never dream of doing in the circles from which they departed in 1989. If, prior to their departure, the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* had carried articles with Scripture quotations taken from the NIV, NKJV or any other modern English version of the Bible, they would have been as surprised as the rest of us and would have supported any action taken to bring the Editor to task. Using them in the public worship of God would have been regarded as an even greater innovation and a complete departure from the Church's practice. But now the APCs' publications quote freely from them. No doubt this helps as far as ecumenical involvement is concerned and it is done on purpose. We do not know which version of the Bible the United Free Church minister, who preached in Alford Place on the Friday of the communion was using. Nor do we know what version was used on Sabbath morning when the Lord's Supper was dispensed by Derek Prime, an itinerating Baptist minister. We do, however, know that in 1962, the Synod, of which some leading APCs were then members, approved the following statement anent the United Free Church: "It is made up largely of former United Presbyterians and is an out and out Voluntary organisation. Its relation to the Confession is of a very doubtful nature. The Confession is received in the light of the Declaratory Acts of the United Presbyterian Church (1879) and of the Free Church (1892)." The Alford Place Church is a place of worship which rightfully belongs to the Free Presbyterian Church but, being unlawfully held by the APCs, we are unable to exercise our right to determine who is and who is not permitted to enter its pulpit. The Aberdeen APC minister will not, of course, be taken to task for his conduct and as for his use of modern versions, unlike the Inverness APCs, there does not appear to be in Aberdeen any office-bearers prepared to oppose their minister and take a stand on this issue. The Scottish representative of the Trinitarian Bible Society, who is also an APC missionary, must find himself in a very anomalous situation and surely in real difficulties if and when he visits places like Aberdeen where the AV is displaced. In Fort William our small but faithful congregation

has to worship in a hired local Red Cross hall while the APCs continue to occupy, unlawfully, not only our church building, but our manse. Their missionary has taken up residence in the manse and for good measure has had his name inscribed on the notice board outside the church. One elder, on leaving the Free Presbyterian Church in 1989, wrote a resignation letter to his minister in which, among other things, he said: "I do not know what some people within the church are doing with their consciences." In our view, it is *now*, as an APC elder, that he should be saying it.

Further Sabbath Desecration

This Government seems to be bent on removing from the nation's Statute Book all that remains of laws which in the past upheld the Divine law with regard to keeping the Sabbath Day holy to God. We now have gambling at rececourses on the Lord's Day legalised and betting shops throughout the length and breadth of the kingdom are being allowed to trade on that day. Gambling is a sin which is heinous in the sight of God on any day of the week but on the Sabbath is even more heinous. We are fast becoming a nation of gamblers and revellers. We thought better of Michael Forsyth, the Home Office minister, but it is he who has now published plans "to reform what he called 'outdated restrictions' in the Sunday Observance Act of 1780 which prevent charging for public dancing." The changes are designed to be in place before next year so that Christmas eve and Hogmany (they both fall on a Sabbath this year) revellers may "celebrate the festivities on the dance floor." Sadly, in Scotland, where there were no restrictions at all — they were thought unnecessary, on account of the way the Sabbath was kept throughout the land — we are now told that after Saturday and Friday, the Sabbath has proved to be the third most popular day for dancing and that those who provide the facilities are finding it very profitable. The time of reckoning with Lord of the Sabbath is yet to come. The individual and nation that will not serve Him shall perish. Spiritual darkness has really descended on our nation when we find those in authority over us setting aside the Law of God and appointing themselves judges of what is morally right and wrong. In a public consultation document recently issued we find the following comment on the 1780 Act: "The Government considers this an unjustified constraint on legitimate pastimes. People should be allowed to spend their leisure as they wish." Where, where, we may well ask, is our nation heading?

The Commemoration of VE Day

On the 8th day of May, as part of the VE Day commemoration arrangements, loyal addresses from the House of Lords and the House of Commons were presented to the Queen at a ceremony held in Westminster Hall. We were glad to hear the Lord Chancellor acknowledging "Almighty God" in his address and speech. His counterpart, the Speaker of the House of Commons, did not mention nor acknowledge the Divine Being in any way! We would have rejoiced to hear the *name* of the Lord Jesus Christ mentioned. He is, after all, the One to whom all power is given in heaven and on earth. We were sad to hear the Queen mention prayer in such a way as to imply that it was proper to pray for the dead. It is to be feared that praying for the dead, although plainly forbidden by the Word of God, is a common practice on these occasions and, alas, acceptable to multitudes. When, however, a Roman Catholic priest went so far as to pray for Adolf Hitler there was an outcry from various quarters. Forced to defend himself, this benighted priest, among other things, said "We always pray for the dead in the Catholic Church, good and bad, because they need our prayers." The soul of poor Adolf Hitler, who died by his own hand after living a wicked life, is now, as far as we are able to judge, in hell, and on the remote side from heaven of that "great gulf fixed" that the Saviour spoke of, and no amount of masses and prayers offered up by deluded, papish priests is going to alter that. The Lord delivered our nation out of the hands of its enemies in 1945 but is it not the case that we have not properly acknowledged His great goodness and kindness to us in doing so? Nor have we repented of our sins? The appointment of a national day of humiliation and prayer is what would be appropriate in our present circumstances.

Mission News

Rev A B Ndebele has travelled via Holland to Chesley, Ontario, Canada, where as most of us know, there is a large congregation of people, mostly of Dutch extraction who are warm friends of the Free Presbyterian Church, and supporters of the Foreign Mission. Their elder, Mr Schuit, and occasionally Mrs Schuit, attend the Synod in Scotland. Mr Ndebele was the officiating minister at their Communion.

Mr Ndebele will then proceed, DV, to Holland to attend and speak at the Mbumba-Zending meeting in Geldermalsen on 29th April. Mr Edward Zikhali, son-in-law of Rev P Mzamo, an Education Staffing Officer in Bulawayo, and elder of our Church, will join Mr Ndebele in Holland and they will both travel together to Inverness to the Synod. Rev John MacLeod

will also be attending the Mbumba-Zending Meeting and speaking to a congregation which usually numbers seven thousand men, women and children. Collections are taken on two occasions during the Meeting and the contributions are most generous.

Miss Marion Graham is at home in Inverness on leave for four months and, I am sure, in much need of a complete rest after a most strenuous term. We wish her a happy and enjoyable holiday. Miss Katie Macaulay is Acting Headmistress in Marion's absence, assisted by Miss Norma MacLean and their African colleagues.

Mr James Mpofu is a Boarding-Master in the John Tallach boarding school. He is also teacher of woodwork and at the end of the school session there is an attractive display of cupboards, tables and stools. But it is with the question of discipline that Mr Mpofu's presence is most appreciated. The six hundred boarding pupils, boys and girls, are lively youngsters, just as they would be anywhere. Mr Mpofu is a father-figure with a kindly, just, but very firm discipline which is greatly appreciated by the Staff. Mr Mpofu takes worship night and morning with the boarders and preaches at the evening service on Sabbath when Mr Ndebele is at another station. This service is always in English.

Mr Mpofu's grandfather was John Mpofu, a stalwart Christian in early days who acted as missionary at Ingwenya when there was a period at Ingwenya when there was no minister. On one occasion a Baptist minister from Bulawayo visited Ingwenya, and on going round the Mission he saw John Mpofu, a white-haired, lively old man seated at a small table under a tree, with his Bible before him. Having been introduced, the Minister said, 'You are preparing your sermon?' John pointed upwards and said, 'I am waiting for it to come from above'.

Among the large congregation at Glasgow Communion this month it was very interesting to see Musa Nyathi from Mbumba. Musa is a post-graduate student at Glasgow University, at present doing Business Studies. Alistair Ross who spent some years of his childhood in Zimbabwe has befriended him. Musa was at the John Tallach School for his Secondary education, as far as Form Four. Some people in the congregation have offered him hospitality but so far he has politely refused. No doubt he is busy studying. It was good to see him in church. We hope he will profit by it, if it is the Lord's will.

We had Miss Etta MacLennan showing some Mission slides recently in Edinburgh. It was a general holiday weekend so that there were fewer than usual at home, but those who came were appreciative, and enjoyed the occasion.

Church Notes

Meetings of Presbyteries (D.V.)

Skye: At Portree on 11th April at 11 am

Northern: At Dingwall on 20th June at 2 pm.

Southern: At Glasgow on 20th June at 6 pm.

Outer Isles: At Stornoway on 13th June at 1 pm.

Western: At Laide on 13th June at 6 pm.

Zimbabwe: At Bulawayo on 13th June at 2 pm.

Bonar Communion

The Kirk-Session has decided to move the Bonar communion from the third Sabbath of August to the second sabbath of July.

Acknowledgement of Donations

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

Foreign Mission Fund: Rev J Luke, N. Ireland, £20, for Kenya.

Free Distribution Fund: Mrs R Walters, Beds., £30.

Eastern Europe Fund: A Perth Friend, £30, per A.N.M.

Legacy Reserve Fund: Estate of Kenneth MacLeod, Kishorn, (Final Instalment), £801.99.

The Treasurers of the following congregations wish to acknowledge the following donations:

Assynt: N. M., Melvich, £50 for Congregational Fund.

Bracadale Strath: Leverburgh Friend, £20, Where most needed, per Rev G G H.

Dingwall: Mrs M. C., £20 for Sustentation Fund per N.M.R.

Laide: Friend, Aultbea, £20; Friend, Aultbea, £20; Friend, Aultbea, £20; Friend, Aultbea, £20; all for Church Funds and per D.A.R.: Aultbea Friend, £20; Aultbea Friend, £20; Aultbea Friend, £20; all for Church Funds and per D.A.R.; In collection plate, £50, for Foreign Mission; In collection plate, £50, for Sustentation Fund; Friend, Malawi, £20, towards telephone, per C.R.; G.I.B., £10; Friend, £20; Isle View Nursing Home, £9.20, £9.30, £8.60, £10.50, £12, £12; Friend, Skye, £10; M.C.C., £100; Friend, Ingwenya, £50; Friend, Aultbea, £30; Friend, Tolsta, £40; Friend, Applecross, £50; Friend, Gairloch, £20; Anon. Friend, Gairloch, £50; Anon. £300; Friend, Laide, £80; Friends, Lochcarron, £20; Friend, Aultbea, £10; Friend, Aberdeen, £30; D. & A.M., £100; Glasgow Friend, £25; Friends, Gairloch, £20; M Geddes, 70DM; A.B., £10; Friends, Laide, £40; Friend, Applecross, £60; all per D.A.R. and For Eastern European Fund; Three Edinburgh Friends, £30, for the Lord's Cause in Eastern Europe, per C.R.; Friend, Laide, £200, in plate; Friend, Melvaig, £10, for Romanian Bibles; £20, for Romania per collection plate; £50, for Eastern Europe, per collection plate; M.M., Ballifeary House, £30, for Eastern Europe, per T.M.; Friends, Laide, £40, for Eastern Europe.

North Tolsta: Friend, £50, for Door Collection; Friend, £20, for Communion Expenses; Tolsta Friends, £48.80, for Free Distribution of Magazines; In memory of a loving husband, £40, for Heating; all per D.McK; Friend of the Cause, Breasclete, £10; Anon., £10, both for Communion Expenses and by envelope in plate.

North Uist: I. McD., £50, for Car Fund; I. McD., £50, for Sustentation Fund; H. Scott, £35, for Sustentation Fund.

Portree: Friend, £500 for Sustentation Fund, per N.B.; Friend £20; Friend, £10, both for Sustentation Fund and per S.Y.M.; Anon, £50 for Bus Fund, per envelope in the plate; A.G., Inverness, £75 for Congregational Funds.