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Setting aside the Moral Law

The erosion of moral standards which began in the Sixties has now inexorably brought us to the point where Government ministers responsible for the enforcement of law and order and the administration of the welfare state might well be regarded as almost at their wits' end. Violence, robbery, dishonesty and immorality are abounding, and with almost fifty per cent of marriages now breaking down, and the number of one parent families claiming state support steadily increasing, it is little wonder that concern is being expressed. The amount of tax-payers' money expended in fighting crime and in providing state benefits is enormous.

'The powers that be' are finding out that it is far easier to identify the problems than to solve them. As the alarm bells began to ring certain measures were adopted with a view to arresting and reversing the moral decline, but it is now very evident that they have failed to produce the hoped-for effect. The soft approach to teenage thuggery, the relaxation of rules to make life within prison walls more congenial for those confined within them, and the changes in the law which were introduced to secure a fair trial for the accused, but which have had the effect of tilting the balance towards favouring the criminal while leaving the victim without redress, are now discredited and regarded as in need of drastic revision. Matters are getting out of hand to the extent that the conviction is beginning to register that it is only a return to Christian moral standards that will, after all, reverse the trend. Noises to that effect are now being heard in the corridors of power. It is suggested that the inculcation of moral standards should begin in the home and that parents who fail to discipline their children should be held responsible for their offspring's delinquency. It is also thought that periods allocated to religious education might be more usefully employed in teaching children the distinction between what is morally right and wrong rather than wasting them on

pursuits which often have no relevance to the Christian religion at all.

The sum of the Moral Law, as every properly-informed Christian knows, is "to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbour as ourselves." If that were dinned into the minds of young and old and, at the same time, emphasis was placed on the solemn fact that men, women and children are accountable to God for their actions, there would surely be some hope of amendment. But how can this be effected when the very people who are given the place of religious leaders, and who ought to preach and practise Biblical Christianity, are continually undermining the authority of the Moral Law by condoning sin as, for instance, was the case recently when a Church of England working party report called for the removal of any stigma attached to couples living together outside of marriage? The same dignitaries are prepared to let self-publicised sodomites continue in what is called "holy orders". Blind leaders of the blind they are and is it any wonder that eventually both fall into the ditch? Some politicians like Mr John Redwood are showing more concern over these matters than time-serving clerics who are more expert at fudging moral issues than defining them and who act as if they were ignorant of the eternal distinction that there is between what is precious and what is vile. And where shall we find, throughout the nation, Christian school-teachers prepared to sit down in class-rooms and in a loving, diligent manner instil into the minds of children the Christian moral code? They are, doubtless, there, but, alas, they are few and far between. The multi-faith/comparative religion approach to religious education has led to confusion and children are left with the impression that Christianity is not unique and that one religion is as good as another.

Those in high places might begin to set a better example. Our Queen, whose conduct and example are, in many respects, admirable, permits herself to be led astray by misguided counsellors and now attends multi-faith services as a matter of course. Is that not giving place to false gods? And what shall we say when she sees fit to attend an ecumenical service in Westminster Cathedral, the principal seat of Popery in the United Kingdom, and where the most heaven-provoking form of all idolatry is practised daily in the so-called sacrifice of the mass? Whatever the Archbishop of Canterbury may have advised, we believe that Her Majesty's conduct is not consistent with her coronation declaration of being 'a faithful Protestant'. We cannot surely countenance idolatry and at the same time love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, strength and mind.

Christian commentators have drawn attention to the place occupied by the Fourth Commandment at the very heart of the Moral Law. It may be safely asserted that when this Commandment is observed in any community, then, so also will be the other nine Commandments. By removing almost all of the laws which inhibited Sabbath-breaking, such as those which restricted the opening of shops and places of entertainment on the Lord's Day, our Government has greatly contributed to the opening of the flood-gates. Can it be that one reason for the widespread rejection of this Commandment is that acceptance of its authority is inseparable from acceptance of the Genesis account of the creation of the heavens and the earth? "For in six days", it states, "the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is", and that contradicts all that is taught in schools and universities with regard to the origin of man and the universe.

If the bringing back of our nation to Christian moral standards appears a task insuperable to us, we are to remember that "the things which are impossible with men are possible with God." An outpouring of the Holy Spirit would do it. Then we would have a situation analogous to that which obtained in Scotland towards the end of the Cromwellian period. "At the king's return", Kirkton, in his *History of the Church of Scotland*, tells us, "every parish had a minister, every village had a school, every family almost had a Bible — yea, in most of the country all the children of age could read the Scriptures, and were provided of Bibles either by their parents or ministers. Every minister was a very full professor of the reformed religion, according to the Confession of Faith framed at Westminster. None of them might be scandalous in their conversation, or negligent in their office, so long as a presbyterie stood. I have lived many years in a parish where I never heard an oath; and you might have ridden many miles before you heard one. Also, you could not, for a great part of the country, have lodged in a family where the Lord was not worshipped by reading, singing, and public prayer. Nobody complained more than the taverners; whose ordinary lamentation was — their trade was broke, people were become so sober."

When I look to my guiltiness, I see my salvation one of our Saviour's greatest miracles, either in heaven or earth. I am sure I may defy any man to show me a greater wonder. But seeing I have no wares, no hire, no money for Christ, He must either take me with want, misery, corruption, or then want me. — *Rutherford*.

Lecture on the Sabbath

by Rev. N. Cameron, Glasgow

(This lecture is reprinted from Volume 38 of this Magazine)

"Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath Day, and hallowed it" — (Exodus 20:8).

The Sabbath Day rest was instituted in the garden of Eden. It was the first whole day man enjoyed after God created him. Although no mention is made directly of the Sabbath Day as a day for rest and worship, there is indirectly in the case of Cain and Abel's sacrifices: "And in process of time it came to pass that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering to the Lord. And Abel, he brought also of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof." The expression, "in process of time," means at the end of days, which may mean either at the end of the days they remained with their father (as we can trace down through the succeeding ages that the father acted as priest in his own family), and that they began then to act as priests in their own homes. The end of days, we firmly believe, meant also the end of the week, or the Sabbath.

From the manner in which reference is made to the Sabbath in the 16th Chapter of Exodus, it must have been lost sight of and forgotten during the bondage of the children of Israel in Egypt. The divine record of the event reads thus:— "And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man; and all the rulers of the congregation came to Moses. And he said unto them, this is that which the Lord has said, 'Tomorrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord'." This is one reason why this commandment is prefaced by the word, "Remember," and, indeed, we as a generation have much need of considering seriously the obligation which this charge of Almighty God will one day mean to us should we forget our duty as to this commandment.

Let us consider now a few things in connection with this commandment of God's moral law. May the Holy Spirit guide us in our thoughts and words.

I. Let us consider the perpetually binding obligation of this commandment.

(1) It was declared by the mouth of God from the top of Mount Sinai on that never-to-be-forgotten day in the hearing of all the children of Israel. We read:— “And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God. . . . And the mount was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon in fire . . . and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice.” The fourth commandment is a part of the expressions of the voice of God that day. It was placed in the middle of the moral law, not only as God expressed it, but also as He wrote it by His own finger on the tables of stone. We have it in the very words which came out of the mouth of God that day. No sane man will deny God’s right to make and declare a law to show His rational, reasonable creatures the rule of their duty towards Him, and towards one another. This is exactly what the moral law contains. No man, having his reason unimpaired, will deny that God has power enough to demand obedience to His law, and in the case of disobedience to punish the transgressor even with everlasting destruction. None will deny these things but “the fool who says in his heart there is no God”: but even the fool will not deny it at the Great Day, and before the Judge and the great white throne.

Let any man consider the precepts of God’s moral law and he will feel convinced that they are unchangeable in their nature. It will never be right for sons or daughters to disobey and dishonour their parents. Neither can it ever be right for a man to kill, commit adultery, steal, slander, or covet. The same thing is true concerning the first table of the moral law. It can never be but sin that any of His creatures should have any false God; or worship the true God by images; or blaspheme God’s great and terrible name by taking it into their lips in vain; or transgress the fourth commandment by doing any work on that day save those of necessity and mercy.

The moral law cannot and will not be abrogated. Our Lord says — “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or 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 no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” Notice that this fulfilment will not be consummated “till heaven and earth pass.” So it would be well for its transgressors to make sure that God has abrogated the fourth commandment before they dare

profane it. But they will search in vain for its annulment in any place in God's Word. It is written in God's statute book, and while it remains there, its transgressors are in danger of being apprehended, and charged before the Great Judge, and condemned as sinners against God's law. This takes place in the case of every Sabbath desecrator when death lands him in the presence of God in eternity. "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" But no. The Papacy, when it introduced images into its worship as a body, removed the Second Commandment from the manuals which were placed in the hands of its people. If it had left it, its followers would have read — "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing 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," etc. It, therefore, removed it, because it prohibited the idolatrous form of worship which it purposed to impose upon the people. So the millions who adhere to the papacy are idolators, and will be condemned for that sin at the day of final judgment.

There is now a supreme effort made by Satan and his servants to banish the Sabbath Day. Very few are met with anywhere who hold that the Fourth Commandment is an integral part of God's moral law, and that such as transgress it, and such as will continue transgressing it to the end, will be punished with eternal death. They will tell one that it was only a Jewish institution, and that we as Christians are not bound to observe it. Some will allow that it should be observed for morning worship in our churches; while others deny that they are under any obligation to keep it holy, or to refrain from doing work on it. On account of these sophistries, Sabbath profanation has come in like a flood into industry of every description in this country, and also into the churches everywhere. Men go to their work on this holy day without a qualm of conscience, and ministers, office-bearers, and members travel by trains and street cars which are run for the very purpose of earning money. All seem to forget, or to disbelieve, that "sin is the transgression of the law, and that the wages of sin is death." This flood has risen so high that one reads in speeches made ostensibly in defence of Sabbath observation that the speaker does not desire to go back to the puritanical manner in which the Sabbath was observed in the past. We are afraid that such statements are made to avoid being considered narrow and bigoted by such as hate holiness, or puritanism, on Sabbath or week days. The desire after popularity is the moving cause of such expression.

An effort is being made to prove that the Christian Sabbath is

unscriptural, and that the seventh day should be observed and not the first. (1) The seventh day was instituted by God to commemorate the work of creation. This day was the Sabbath Day during the Old Testament economy. It was the Son of God that created the heavens and the earth, and all that they contain, as it is written — “Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. . . . And thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thy hands.” (2) It was the Son in our nature, that suffered, obeyed, and died for his own elect people. This work of redemption He finished on the morning of the Resurrection. “There remaineth therefore a rest (Sabbath-keeping) to the people of God. For He that entered into His rest hath ceased from His own works, as God did from His.” Who is said to cease from His works in this scripture? Who but Christ, and the Sabbath-keeping that remains to the people of God now commemorates the work of the Son of God by which he laid the foundation of the new creation, which shall not pass away like the old creation. That the Church, especially among the Gentiles, in the apostolic age and ever since held the first day of the week as the Christian Sabbath is manifest in the Scriptures of the New Testament. On the evening of the Resurrection day Christ met with His disciples, Thomas being not then present. Eight days after that He came into their midst and cured Thomas of his unbelief. Again, we find that at Troas “upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached to them, ready to depart on the morrow” (Acts 20:7). Again, we find in I Cor. 16:1-2, “Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store . . .”. This shows that these churches assembled together on the first day of the week, and that an order was given them to make a collection for the poor on that day. In Revelation we read — “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day” (Rev. 1:10). This shows that the first day of the week was called “the Lord’s Day”.

There was no cause why the terms of the Fourth Commandment should be altered; for the command is, “Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work; but the seventh day.” The seventh day after six days of labour is quite in agreement with the terms of the Fourth Commandment. I think every fair-minded man will feel convinced that notwithstanding the Jews met in the synagogues on the Sabbath Day as before, the Gentile believers kept the Lord’s Day, i.e., the Christian Sabbath, from the beginning. If further proof were necessary, the many occasions upon which the Lord sent the Holy Spirit since the day of Pentecost to bless His word to poor sinners on the Lord’s Day should satisfy any reasonable person that the Lord still blesses this day of rest.

(To be continued)

Particular Redemption

By the Rev. Donald Beaton

The following has been extracted from a little booklet published, in 1938, by the Sovereign Grace Union under the title: "Some Foundation Truths of the Reformed Faith." Mr Beaton was a church Tutor for over forty years.

Dr Cunningham has well said: "The Incarnation of the second Person of the Godhead, the assumption of human nature by One who from eternity possessed the divine nature, so that He was God and man in one Person is, as a subject of contemplation, well fitted to call forth the profoundest reverence, and to excite the strongest emotions; and if it was indeed a reality, it must have been intended to accomplish most important results. If Christ really was God and man in one Person, we may expect to find, in the object thus presented to our contemplation, much that is mysterious, much that we cannot fully comprehend; while we should also be stirred up to examine with the utmost care everything that has been revealed to us regarding it, assured that it must possess no ordinary interest and importance" (*Historical Theology*, ii, 237). This is certainly the right frame of mind in which to approach the sublime subject of the doctrine of redemption. It should never be forgotten that there is a very intimate connection between the Person and the work of Christ. A low view of His Person will naturally lead to an inadequate view of His propitiatory work. Hence Socinianism, Arianism and Modernism have no glorious doctrine of redemption to present to sinners. It is a feature of the theology of the present day as recognised too widely in the high places of the professing Church that Christ is not given the high and honourable place as "the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Hence His vicarious sacrifice is eliminated from the theological system of Modernism, which has no need of a divine sacrifice and ruthlessly rejects the very idea. Modernism is the modern expression of the ancient taunt of the chief priests, scribes and elders: "If He be the King of Israel, let Him come down from the cross, and we will believe Him" (Matt. 27: 42). Eliminate the cross and all it implies, and what Gospel is there to preach to perishing men, lost and ruined? Let Calvary be preached in all its glory of redeeming love, and then it is good news indeed to those who are ready to perish. No wonder the Apostle said: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6: 14).

The term "satisfaction" is used by the Reformers to designate the priestly work of Christ, and in many respects it is preferable to the word

“atonement,” which occurs but once in the Authorised Version of the New Testament (Rom. 5: 11), and then with the meaning of *at-one-ment or reconciliation* (vide margin), expressing the *effect* and not the *nature* of Christ’s work. That work was so perfect that it gave full satisfaction to God’s justice. “This perfection of the satisfaction of Christ” is not due, as Dr Charles Hodge points out, “to His having suffered either in kind or in degree what the sinner would have been required to endure; but principally to the infinite dignity of His Person. He is not a mere man, but God and man in one Person. His obedience and sufferings were therefore the obedience and sufferings of a divine Person” (*System. Teol.*, 3: 483). This does not imply that the divine nature suffered as was maintained by some heretics (Patripassians) in the ancient Church, and as is held by many modern theologians who hold the doctrine of the *passibility* of God. It is wrong to say that the human nature was the sacrifice, for this would immediately make the sacrifice finite. The correct way of stating the doctrine is that He suffered *in* His human nature, but the suffering was of a person who was divine. Hence the Scriptures when they speak of His sufferings always speak of them as the sufferings of a person.

A truth which must be maintained at all costs is the vicarious nature of Christ’s death. The Saviour stood, as the old divines put it, in the sinner’s law place. Christ, the substitute, suffered in the room and stead of all His people.” The attempt is sometimes made to illustrate vicarious suffering in grace,” says Dr Shedd, “by what is denominated ‘vicarious suffering in nature.’ But the analogy is defective. The two things are different in kind, not merely in degree. A mother’s suffering for her child is not substitutionary, and has no reference to retributive justice. The following points of difference are evident: Vicariousness in nature: (1) Is not expiatory, that is, satisfactory of law. (2) Does not release another from obligation to suffer penalty. (3) Is sharing suffering with another. The mother suffers with the child. There are two sufferers. (4) Is helping another to bear suffering. The mother assists her child to endure. Vicariousness in grace: (1) Is expiatory; that is, satisfactory of law. (2) Releases another from the obligation to penal suffering. (3) Does not share suffering with another, but endures whole of it. Christ does not suffer with the sinner, but ‘treads the winepress alone.’ (4) Does not assist the sinner to bear suffering, but suffers in his place (*Dogmatic Theol.*, 3: 503, 4).

(i.) *The Necessity of Redemption.* — Scripture plainly teaches that satisfaction was made and that pardon and salvation are held out to sinners

and bestowed upon them on the ground of Christ's satisfaction. "Neither Scripture nor reason," says Dr Cunningham, "warrant the position that repentance is, in its own nature, an adequate reason or ground, ordinarily and in general, still less in all cases, for pardoning those who have transgressed a law to which they were subject" (*Hist. Theol.*, 2: 283). The very Incarnation of the Son of God. His life of humiliation, His death on Calvary's cross, all proclaim the necessity of satisfaction: "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin." All this life of humiliation and suffering has elements in it so extraordinary that we are forced to say that it would never have taken place had it not been absolutely necessary. "We feel", says Dr Cunningham, "and we cannot but feel, that there is no unwarranted presumption in saying, that if it had been possible that the salvation of guilty men could have been otherwise accomplished, the only-begotten Son of God would not have left the glory which He had with His Father from eternity, assumed human nature, and suffered and died on earth. This ground, were there nothing more revealed regarding it, would warrant us to make the general assertion that the Incarnation, suffering, and death of Christ were necessary to the salvation of sinners; that this result could not have been effected without them" (*ibid.* ii. 254). He is careful to point out, however, that this general consideration does not warrant us in asserting directly and immediately the necessity of redemption, but only the necessity of the suffering and death of Christ, whatever may have been the character attaching to them, or the effect resulting from them in connection with the salvation of sinners.* Furthermore, there are some things which God cannot do because of His infinite perfection. If sin could not be pardoned without satisfaction, then it is because the infinite perfections of His nature stood in the way.

(1) God's law proclaims that the soul which sins shall die. Since God has said this, and as He is not a man that He should lie, nor the son of

* The question of the *necessity* of Christ's satisfaction was raised in the controversy with the Socinians and others who denied that a vicarious redemption was necessary. The assertion of the necessity of redemption, as well as the denial, must be based upon certain ideas of the attributes and moral government of God viewed in connection with the actual state and condition of man as a transgressor of His law says Dr William Cunningham. The necessity on redemption is based by Dr J. Owen on the nature of divine justice. In his *Dissertation of Divine Justice* (Works 10: 481) he maintains the absolute nature of divine justice in opposition to the view that its claims could be set aside by the mere volition of God. There were some among the Schoolmen (e.g., Hales and Bonaventura) and also such great divines as Dr W. Twisse, the prolocutor of the Westminster Assembly, Samuel Rutherford, and others, who held that it was possible for God to have pardoned sin by a mere volition without satisfaction to His justice. Dr Twisse held that redemption was only *hypothetically* necessary. The foregoing divines reached their conclusion by magnifying God's sovereignty and power at the expense of His justice.

man that He should repent (Num. 23: 19), His truth is pledged that this will not be meaningless. We cannot conceive of a way whereby this veracity will be maintained in all its integrity and unsullied purity except by an adequate satisfaction being rendered. While this is so, we are not warranted in asserting these things apart from revelation, but they give us strong grounds for asserting that since God did threaten death as the punishment of sin, nothing could prevent the carrying out of this threatening except an adequate satisfaction.

(2) The necessity of redemption is not only based upon God's veracity, but upon His justice. By this justice divines mean that perfection of His nature of which He cannot denude Himself, and which of necessity must regulate the free acts of His will. This justice cannot be set aside by an arbitrary decree. If sin is to be pardoned, then some provision is necessary, not only to conserve this veracity, but to vindicate His justice.

(3) In connection with this subject it is important that the fundamental idea of sin as a transgression of God's law should be kept before us. It is not merely debt, but it is breach of God's law. When God deals with it, it is not as a creditor, who may remit the debt, but as a just law-giver who has given a holy law, prohibiting sin upon the pain of death, and who in the interests of holiness must vindicate the honour of His law when broken. The point touched on here is clearly brought out by an illustration of Dr Charles Hodge. A man is in debt to the extent, say, of £100; a kind friend comes forward, advances the £100, and the claims of the creditor end. But in the case of a man who steals £100, the fact that a kind friend may offer the money by way of reparation does not end the matter. In this case law has been broken, and satisfaction must be rendered by the payment of a penalty. Stress, great stress has been laid upon the necessity of redemption, and the more this doctrine is considered, the more terrible does sin appear. Since there is no way of removing it but by the satisfaction made by our Lord Jesus Christ, how hopeless is the case of those who look to another way of salvation:

(ii.) *The Extent of Redemption.* — By this phrase it is not meant that the sufficiency of the vicarious death of Christ is not infinite; for the most orthodox Calvinistic theologians, though using the terms particular or limited,* hold that doctrine with unswerving loyalty. Some of the Schoolmen, in an endeavour to set forth this great truth, were accustomed

* *Definite* is the more correct term, and it is used by the Princeton theologians and invariably by Dr Cunningham and Dr G. Smeaton. *Limited* is open to the objection that it tends to conflict with the sufficiency of the redemption if its common usage is not kept clearly in mind.

to say that Christ died sufficiently for all men, but efficiently or efficaciously for the elect (*sufficiens pro omnibus, efficaciter pro electis*). The phrase is ambiguous, though accepted by Calvin and other orthodox divines, as it may appear to ascribe an *intention* of Christ dying for all without exception. It fixes attention on the *intention* rather than on the *sufficiency*. After the controversies concerning the *extent* or *design* of redemption, Reformed theologians modified the formula, making it read: "Christ's death was *sufficient* for all, while *efficacious* for the elect." This statement sets forth the *infinite efficacy* of the vicarious sacrifice, while the statement of the Schoolmen would seem to indicate, as Dr Cunningham points out, "that when He died, He *intended* that *all* should derive some saving and permanent benefit from His death." (*Hist. Theol.*, ii. 332). The question between those who hold the doctrine of a *definite* redemption, however, and those who hold by an *indefinite* redemption, is not the question of the sufficiency of the redemption, but its *design* or *intention*. "All that Christ did and suffered would have been necessary," says Dr C. Hodge, "had only one human soul been the object of redemption; and nothing different and nothing more would have been required had every child of Adam been saved through His blood" (*System, Theol.*, ii. 545).

In maintaining the doctrine of particular redemption it is not meant that humanity in general, including those who ultimately perish, does not derive some benefits and advantages from Christ's death. "They (i.e. Calvinists) believe," says Dr Cunningham, "that important benefits have accrued to the whole human race from the death of Christ, and that in these benefits those who are finally impenitent and unbelieving partake. What they deny is, that Christ intended to procure, or did procure, for all men those blessings which are the proper and peculiar fruits of His death in its specific character as an atonement, that He procured or purchased redemption, that is, pardon and reconciliation, for all men. Many blessings flow to mankind at large from the death of Christ, collaterally and incidentally, in consequence of the relation in which men, viewed collectively, stand to each other. All these benefits were, of course, foreseen by God when He resolved to send His Son into the world; they were contemplated or designed by Him, as what men should receive and enjoy. They are to be regarded and received and bestowed by Him, and as thus unfolding His glory, indicating His character, and actually accomplishing His purposes; and they are to be viewed as coming to men through the channel of Christ's mediation, of His sufferings and death" (*Hist. Theol.*, ii. 333). This is the position taken up by Turretin, Witsius, C. Hodge and A. A. Hodge. While admitted by Calvinists of

unimpeachable orthodoxy, yet it is not meant by them that Christ, in the true and proper Scriptural import, substituted Himself in the room and stead of all men without exception, or that He made satisfaction to God's justice for them, or that He purchased redemption for them. For all this is not true of any but those who are actually at length pardoned and saved.

The question at issue does not concern the nature of Christ's work. If His death was designed simply to exert a moral influence on men, it must have been designed indiscriminately for all. But both parties in this controversy — Calvinists and Arminians — reject the moral theory of the atonement. According to this theory, all idea of expiation or satisfaction of divine justice by vicarious punishment is rejected and the efficacy of Christ's work is attributed to the moral effect produced on the hearts of men by His character, teaching and acts. This view was first distinctly set forth by Abelard (A.D. 1142). It is the view held in more recent times by the Socinians and in still later times by Jowett (Master of Baliol) Maurice, Young, Bushnell, and Coleridge in his *Aids to Reflection*. The same objection applies to the governmental or Grotian theory of the atonement. According to this view, God's justice is not vindicatory, but is to be referred to a general governmental rectitude, based on a benevolent regard for the highest ultimate well-being of the subjects of His moral government. If this be so, then it follows that this work can have no special reference to one man more than another. "All that it can do for any it has done for all." According to this theory, Christ's death has removed the obstacles out of the way of all and so rendered possible the salvation of each. This theory, advanced by Grotius, the great jurist, has never been embodied in the creed of any historical Church. The theory was held by President Edwards, junior, of Union College, Schenectady, New York State, and is styled the *Edwardean Theory of the Atonement*.*

What, then, is the real question involved in the matter at issue? It is this: "Did Christ die with the *design* of making satisfaction to divine justice on behalf of all men indiscriminately, or on behalf of His elect people given to Him by the Father before the foundation of the world, to be redeemed by Him and to be His inheritance? The answer Calvinists give is: "On behalf of His elect people." The real question is not a *limited* atonement implying the limitation of Christ's sacrifice in value, but an

* It is only right for the sake of the good name of President Edwards, of Princeton College, to point out that he held the orthodox doctrine of the atonement. The President Edwards referred to above, was a son. The elder Edwards never held the governmental theory of the atonement.

atonement that was limited to a certain class, or to use the words of the Westminster Divines: "To all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption, He doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same, making intercession for them, and revealing unto them, in and by the Word, the mysteries of salvation; effectually persuading them by His Spirit to believe and obey; and governing their hearts by His Word and Spirit; overcoming all their enemies by His almighty power and wisdom, in such manner and ways as are most consonant to His wonderful and unsearchable dispensation"*** (*Conf.*, 7: 8). "Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only" (*Ibid.*, 3: 6). The doctrine of the Reformed Church is, to put it in a few words, that the Lord Jesus Christ died with the design of actually saving His elect people; that is, as Dr A. A. Hodge puts it, "for the purpose of actually saving those whom He does actually save" (*The Atonement*, p. 332).

(1) The Reformed theologians in their theology taught that it was the design of the redemptive work of Christ to carry into effect the purpose of election. As presented to us in the *Confession of Faith*, God is represented as having, out of His mere good pleasure, elected some to everlasting life and to all the means thereof, and having sent His Son to effect that purpose by His obedience unto death. (2) The love that prompted God to send His Son and the love that prompted His son to die is set before us in Scripture as the highest conceivable love which made it certain that He will also, with His Son, freely give the objects of that love all things that His wisdom sees they need, and that the objects of that love were a people predestinated from all eternity. (3) That Christ died with the design of making the salvation of those for whom He died certain in pursuance of eternal covenant engagements,* is also the teaching of Reformed theologians. (4) That the purchase of salvation is so connected with its application that it respects the same persons, the latter following upon the former. (5) The Lord Jesus obtained the gracious influences of the Holy Ghost and all the fruits of the Spirit for those for whom He died. Their doctrine was that Christ died for the purpose of actually saving

*** Dr Cunningham says concerning this statement: "Now this latter statement . . . contains, and was intended to contain the true *status quaestionis* in the controversy about the extent of the atonement" (*Historical Theology* ii. 329).

* This subject is dealt with by Witsius in his *Economy of the Covenants* (ii, 9), at the considerable length and also by Dr Hugh Martin in his work, *The Atonement*, in which he treats the redemptive work of our Lord in relation to the covenant of grace. Dr R. Watts, Belfast, recommended this as one of the most masterly works on the subject.

those whom He does actually save; or, to put it in the words of the Confession: "Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only" (iii. 6). Around this question have raged those controversies that bear the names of (a) Arminianism, (b) Amyraldianism, (c) Baxterianism, (d) Double Reference, and (e) Dr B. B. Warfield's Cosmic or Eschatological Universalism.

(a) The *Arminian* doctrine asserts that Christ died for all and every man alike — for Judas as well as for Peter. And in support of their position. Arminians appeal to certain passages in Scripture which they allege have a definitely universalistic application. According to the teaching of consistent Arminianism as to the design of Christ's death, it simply brought all men into a salvable state, but did not actually procure reconciliation for any, and, as Dr G. Smeaton puts it, "under the guise of enlarging Christ's merits, it tended only to undermine and diminish them." Arminianism did not scruple to maintain that the ransom might have been paid by Christ and yet not applied to any because of unbelief. "A gulf was thus drawn," says Dr Smeaton, "between the procuring of redemption and the application of it, as if these were not of equal extent and breadth. The application was thus suspended on man's free will, and humanity was thrown back on its own resources, or on such aid as all equally receive, to apply the redemption for themselves" (*Apostles' Doctrine of the Atonement*, p. 537). The Arminians also held that the end of Christ's death was to acquire a new right, on the ground of which God might make a new covenant with men. This is thorough going Neonomianism, as Dr Cunningham has pointed out, the same in substance though not in form as that around which the Neonomian Controversy was waged in England in the 18th century, and which had its echoes in Scotland in the Marrow Controversy. The Arminians further denied that the Atonement carried with it the ground of its application. As the sinner's salvation is left so largely to his own free will, it follows that thousands for whom Christ died, according to the Arminian view, may never be saved. In point of fact, Arminians admit that many are lost, i.e., many of those for whom, according to their doctrine, Christ died. (a) If this be so, then their doctrine of a universal redemption is what Dr Warfield described as *inoperative* universalism. "Though in *intrinsic worth* it (Christ's satisfaction) could save the whole world," says Dr Smeaton, "and a thousand worlds more, if there had been such worlds of human beings to be saved, yet the redemption work does not extend, in point of fact, beyond the circle of those who approve of it as a fit and proper method of salvation; or, in other words, who, by a faith which is the gift of God, are led to accept

it as the ground of reconciliation with God. It is simply co-extensive, as to saving effects, with the number of true believers" (*Our Lord's Doctrine of the Atonement*, p. 371). (b) Further, if some are lost for whom Christ died, then His redemptive work has failed for them or the Holy Spirit has failed in applying the benefits of His redemption. In either case their doctrine does dishonour to Christ and the Holy Spirit, and if not blasphemy it is perilously near it.

It remains to be pointed out that there are Scriptural statements which cannot by any fair process of interpretation be reconciled with the Arminian doctrine, and in this connection, perhaps, there are no works attaining such excellence as Prof. G. Smeaton's *Our Lord's Doctrine of the Atonement* and *The Apostle's Doctrine of the Atonement*. Dr Smeaton adopts the exegetical method and dealt with the texts in the Gospels and Epistles bearing on the subject.

Our Lord speaks of those for whom He was to lay down His life as His sheep (John 10: 15), a people given to Him by the Father who hear his voice and follow Him; it is for these that He laid down His life. Again, those whom He is to save are called His people (Matt. 1: 21); and those for whom He laid down His life are called His friends (John 15: 13, 14). Concerning an oft-quoted and oft-misunderstood text, Dr R. L. Dabney says: "There is, perhaps, no Scripture which gives so thorough and comprehensive an explanation of the *design* and results of Christ's sacrifice as John 3: 16-19" (*Systematic and Polemic Theology*, ii. 535). The satisfaction offered is definitely *limited* to those who believe in His name. The Bible teaches that the *design* of Christ's death is actually to save, and not simply to make salvation possible (Matt. 18: 10; Rom. 5: 10; 2 Cor. 5: 21; Gal. 1: 4; Eph. 1: 7)

(To be continued)

John Welsh

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5. Maintaining the Whole Truth

Rev. K. D. Macleod

AFTER four months of imprisonment in Blackness Castle, Welsh and his five fellow prisoners were released, but only to allow them to appear for trial before the Privy Council in Edinburgh, as were others imprisoned in various parts of the country for the same reasons. They were denied the services of a lawyer, but Forbes, who as moderator in

Aberdeen took the lead in all these proceedings, read a supplication on behalf of them all. Its petition was that their case be remitted to the General Assembly "because it is of verity that, by warrant of the Word of God, discipline of the Kirk of Scotland, acts of Parliament made in favour of the same, and practice since the reformation of religion, all spiritual matters anent doctrine and discipline have been, and ought to be, cognosced and judged by the Kirk only as competent judges thereof".

Shortly afterwards Robert Youngson, minister of Clatt in Aberdeenshire, who at an earlier meeting of the Privy Council had given way sufficiently to secure his release, appeared before them to declare that he had been summoned by the great God and his own conscience to withdraw his concessions; only by doing so, he now realised, could he find rest for his troubled soul. With Youngson now added to their number, and their supplication rejected, the 14 prisoners presented a further document by which they declined the authority of the Privy Council in a case which was purely spiritual. The Council proceeded to declare that the meeting of the Assembly in Aberdeen was unlawful and remanded the ministers to their various prisons until the King would make his mind known. Some attempts were made in private over the next two days to persuade the ministers to make concessions. These were unsuccessful, but the fact that these attempts were made at all reflected the weight of public opinion against the authorities. Some of the leading men in Scotland — including the Earl of Morton, the Earl of Argyle and Sir William Livingstone — actually made public their opposition to Government policy.

The King's mind was made known in due course: the six prisoners in Blackness must be put on trial charged with high treason — which carried the death penalty — for they had refused to acknowledge the authority of the Privy Council in matters ecclesiastical. The Council did not appreciate this new move, "in regard", as they put it, "the things already done by us had given great discontentment to all men".

In the two-month interval before the trial began, although he had stood up to all the phenomenal efforts of his ministry, Welsh's health broke down and he was never afterwards completely well. His fellow-prisoners too suffered in their health. They were forced to petition the Council to transfer them to another prison, or at least to arrange to have their food provided by someone who would be less exorbitant in his charges than the Constable of the Castle. The Constable was indeed requested to be more reasonable in his charges, or to allow the prisoners to make their own arrangements. At the same time he was directed not to relax the

severity of their imprisonment in any way, but to keep them in separate rooms, not to allow them to meet, and not to allow them any visitors. This was, to use the prisoners' own words, "more rigorous than customarily hath been enjoined to most heinous malefactors". Common criminals, it seems, were generally fed at public expense.

But the Town Council of Ayr held a public meeting to ask Welsh's parishioners to make voluntary contributions for his support, just as they had done while he was still assistant to John Porterfield. Welsh recorded years later, "The love of our flocks and private saints and particular friends had been so exceeding towards us, that had it not been for their abundant love, it had not been possible for us to have endured the charges of the one half of the time of our imprisonment, neither could we have gotten ourselves set at liberty from our prisons".

The King sent the Earl of Dunbar, one of his court favourites, to Scotland to see to the arrangements for the trial. He entered Edinburgh with great pomp, a guard of more than 600 cavalry accompanied him and seven silver trumpets were blown before him, but he had scarcely arrived when he found that he had undertaken a task far more difficult than he at first realised. He therefore wrote the King pointing out the danger to His "Majesty's design in the erecting of bishops" and asking him to "supersede that business and to renew his first commandment", which was to send the ministers into banishment without a trial. The trial, however, was appointed for January 10 in Linlithgow.

Dunbar sent James Melville, the eminent minister of Kilrenny in Fife, to Welsh to see if he was prepared to make some admission of blame. Dunbar promised Melville that if Welsh and the others cooperated he would do all in his power to pacify the King, claiming that he would willingly "give a thousand pounds sterling to have the King satisfied in that matter, without hurt to the Kirk and danger to the honest men that were in prison". Melville undertook the mission, "glad to have the occasion to talk with his brethren and see how God wrought with them".

First though, they met their lawyers, who also were sent on the same mission as Melville. The lawyers were able to go so far as to promise that if the ministers would, without any confession of wrongdoing, only submit to the King on account of the offence taken (not the offence given) and pass from their document which declined the authority of the Council in things ecclesiastical, they would be restored to their charges and all their expenses would be reimbursed.

Welsh describes all the lawyers' arguments as temptations, and adds, "It pleased our God to strengthen us to overcome them ... and convict

the consciences that, without iniquity and betraying the Lord's truth and crown, we might not only not do the least evil for the appearance of ever so great a good, but not the appearance of evil, which might offend the saints of God or cause our adversaries to think or say that we had fainted from so high a point of the Lord's glory as that which was called in question.... Which was not, as they and others took it, a thing indifferent, but an essential point of the sovereignty of Christ's royal crown and kingdom, and that both in authority of convening His own servants when, where, and after what manner it pleaseth Him to do His affairs, unto the which He had promised His presence, and in the authority of judgement of all matters belonging to His kingdom, both essential and accidental, from the which we might not depart in any jot, under the pain of high treason against the Lord Jesus.... Necessity was laid on us to defend His truth although our blood should go for it, and we had no warrant to look for any blessing either to ourselves or others by the omission of any part of our duty."

The next day they had a further discussion with one of the lawyers, Thomas Hope, whom they convinced of the rightness of their case, and he left them promising to appear for their defence the day following if indeed the trial went ahead, for they had not, even at this late stage, had any intimation from the authorities. Later that same day they were visited by five of their brother ministers, doubtless a welcome change from the ban that had been so long in force against visitors. And in the evening James Melville arrived with two other Fife ministers, "with whose fellowship", says Welsh, "we were greatly comforted".

Welsh goes on to describe the negotiations with Melville: "After calling on the name of the Lord we went to consultation what was to be done, and how far, for the avoiding of inconveniences, we might condescend. Sundry propositions were made, and left for further advisement till after supper, at which time we thought that in nothing could we in conscience make, even in appearance, any concession.... Therefore we thought that it was our duty to give a full testimony to the whole truth with all boldness if the Lord would strengthen us, and to endure the utmost which men could do to us, yea, even to the sealing of it with our blood if the Lord would call us and strengthen us to the same, calling to mind that all compromises which have ever been made in the cause of God have always strengthened the enemy, done injury to the truth, enfeebled the weak, and were never to this day joined with a blessing in the end.... These our resolutions being perceived by our brother Mr James, it did greatly comfort him, he affirming that what made him so sparing at this time in

encouraging and exhorting others to the cross was the infirmity he had seen in the whole ministry. Better it were never to resolve than afterwards to fall back. But seeing the Lord had given us the full determination to bear whatever was required for the defence of the truth, according to the measure of grace and strength which the Lord should minister, therefore was he comforted. And so he greatly confirmed us in bearing witness to the truth, and assured us that the cross alone would give it the victory." The visit, we are told, ended with "most comfortable exercise of the Word and prayer".

Between five and six the following morning the ministers were wakened by the sound of the trumpet and the clank of horses' hooves outside. It was a party of the King's guard which had come with a warrant to bring the ministers to Linlithgow for their trial, which was to begin before daybreak. As soon as Welsh heard the trumpet he got up and cried, "Courage now, brethren, let us sing the eleventh Psalm". It was doubtless the sincere exercise of their hearts for such men to sing, "I in the Lord do put my trust ...", and to go out in that spirit after prayer, but without time even for breakfast. We have every right to believe that they went to their trial with God's blessing, for, in the words of the same Psalm, "the Lord loveth righteousness; His countenance doth behold the upright". After their four-mile walk to Linlithgow, they had the pleasure of meeting about 40 of their brethren who had gathered to support them. Among them were Andrew Melville, then Principal of St Mary's College in St Andrews, and John Ker, Mrs Welsh's half-brother and now minister of Prestonpans. It is interesting to note how, some years earlier, on his return from visiting Paris, Ker met John Davidson who was then still minister of Prestonpans. Ker was wearing the overly-fashionable clothes of the students of the Paris of that time, and Davidson pointed out the foolishness of wearing such clothes. The remark was blessed to the younger John; it was the turning point in his life.

The start of the trial was, however, delayed till well on in the day to allow further private negotiations with the prisoners to take place, in the hope of winning concessions. When others had failed, the Lord Advocate told them that if the matter went to trial they would certainly be condemned, reminding them that the penalty for high treason was death. He advised them to discuss the matter with their brethren before they would run such a risk. Welsh and his friends were willing enough to do this, although they had already made up their minds to face the worst. Their ministerial brethren concentrated on investigating any possibility of a way out which would not involve withdrawing their declination. In the end

it was decided to ask the Privy Council to delay further proceedings to allow them to meet their presbyteries and synods, which they had represented at the Aberdeen Assembly, for it was to them alone, technically speaking, that they were responsible for what they had done. A deputation including James Melville went before the Council with this suggestion, but it was firmly rejected.

When Welsh and his fellow-prisoners heard this, they declared that they saw that the Lord had called them that day to give a testimony to the liberty of the kingdom of Jesus Christ and to stand to His crown against the usurpation and the pride of men, at which they were not afraid, but exceeding glad and courageous; only they besought the brethren to give them their advice so that they might not injure the cause, for they had no respect to anything that could befall themselves in comparison with that. As one of their ministerial brethren was concluding their conference with prayer, asking especially and fervently for the strengthening of the men who were to go on trial, the lieutenant of the guard entered and peremptorily interrupted him with the demand that the six ministers go with him to the Tolbooth, where the judge and Council were waiting.

(To be continued)

Shunning Idolatry

The following was extracted from "The Ten Commandments" by Thomas Watson, published by the Banner of Truth. He was one of the great Puritan divines who flourished in the 17th Century. C H Spurgeon described the volume containing Watson's sermons on the Shorter Catechism "one of the most precious of the peerless works of the Puritans". What is reprinted here is found in his exposition of the Second Commandment. It would appear that Thomas Watson too would disapprove of Christians being present at a requiem mass.)

Take heed of the idolatry of image-worship. Our nature is prone to this sin as dry wood to take fire; and, indeed, what need of so many words in the commandment: "Thou shalt make any graven image, or the likeness of anything in heaven, earth, water," sun, moon, stars, male, female, fish; "Thou shalt not bow down to them." I say, what need of so many words, but to show how subject we are to this sin of false worship? It concerns us, therefore, to resist this sin. Where the tide is apt to run with greater

force, there we had need to make the banks higher and stronger. The plague of idolatry is very infectious. "They were mingled among the heathen, and served their idols." It is my advice to you, to avoid all occasions of this sin.

1. Come not into the company of idolatrous Papists. Dare not to live under the same roof with them, or you run into the devil's mouth. John the divine would not be in the same bath where Cerinthus the heretic was.

2. Go not into their chapels to see their crucifixes, or hear mass. As looking on a harlot draws to adultery, so looking on the popish gilded picture may draw to idolatry. Some go to see their idol-worship. A vagrant who has nothing to lose, cares not to go among thieves; so such have no goodness in them, care not to what idolatrous places they come, or to what temptations they expose themselves; but you who have a treasure of good principles about you, take heed the popish priests do not rob you of them, and defile you with their images.

3. Do not join in marriage with image-worshippers. Though Solomon was a man of wisdom, his idolatrous wives drew his heart away from God. The people of Israel entered into an oath and curse, that they would not give their daughters in marriage to idolaters. Neh. 10;30. For a Protestant and Papist to marry, is to be unequally yoked; and there is more danger that the Papist will corrupt the Protestant, than hope that the Protestant will convert the Papist. Mingle wine and vinegar, the vinegar will sooner sour the wine, than the wine will sweeten the vinegar.

4. Avoid superstition, which is a bridge that leads to Rome. Superstition is bringing any ceremony, fancy, or innovation into God's worship. He hates all strange fire to be offered in his temple. Lev. 10;1. A ceremony may in time lead to a crucifix. They who contend for the cross in baptism, why not have the oil, salt, and cream as well, the one being as ancient as the other? They who are for altar-worship, and will bow to the east, may in time bow to the Host. Take heed of all occasions of idolatry, for idolatry is devil-worship. Ps. 106; 37. If you search through the whole Bible, there is not one sin that God has more followed with plagues than idolatry. The Jews have a saying, that in every evil that befalls them, there is *uncia aurei vituli*, an ounce of the golden calf in it. Hell is a place for idolaters. "For without are idolaters." Rev. 22;15. Senesius calls the devil a rejoicer at idols, because the image-worshippers help fill hell.

That you may be preserved from idolatry and image-worship. 1. Get good principles, that you may be able to oppose the gainsayer. Whence does the popish religion get ground? Not from the goodness of the cause, but from the ignorance of their people. 2. Get love to God. The wife that loves her husband is safe from the adulterer; and the soul that loves Christ is safe from the idolater. 3. Pray that God will keep you. Though it is true, there is nothing in an image to tempt (for if we pray to an image, it cannot hear, and if we pray to God, by an image, he will not hear), yet we know not our own hearts, or how soon we may be drawn to vanity, if God leaves us. Therefore pray that you be not enticed by false worship, or receive the mark of the beast in your right hand or forehead. Pray, "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe." Lord, let me neither mistake my way for want of light, nor leave the true way for want of courage. 4. Let us bless God, who has given us the knowledge of his truth; that we have tasted the honey of his word, and our eyes are enlightened. Let us bless him that he has shown us the pattern of his house, the right mode of worship; that he has discovered to us the forgery and the blasphemy of the Romish religion. Let us pray that God will preserve pure ordinances and powerful preaching among us. Idolatry came in at first for want of good preaching. The people began to have golden images when they had wooden priests.

Notes and Comments

Idol Worship

How great must that delusion be to which teeming millions of our race are given over when, even in this supposedly enlightened age, we find multitudes flocking to statues and images of supposed gods with a view to placating and pleasing them with drink offerings! So great is the deception that we find hordes of devotees convinced that they are witnessing a miracle when their milk offerings appear to be consumed before their very eyes, and in India religious fervour rose to such a height that the country was described as being brought to a standstill by the "devotional frenzy" which had gripped the Hindu faithful. But this was far from being confined to India and the Asian continent. The phenomenon — idols drinking milk — was said to be observed even in Britain and America with queues forming at Hindu temples in these nations' principal cities. Some close to the scene have explained the "miracle" as a clever deception practised by Hindu priests suspected of

having installed suction pumps hidden out of sight within the idol. If the purpose was to gather money into their coffers, it was clearly a great success. In other cases the porosity of the material of which the idols were composed explained the disappearance of the milk from spoons placed to their mouths. According to the *Daily Telegraph*, a man called James Randi, described as the world's best known "miracle buster", said that if the spoonful of milk were held to the elbow it would just as easily be absorbed by capillary action. Mr Randi, we are informed, was recently involved in an investigation of a statue of the so-called Madonna located in Civitavecchia, Italy, and which purportedly cried tears of blood. "Working with Professor Luigi Garlaschelli of the University of Pavia, they found that all that was needed to recreate the phenomenon were a hollow statue of porous alabaster that has been fired to give it a shiny surface, some human blood and a nail. If you scratch the surface of the glaze, that is the only exit for the liquid and it runs out," said Mr Randi. A genetic test was done on the blood from the Civitavecchia statue and it turned out to be male. When we asked the priest about it, he smiled, and said: "Yes of course it is the blood of Christ". What if it were female blood? The Priest replied: 'That would be all right too — it would be her blood in that case.' The same *Telegraph* article tells us that a few years ago, Professor Garlaschelli also explained away another supposed miracle, that of the blood of St Gennaro which was supposed to liquefy from a dark brown solid. This is one of Italy's most venerated relics. "He showed that it was little more than medieval alchemy, having recreated the effect in his laboratory using chemicals plentiful in the clays from Mount Vesuvius. The congealed blood is a thixotropic mixture, a solid that becomes liquid when shaken or vibrated." The cardinal, in the course of the annual ceremony, takes hold of the reliquary containing the "blood", gives it good shake, and, behold, the "miracle" takes place!

The "Big Bang" — Fact or Fiction?

It is interesting to read in the Press that scientists are coming up against difficulties which appear to cast doubt on the validity of their much-vaunted Big Bang theory of the origin of the universe and that they are now, in fact, arguing among themselves. Because the Biblical account of the creation of the heavens and the earth never seemed to receive as much as a mention, we were beginning to think that perhaps these learned and eminent men had never really heard of it, and that they had never entered into discussion with those who believe it. That, however, is not the case as far as Professor Steve Jones of University College is concerned. He

quotes the result of a *Daily Telegraph* opinion poll which asserted that 39 per cent of people believe that the universe began with a Big Bang while 29 per cent 'opted for the idea that it arose "through an act of creation by God, broadly as described by the book of Genesis in the Bible".' Professor Jones then goes on to ask: 'Can it be true that 16 million Britons think that "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" and "formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life"?' That there are so many who believe this to be the literal truth is very "depressing", as far as he is concerned and his language in regard to them is scornful.

"If everything", he writes, "began through the whim of a creator whose deeds are written down in a big book the accuracy of which is beyond question, then science is irrelevant. As believers are certain that they are right, then every fact, by definition, fits their theory. If all evidence can be interpreted in only one way, then there is no point in arguing. There is, in fact, not much point in looking for evidence at all. The Big Bang, unlike the Book of Genesis, is just a theory. It may be right but scientists bicker about it all the time. Every contribution to the debate is taken seriously, even if only to be dismissed. The idea explains so many phenomena as well — the background radiation that echoes a cataclysmic event, the fact that the universe is expanding, and much more — that the controversy seemed to be dying down.

"Recently, though, a nasty problem started it up again. Scientists reported that some stars appear to be older than the universe itself — if it did indeed begin with a Big Bang. Estimates of the date of that event, based on the rate at which the universe is expanding, were about 12 billion years ago. Some stars, though, are now thought to be 16 billion years old. A few astronomers have been happy to declare that four billion years was nothing between friends; but to others the finding casts doubt on the whole theory. For a year or so the dispute has generated more heat than light. Last month the *Telegraph* reported a possible answer: the universe is expanding more slowly than we thought, so that it is really about 18 billion years old; older than any star. Problem, apparently, solved — although the Astronomer Royal, Sir Martin Rees, delivered a noticeably cool response to the finding. And in last week's *Nature*, new information from the Hubble Space Telescope suggests that the universe is only 9.5 billion years old: problem back, worse than before. . . . It could be something trivial. But it might be that the Big Bang will turn out to be a small flop; if the idea is simply wrong, we would be back to a state of dismal uncertainty about our origins." Well that is what Professor Jones

thinks, but he is not speaking for us but for his own company of agnostic scientists. On the basis of what is on record in the Bible we do not accept that the universe is billions of years old; nor do we for a moment give credence to the Big Bang Theory. If, in the words of Thomas Henry Huxley, Darwin's great defender, (quoted by Professor Jones), we are now witnessing "the slaying of a beautiful hypothesis by an ugly fact", the spectacle is not one which surprises us at all. Scientists and astronomers will sooner or later have to come to the realisation that it is "through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." The Christian, standing upon "the rock of divine truth", as A A Hodge pointed out, need not fear the result of scientific investigations. The God of truth is also the God of creation and there cannot be any conflict between His word and His works being alike revelations from Him. Defined as "the human interpretation of God's works", science is far from being irrelevant. "God has given us the Bible not only to guide our faith but also to provide a framework of revelation within which to interpret the mysteries of the earth's origin and destiny."¹

On the same page of *The Daily Telegraph*, we have the Astronomer Royal asserting that "the triumph of the 20th century is to have learnt that we and the earth come from stardust. . . Darwin showed our links with the animal world; today's discoveries reveal our link with the cosmos. We are ashes of long dead stars. Every atom in our bodies is a fossil whose history can be traced to the early universe." The question we would like to ask the Astronomer Royal is the obvious one — where did the stars or the atoms come from in the first place? He would most likely turn away from us and avoid the difficulty. Professor Jones tells us that he — against his better judgment, he says — used to argue with "those who claim that evolution, of stars and of man, is wrong and that it is all due to God. Soon, though, I realised that this was not a real dialogue at all. Anything I said was either a lie, a silly mistake, or fitted perfectly into Genesis". Jones goes on to say that "the evidence for human evolution is, in fact, extraordinarily weak. There are no more fossils than would cover a decent-sized table and we know almost nothing about what propelled a hairy and rather stupid ape into a bald and mildly intellectual human being." He did not wish to be quoted out of context so it is proper to also point out

¹ Professor J C McCampbell in Foreword to *The Genesis Flood*

that Professor Jones considers the fact of evolution to be so well established in other animals that he found it completely convincing. "Man is an animal, therefore I believe we, too, evolved. How it happened is another problem. There is not a single statement in the *Origin of Species* that is not disputed. That is enough to convince many who believe only in certainty that Darwin is wrong and Genesis is right. If scientists disagree and believers do not, then surely believers must have won the argument." He goes on, however, to assert that "to any scientist, precisely the opposite is the case. Conviction kills the search for truth because it does away with the argument altogether." We disagree. Conviction of the truth of the Divine record stimulates and encourages scientific research. Was that not true in the case of Michael Faraday, generally considered to have been the greatest of all experimental physicists?

Celibacy and the Church of Rome

The crisis over celibacy in the Church of Rome is now become acute world-wide but nowhere more so than in the Republic of Ireland, one of the most Popish nations under heaven. Its very constitution bears testimony to that. Now, we are told in a most revealing and damaging article in *The Herald*, the Pope is "deeply worried about morale in the Barque of St Patrick". The lid is being slowly lifted off a can of worms and what is ugly, immoral and unacceptable is being exposed to the light. So serious has the situation become that the Pope felt it necessary to send Archbishop Jorge Mejia, secretary of Rome's powerful Congregation of Bishops to investigate and report. He has now returned "with a voluminous report on child sex abuses involving priests that will make grim reading for the Pontiff." Cases of deviant sexual behaviour are numerous. The *Daily Telegraph* recently reported (05/10/95) that a priest had paid £50,000 to a former altar boy in settlement of a civil claim for damages for alleged sexual abuse and that less than a week before that the bishop of Dublin, Dr Desmond Connell, had acknowledged that he had approved a £27,500 to a priest in 1993 to pay damages in settlement of a civil claim. At the same time the diocese of Dublin revealed that in the same year a priest in a separate case had settled a civil claim for £50,000, plus £6,000 costs. We are told that in the past three years there have been embarrassing court cases involving priests or religious brothers charged with child sex abuse or related offences in at least 12 of Ireland's 26 Roman Catholic dioceses and that "an authoritarian church system with an addiction to secrecy has not been honest and forthcoming". Dr Brendan Comiskey, the bishop of Ferns, brought matters to a head when he called for "a full debate

on celibacy in the context of the decline in priestly vocations in Ireland''. He earned for himself a public rebuke from Cardinal Daly and was summoned to Rome to give an explanation of his stance. This was, however, cancelled and the emissary from Rome was instead despatched. Meanwhile Bishop Comiskey has been packed off to the United States on what is described by the church as a "three-month sabbatical" but others, including the *Herald* journalist, say that he is there to be treated for alcoholism. As a damage limitation exercise, Cardinal Daly has publicly offered "the most abject and most humble apology to the victims of sex abuse and their families". The mass media are being blamed and declared to be "obsessed with promoting a permissive agenda to undermine traditional Catholic values on marriage." Marriage? Phyllis Hamilton, a priest's housekeeper, has just revealed that she was married for years to "Father" Michael Cleary — "a popular radio padre who took a hard line against contraception and divorce"! John Cooney concludes his *Herald* article with these words: "However, if Archbishop Meja is an accurate reporter of the Irish Church scene, he will inform Pope John Paul that most of the tabloid ooze in Ireland is church-sourced. It is the Catholic (sic) Church, not the media, that needs to clean up its act". If space permitted, we would add as a postscript the opening verses of the eighteenth chapter of the book of Revelation.

The "Toronto Blessing" comes to Magheragall

Much has been written of the so-called "Toronto Blessing" and our Synod has already issued a solemn warning against any countenancing of it declaring it to be "a dangerous and God dis-honouring movement". Producing, as it apparently does, "a babel of subhuman and animal sounds and various forms of bizarre conduct", it is not from God but from Satan. It saddens us to read in "Belfast Newsletter" that it has arrived in a Presbyterian Church in Magheragall bringing controversy and division in its wake. The majority of the elders in the church as well as a majority of the congregation, it is heartening to read, have opposed their minister's introduction of a charismatic-style service featuring this phenomenon. The minister is expected to take leave of absence from his charge and the likelihood is that his pastorate in the South Antrim village will come to an end. It seems strange to us that the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church concerned should have difficulty in formulating and announcing an official view on the "Toronto Blessing". If it had been less dilatory perhaps the troubles of the Magheragall congregation would not have arisen in the first place.

Mission News

Zimbabwe

The communion has been held this past weekend at Ingwenya. It would be good to have news of the services and those who were present and if there were any new members. It would have been the first occasion on which Rev Neil Ross preached in Zimbabwe and we trust that there was a blessing following all the services. It was disappointing that, by order of President Mugabe, the opening of the schools had been postponed for a week owing to the opening of the Commonwealth Games in Harare. Otherwise, there would have been an additional congregation of 600 boarding pupils. On the other hand, it gave the Headmistress, Miss Marion Graham, a week to recover after her flight from Scotland.

At Mbumba they are having a specially busy time at the hospital. The wards are overflowing. One third of the patients are HIV positive. Some are very ill and have to remain in the hospital for a longer period, which again leads to overcrowding in the wards. The nurse-aides deserve much credit for the work they do. The Sisters do the ward round in the morning and leave 'orders' for the day, and the aides are left to look after the patients until evening, unless they inform the Sisters of a problem. 'We would like to see it done differently', Sister Anne Zekveld writes, but it is just impossible at present. There are 100 to 150 patients passing through Outpatients daily. There are X-rays to be done, deliveries of babies, and all the other unexpected things that turn up, besides the administrative work, and there are only 24 hours in the day! (Is there none of you out there interested in coming to help us?) We are glad to have Dr Janetta Hak back again. She has brought her young brother with her and he is helping voluntarily with odd jobs on the Mission for a few months.

At the beginning of August, the Minister of Health, Dr Stamps, sent word that he was coming for a three-day visit. Anne describes the visit: "Dr Stamps arrived by car with a driver at the wheel. They had come all the way from Harare, a six-hours journey. We were very apprehensive about this visit as we were wondering what he would do for three whole days at Mbumba and we were very busy. Dr Hak had not yet come. However, we were very pleasantly surprised. He had come to work, not to be entertained. We were to tell him what to do. We were glad of a doctor's advice. On Friday he did a ward round and also saw some outpatients. Of course, an important man like him cannot go anywhere secretly and a crowd of newspaper reporters arrived from Bulawayo to interview him, which took two hours. He had a problem with our stand

on family planning, so we invited Rev P Mzamo and Mr Mziya, our Administrator, to discuss matters with him. Though we still did not see eye to eye with him we were glad to find Dr Stamps is a man of high moral principles and is not afraid to make his views known to those in authority. That same night he performed an operation on one of our patients. The next day, Saturday, he visited the district hospital at Nkai and went to see two local clinics. That evening he met with all our hospital staff and asked if they had any complaints! The next day was Sabbath and the Rev P Mzamo was present. He preached in English in the morning. Dr Stamps knew a little Ndebele but could speak Shona as he worked among Shona people. He attended both services and the worship in the hospital in the evening. Dr Stamps is a South African Presbyterian and we are glad to have someone like him in the Government. He had to leave at 6 am the next morning as he had an appointment at 12 midday in Harare. The whole staff, perhaps with few exceptions, were at the gate to see him off."

J.N.

Letter from Kenya

Sengera, 9/9/95.

Dear Friends,

I was looking out of the window of the manse in Raasay the week before I left and saw two geese followed by a lone goose flying steadily and purposefully South down the Raasay Sound. There will be three weeks since my own flight South by the time you read this letter. My journey out overnight was comfortable enough, though having been given a seat between a mother and her 7-year-old daughter — part of an American missionary family — I did not sleep all night. I was met by Mr Donald MacDonald the mission Administrator, whose wife's sickness and return home was the occasion for my coming to Kenya. We completed the 6½ hour journey to Sengera in two stages over road, where the surface was frequently poor and the driving adventurous to say the least.

Compared with a year ago, the Hospital is now fully functional, and though the peak of the malaria season has passed, the beds (40), are full and there are some very sick patients.

As I write there are 4 cases of typhoid, 2 of diabetes, and many of malaria, and there have been 4 deliveries within the past 24 hours. Until the children develop a resistance of their own to malaria, they are very prone to the disease, and many arrive at hospital with very low blood

counts, needing a blood transfusion as an emergency. The saddest cases are, of course, those of AIDS. Three adults were diagnosed in the past week, and a girl of 16 died of the disease in the arms of her brother. Apart from ward rounds, and outpatients, the day begins and ends with worship on the verandah of the hospital, with a short address in the mornings. Sabbath starts with the same morning worship at 8.00 am followed by Catechism in the Church at 9.00. The first service is at 10.00 and after a short break, the second service is held at 11.30. The last service of the day is on the hospital verandah at 2.00 pm.

Mr MacDonald returns home on Monday (DV) to be united with his wife and daughter. They have had their share of difficulties and disappointments over the past three years. At one (of several) farewell meals many spoke with affection of their efforts over the past three years in establishing the work here. As for their 18 month old daughter Sarah, one of them said they would willingly start paying cows for her now! Sister Coote, whom some of you will know, leaves on 28th for furlough. The nurses had an exhausting time after Dr Christine left, and she needs and deserves a rest. A week later I expect to travel to Nairobi to meet Rev. N. Ross, Dingwall, who with his wife and two of their family will be coming up to Sengera while I fly home. I look forward to being among you again and hope you are supporting the elders in my absence with your presence in Church.

The sight of those geese, driven by a God-given instinct, and ploughing South regardless, set me thinking of the Lord's promise to Israel. "For I will take you, one of the city and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion" (Jer 3:4). Are you among them; Is there any more important question?

Your affectionate paster,

J. R. Tallach

Church Notes

Meetings of Presbyteries (D.V.)

Skye: At Portree on 13th February at 11 am.

Northern: At Dingwall on 8th December at 2pm.

Southern: At Glasgow on 14th November at 6 pm.

Outer Isles: At Stornoway on 7th November at 1pm.

Western: At Laide on 19th December at 6pm.

Believer's happy entrance into Heaven

There is a consummative entrance into the holiest, that the believer shall have, as a fruit of the rending of the vail, and that is when he comes to the heaven above, to the higher house, whither the forerunner is for us entered, having rent the vail, which was rent that we might have access to God in glory as well as in grace, and then the believer will not be half in, as it were, but completely within the vail; for then will his communion with God be completed, then his knowledge of God, his love to God, his delight in God, his vision of God's glory, his conformity to God's image, will all be complete; for that which is in part shall be done away, and that which is perfect shall come, 1 Cor. 13: 10. O what a sweet change will that be, when faith will say to vision, I give place to you; when hope will say to fruition, I give place to you; when grace will say to glory, I will give place to you; when partial communion will say to perfection, I give place to you; when short passing blinks will say to uninterrupted everlasting joys, I give place to you. Little wonder then believers long to be wholly within the vail. — *Ralph Erskine*

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

Foreign Mission Fund: E.G.A.B. £25, per Rev DAR ; Anon., Canada August) \$100.

Eastern Europe Fund: A friend in the US, US\$1,000; A friend, Inverness, £50; Lochcarron friend, £30.

Dominions and Overseas Fund: Italian Church Collections, £310.38, per Rev DAR Anon.(Postal Orders), £100

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

Barnoldswick: £5, £10, both for Sustentation Fund; £5 for Manse Fund; £5 for Eastern Europe; £20, "A little help towards Communion expenses", E.K.; £40, "Where most needed", E.K. All from collection plate.

Halkirk: Mrs Barbara Campbell's Executry, £32,683.67.

Kames: In memory of much loved parents, for Church Funds, £250.

London: Friend of the Cause, £4 for Congregational Fund; Anon. £10, for Sustentation Fund; both per Rev KMW.

North Uist: MB McD, £50; I McD, £50, both for Car Fund. .

North Harris: Friend, Leachlee, £50; MM, Cluer, £10; Two Friends, MacQueen Street, per JN, £20; Anon. £10; Anon. £10; all for Communion expenses; Anon. £20, for loop system.