

The Free Presbyterian Magazine and Monthly Record

Vol 101

February 1996

No 2

A Perfect Salvation

FUNDAMENTAL to our understanding of the whole human race is the fact of sin. It is fundamental to our understanding of the whole course of human history, and of the present state of western society in particular. Indeed it is the only explanation of all the sorrow and suffering, and all the violence and hatred, which fills the world. And, above all, it should be fundamental to our understanding of ourselves as individuals.

Sin has consequences which extend beyond human relationships, for it affects our whole relationship with God. Every single individual, male and female, young and old, rich and poor, is by nature under condemnation, eternal condemnation, because all have sinned against God. For those who are still alive it is as yet a suspended sentence, but only because of God's forbearance and longsuffering. Yet it is not that kind of suspended sentence which can be avoided by better behaviour, by some more effective attempt at keeping the law of God for the rest of one's life. That is out of the question because "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight" (Rom 3:20). The sentence is suspended to give the opportunity for repentance. But where there is no repentance a time of reckoning must come, for God is a God of perfect justice, who cannot pass by sin. And where there is a sense of the total evil of sin, as done against the infinitely holy God, sinners will see that there is a necessity in the punishment of sin. For if sin is not punished God must cease to be just, and that can never happen.

Where then is there a place for such a petition as David's: "Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions" (Ps 25:7)? The answer comes in the next part of the verse: "*According to Thy mercy* remember Thou me". The exercise of mercy on God's part is perfectly consistent with His justice, for "mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Ps 85:10). Mercy can be shown to the sinner by not inflicting the sentence, because a substitute was provided — a substitute who could endure the infinite penalty which is the just recompence of sin. It is righteous

because sin is an infinite evil, and sin is an infinite evil because it is committed against an infinite God. Christ, the divine Saviour, the altogether suitable substitute, endured the full penalty of divine wrath against sin - not His own sin, for He had none, but the sin of all that great multitude who were given to Him in the eternal covenant, and who as perfectly sanctified in heaven will to all eternity sing to the praise of divine mercy, as a mercy which is exercised in perfect harmony with divine justice.

The simple truth of the gospel is that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. In Him were fulfilled the words of Isaiah: "He will magnify the law and make it honourable" (42:21). If the law was dishonoured by countless transgressions from the moment when man fell, here is One who as the sinner's substitute honoured the law by keeping it perfectly. Likewise in enduring the penalty of the law He honoured the law in all its claims against those whose sins he was bearing, for He entered with full heart into the justice of God in its claims for full satisfaction because of a broken law, although the sentence, "Thou shalt surely die", fell on Himself. Even when enduring the divine anger against sin in His body and soul He could say, "But Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel" (Ps 22:3).

Just as surely as the Father declared at His baptism and on the mount of transfiguration, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," so He made it known by the resurrection that He was well pleased with the Son's work at Calvary. Satisfaction had been made to a broken law, and it was now declared to all succeeding generations that Christ had magnified the law and made it honourable.

In the gospel it is made known that no one who believes in Christ can perish, and all who hear the gospel are commanded to believe. Yet it seems strange that a command should be needed in such circumstances: sinners under sentence of eternal death told that they can only escape if they believe in Him who was crucified and rose again. It speaks with great force of the hardness of every sinner's heart that no one will embrace this Saviour apart from divine power. It speaks of tremendous blindness in every human heart that sinners do not recognise either the danger of an undone eternity or the freeness with which salvation is offered to the undeserving. It speaks of extraordinary rebellion when sinners will not respond with the utmost eagerness to the command to repent and believe the gospel. And it speaks of the great power of the god of this world to blind "the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor 4:4).

It is a solemn fact that "because sentence against an evil work is not

executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Ecc 8:11). While the divine sentence of condemnation is suspended, man's heart is continually being hardened in sin and is being particularly hardened by resistance to the gospel. The hard heart of man is ever unwilling to believe that the sentence will ever be inflicted against him, and he is equally unwilling to believe that the salvation which is offered to him is really good. He is unwilling to accept that he could be happy if he is saved, for holiness is not attractive to man's fallen heart. But the fact is that God brings this salvation near to us in His goodness.

Only those who have been made willing to submit to God and His way of salvation can understand the greatness of the blessings which are included in that salvation. As when, for instance, the Lord calls, "Come out from among them . . . and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you and ye shall be my sons and daughters" (2 Cor 6:17f). Who that has experienced true family love and can look at God with an unbiased heart (that is, a renewed heart) can doubt that the tender care of an all-wise Father in heaven is an unspeakable blessing? This blessing of adoption, besides the blessings of justification and sanctification, and every other blessing that flows from them, was purchased by Christ. Not only does He deliver sinners from perishing, not only is the sentence of condemnation removed, but the sinner is brought into a condition where he is treated as a child and has been given the heart of a child. He is still a wayward child, but the heavenly Physician is dealing with that waywardness and, at the point of leaving this world for a better, that waywardness will be completely removed. The blessedness of heaven is not only that there will be no more sorrow or suffering, no more violence or hatred; the greater fact is that in heaven there will be no more sin. But if a life of holiness in this world is unattractive to those whose hearts are still biased by sin, how much more unappealing will be an existence where everything is perfectly pure, where there is not the slightest stain of sin. What reason then for all to pray, "According to Thy mercy remember Thou me"!

When we take into account the corruption of human nature we should not be surprised that unconverted sinners under the gospel so often remain unconverted. They have hearts that are blind to their danger, to the infinite evil of sin, and to the blessedness of a state of salvation both on earth and in heaven. Nor should we be surprised at the attitude of those who oppose true Christianity. False religion has an attractiveness to the natural heart which the truth can never claim. It is a road to blessedness which does not emphasise the corruption of the human heart or the helplessness of the sinner

dead in trespasses and sins. Idolatry in its various forms appeals to the senses in a way that the simplicity of Scriptural worship never can.

Yet false religion can never ultimately satisfy its followers. A generation will come which will see through its emptiness but, unless the Lord will work in saving mercy, only to turn to some other form of false religion or, as this generation has done so largely, turn to no religion at all. Or, perhaps one should say, to a religion whose chief precept is to enjoy oneself to the maximum in this life. If every false religion is built on a thoroughly insecure foundation, this is a religion which has no foundation at all. Hence the widespread questioning of whether life has any meaning — which has so characterised young people over the last few decades. Yet perhaps there has never been a time when more books were published trying to show in one way or another that Christianity is false. Fallen man has always put great effort into suppressing the truth, because the truth is perceived as a threat to a comfortable existence in sin. Today books which claim to give a *Life of Jesus*, for instance, are sold in their multiplied thousands because multitudes wish to feel more secure in their rejection of Him as a Saviour. This generation is thoroughly secular, yet it seems to feel it necessary to have its unbelief bolstered. Man, it has been said, is incurably religious. He cannot feel secure in atheism, especially when confronted with the great reality of death. But he has no wish to acknowledge the living God, although God has so clearly revealed Himself.

The greater part of the professing Church is unspeakably culpable in having aided and abetted the increasing secularity of our times by covering over the clear light of the Scriptures with her unbelief. Now she looks around in surprise because almost no one pays attention to her any more. The Church must learn once more to take seriously the fact that all are by nature under God's condemnation. She must also face the fact that hers is the trumpet by which the world is to be called to recognise this solemn fact and by which the remedy is to be proclaimed. The Church must learn to set Christ — as He is revealed in the Scriptures — at the centre of her message. How we should long for a time when a reinvigorated Church would proclaim faithfully throughout the world the good news that the Son of God became man so that He might work out a perfect salvation for sinners! And how we should pray that this message would be powerfully applied by the Holy Spirit to multitudes of hearers, so that the awful sentence which hangs over their head would be removed for ever! Such a time has been promised. May the Lord hasten it!

KDM

Walking Humbly with God

John Owen

This extract concludes Owen's third of five sermons on the expression, "And to walk humbly with thy God" (Micah 6:8). This sermon deals with humbling ourselves to the law of His grace in our walking with God, and is continued from the last issue. These sermons appear in volume 8 of Owen's Works.

[5.] WE are to humble ourselves to this — that we address ourselves to the performance of the greatest duties, being fully persuaded that we have no strength for the least. This is that which lies so cross to flesh and blood, that our souls must be humbled to it if ever we are brought to it; and yet without this there is no walking with God. There are great and mighty duties to be performed in our walking with God in a way of gospel obedience: there is cutting off right hands, plucking out right eyes; denying, yea, comparatively, hating father, mother, and all relations; dying for Christ, laying down our lives for the brethren; crucifying the flesh, cutting short all earthly desires, keeping the body in subjection, bearing the cross, self-denial, and the like — which, when they come to be put in practice, will be found to be great and mighty duties. This is required in the law of grace — that we undertake and go through with these all our days, with a full assurance and persuasion that we have not strength of ourselves, or in ourselves, to perform the least of them. "We are not sufficient of ourselves," saith the apostle (2 Cor 3:5). We cannot think a good thought. Without Christ we can do nothing (John 15:5).

This, to a carnal heart, looks like making of brick without straw. "A hard saying it is, who can bear it?" May not men sit down and say, "Why doth He yet complain? Is He not austere, reaping where He hath not sown? Are His ways equal?" Yea, most equal, righteous, and gracious; for this is the design of His thus dealing with us, that upon our addressing ourselves to any duty, we should look to Him from whom are all our supplies, and thereby receive strength for what we have to do. How unable was Peter to walk upon the water! Yet, when Christ bids him come, he ventures in the midst of the sea; and with the command hath strength communicated to support him. God may call us to do or suffer what He pleases, so that His call have an efficacy with it to communicate strength for the performance of what He calls us to (Phil 1:29).

This, I say, are we to humble ourselves unto — not only in the general to reckon that the duties that are required of us are not proportioned to the strength residing in us, but to the supply laid up for us in Christ; but also to lie under such an actual conclusion in every particular duty that we address ourselves to. This, in civil and natural things, were the greatest madness in the

world; nor is it needful that you should add any farther discouragement to a man from attempting any thing, than to convince him that he hath no strength or ability to perform or go through with it. Once persuade him of that, and there is an end of all endeavours; for who will wear out himself about that which it is impossible he should attain? It is otherwise in spirituals: God may require any thing of us that there is strength laid up in Christ for, enough to enable us to perform it; and we may by faith attempt any duty, though never so great, if there be grace to be obtained for it from Christ. Hence is that enumeration of the great things done by believers through faith — utterly beyond their own strength and power (Heb 11:33,34), “Out of weakness were made strong.” When they entered upon the duty, they were weakness itself; but in the performance of it grew strong, by the supply that was administered. So we are said to come to Christ to “find grace to help in time of need” (Heb 4:16) — when we need it, as going about that which we have no might nor power for.

This is the way to walk with God — to be ready and willing to undergo any duty, though never so much above or beyond our strength, so we can see that in Christ there is a supply. The truth is, he that shall consider what God requires of believers, would think them to have a stock of spiritual strength like that of Samson’s, since they are to fight with principalities and powers, contend against the world, and self, and what not; and he that shall look upon them will quickly see their weakness and inability. Here lies the mystery of it — the duties required of them are proportioned to the grace laid up for them in Christ — not to what they are at any time themselves intrusted withal.

[6.] This, also, is another thing we are to humble ourselves unto — to be contented to have the sharpest afflictions accompanying and attending the strictest obedience. Men walking closely with God, may perhaps have some secret reserves for freedom from trouble in this life: hence they are apt to think strange of a fiery trial (1 Pet 4:12); and therefore, when it comes upon them, they are troubled, perplexed, and know not what it means; especially if they see others prospering, and at rest in the land, who know not God. Their estates are ruined, names blasted, bodies afflicted with violent diseases, children taken away, or turning profligate and rebellious, life in danger every hour — perhaps killed all the day long: hereupon they are ready to cry, with Hezekiah, (Is 38:3) “Lord, remember;” or to contend about the business, as Job did, being troubled that he was disappointed in his expectation of dying in his nest. But this frame is utterly contrary to the law of the grace of God; which is, that the children that He receives are to be chastised, (Heb 12:6); that they are to undergo whatever chastening He will call them to: for having made the Captain of their salvation perfect through all manner of sufferings, He will make His

conformable to Him. This, I say, is part of the law of the grace of God, that in the choicest obedience we willingly undergo the greatest afflictions. The management of this principle between God and Job were worthwhile to consider; for although he disputed long, yet God left him not until He brought him to own it, and to submit unto it with all his heart. This will farther appear in our second head, about submitting to the law of the providence of God. The truth is, to help our poor weak hearts in this business, to prevent all sinful repinings, disputes, and the like, He hath laid in such provision of principles as may render the receiving of it sweet and easy to us; as:

First. That He doth not correct us for His pleasure, but that He may make us partakers of His holiness: so that we are not in heaviness unless it be needful for us; which we may rest upon, when we neither see the cause nor the particular of our visitation — then, on this account we may rest on His sovereign will and wisdom.

Second. That He will make all things work together for our good. This takes the poison out of every cup we are to drink, yea, all the bitterness of it. We have concernments that lie above all that here we can undergo or suffer; and if all work for our advantage and improvement, why should they not be welcome to us?

Third. That conformity and likeness to Jesus Christ is hereby to be attained; and sundry other principles there are given out, to prevail with our hearts to submit and humble our souls to this part of the law of God's grace: which is a thing that the devil never thought Job would have done, and was therefore restless until it was put to the trial; but he was disappointed and conquered, and his condemnation aggravated.

And this is the first thing required of us — namely, that we humble ourselves to the law of the grace of God.

Use 1. Let us now take some brief account of ourselves, whether we do so or no. We perform duties, and so seem to walk with God; but:

(1.) Is the bottom of our obedience a deep apprehension and a full conviction of our own vileness and nothingness — of our being the chief of sinners, lost and undone; so that we always lie at the foot of sovereign grace and mercy? Is it so? Then, when, how, by what means, was this apprehension brought upon us? I intend not a general notion that we are sinners; but a particular apprehension of our lost, undone condition, with suitable affections thereunto. Do we cry to the Lord out of the depths? Or is the end of our obedience to keep ourselves out of such a condition? I am afraid many amongst us, could we, or themselves, by any means dive into the depths of their hearts, would be found to yield their obedience unto God merely on the account of keeping

them out of the condition which they must be brought unto before they can yield any acceptable obedience to Him. If we think at all to walk with God, let us be clear in this, that such a sense and apprehension of ourselves lies at the bottom of it — “Of sinners I am chief”.

(2.) Doth this always abide in our thoughts, and upon our spirits — that, by all we have done, do, or can do, we cannot obtain righteousness to stand in the presence of God; so that in the secret reserves of our hearts we place none of our righteousness on that account? Can we be content to suffer loss in all our obedience, as to an end of righteousness? And do we appear before God simply on another head, as if there were no such thing as our own obedience in the world? Herein, indeed, lies the great mystery of gospel obedience — that we pursue it with all our strength and might, with all the vigour of souls, and labour to abound in it, like the angels in theirs — perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord; and yet, in point of the acceptation of our persons, to have no more regard unto it than if we had yielded no more obedience than the thief on the cross.

(3.) Do we, then, humble ourselves to accept of the righteousness that God in Christ hath provided for us? It is a common working of the heart of them whom God is drawing to Himself — they dare not close with the promise, they dare not accept of Christ and His righteousness — it would be presumption in them. And the answer is common — that indeed this is not fear and humility, but pride. Men know not how to humble themselves to a righteousness purely without them, on the testimony of God: the heart is not willing to it; we would willingly establish our own righteousness, and not submit to the righteousness of God. But how is it with our souls? Are we clear in this great point, or no? If we are not, we are at best shuffling with God — we walk not with Him. He admits none into His company, but expressly on the terms of taking this righteousness that He hath provided; and His soul loathes them that would tender Him any thing in the room thereof, as men engaged to set up their wisdom and righteousness against His. But I must conclude.

Use 2. If all these things are required to our walking with God where shall they appear, where shall be their lot and portion, who take no thought about these things? Some we see visibly to walk contrary to Him, having no regard to Him at all, nor considering their latter end. Others have some checks of conscience — that think to cure these distempers and eruptions of sin with a loose cry of “God be merciful to them”. Some go a little farther — to take care of the performance of duties; but they seek not God in a due manner, and He will make a breach upon them. The Lord awaken them all before it be too late!

Reasons to Pray and Praise

The text of a letter written by Alex MacLennan, Muir of Ord, to a friend.

THIS is only a few lines to ask about you. I thought at one time you would be married before now. Whatever turn events have taken the only thing I am concerned about is that you would have composure of mind, resting in the Lord, waiting patiently (Ps 37). When I look back on my pilgrimage I find reasons to praise Him for the things and persons I strongly desired to have that He kept from me, sometimes hedging my way with high walls. It is an awful sin to worship and serve the creature more than the Creator, the only fountain of happiness. If we wish to enjoy the creature, the only way to do so is to enjoy Himself above them all. The creature can be nothing to us but as He will make it. May we always stand in fear of ourselves!

How prone we are to unbelief, distrust and departure from God! We must aim at nothing less than plucking out right eyes and cutting off right hands when they clash with loving the Saviour in sincerity. There was an old, simple shepherd in Beaulieu many years ago, Simon Campbell. He used to have a petition in prayer that stuck to me — I see the wisdom of it as time goes on — “Lord, take away from us everything that must not be with us”. May we pray daily that He would shield us from every influence that would cool our love to Christ, hinder our prayers, lessen our desires after the better country, impede our progress toward heaven. We are living in a world of sin, a world of sin within us which nothing can conquer but the grace of God. Why should you repine for the absence of the springs when you have the fountain-head? Christ is the embodiment of all that is lovely, desirable, beautiful — and worthy that His praise should be on every lip.

My mother used to speak of what a godly minister once said, “See that you marry Christ before you marry anyone else”. How we should praise Him for the richness, fulness and freeness of the covenant of grace sealed with the blood of Christ! The great question is, Am I in the covenant? Yes, if you are daily asking God to fulfil the promises; God’s elect are all a praying people. What a priceless gift is a praying spirit! We may at times be thinking that we would pray more and better if we had time and outward comforts, which are great blessings for which the Giver is to be praised. Yet I find all these are empty if the praying spirit is absent, as old Mr Macfarlane once said to my father in the rocky isle of Rona where I was born, “There are plenty of places for prayer here if we had the Spirit of prayer”. Blessed be His holy name, He has promised the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. . . .

No doubt the married state is the ideal life when you meet with the right person. However, the fashion of this world will pass away in this matter. I may pass on to you what caught my eye recently: "Although there are no special ties in heaven, I cannot dismiss from my mind the thought that there godly families will resemble a galaxy of stars like the Pleiades, singing the praises of a triune God". I need not say that I'd like to hear from you at any time.

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you."

The Great Apostasy

William Cunningham

In 1837 Cunningham, later to become Professor of Church History in the New College, Edinburgh, reprinted The Doctrines and Practices of the Church of Rome Truly Represented: in Answer to a Book Entitled "A Papist Misrepresented and Rerepresented". The author was Edward Stillingfleet (1635-99), who became Bishop of Worcester in 1689 and was responding to a priest by the name of Gother. When Gother's book was reprinted in 1835 the advertisements quoted Cunningham describing it as "a very clever pamphlet", but not, of course, his other descriptions, such as "full of misrepresentations from beginning to end". It would seem that by involving Cunningham in this way in their advertisements the publishers provoked him to issue this devastating reply. The following article is extracted from Cunningham's extensive and masterly preface, in which he gives a brilliant analysis of the principles underlying the whole Roman system, principles which are unaffected by the skin-deep changes since then, even those of Vatican II. Together with the notes which he added throughout the book, Cunningham's writing amounts to more than half of the 1837 edition of what is usually known as Stillingfleet on Popery.

THE system of Popery occupies a prominent place in the New Testament. Not only are there abundant materials in the Word of God for establishing the erroneous and dangerous character of its tenets individually, but the system, as a whole, is there delineated so fully and plainly, that it seems to be scarcely possible to mistake it. It is predicted as a great apostasy from the true faith, which was to prevail extensively in the professing Church, and to be attended with the most injurious consequences. It is expressly ascribed to the peculiar agency of Satan; and, indeed, the very reason why it forms the subject of so many of the predictions of the New Testament, is because it was Satan's great scheme for frustrating the leading objects of Christianity — for depriving men of the important advantages,

connected both with this world and the next, which the preaching of the gospel was intended to convey; and was to be very successful in effecting these ends.

When God created man after his own image, Satan resolved to tempt him to commit sin; and was permitted to succeed Under his agency the Patriarchal religion degenerated among the mass of mankind into Paganism; the Mosaic into that state of things which is described in the Gospel history, and which, for want of a better word, may be called Pharisaism; and the Christian religion into Popery The leading feature of Paganism is idolatry; that is, worshipping those who are no gods, or worshipping God by images This very idolatry, although in a more mitigated form, corresponding to the greater light of the Christian dispensation, is still a leading feature of Popery, and serves to a large extent, among its deluded votaries, the object of withdrawing men from contemplating God, and holding communion with the Father of their spirits

The state of religion among the Jews in the time of our Saviour, however, was such as to afford abundant proof of the ingenuity and activity of the great enemy of God and man. Pharisaism was a complete perversion of the true religion as revealed by God through Moses, and had a very striking resemblance to Popery, especially in these important particulars: That it was founded not upon the written Word of God, but upon the traditions of men; that the true ground of a sinner's hope was obscured, if not overthrown, by a principle of self-righteousness; that personal religion was supposed to consist in the observance of outward rites and ceremonies, rather than in genuine holiness of heart and life; and that to a considerable extent the authority of the divine law was made void by human traditions

The most obvious reflections — which must occur even upon a superficial examination of the history of Popery, and which can only be confirmed by more extensive acquaintance with the subject — are, that the Church of Rome pursued with unwearied zeal and perseverance the grand object of the entire subjugation of the Christian world to her sway — the possession of an absolute control over the consciences and the property of men; that she displayed singular skill and ingenuity in taking advantage of every circumstance which could promote her end, and in accommodating her plans to the situation in which she found herself placed; and that she never scrupled to trample upon the laws of God and man, whenever this seemed to be for the time expedient. This view of Popery, which a mere survey of its history obviously suggests, is fully confirmed by an examination of the system itself, which, in all its doctrines, rites and ceremonies, is plainly

intended and admirably adapted to make men the abject slaves of their spiritual superiors, and to elevate the priest to an influence which no human being ought to possess over another.

All this is in full accordance with the information given us in the Sacred Scriptures, which unfold also the bearing of Popery upon the spiritual welfare of men, and its fitness to serve the purposes of him to whose agency it is ascribed, and whose zeal and activity, operating upon the depraved hearts of men, who must have some religion, but hate the true one, can alone account for its extraordinary success. It is described by the Apostle Paul in the following remarkable words (1 Tim 4:1-3): "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth". The first verse gives a general description of an apostasy from the faith, under which men would yield to the influence of deceitful spirits and doctrines of devils, or rather doctrines concerning demons — that is, dead men made objects of worship; and Popery is certainly, if there be any meaning in words, or a possibility of ascertaining God's will from the Bible, a deviation from the faith once delivered to the saints, in the production and diffusion of which many deceitful spirits were actively engaged, and one leading feature of which was the introduction, in imitation of Paganism, of demons, or dead men to share in the honour and worship due to God alone

To identify this apostasy still more decidedly with Popery, the third verse specifies two of its particular features — namely, the prohibition of marriage and of meats — well known to be characteristic of the Church of Rome; and these are selected, as an old writer well observes, "not because they are the worst, but the most palpable — not because they are the most impious, but the most easily recognised". . . .

A full and minute prediction of the Popish system is to be found in 2 Thess 2:3-13 — a passage which should be carefully studied by all who wish to understand what Popery is. Every particular mentioned in these verses has been fulfilled in the doctrines and practices of the Church of Rome; but at present we wish specially to notice the account given here of the means by which it was to gain an influence in the world. First, it is directly ascribed to the working of Satan, and the influence of signs and lying wonders. The system is characterised as a mystery of iniquity, which was displaying itself even in the Apostles' days — a statement which warrants us to expect in its

fuller development an incalculable amount of villainy, and to discover more wickedness the more fully we become acquainted with its secret workings. Its progress is to be marked by all deceivableness of unrighteousness; that is, by every species of fraud, fitted and intended to deceive men. The conduct of its miserable victims is described as a strong delusion, leading them to believe lies. All these predictions are fulfilled in the history of the Church of Rome; and if it be indeed the Popish system which the apostle here describes under the designation of the Man of Sin and Son of Perdition — which cannot reasonably be doubted — then the Word of God expressly warrants us to expect, in the conduct of those who are engaged in promoting the cause of Popery, every kind and degree of iniquity, fitted and intended to deceive; to cherish the strongest abhorrence of the system, and the deepest commiseration for its wretched victims; and to employ the strongest language in denouncing it.

It is of great importance that Protestants should form their views of Popery from the Word of God, that thus they may be guided to feel and act aright in regard to it, and to those who are under its sway

We shall now give a few illustrations of the deceivableness of unrighteousness that has been exhibited by Papists in order to secure the subjection of the Christian world to the Bishop of Rome; and these shall be drawn, not from isolated facts, or from the minor peculiarities of the Popish Church, but from her conduct in regard to her authorised standards, which determine and mark out the main features of her character.

1. Every Popish priest swears, at his ordination, that “he will never interpret Scripture except according to the unanimous consent of the fathers”; an oath which it is impossible to keep, except by abstaining wholly from interpreting the Bible. They profess to find all the peculiar doctrines of Popery in the writings of the early fathers. That they cannot derive effectual support from this quarter, even if the opinions of these fathers were to be admitted as authoritative, has been fully established by Protestant divines; but in order to get some appearance of support for their heresies and corruptions in the works of primitive writers, they have deliberately and extensively corrupted them

2. Every Popish priest is sworn to maintain every doctrine defined by the General Councils and Sacred Canons. The earlier councils, however, could not be allowed to speak for themselves, without injuring the cause of the Church of Rome, and therefore they have been extensively corrupted by a series of the most extraordinary forgeries Comber, Dean of Durham proves that, in the authorised editions of the Councils there are inserted

the accounts of councils which never assembled, or which never issued the canons ascribed to them — that the canons of some real councils are altogether suppressed, and that in many more cases they are extensively corrupted by mutilations and additions, all directed to the object of supporting the claims of the Church of Rome.

3. The Sacred Canons, to which every Popish priest is sworn to adhere, are taken, to a considerable extent, from the Decretal Epistles of the Popes. Now, what are these? They are a series of letters, ushered into the world, by the Church of Rome, about the year 800, professing to be written by the Popes (nearly forty in number) from the time of Clement, the immediate successor of the Apostles, down to Siricius, who lived about the end of the fourth century, and containing statements in which many of the doctrines and practices of Popery are approved of, and in which these Popes assumed to themselves, upon the ground of divine and apostolic authority, absolute supremacy — the most extensive jurisdiction which the most insolent Pontiffs have ever claimed. Of course, they are forgeries; and yet they were constantly cited for about 700 years by councils, and by the Popes and their champions, to justify the usurpations and defend the corruptions of the Church of Rome — to determine causes, and to decide controversies in religion. The forgery, however, was so gross and clumsy, that it could not stand the light which the Reformation introduced, and it is now acknowledged by all learned Papists.

4. Another illustration of the deceivableness of unrighteousness which the Church of Rome has always exhibited, may be found in the legends, especially in regard to false miracles, which she invented and published to deceive men, and promote her great object. Signs and lying wonders are expressly mentioned in Scripture as one of the means by which Popery was to be propagated in the world, and every one acquainted with history must know that this prediction was fully verified Besides, to a certain extent, these legends and miracles have received the sanction of the Church of Rome in such a way that she must bear the responsibility of them

The Church of Rome claiming infallibility is, of course, unchangeable in all matters of faith and practice. While her friends among pseudo-Protestants claim for her the credit of having changed, and while she is very willing to enjoy the benefit of this allegation, she is bound in consistency to maintain that it is unfounded. But it is very easy to prove that many of her principal defenders, with the concurrence or connivance of her highest authorities, have given erroneous and fraudulent, as well as contradictory, accounts of her doctrines, according as seemed to suit best the age or the country for

which they were intended The great standard of Popish doctrine is the Council of Trent, to all whose canons and decrees every Popish priest is solemnly sworn to adhere. This council was assembled in 1545, and continued, with various prorogations, till 1563 and it certainly affords an interesting indication of the character of the Church of Rome, that the formation of the infallible standard of her doctrines should have been accompanied and influenced by such a mass of fraud and iniquity as was exhibited at Trent

The unchangeable principles of Popery provide distinctly and expressly for giving to fellow-sinners lordship over the conscience, which is the prerogative of God alone; and the whole history of the Church of Rome affords ground to fear that she will exercise this lordship whenever she can. It is one of the leading characters given of the Church of Rome in the Word of God, that she is drunk with the blood of the saints; and there is good reason to believe (Rev 18) that her intolerant and persecuting spirit will continue until her final destruction. . . . So lately as 1832 the present Pope in his *Encyclical Letter to all Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops, and Bishops*, denounced, in the strongest language, the liberty of the press and liberty of conscience It is an interesting fact that the Protestants of New York, in order to counteract the exertions of Papists in glossing over and concealing all the offensive features of the system, have taken the strong step of republishing there, in 1834, the Rhemish Testament, with the original annotations in all their purity, and free from those omissions and modifications which Papists have introduced into them to adapt them to modern times The reason they assign for taking upon themselves the responsibility of publishing such a mass of heresy, falsehood and intolerance, as the original Rhemish Notes contain, is this, "that the American people, and particularly the Churches of Christ in the United States, until *recently*, have displayed a morbid incredulity in reference to the Papal system, and an almost settled determination not to be convinced of the damnable heresies and soul-killing abominations of Popery" There is the less reason why we should take our view of the meaning of the standards of the Romish Church from individuals or bodies of men among Papists, because, in regard to the Decrees of the Council of Trent, which may be considered as the chief part of their authorised standards, all ecclesiastics, even bishops, are forbidden, as has been already observed, by the bull of Pius IV to publish any sort of interpretation of them, under the penalty of the "wrath of Almighty God, and His blessed Apostles Peter and Paul"

The subjects of dispute between Papists and Protestants extend over the

whole field of divine revelation. In almost every department of Scriptural truth, with regard either to doctrine or duty, there is some Popish heresy or corruption which should be refuted and exposed. A mere inspection of the works of the systematic divines who flourished soon after the Reformation establishes the truth of this position.

John Welsh

7. Banishment

SENTENCE on the prisoners was deferred until the King had been consulted. The next day they returned to Blackness. They were accompanied as far as the Castle by six of their brethren, including the two Melvilles. It is James Melville who records the parting scene: "At Blackness, with thanksgivings, prayers and many tears, divers of the brethren of the ministry left them, gladder and more confirmed in the cause than ever before, rejoicing greatly that God by this action had cleared the case to the knowledge and conscience of all men more than before, and that He had honoured His servants with a plain and constant testimony given thereto". At least the prisoners had not been sent to Huntingtower, near Perth, where they would be in the even more severe keeping of Lord Scoone. When that proposal was made at the Privy Council, one of the lords objected. Enough rigour had been used already without any cause, he declared, and therefore it were good to use no more.

Sustained as he was at this time by the grace of God, even although expecting the sentence of death, Welsh wrote to the Countess of Wigton, a thoroughly godly woman who was a daughter of the third Earl of Montrose, and so a member of a family not noted for its support for true religion. "My desire to remain here is not great," Welsh told her, "knowing that so long as I am in this home of clay I am absent from God; and if it were dissolved I look for a building not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. . . . I long to eat of the fruit of that tree which is planted in the midst of the paradise of God, and to drink of the pure river, clear as crystal, that runs through the street of the New Jerusalem. . . . Why should I think it a strange thing to be removed from this place to that wherein my hope, my joy, my crown, my Elder Brother, my Head, my Father, my Comforter and all the glorified saints are, and where the song of Moses and of the Lamb is sung joyfully, where we shall not be compelled to sit by the rivers of Babylon and to hang up our harps on the willow trees, but shall take them up and sing the new

Hallelujah: Blessing, honour, glory and power to Him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever?

"Continue, I pray you, as you have begun, in wrestling with the Lord for me that Christ may be magnified in my mortal body whether living or dead, that my soul may be lifted up to the third heavens, that I may taste of those joys that are at the right hand of my heavenly Father, and that with gladness I may let my spirit go thither where my body shall shortly follow. Who am I that He should first have called me, and then constituted me a minister of the glad tidings of salvation these 16 years already, and now last of all to be a sufferer for His cause and kingdom?"

On January 22 the King wrote to the Council instructing them to proceed with the trial of the ministers imprisoned elsewhere. He stated his opinion that it should not be difficult to obtain their conviction also, especially if the jury was chosen more carefully! Only afterwards would he show his mind on the sentence to be passed on those already convicted. The Council were not so sure of finding a suitable jury; indeed they believed it would be impossible to find a body of men who would be prepared to convict those other ministers. Perhaps more importantly, they were afraid of public reaction if the trial went ahead, and it never did. The Council even asked the King to show some favour to those already convicted. But at the same time they issued a proclamation forbidding everyone, under the pain of death, to find fault with what had been done against Welsh and his brethren.

In May, Welsh and Forbes were brought to Edinburgh Castle so that they could appear as witnesses in the trial of Seton, Chancellor of Scotland. Charges had been brought by Archbishop Spottiswood, who suspected, probably correctly, that Seton was privately opposed to the establishment of Episcopacy. Seton was in due course acquitted, and Welsh was not in fact called to give evidence because of Seton's influence with the Earl of Dunbar; Welsh's evidence would have been against Seton's interest. For some months Welsh was able to enjoy easier conditions than in Blackness; possibly the reason was that the governor of Edinburgh Castle at the time was his wife's cousin. Welsh had freedom to go where he wished within the bounds of the Castle and could receive visitors at will, his wife especially taking the opportunity to be with him.

After keeping Welsh and his five fellow-ministers waiting for over eight months in the expectation of being sentenced to death, the King at last wrote to the Privy Council to declare his mind: "We have of our wonted clemency", began the King in terms which he himself could scarcely have thought sincere, "upon that respect only, spared to inflict the rigour of the

law at this time, it being our will and pleasure that our Lord Justice or his deutes should appoint and affix a Justice Court to be kept at Linlithgow, or any other place that you shall think expedient, upon the 23rd day of October next to come, and there cause sentence to be given out against the said traitors, to be banished out of all our dominions during all the days of their natural lives, upon pain of death; and the sentence being pronounced, our will and pleasure is that they be taken back to prison, there to remain by the space of one month, to prepare themselves for their departure; before the expiry whereof, if they do not depart, wind and weather serving, our will and pleasure is that the ordinary death usually inflicted upon traitors be directed to be executed upon them; and if they shall not depart within the said space, or being departed, shall return into our dominions without our licence, they shall incur the pain of death and all other pains due to persons convicted of treason". Some clemency!

Sentence of banishment was duly passed by the court against Welsh and his five fellow-prisoners. Eight other ministers were banished at the same time, but without trial, to distant parts of Scotland, including the islands of Arran, Lewis, Orkney and Shetland. The prisoners in Blackness were not in the end given the promised month to settle their affairs, but were hustled out of the kingdom after a fortnight, when they set sail for France. This was a country which endured much persecution, and a persecution which was eventually to succeed in almost wiping out the Protestant Church, but in 1606 the Church there was flourishing, following the signing of the Edict of Nantes in 1598. Welsh and the others would have chosen France as most likely to offer opportunities for usefulness; after all, many Scottish ministers were already there before them as pastors or as teachers of theology. And there was the great blessing that the Church in France was organised on Presbyterian lines.

On the morning of 6 November 1606 they left their prison and arrived, along with their wives and some other close friends, at the pier in Leith, where a considerable crowd was waiting to bid them farewell. After Welsh had offered up an earnest, solemn prayer, they embarked in a small boat, which carried them out to the ship chartered by the Government to carry them to Bordeaux to begin their exile. Because the captain was not ready to sail, the ministers had the opportunity to go ashore again. This saved them from an unpleasant evening when the wind rose, forcing the ship to run for shelter to the other side of the Firth of Forth. It was perhaps at some risk to his future comfort that John Murray, a local minister, entertained his brethren that evening, especially as he had already offended the bishops by his faithfulness.

When the wind dropped and became favourable for sailing, the ministers were called for. Even although it was now 2 am, an even larger crowd had gathered to see them off. Welsh again prayed, and from the boat he preached what was to be his last sermon in Scotland, exhorting his hearers to hold fast the doctrine which he had taught. As the boat moved off into the dark night the ministers sang Psalm 23 so "that both the courage and joy they had in God might be manifest to all". Someone who was present wrote to James Melville reflecting on the scene: "Blessed be God, who made that action glorious and graced them in the hearts and eyes of all that looked on them, and grant me grace on my part never to forget it."

In due course the vessel was sailing through the Bay of Biscay before making her way into the port of Bordeaux. Within a few weeks Welsh had begun to learn French. And, as he told his fellow-exile Robert Boyd, who was then Professor of Theology in the University of Saumur, he did so "desiring and thirsting for no other thing under heaven, but that I may be fruitfully, with comfort, employed in (God's) work after the manner, and in the place and part where the only wise God has appointed and decreed that I may serve most for His honour in the advancement of His kingdom, being willing to submit to whatever state and condition might serve thereunto".

Being removed from the scene of his previous success in the gospel must have brought its own share of sadness, besides a degree of home-sickness, especially till his wife and family arrived from Scotland six months later. And he mourned to Boyd over "my unprofitableness now, standing as it were idle, and the Master of the vineyard as yet not having hired me to work in the same here in this country". And again: Preaching "is my principal desire, and I should be content with mean things, food and raiment in great simplicity, with the liberty of such an opportunity". But within only 17 weeks of arriving in Bordeaux Welsh was sufficiently fluent to be able to preach in French, "with some comfort and blessing," he told Robert Boyd, and added, "I thank my God in Jesus Christ". Apparently in his exposition of the text and in preaching doctrine his French was excellent for a beginner, but when Welsh turned to application, becoming more earnest and speaking faster, the accuracy with which he used the language deteriorated. His solution was to arrange with someone to stand up in his seat when he needed to take more care; he was anxious, not only to be Scriptural in what he had to put across to the people, but also to say it well.

A visit to Boyd at Saumur in early 1607, and lasting several weeks, gave Welsh real pleasure, and doubtless Boyd also, for they were, both of them, strangers in a strange land. Welsh wrote soon afterwards to Boyd about "the

comfort I had in communion with you, with whom I durst pour out the distresses of my troubled soul, the which was unto me no small ease and consolation". It was a friendship that was to last till Welsh died though, after Boyd's return to Scotland in 1614, correspondence between them was much more difficult. From Saumur Welsh went to La Rochelle, less than 100 miles away, for a meeting of the National Synod of the Reformed Church of France; four of his fellow-exiles were also present. They were introduced to the Synod and invited to be present throughout its deliberations.

It must also have given great satisfaction to Welsh to see at least 30 of his parishoners from Ayr arrive at La Rochelle during his stay there. It was a tremendous display of their respect and attention for so many of them to make what was then such a long and tedious journey. And before they left they had a last sermon from their former minister, preached in the College of La Rochelle, a sermon which was attended by over 100 others; these included some Englishmen, and others who could understand English, among them some members of the Synod. Welsh's visitors brought with them a pile of letters from his friends in Scotland, including "sundry faithful godly brethren" in the ministry. His words to Boyd soon afterwards were doubtless a description of his own reaction to events in Scotland, which since his departure had continued to follow the same downward track as before: "These letters are written with such holy grief and dolour as would break the strongest hearts that ever had the meanest grain weight of true compassion left them".

Welsh hoped that his attendance at the Synod would lead to some opening for him to serve the Church in France, but nothing came of it. Yet he found peace in thinking of the supreme providence of God. Welsh left La Rochelle for Bordeaux some days before the end of the Synod without being any nearer to a permanent position. Though obviously very disappointed he was able to write, "When I look to my Lord I have full rest and contentment, and yet in regard to myself I have not found that which I would have looked for".

It seems, however, that after he left La Rochelle, the Synod proposed that Welsh be appointed to the church of Pons, but for some reason now unknown he did not accept the offer. He was also at some stage offered the chair of theology at the college in Dijon, but he did not feel able to accept it. He was still waiting for his wife and family, and Dijon was too far from the coast. Besides, his health was still poor. Welsh was considered for the chair of theology in La Rochelle, but it was another Scotsman who was appointed, possibly because the ecclesiastical authorities were afraid to offend King James, whom they regarded as a protector of Protestants. It is clear too that

the English ambassador did his best to spread a view of Scottish Church affairs which was favourable to his King, and this may well have created a prejudice against Welsh. Welsh's ruling passion was that the Lord would open a door to him to preach Christ. He regarded preaching as his proper calling and gift, and he considered the teaching of theology as very much a secondary activity.

KDM

(To be continued)

We judge of things by their present appearances, but the Lord sees them in their consequences; if we could do so likewise, we should be perfectly of His mind; but as we cannot, it is an unspeakable mercy that He will manage for us, whether we are pleased with His management or not; and it is spoken of as one of His heaviest judgements, when He gives any person or people up to the way of their own hearts, and to walk after their own counsels.

Our gracious Lord is long-suffering and full of compassion; He bears with our frowardness, yet He will take methods both to shame and to humble us, and to bring us to a confession that He is wiser than we. The great and unexpected benefit He intends us, by all the discipline we meet with, is to tread down our wills, and bring them into subjection to His. So far as we can attain to this, we are out of the reach of disappointment.

O how shall we then admire, adore and praise Him, when He shall condescend to unfold to us the beauty, propriety and harmony of the whole train of His dispensations toward us, and give us a clear retrospect of all the way and all the turns of our pilgrimage!

This is no small part of the growth in grace which you are thirsting after, to be truly humbled, and emptied, and made little in your own eyes.

Our holiness . . . consists . . . in spiritual desires, in hungerings, thirstings and mournings; in humiliation of heart, poverty of spirit, submission, meekness; in cordial admiring thoughts of Jesus, and dependence upon Him alone for all we want.

John Newton

Mission News

It was very good news to hear that the rains in Zimbabwe have been plentiful this year. Several years of drought or of near-drought have been a severe drain on the people's resources. It is a matter for much thankfulness to the Lord that the rain is plentiful.

Marion Graham writes: "On my way to school recently I was reminded of verses in the Song of Solomon, chapter 2, not because 'the rain is over and gone', but because the rain has come and 'the time of the singing of birds has come, and the voice of the turtle (dove) is heard in our land.' The beautiful little weaver birds are busy looking for grasses to make their amazing ball-like nests, which they build or weave round a branch." Doves are also to be heard and many other birds and small creatures are rejoicing at the sound of rain.

Despite the rejoicing over the rain and the joyful hastening of the people to plough and plant, it has been a sad time at the Mission. I quote from Marion: "First of all there was the death of the late David Ndlovu, who was the works manager, church elder and local missionary, and exceptional in his devotion to the Lord's work. He had been unwell for a period of years but had kept on working until a few days before he died."

Then our foreman builder and general workman, Ndaba, who had worked with David for a period of almost 30 years, passed away last month after a few months' illness. His death was a great shock. Ndaba had a sad life in many ways, having lost more than one of his family by death. Ten days before Ndaba's death our painter Mlilo, who was a former pupil at Ingwenya and well-known to all, was the victim of a hit-and-run accident. He died 24 hours after being knocked off his bicycle by a pick-up truck carrying a heavy iron pole. Everyone knew Mlilo as a perfectionist in his work, and there was an amusing eccentricity about him in that he insisted on making up his bills in pounds and shillings despite the fact that dollars and cents had been in use for over 20 years. The faithful service of both these men was much appreciated.

I quote again from Marion's letter: "You will remember that Mr James Mpofu, who had been our boarding master for many years, retired in September and took over the late David Ndlovu's work. As Mr Mpofu was already older than David was when he passed away, he has taken on a strenuous commission and he could do with an understudy to take over when the time is appropriate." As Marion says, they will miss Mr Mpofu's influence and support, and his skill with the singing class he had in the

boarding school. Marion refers to the gratitude of herself and the staff at the provision made in the appointment of Mr Dame Sibanda as boarding master at the school. Marion asks for the prayers of the Lord's people that he would be made a true witness for Christ, and that his family may show how a Christian family should behave. She hopes that he will stand up to the stress and strain of having such a large family of young folk under his care.

We rarely give news of New Canaan, where Rev and Mrs Z Mazvabo and family have their home and where Mr Mazvabo and his church office-bearers care for the spiritual needs of eight congregations. The drought was always particularly severe in that part of the country and the people suffered greatly. One reason why news does not come so readily from New Canaan is that their Mission lies almost 200 miles east of Bulawayo among the Shona people, whereas the other stations, such as Mbuma, Zenka and Nkai lie 200 miles to the west of Bulawayo. In addition, Mr Mazvabo suffers from failing eyesight. He makes use of the Authorised Version of the Bible on tape and has a driver to take him around his parishoners. His wife also drives.

But this undoubted trial reminds one of an illustration used by Mr Mazvabo while preaching in Edinburgh some years ago when he and the Rev Alfred Mpofo were studying in Glasgow. The illustration was to show the tender mercies of the Lord to His people when they are suffering from trials and afflictions. I quote from memory: "In our country", Mr Mazvabo said, "we do not have water piped to our homes except in the towns. In the country districts the mother of the home with her daughters is responsible for fetching water from the nearest well. She usually carries a four-gallon tin on her head and the grown-up daughters do the same, but the younger girls have smaller tins. The smallest little girl may have a tin no bigger than a jam tin, but each is bearing her share. So the Lord deals with His people. He gives them trials of different kinds, but He gives grace and strength according to what they are able to bear, and according to His own gracious purposes and His tender love for them."

J.N.

Is not God the Father of all who abide under His shadow? Is not Jesus Christ their elder Brother? Are they not all adopted into one family? Have they not all one Spirit?

If God was highly and justly offended with those who despised His law made known by Moses, must He not be greatly provoked by those who despise His grace revealed to men by and through His Son?

W S Plumer

Book Reviews

Biblical Worship by Kevin Reed, 80 pages, Presbyterian Heritage Publications; £2.95 from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom.

This excellent booklet is easily read and shows the importance of worshipping God according to His Word. It is divided roughly in two, using examples out of the Old and New Testaments. Showing for instance "that tabernacle worship was not the invention of Moses, it was built according to a divine blueprint," Kevin Reed says in the section *The Precepts of the Law* that "all forms of worship must have express Scriptural warrant, if they are to be admitted as legitimate means of worship".

In regard to Aaron making the golden calf he quotes a modern writer who says, "Aaron made a golden calf (that is, a bull image). It was meant as a visible symbol of Jehovah, the mighty God who had brought Israel out of Egypt. No doubt the image was thought to honour Him, as being a fitting symbol of His great strength. But it is not hard to see that such a symbol in fact insults Him: for what idea of His moral character, His righteousness, goodness and patience, could one gather from looking at a statue of Him as a bull? Thus Aaron's image hid Jehovah's glory. In a similar way, the pathos of the crucifix obscures the glory of Christ, for it hides the fact of His deity, His victory on the cross, and His divine strength, it depicts the reality of His pain, but keeps out of our sight the reality of His joy and power. In both these cases the symbol is unworthy most of all because of what it fails to display."

Reed then goes on to mention the different kings of Israel who claimed "good intentions" as an excuse for worship which God had not sanctioned. In the summary on the Old Testament, Reed says, "God has prescribed the proper way of worship: He has furnished a "divine pattern" — a "due order" for worship. Since mankind has an inherent tendency to corrupt worship, we need divine instructions if our worship is to be acceptable unto God. Therefore, proper worship is restricted exclusively to the means ordained by God."

Again: "With respect to reformation, we observe that genuine reform in the Old Testament included the following components: 1. Repentance and confession of sin. 2. Restoration of the word of God to a preeminent position. 3. Restoration of the outward ordinances established by God, including the proper place of worship, the proper priesthood, and the Levitical ceremonies. 4. Renewal of covenant obligations. 5. Removal of the implements of superstitious, false and corrupt worship."

Dealing with worship in the New Testament, he points out how Christ answered Satan with "It is written" and how Christ confronted the scribes and Pharisees with their traditions, which they set above the laws of God. Further on, Reed deals with *Disputed Aspects of Worship* and concludes this excellent booklet by saying that "all of our worship should possess two preeminent characteristics: 1. We must come to the Lord with sincere hearts filled with love for Him. 2. We must worship God using only the means established in His word."

D Vermeulen

Gleanings from Thomas Watson, hardback, 156 pages, *Soli Deo Gloria*, £9.50 from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom.

Watson has always been noted for his graphic style as well as for the solid spiritual quality of his writing. Here is a volume first published in 1918 giving short extracts from his other books. These extracts are very rarely longer than a page — of large type — and most are much shorter. They are collected under headings such as *Warnings, Contentment, Temptation and Praying*. The final chapter is a series of very short *Fragments*. Watson can always be recommended, and this book is no exception, but readers would do well to attempt some more continuous reading as well as short pieces like this, excellent though they are.

KDM

Notes and Comments

The Succession to the Throne

Following some correspondence in the English Churchman about the succession to the British throne, the Clerk of the Northern Presbytery, Rev D M Boyd, wrote as follows. The Presbytery asked that the letter, which was printed in the English Churchman of December 8 & 15, be sent to The Free Presbyterian Magazine.

Following the discussion in your columns about the eligibility of the Prince of Wales to succeed to the throne on account of his adultery, it is more relevant to speak about his fraternising with Roman Catholicism.

Whatever precedents there may be for adulterers to succeed to the throne, the Bill of Rights is quite clear about the subject of fraternising with Rome. The Bill of Rights states:

"... all and every person and persons that is, are, or shall be reconciled to, or shall hold communion with the see or Church of Rome, ... shall be excluded and be for ever incapable to inherit, possess or enjoy the crown and government of this realm ... or to have, use, or exercise any regal power, authority or jurisdiction within the same".

A recent statement from Buckingham Palace stated: "The Queen does not attend Catholic Mass for constitutional reasons." Yet we know that Prince Charles attended a Roman mass at Kirkby Stephen some years ago, and that he wishes to be reconciled to Rome.

We also hear that the Princess of Wales is thinking of being reconciled to Rome. Although the Prime Minister stated in the House of Commons that the marital situation of the Prince and Princess of Wales did not bar the Princess of Wales becoming Queen, yet there has been no comment on her constitutional position if she becomes a Roman Catholic. However, the Bill of Rights is quite clear on the matter.

Further, the Bill of Rights is a contract with the whole people of the realm, not easily overthrown by the unilateral wishes of the Prince or Princess of Wales. The Bill of Rights goes on to say:

" . . . and in all and every such case or cases the people of these realms shall be and are hereby absolved of their allegiance; and the said crown and government shall from time to time descend to and be enjoyed by such person or persons being Protestants as should have inherited and enjoyed the same in case the said person or persons so reconciled . . . were naturally dead".

The Royal Family

The Queen's request to the Princess of Wales that she begin divorce proceedings highlights again the sad position of the British royal family. Given the confessed adultery of both parties, we do not object to the divorce, though it would be unscriptural for either of them to remarry. But we are left with serious questions. First, is someone who has broken his marriage vows suitable for the office of king? For Prince Charles has demonstrated that he cannot be relied on to keep solemn commitments: those he made to his wife in the presence, not only of thousands of human witnesses, but of God Himself.

Can we then expect Prince Charles to keep his vows as king, and to respect, in particular, the vow to uphold the Protestant religion? In any case, will he be willing even to take the Coronation Oath as it presently stands? It was not for nothing that the oath was framed in its present form. A generation that forgets its history deserves to fall into disasters that could be avoided by heeding the lessons painfully learned in the past. However, another question presses itself on us: Does a nation where adultery is so widespread, and so much condoned, deserve a better king?

It is perfectly obvious that the reputation of the Royal Family has declined over the past few years. It still holds true: "Them that honour Me I will

honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed". God has been conspicuously dishonoured even by the Queen herself, especially in attending multi-faith services, which deny the uniqueness of God, and most recently in attending a service in the Roman Catholic Westminster Cathedral. To have Cardinal Hume thank the Queen during that service for receiving "Pope John Paul II into your London home" in 1982 was to add insult to injury for her truly Protestant subjects. Sadly, the Queen herself has not been faithful to her vow to maintain the Protestant religion.

At the same time as the Queen has shown herself less and less faithful to the Protestant religion, the Royal Family and the institution of the monarchy have been steadily losing public esteem. The threads of providence are closely intertwined, and all are held in the hand of Him who is "a God that judgeth in the earth". Yet, however much the Queen, her family and most of her subjects have departed from the rather higher standards of the time of her coronation, just over 40 years ago, we have every reason to plead with a merciful God that He would return to the United Kingdom and bring both rulers and ruled to His footstool in repentance. How desperately we need it!

Archaeology and the Bible

Archaeology has long proved useful in providing information which is of some help in understanding the background to the Bible. But how far can archaeology actually take us? Recently *Time* magazine ran a cover article with the title, *Is the Bible Fact or Fiction?* On the front cover was the further description, "Archaeologists in the Holy Land are shedding new light on tales of the Scriptures and what did — and didn't — actually happen". The writer of the article has been bold enough to set himself up as a judge of the truth of the narratives of Scripture.

He does have some interesting findings to report from recent archaeological digs. For instance: in 1979 an Israeli archaeologist found two tiny silver scrolls inside a tomb in Jerusalem. They are assumed to date from 600 BC. When they were unrolled, a benediction from Numbers was found etched into their surfaces. The writer concludes, "The discovery made it clear that parts of the Old Testament were being copied long before some sceptics had believed they were written". Then in 1986 scholars identified an ancient seal that belonged to Baruch the son of Neriah, who was Jeremiah's scribe. Another seal belonged to Jerahmeel, who was sent to arrest Jeremiah and Baruch. Therefore, scholars conclude, Baruch and Jerahmeel actually existed; they accept that the Bible has been proved true in these details. David too is accepted as a figure of history. In 1993 an inscription was found containing the phrases *House of David* and *King of Israel*. The writing

describes the victory of a neighbouring king over the Israelites, and is thought to date from the ninth century BC, about a century after David's reign. *Time* comments, "The sceptics' claim that David never existed is now hard to defend".

Quite so. But we must not fall into the trap of thinking that archaeology can ever *prove* the Bible true. All it can do is give some supporting evidence confirming the truth of the Bible. God is speaking in the Bible; for man to attempt to prove that what God says is true is even more ridiculous than a fly refusing to accept the truth of Pythagoras' Theorem unless it could work it out for itself. What is the right attitude? It is to note that in the Bible "the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is, to give glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God: yet, notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts" (*Westminster Confession of Faith* 1:5).

One danger in relying on the findings of archaeology to prove the Bible true is that our assurance of the truth of the whole Bible is at once weakened if a *particular* finding from archaeological research later proves to have been in error. If we depend on archaeology we can only be sure of those parts of the Bible which have actually been confirmed by archaeology. But there is no such proof of the existence of other great men of faith like Abraham, Moses and Joshua. *Time* accordingly declares, "Years of searching have convinced all but the most conservative experts that Abraham and the rest of the Patriarchs were inventions of the Bible's authors". It would seem that the attitudes of the majority of experts are as much in touch with reality as someone who says about a present-day event, "It didn't happen because I didn't see it".

Unbelieving experts give to archaeological data, and more significantly, to the interpretation of archaeological data, an authority which they do not have. It is through faith, the Bible tells us, that "we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God" (Heb 11:3) — by faith in the *facts of divine revelation*. It is by faith also that we are to believe in the existence of Abraham, Moses, Joshua and all the other Bible characters. If the archaeological data have been rightly interpreted — and, who knows, there might have been more than one Baruch, son of Neriah — there is external

confirmation of the existence of Baruch, David and others. But, whatever archaeology can tell us, we still need a divine revelation so that we can know, for example, the purpose of Christ Jesus coming into the world. Much more might have been written, but the great purpose of revealing to us the great facts recorded in Scripture, and about the life of Christ in particular, is "that (we) might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing (we) might have life through His name" (John 20:31).

This is not to deny the uses of archaeology, just to try and show its limitations. If archaeology had been taken more seriously in some quarters, many of the wilder speculations of higher criticism in this century would never have been entertained. Certainly nobody today would think of stating, as was done with great authority during the last century, that Moses could not write!

Fundamentalism

Surely the most crass of comments on the tragic death of the Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzak Rabin, was that of the Archbishop of Canterbury when he described the killing as a "reminder how demonic religion can become when it is perverted by hatred and fundamentalism". Dr Carey knows perfectly well that he is lumping together Protestants who believe in the absolute authority of the Scriptures, with the most extreme terrorists, to the disparagement of the former. This is totally unworthy of someone who has subscribed the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, and has his roots in some form of evangelicalism.

Certainly Fundamentalism would not be our preferred term to describe the position we hold, because of its associations with Arminianism. But what is most despised in Fundamentalism by the world outside is something we would wish unflinchingly to hold to — the absolute truth of what we believe. And we hold to it because we are bound to the perfectly reliable revelation God has given in the Bible, and only in the Bible. The (Protestant) Fundamentalist movement in America had its roots in the publication in 1910 of a series of 12 free booklets entitled *The Fundamentals*, which were intended to set out the orthodox position on a number of basic Scriptural doctrines in the face of modernism. The series also included material written to oppose Romanism, the cults and the theory of evolution. The image of Fundamentalism suffered from the way an unsympathetic press portrayed the famous Scopes trial in 1925 when the defeated Democratic Presidential candidate of the previous year, William Jennings Bryan, was involved in the prosecution of a John Scopes who was, contrary to the law of Tennessee, teaching the theory of evolution in a state school. More recently the meaning

of the term Fundamentalism has been extended beyond Protestantism to cover any group who are definite in their beliefs — over against the fundamental belief of modern liberalism that no one can be sure of any system of values, though that belief is itself upheld with inconsistent determination. The Christian's fundamental position must be that God has spoken with absolute authority and with total accuracy in the Bible, whatever unbelievers may say in opposition, and that he is under absolute obligation to believe what God has said and to obey with wholeheartedness.

Slipping Away

Almost 40 years ago, in 1958, J I Packer first published his excellent book *Fundamentalism and the Word of God*. His downward course since then has given extreme cause for concern. Alarm bells were perhaps first set ringing furiously when he wrote, along with another Church of England evangelical and two Anglo-Catholics, the book *Growing into Union*. More recently this magazine noted his part as a signatory of the ecumenical document *Evangelicals and Catholics Together*. Sadder still is to read that he was among a group of prominent evangelicals who had a two-hour meeting with the Pope. Described as "very warm", the interview took place during the Pope's recent visit to the United States. The pity is that Dr Packer does not apply to himself his own commendation of Nehemiah in his recent book on that godly leader of the Jews after the captivity. A reviewer quotes Packer as commending "Nehemiah's zeal for truth and purity, and the consequent practice of discipline in the community". A genuine zeal for truth and purity in the twentieth century is inconsistent with fraternising with the Man of sin.

How much we all need to be kept from slipping away from what is right!

Crusade Evangelism

After 50 years as a preacher, Billy Graham, now 77 and suffering from Parkinson's disease, has nominated his son Franklin as his successor as leader of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. This is a massive organisation with an income of \$88 million dollars in 1994. Crusade evangelism requires enormous organisation and huge sums of money, especially when crusades are transmitted by satellite to audiences throughout the world. And there are results. Billy Graham's most recent crusade, in the Californian capital of Sacramento, produced 11 483 "commitments", 6.5% of those who attended over five days. But, even apart from the erroneous doctrine he preaches, the other goings-on do not inspire confidence in the quality of the results. "Musical and drama groups rotated different acts on each stage", reports *Christianity Today*. "Sometimes groups on each stage performed simultaneous songs or skits."

The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association is just one of a multitude of organisations proclaiming a false gospel by worldly means. And according to current trends no change of leadership is going to change the modern evangelistic scene. Billy Graham prides himself on his unwillingness to engage in controversy. "I would soon become so embroiled that the effectiveness of this ministry would cease. . . . I am reminded of Nehemiah's answer to his critics, 'I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down; why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?'" He may not wish to listen to his critics when they point out the danger of preaching a false doctrine of conversion, and of sending back to their own churches those who have made "commitments", be they Roman Catholic or liberal Protestant, but he should listen to the Word of God. After all, he has said, "When God calls us, we are to remain faithful". Today the evangelical world accepts that the Bible does have authority, but there is a conspicuous unwillingness to submit completely to the Bible - in doctrine and worship and practice. And it is a specially dangerous matter, not by any means confined to crusade evangelism, to give people the impression they are converted, although there has been no change of heart, and the change in the outward life is purely superficial.

KDM

Church Information

Free Presbyterian Publications

Sales of *The Westminster Confession of Faith* continue to be encouraging. So much so that the hardback edition had to be reprinted at the end of last year after only some eighteen months. It is now available with a genuine cloth binding at £12.50. The printing in 1994 included a quantity bound in paperback (still available at £6.95) and used the edition of S W Carruthers earlier this century. Following the work of his father and B B Warfield, Carruthers devoted considerable effort to ascertaining the original text of the Confession of Faith, free from the misprints which had crept into successive editions over the years. A reprint of the booklet edition has also become necessary and should be available (at £1.50) before this issue of the magazine appears. It has been reset and now contains all the Scripture references.

It is hoped that a new biography of Rev J B Radasi, the founder of the Free Presbyterian Mission in Zimbabwe, by Miss Jean Nicolson, will appear during the spring, DV. Miss Nicolson herself spent many useful years on the Mission in Zimbabwe, and has written the book with young people especially in mind. A reprint of the book for young children, *The Peep of Day*, is also planned.

Other forthcoming titles include Alexander Stewart's excellent book on the types and sacrifices of the old testament, *The Tree of Promise*. A significant new biographical introduction is being prepared for it by Mr Roy Middleton. Also under preparation is a collection of the writings of the late Rev Donald Beaton.

Committee Meetings

These will meet in Inverness Free Presbyterian Church as follows (DV):

Tuesday, March 19

9.00 am - 11.00 am	Religion and Morals Committee
11.00 am - 1.00 pm	Foreign Mission Committee
2.00 pm - 3.30 pm	Welfare of Youth Committee
2.00 pm - 5.00 pm	Finance Committee
5.00 pm - 6.00 pm	Sabbath Observance Committee
5.00 pm - 6.00 pm	Outreach Committee
6.30 pm - 8.00 pm	Publications Committee
7.00 pm - 8.30 pm	Dominions and Overseas Committee
8.00 pm - 9.30 pm	Bookroom Committee

Wednesday, March 20

9.00 am - 10.00 am	Magazines Committee
10.00 am - 11.30 am	Training of the Ministry Committee
11.30 am - 1.00 pm	Church Interests Committee

Acknowledgement of Donations

The General Treasurer acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:

Bookroom Fund: Lewis postmark £17.50 per MM.

Eastern Europe Fund: South Harris £50.

Congregational treasurers acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:

Assynt: Sustentation Fund: Anon £50.

Dingwall: Manse expenses: Friend £100 per DM.

Edinburgh: Congregational funds: Anon, North Harris, £50 per RAC. Church Repair Fund: Ps 12:1 £100.

Glasgow: Congregational Fund: Anon £100, Harris friends £60, Mrs ML £30, CM £500; all per Rev DM; HG £20. Communion expenses: Anon per RAC £10, JC £25, Anon per DRM £10. Where most needed: SMD £46. Manse tel: £100. Hearing aid system: CM £25. Minibus exps: Mrs RMR £10. Bus fund: Anon £10 per Rev DM, £20, £10, £10. Tape Fund: Stornoway friends £40. Sponsor a blind child: Anon £100, £100. TBS: Anon £40, £40. Training of students & TBS: £40. Sustentation Fund: AN per Rev DM £40, Anon £45. Italian Mission: Anon £20. Eastern Europe £40. Eastern Europe & Africa: £80. Foreign Mission Fund: £10. Mozambique: Anon £40.

Inverness: Kenya Mission: Anon £50. Where most needed: Anon £40. Both per KAM. Sustentation Fund: Anon £20, £60, £80, £20, £100.

Staffin: Church painting: Friends £50.

Stornoway: Sustentation Fund: Miss K A Macleod, The Cottage, Callanish, £120, A friend £10, AM £10, all per Rev JM, C £100. Where most needed: A friend of the Cause per AML. Manse heating: Anon £200. Petrol: Anon £10. For congregational purposes: Mrs H (Sydney) \$(Aust)1000 per Rev JM.