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The Year's End

As another year is about to draw to a close it is a suitable time to reflect on the fleeting nature of time and on the use we are making of the time given to us. We are at present in a time state but soon, oh how soon, must time give place to eternity. For those who have reached middle life or have come to old age, as they look back on the years that have gone and think of so many whom they knew here but who are now inhabiting eternity, there comes an awareness that time is swiftly passing and the great eternity drawing near. How clear it is that the place which knows us now shall soon know us no more for ever. Yet how slow we are to lay it to heart.

Time hastens on, passing almost unnoticed. Moments swiftly fly. We are carried along inexorably on the wings of time. A moment passes and it is gone for ever, never to return until time shall be no more. Only then shall those moments of misspent time re-appear to be a swift witness against us at the day of judgment and to seal our eternal doom if we die impenitent. Misspent moments and hours and days and years will be the charge laid against many when they appear to give in their account.

As this year begins to close let us reflect and think back on the days and the years that are gone. How have we spent these years and days and moments of time? Have we to confess sadly that they have been spent in "seeking our own, and not the things that are Jesus Christ's?" If so, how solemnly we should reflect upon such a course of life. If I have to say that this has been my manner of life from my youth up, must I not ask myself whether this is going to be the manner of my life to the end of my days. Let each one reflect on this for himself or herself. Let each one address these questions to his own or her own soul — Must I go on as I have gone on hitherto? Is there any way of escape from a Christless and Godless and self-centred life? Is it possible that even so far along the course of time there is deliverance for such a sinner as I? After so many

misspent moments and hours and years, is it possible for such a one as I am to begin to live unto God?

Let us now look at the answer to such questions as these. To find the answer let us go to the 37th chapter of the prophecy of Ezekiel. There we find the same question put — Can these dry bones live? And what was the answer given? As well as the command to prophesy unto the dry bones, the answer was given in these terms — “Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.” Oh, what encouragement is here, poor needy sinner. Is there not here what will lift up your drooping spirits? In Christ there is salvation and by the breathing of His Spirit even your needy soul may live and in living “taste and see that God is good.” By faith in Christ’s Name, the closing days of this year may become the beginning of days to you and herald the approaching glory of that endless day of eternal bliss which has a beginning but knows no end.

Christ is All

by Dean Henry Law

24. THE SUMMARY

“These are the commandments, which the Lord commanded Moses for the children of Israel in Mount Sinai.” (Lev. xxvii. 34).

Leviticus thus ends. Bright is this jewel in the Bible-crown. This Book stands as a rich tree in a rich garden of delight. — Happy are they, who gather wisdom from its laden boughs!

These last words fall with solemn weight. They are the farewell of these pages. They seem to seat us on some height, whence we survey the traversed plain. They bring the whole into a narrow view. They bid us to cast back a parting glance, and count our gain before we onward move.

As we reflect, one truth is obvious. The main lesson of this Book is Christ. He is the light and lustre of each part. To read aright, is to walk up and down with Him. Have we thus found? Is He more deeply grafted in our hearts? Is He more closely shrined within our thoughts? Has He become the mainspring of our being? Have we no longer any mind but His? Christ is the juice — the life — the heart-blood of Leviticus. If it instruct not thus, the veil is on the reader’s mind. He gropes in darkness amid glorious rays.

He who sees Christ — the glory of this Book, sees quickly, that our God is love. The Son reveals the Father's heart. The gift proclaims the Giver. Here golden letters write God's name of love.

Hear it, O Earth. Let this bright sunbeam shine through every clime. Behold God's loving mercy in redemption's plan. He calls His Son to bear the sinner's sins. He lays all help upon a mighty helper. Such scheme is as a flood of grace bursting from springs of love. The first thought and the last is love. When then Leviticus exhibits Christ, it calls us to adore our God, as Love.

This Book, too, is a signal proof of God's desire to bless. Strong efforts are here made to break down ignorance — to dispel mists — to introduce pure light — to open out the Gospel-way. A remedy unknown heals no disease. A shield unused wards off no blows. A chart unstudied is no guide. A saviour hid is saviour none. Hence types and figures are profusely given. They leave no mode untried to picture Christ. They show clear models of His saving work. Part after part moves, as a living semblance, on the stage. The Gospel is here displayed in skilfully-constructed forms. One is exhibited. Another comes. And then another is adjoined. But all have one design — to set Christ before men. In varied colours the same features shine. In every portion "Christ is All." Can we thus read, and doubt God's mind?

Is not the purport clear, as day? If constant efforts prove desire, here is desire, that eyes may see — and hands may grasp — and feet may swiftly follow — and hearts may love — and souls may trust, the Saviour sent by God. Who can draw back, when God thus strives to teach? Reader, can you pass through Leviticus to death?

Leviticus next graphically shows, how Jesus saves. It is a blood-stained record. The rites are full of death. The page resounds with victims' groans. Is not Christ here? He comes not with entreaties on His lips. He strives not to melt justice by appeals. He brings no pleas for mitigation or reprieve. He grants, that His poor flock are lost — wholly and helplessly undone. He writes condemned on each, and He allows, that endless misery is justly earned. He vindicates Jehovah's glory in demanding death. But He claims right to save by substitution. He pleads the Covenant, which gives Him license to be Surety. He comes a proxy by eternal compact. The sinful seed are flesh and blood. He takes this nature. He assumes this flesh. So He becomes our Kinsman. If flesh must suffer — He is flesh. If soul must agonise — a human soul is His. Thus he is wholly fit to bear — to suffer — and to die. He bounds, as ardent courser to the guilty place. With eager step He mounts the Altar.

His people's sins are piled on Him. The hateful load is bound upon His back. And He endures, till every penalty is fully paid. He drinks the cup, till every dreg is drained. The sword of justice is sheathed within His heart. He verily sustains the all of all that torment, which endless hell would have been pouring on His flock.

This is that fact, on which salvation hinges. Till this be fully seen, the soul drifts hopelessly towards shores of woe. Oh! it is worth ten thousand times ten thousand worlds, to be assured, that death is died — and sufferings suffered — and agonies endured — and the worm slain — and vengeance satisfied — and sins washed out — and debts all paid. It is the joy of joy, to see no frown in God — no stern repulse — no look but tenderness and smiles. It is, as heaven begun, to see hell's portals closed — its chains all shivered — its fires extinct. It is ecstatic rapture to behold an open passage to a glorious home — a blessed rest — a reign with God for ever.

Leviticus is blazoned with this fact. The altar prominently stands. What is it, but an emblem of the cross? Victims without number die. They each are typical representatives of Christ. A stream of blood flows without ebb. Each drop displays the wounded Saviour, and the dying Lamb. Priests spare not the death-blow. The uplifted arm shows justice with the avenging sword. The blazing fire consumes its prey. Here all demands of wrath are met. The tabernacle-service thus displays a reconciling Calvary. It leads directly to the curse-bearing tree. It is a varied model of Christ taking away guilt — of God inflicting punishment on Him — of sinners ransomed by His anguish — of wrath expiring in the Godman's wounds.

Such are the rays, which mainly constitute Leviticus's light. Reader, an earnest question knocks at your heart's door. What is your profit from this Book? It may be, that you see no heaven-born virtue in these signs — that all these rites seem but a meaningless parade of death. Tremble. The Gospel hidden is the grave of hope. But look again. Each sacrifice allures you to Christ's side. Each record brings the only Saviour to your door. Each altar is a call to Calvary.

Ah! can it be, that Jesu's emblems have no charms for you! Sad is this evidence. The all-lovely is not lovely in your eyes. The all-precious is accounted vile. God's grandest gift is scorned. Heaven's glory is cast, as a husk to wind. But look again. Think of the misery of a Christless state — the peril of a Christless life — the anguish of a Christless death. You dare not say, that you are without sin. The hardest heart — the dullest mind — the blindest of the blind — allow, that there is error in their

lives. Be sure iniquities are an appalling mass. The sands of all the ocean's shores reach not their number. In height, they tower above the skies — defying God. In depth, they penetrate to hell — there claiming the just due. Each stone of this tremendous pile is such an outrage against God, that finite penalty can never make amends.

Now read Leviticus again. Its pages cry, Sin need not be your ruin. There is a death which saves from death. There is a stream, which cleanses from all stains. There is a wounded side, which shelters — hides — redeems. A Saviour dies. And, if through grace you clasp His cross, all — all — is pardoned. Leave not Leviticus, until you shout, I see salvation's glorious scheme. I see a Godman bleeding in my place. I see transgression laid on Him. He has endured my hell. He calls me to His heaven. Then will these types be chosen pleasure-ground, and steps to ever-brightening views. But there are some, who, spirit-led, have found the cross. Thrice-happy men! You are God's sons, and glory's heirs. But here you pant — you long — you strive — you pray, for deeper knowledge of your precious Lord. More — more — is your intense pursuit. The day is blank, unless you study Christ. To you Leviticus is a boundless mine. The more you dig, the richer is the ore.

When Satan whispers that your sins are vile, these many sacrifices pass in review. Each puts a seal to the reviving truth, that God's own Lamb bears guilt away, and so these rites extract all conscience-stings.

You hear of coming wrath. You know the quenchless fire is terrible reality. But every altar shows fierce flame consuming an offering, that the offerer may be free. You thus are taught, that all the vengeance, which you earn, expires in Jesu's agony.

You seek renewed assurance, that God's smile is towards you. These rites for ever sound, that enmity no more remains — that reconciliation is complete.

Your piercing eye would read the language of Christ's heart. These rites unfold it. Each death proclaims: Christ dies for you. He counts no sufferings great, to buy you, as His own: He wades through all the billows of God's wrath — through all the flames of hell — through all the depths of torment, to set you free, and cleanse you from all stains, and rescue you from foes. His anguish passes thought. And why? Because His love for you exceeds all bounds. Leviticus displays its costly efforts, and thus proves its truth. Faith claps the hand in every ordinance — and sings, See how Christ loves me.

But you are conscious of an evil heart. You would be pure, as God is pure: but vile corruptions raise their hated head. You would have every

thought in heaven: but a depressing weight drags down to this earth's mire. You would have life one spiritual employ; but an indwelling foe prevents. Seek for relief amid these types of Christ. Draw nearer to the slaughtered victims, and the streaming blood, and the uplifted knife. Through these discern the tortures of the cross. Each pang shows sin to be exceeding sinful — a monster of unspeakable deformity — an enemy, which slew the Lord — the executioner of all His stripes. You must loathe that, which pierced Christ's heart. Down, down with that, which spared not Christ. Thus he, who probes by faith the wounds of Christ, most hates iniquity — most flies its touch. Leviticus thus leads to a sin-loathing walk.

Learn more and more the quickening lessons of this Book. You live in a cold world. You breathe a freezing air. You have to climb an adverse hill. You have to struggle with resisting tides. Your chariot wheels need oil. Fresh fuel is required to keep your fire alive. Seek warmth and a reviving gale from these invigorating rites. Here Christ is seen a quenchless flame of zeal. He is one effort to save souls. Behold and catch the holy warmth. Behold, and be Christ-like.

These are sad days of indolent profession. There is a seeming faith in soft attire. There is much loitering by the brooks of sloth. Whence this indulgent ease? Christ and His dying love are little studied — and are poorly felt. He, whose eye cannot long be absent from the cross, will find his heart all fire — his feet all speed — his lips all fluency — his life all effort to save souls — to thwart Satan — to testify of Christ — to glorify his God. Self dies in Jesu's death. Life in Christ's service springs from Jesu's cross. Zeal is the fruit of this Book duly read.

Great Spirit of the living God, we bless Thee for this Gospel-book. Hear an imploring prayer, and make Leviticus a seed of life — a ray of hope — a flood of peace — a pasture of delight — a garden of pure conflict — a step towards heaven — a text-book of redeeming love — a picture of Christ's heart, to many a pilgrim through this sin-sick world. Hear, for Christ's sake. Amen.

VISIT TO ISRAEL

Rev. H. R. Moshe Radcliffe hopes to lead a party to Israel next year (D.V.). The trip will last for 15 days beginning on July 22nd 1978, and the price will be £327. Anyone interested should contact Mr Radcliffe as soon as possible at 15 Fotheringay Road, Glasgow G41 4NL.

The Increasing Observance of Christmas in Scotland

by Rev. D. Beaton

Year after year Presbyterian Scotland is gradually but surely adopting the customs and the religious festival days of her more powerful neighbour in the South. Some of these customs may be innocent enough, but it is quite different with others, such as a loose view of the sanctity of the Lord's Day. Alongside this there is an extraordinary readiness on the part of Presbyterians to adopt such festival days as Christmas and Easter. These have a place in the Church calendar, and are more or less devoutly observed by many, but by the great bulk these days are set aside for pleasure and amusement. Presbyterian Scotland at the First and Second Reformations set its face sternly against the observance of these so-called "holy" days.

In the First Book of Discipline the Scottish Reformers, under the first head of Doctrine, say:—"Seeing that Jesus Christ is He whom the Father has commanded only to be heard, and followed of His sheep, we urge it necessary that the Evangel be truly and openly preached in every Kirk and Assembly of this Realm; and all doctrine repugnant to the same be utterly suppressed as damnable to man's salvation." They then state what they mean by preaching this Evangel and what they understand by the contrary doctrine, viz.:—"Whatsoever men, by laws, counsels, or constitutions, have imposed upon the consciences of men, without the expressed commandment of God's Word; such as the vows of chastity . . . keeping of holy days of certain saints commanded by men, such as be all those that the Papists have invented, as the Feasts (as they term them) of Apostles, Martyrs, Virgins, Christmas, Circumcision, Epiphany, Purification, and other fond feasts of Our Lady" (Knox's Works, II, 1856). At their 17th session the famous Glasgow Assembly (1638) confirmed this view, and decreed that these Feasts "be utterly abolished, because they are neither commanded nor warranted by Scripture." In their Act reference is made to Assembly decisions on these Festivals (Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, p.19). In 1566 (25th December) the General Assembly, while giving its approval to the Second Helvetic Confession, disapproved of "days dedicated to Christ." In a letter sent to Beza it is not only said that such festivals as Christmas, Circumcision, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension, and Pentecost, that they

"at the present time obtain no place among us," but that they "dare not religiously celebrate any other feast day than what the divine oracles have prescribed." In the Directory for Public Worship, in the Appendix touching Days and Places for Public Worship, it is laid down as a rule:—"There is no day commanded in Scripture to be kept holy under the Gospel but the Lord's Day, which is the Christian Sabbath. Festival days, vulgarly called Holy-days, having no warrant in the Word of God, are not to be continued." The General Assembly in 1645 passed a stringent "Act for censuring the observers of Yule-day and other superstitious days, especially if they be scholars," giving as their reason "the manifold abuses, profanity and superstitions committed on these days. So great was the opposition to the observance of Christmas in Scotland in the eighteenth century that when a law was passed in Queen Anne's time repealing a law which forbade the Court of Session a "Yule vacance," it raised quite a storm of indignation.

We believe our forefathers acted rightly in this matter. And those who are again introducing the observance of Christmas into Scotland have neither Scripture nor history on their side. One will search the New Testament in vain for a command to keep the birthday of the Lord Jesus Christ sacred. It was certainly a momentous day for the world, but His advent, wonderful though it was, would not have saved sinners. It is His death and resurrection that brought everlasting hope to sinners, and the Church of God has her holy day in the Christian Sabbath as commemorative of His resurrection from the dead. If God asked men to observe Christmas and Easter they would flout His command just as they are doing the Sabbath, but because He has not asked them to do so they become a law unto themselves. The manner in which Christmas is observed in England with its religious services, followed too often by revelry and the observance of customs handed down from pagan times, ought to make serious-minded Scottish Presbyterians ponder as to whether such a way of observing this Church festival commends itself to them, as in accordance with the fitness of things.

Dr Maclean, sometime Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church and an authority on the early Church festivals, says that Christmas was probably unknown until A.D. 300. That admission by a Scottish Episcopalian prelate is of great significance. This opinion is confirmed by Professor Kirsopp Lake in his article in Hasting's Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics (III, 601). As to the two dates 25th December and 6th January, on which Christmas was observed, Duchesne suggests that the former date was observed by the Western or Latin Church, while the

latter was observed by the Eastern or Greek Church. Why was the 25th December chosen as the date for this festival? Sir William Ramsay has shown that the birth of the Redeemer could scarcely be on the 25th December, as it was not a time suitable for the Shepherds to be out with their flocks in the fields. Apart from this, the Gospels throw no light on the day or month of the Redeemer's birth. Why, then, was the 25th December fixed on? Professor Kirsopp Lake quite candidly admits that it was owing to the Church wishing to distract the attention of Christians from the old heathen festivals that December 25th, the *dies natalis solis invicti* (birthday of the unconquerable sun) was fixed on. Our author, while making this admission, maintains that the commonly accepted view that Christmas was intended to replace the Roman "Saturnalia" is not tenable. This feast was celebrated on 17th-24th December. Some of the customs are thus described:—"Gambling with dice, at other times illegal, was now permitted to be practised. All classes exchanged gifts, the commonest being wax tapers and clay dolls. These dolls were especially given to children." It must, therefore, be conceded that if the "Saturnalia" were not replaced by Christmas, that it certainly took over with its observance a great deal of the pagan tomfoolery that characterised the "Saturnalia." This accounts for many of the customs observed at Christmas. Many of the other customs observed in England and now followed in Scotland are traceable to distinctly pagan Norse influences.

The observance of Christmas as a religious festival, then, has (1) no warrant from Scripture. (2) There is no warrant for the 25th December being the birthday of the Redeemer. (3) Its observance was not known until the fourth century. (4) It replaced a heathen festival and retains in many of its customs its connection with the day following the Roman "Saturnalia." Why Presbyterians should be so keen to observe such a day, therefore, can only be accounted for on the ground that men are always determined to add something in religious observances that God never asked for nor commanded. (*Free Presbyterian Magazine*, Vol. 51, January 1947).

Be Not Conformed to the World

Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians chapter 11, states quite clearly, that "if a woman have long hair it is a glory to her," and "if a man have long hair it is a shame unto him," and if what he says does not mean simply that it is wrong for women to wear the hair short, and men to wear their hair long, then language is meaningless.

If it is a matter of indifference why is it ever mentioned in the Word of God? Surely it is laid down by our Creator for a specific purpose: namely to show the distinction between male and female. In 1 Corinthians chapter 11 verses 3, 4 and 10, this distinction is particularly noted by Paul in the act of worship before God, and the long hair of the woman to be a sign of subjection to the man. More and more in modern times, Scriptural distinctions in the appearance of men and women are becoming blurred and indeed obliterated. Sinful men and women do their utmost to break down all lawful and reasonable distinctions made by God and righteous men, even to the extent of women becoming "ministers of the gospel."

With regard to cutting a woman's hair short, some maintain this to be in order, providing the head is not shorn. They say, "shorn or shaven" means simply to shave the head. If so why are both words used and not simply "shorn?" The answer must be because there is a degree of difference. This, Jameson, Faussett and Brown point out in their commentary on 1 Corinthians chapter 11, "A woman would not like to be 'shorn' and what is worse 'shaven!'" C. Hodge says in his commentary on the same portion, "'shorn or shaven' the latter is the stronger term, it properly means to cut with a razor."

The description understood from the original language, suggests as it is wrong for a woman to shave her head, so it is wrong to cut her hair short. "To cut off the hair," "to clip short," "shear," "shave."

However, were there nothing more in scripture that the words "if a woman have long hair it is a glory to her," this is sufficient to understand that the contrary fashion is to cut the hair short, and "if a man have long hair it is shame unto him," showing that the fashion becoming to the man is "shorn hair."

Were it not the habit of some women in the church at Corinth to appear in public with shorn hair, there would be no need for Paul to give extensive advice as to why it was proper that women wear their hair long, and now the fact that he has served to highlight the fashion of how we are to wear our hair as something commended by nature and the God of Eternity. The question of women's and men's hair, and how they are to wear it may seem a trifling matter. This cannot be, since these matters are dealt with in the Scriptures which are given by the Holy Ghost and therefore are the Word of God.

To come short of the Word of God is to conform to the world. One of the elements in pure religion is to keep ourselves "unspotted from the

world." We read in 1 John 2 verse 15, "if any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him." Such a truth should make us afraid of the least conformity with the world, "hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." (Jude 22).

D. A. R.

Eadar-Mhineachadh air Salm CXXX

5. Feudar a chur ro so na h-eagalan a dh' fheudas a bhi 'buadhachadh air anamaibh ré seal, gu bheil iad gu buileach air an treigsinn le Dia, agus gu faighear iad 'nan daoine a chuireach air cùl aig an là dheireannach. Bha Ionah coltach ri bhi anns a' chor so, caib. II. 4, "An sin thubhairt mi, Tha mi air mo thilgeadh a mach á fradharc do shùl;" — "tha mi caillte gu siorruidh, agus cha-n aidich Dia tuilleach mi." Agus a ris Heman, Salm lxxxviii, 4-5, "Mheasadh mi mar iadsan a théid sios do'n t-slochd." Feudaidh na h-eagalan so buadhachadh anns an anam, gus am bheil piantan ifrinn air a ghlacadh; air chor as nach d' fhàghadh comhfhurtachd, no sìth, no fols aige, gus am bheil e air teachd gu bhi na uamhas dha féin, agus ullamh air tachdadh a ròghnachadh air thoiseach air beatha. Feudaidh anam gràsmhor tuiteam anns a' chor so do bhrìgh peacaidh. Ach gidheadh, do bhrìgh gu bheil so a' cogadh gu neo-mheadhonach an aghaidh beatha a' chreidimh, cha cheadaich Dia do neach sam bith d'a chuid féin luidh fada ann, mur dean e sin ann an cùisibh neo-ghnàthach. Agus, —

6. Gu bheil Dia air uairibh a' sàthadh a shaighdean gu h-ùigheach anns an anam, a' cur trioblaid, agus anshocair r' a dhoilgheas; Salm xxxviii. 2, "Oir shàthadh do shaigh-dean annam, agus tha do làmh trom orm." Air na h-uile ceum, mar gu'm b' ann, bha Dia a' cur saighde sgaiteich, gheur sàs 'na anam, a bha 'ga chràdh, agus 'ga lotadh. Is iad na saighdean so achmhasan Dhé: Salm xxxix, 11, "Le achmhasanaibh air son euceirt 'nuair a chonaicheas tu duine, bheir thu air a shnuadh caitheadh mar leomann." The Dia 'na fhocal agus le a Spiorad anns a' choguis, a' labhairt nithe searbha, geur ris an anam, 'gan cur an sàs ionnus nach fhaigh e an crathadh air falbh. Is iad so cuisghearain Iob vi. 4. 'Nuair a labhras an Tighearn, tha a bhriathran cho éifeachdach as gu'n teid iad tre'n chridhe; agus tha Daibhidh ag innseadh dhuinn ciod an toradh a bhitheas aig sin, Salm xxxviii. 3, "Cha-n 'eil fallaineachd a' m' fheòil air son d' fheirge: cha-n 'eil sìth a' m' chnàmhan air son mo pheacaidh." Tha am pearsa gu léir air a chlaoidheadh, agus gach slàinte agus suaimhneas air am buntuinn air falbh. Agus a ris, —

7. Tha *marbhantachd agus neo-chomas ann an dleasdanas*, aon chuid a thaobh deanadais no fulangais, ann an comh-chuideachd an t-suidheachaidh so: Salm xl. 12, "Ghlac m' euceartan mi, agus cha-n 'eil e'n comas dhomh sealltuinn suas." Bha a neart spioradail air a lagachadh tre'n pheacadh, air chor as nach robh e'n comas dha tomhas sam bith de chomh-chomunn a mhealtuinn ri Dia. Cha-n urrainn an t-anam a nis *ùrnuigh* a dheanamh le beatha no cumhachd; tha *'éisdeachd* gun tairbhe; cha-n urrainn e *maith* a dheanamh no comh-roinn a thoirt uaith gu suilbhire; cha-n 'eil cleachdadh na h-inntinne-nèamhaidh 'na *bheachd-smuaineachadh*; ach tha e *tinn*, anmhunn, diblidh, agus air a chromadh sìos.

A nis, tha sinn ag ràdh, gu feud anam gràsmhor, an déigh mòran comh-chomuinn ri Dia a shealbhachadh, a bhi air a thoirt gu suidheachadh, do bhrìgh peacaidh, agus le mothachadh d'a chiont, anns am bi cuid no an t-iomlan de na nithibh so, maille r'an samhail eile, mar chrannchur aige; agus tha iad so a' deanamh suas nan doimhneachdan mu'm bheil an salmadair ann an so a' gearain. Bheir sinn fainear 'na dhéigh so, ciod iad na peacaidhean àraidh a tha mar is tric a' cur anama nan creideach anns na doimhneachdaibh so.

Anns an dara àit, Nochdaidh sinn a nis *cionnus gu feud creidich tuiteam 'na shamhuil so de chor*, agus mar an ceudna *cionnus gu bheil sin gu tric a' tachairt dhoibh*.

Book Reviews

The Christian Ministry by Charles Bridges.

The recent re-issue of two 19th century classics from the Evangelical branch of the Church of England is a salutary reminder of the faithful testimony once raised in the English Establishment before the pernicious fruits of the Oxford Movement had swung Anglicanism back down the road to Rome. 'The Christian Ministry' by Charles Bridges, now reprinted by Banner of Truth at £2.95, is probably unsurpassed in its diagnosis and treatment of ministerial inefficiency. Beginning with a general view of the Christian ministry, in which its divine origin, its dignity, uses, necessity, trials, comforts, qualifications and preparation are clearly expounded, Bridges proceeds to investigate the causes of ministerial failure, both from within and from without. Amongst external causes, he lists the withholding of the Spirit's influence (a matter in itself which calls for much heart searching), the natural enmity of men's hearts to

spiritual things, the power of Satan, and certain local hindrances (such as the rise of heresies and Sabbath-breaking), but does not fail to emphasise the lack of a divine call as the chief reason for failure in the sacred office, adding the solemn truth that 'if we run unsent, our labours must prove unblest' (p.90). While searching within the minister's personal character, Bridges exposes and fearlessly condemns such ministerial sins as worldliness, the fear of man, lack of self-denial, covetousness, spiritual pride, unbelief, and inadequate personal religion, and offers the appropriate Scriptural cure. Besides such experimental enquiries, the treatise is notable both for its author's masterly treatment of public preaching, in its preparation, content, and spirit, and for his discriminating practical advice on the treatment of various cases which fall within the pastor's purview. The value of Bridges' study is also considerably enhanced by the inclusion of copious quotations from other authors, among whom Augustine, Baxter, Burnett, Calvin, Luther, the Henrys, Quesnel, Scott and Secker feature prominently, and by his frequent and humbling references to the ministry of Christ Himself. Of the many choice sayings to be found in the book, perhaps the following selection may give the reader some idea of its scope and some taste of its spirit: 'The fear of God will subjugate the fear of man'; 'Self-dependence is the grand hindrance to our efficiency'; 'Lord, turn the fear of men's faces into a love of their souls'; 'One great end of our preaching is, distinctly to trace the line of demarcation between the Church and the world'; 'Do we press Christ and regeneration and faith and holiness — believing that without these, men can never have life?'; 'As our Surety, He delivers us from the curse of the Law. As our King, He brings us under its rule'; 'Let Christ be the diamond to shine in the bosom of all your sermons' (pages 126, 174, 297, 277, 322, 237 and 258). We would recommend the prayerful study of Bridges to all ministers, and suggest its inclusion in the Divinity Course of every Church.

J.M.B.

Holiness by J. C. Ryle.

The second reprint is Ryle's 'Holiness' (Evangelical Press, paperback, £1.50). As the acknowledged Anglican champion of the Reformed faith during the last century, Bishop Ryle wielded an influence which extended far beyond his own diocese of Liverpool. Now, after years of neglect, his writings are receiving renewed attention from the Evangelical world. 'Holiness' represents Ryle's deep conviction that Scriptural orthodoxy is not only useless but positively harmful unless accompanied by a holy life. His book therefore calls us away from intellectualism to an experimental

and practical knowledge of Divine Truth. It is not, however, 'mere orthodoxy' which Ryle attacks — it is the 'Higher Life' and 'Perfectionist' teaching (reproduced today in the Keswick and Strathpeffer Conventions), that holiness is attained 'by faith only, and not at all by personal exertion' (Introduction, p.viii). Ryle's vigorous rejection of this error is achieved by separating what others have confusedly joined together. 'Justifying faith,' he writes, 'is a grace that worketh not, but simply trusts, rests, and leans on Christ' (Rom. 4:5). 'Sanctifying faith is a grace of which the very life is action: it worketh by love, and like a main-spring, moves the whole inward man' (Gal. 5:6). In justification, the word to be addressed to man is 'Believe — only believe'; in sanctification, the word must be 'watch, pray, and fight' (p.viii and xvii). It is men's persistent failure to distinguish between justification and sanctification that has produced so much confusion in the modern Evangelical world.

In unfolding the true doctrine of sanctification, Ryle lays great stress on its progressive nature, on the awful power of indwelling sin in experienced believers, on the necessity to strive after increased holiness, to fight a running battle against sin, to grow in grace, and to get all from Him in whom all fulness dwells. His handling of the much-neglected subject of Assurance constitutes a trenchant rebuke to those who glory in their doubts, and a stirring encouragement to such as are 'faint, yet pursuing'. The latter part of the volume, misleadingly entitled 'Examples of Holiness' in this edition, sets forth the sanctified character of Moses, warns us solemnly against sloth and worldliness from the examples of Lot and his wife, exhibits the Redeemer's gracious power in the salvation of the dying thief, exposes indwelling sin in the disciples, encourages the fearful by directing them to the only Rock of their salvation, cautions the Church against apostasy, shows the necessity of love to Christ as a principal part of holiness, demonstrates the absolute necessity of possessing Christ for ourselves, offers Him freely to thirsty sinners, expounds the true nature of a Gospel ministry, highlights the needs of the times, and shows how Christ is all.

To recommend Ryle on Holiness would be almost an impertinence. Suffice it to say that there is not, to our knowledge, a more sane, lucid and Scriptural treatment of this very important theme since the days of the old Reformed divines.

J. M. B.

Signs of the Apostles, Observations on Pentecostalism Old and New by Walter J. Chantry. Banner of Truth Trust, pp. 147, price 60p.

Pentecostalism has attracted a good deal of notice in the past 15 years, both in this country and in America, with its claims of having received

the Holy Spirit as at Pentecost, from which it derives its name, and of being a charismatic movement because of the miraculous gifts accompanying the descent of the Spirit, which this group profess to enjoy. Here may be seen the extreme reaction against the dead formalism of the professing church and the ritualism of the Protestantism of the present day. The emphasis of Pentecostalism, however, is upon the miraculous gifts which were bestowed upon the early Church and not upon the fruits of the Holy Spirit's work among the early Christians. The Pentecostals speak of new revelations which they have received, and of miraculous powers of healing and of the gift of tongues. Such terms are in use among them as the "full Gospel," the "deeper life," derived from the Keswick holiness movement, and "second baptism of the Spirit." It is not surprising that these strange doctrines should find favour among people of the most divergent religious beliefs. The Roman Catholics welcome "the spiritual blessing" of Pentecostalism as "giving new dimensions to the adoration for the 'blessed mother of our Lord'" and a deeper understanding of the mass. The World Council of Churches find in Pentecostalism the "powerful manifestations of the Spirit." Liberal and Modern religious leaders and some so-called evangelicals have spoken well of the movement. Pentecostalism has even attracted the students of Andrew Murray who has spoken so much about the higher life.

This little work by W. J. Chantry examines this modern phenomenon in the light of Scripture and explains clearly the true meaning of such passages of God's Word which speak of the gifts and work of the Holy Spirit, as in I Cor., chapters 12-14, and Acts, chapter 2. The dangerous character of Pentecostalism is not overstated but clearly described. Two passages may be quoted to give an indication of how the book deals with Pentecostalism. "Since Pentecost, all of God's promises in the Covenant of grace have come to fuller realisation, in men's hearts by the Spirit" (p. 88). "As there were offices extraordinary (apostles and prophets) at the beginning of our dispensation, so there were gifts extraordinary; and as successors were not appointed for the former, so continuance was never intended for the latter. The gifts were dependent upon the offices. We no longer have the apostles with us and therefore the supernatural gifts (the communication of which was an essential part of 'the signs of an apostle,' II Cor. xii, v. 12) are absent" (Pink) — 146. The work concludes with quotations from John Chrysostom in the early Church to Profs. Smeaton and Dabney in modern times, emphasising that the gifts claimed by Pentecostalists have passed away with the first Apostles. The

whole Pentecostal movement of today is a perversion of one of the great and precious periods of the Church's History when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon his people by the Risen Redeemer with unprecedented fulness.

This is a timely book, giving a satisfactory and clear witness against the pernicious heresies of Pentecostalism. Perhaps we may detect a leaning towards charity in referring to "Pentecostal brethren in Christ" in the Introduction, and to "solid and godly Pentecostals" (p. 105). The Banner of Trust Trust are to be commended for printing this greatly needed warning against a growing, insidious and dangerous cult. A. F. M.

A Call to Prayer by J. C. Ryle. Evangelical Press. Price 75p.

This 78-page booklet on prayer is intended to stir up prayerless souls to their duty. Man's need of prayer is clearly set out, as also are the many encouragements we have to engage in this duty. Ryle states his conviction that many do not pray. He shows also that those who were eminent Christians were all men of prayer. Neglect of prayer, he states, is one great cause of backsliding. This is a book which emphasises the need of prayer if we are to be saved and if we are to live the Christian life and contains solemn warnings to those who do not pray. D. B. M.

Notes and Comments

Nativity Plays

The article in the present issue of the magazine on "The Increasing Observance of Christmas in Scotland" was written in 1947. At that date the tendency to adopt Romish and pagan practices was clearly discernible. What was a trend then has become the order of the day now. This is true particularly with regard to nativity plays, which have become very popular at this time of the year in Churches and schools. These theatrical productions, in which the Saviour is blasphemously represented by a child's doll, are supposed to convey the Christian message to the onlookers. How low has Scotland fallen religiously when she can be fobbed off with such misrepresentations of the Christian Faith!

Communist Recognition

The President of Rumania, who is due to pay a State visit to Britain in the spring, is to stay at Buckingham Palace as the guest of the Queen. He is the first Communist leader to be honoured in this way we understand, according to a report in the "Daily Telegraph."

It is, in our view, regrettable that the Head of an atheistic, undemocratic and totalitarian regime should be accorded such an

honour. The persecution of Christians in the countries behind the iron curtain should be sufficient reason for failing to give these countries and their leaders the preferential treatment reserved for more worthy nations. If this was not enough, surely the Communists declared aim of the destruction of all democratic systems is. It is hardly flattering to Her Majesty the Queen to ask her to entertain the representative of a system that is seeking her own and her nation's destruction.

The Prime Minister and the Pope

In September the Prime Minister had a private audience with the Pope. This accords well with the practice of statesmen of showing deference to the Man of Sin. It was not to Mr Callaghan's credit, nor for the good of our country, that he chose to follow this practice.

As might be expected Northern Ireland received attention in the discussions. There the Pope has great interest in securing power for the Roman Catholic minority. Mr Callaghan informed him that the Government were doing their utmost to work towards a system of power sharing in the province. This, no doubt, pleased the Pontiff well. He could feel that, having the British Government on his side, he need have no fear but that the interests of his subjects in Northern Ireland would be safe-guarded.

Northern Ireland

Mr Callaghan, the Prime Minister, and Mr Jack Lynch, the Eire Prime Minister, had discussions on Northern Ireland. An attempt is being made to get a fresh initiative going on Northern Ireland, which means, of course, that the Protestants there are to be coerced or cajoled into relinquishing their claim for majority government in the province. In view of the history of Southern Ireland's relations with the Protestant North, we cannot see what constructive part Eire can play in a settlement in Northern Ireland. Its most helpful role would be one of non-interference, though it is too much to hope for that it would adopt such an attitude. The baneful influence of Roman Catholic power is felt, not only in Northern Ireland, but in the political arena world wide. May the day be hastened when its nefarious influence will be ended.

Warning to Britain

Sir Frederick Catherwood, speaking at a Headmaster's Conference in Oxford, warned his hearers of the danger facing Britain through the presently prevailing permissive ideology. The present ideology, he declared, is, by any standard, a catastrophic failure, as the social

statistics show. He further maintained that in the corridors of power it was the secular view which had the predominant influence in legislation and on education. He called for a return to moral values in education. It is gratifying to hear a man in Sir Frederick's position speaking out in this way and exposing the present climate of opinion in the nation.

One of the sad features of the situation today is the extraordinary complacency of the leaders of the nation in the face of national moral decline. It is time that they awakened to the realities of the situation before the nation perishes in its own corruption. A true realisation of our danger would bring to the hearts of our leaders a sense of their utter inadequacy to meet the situation and a profound conviction of the need of divine help. May they be speedily brought to this.

Religious Education in Schools

The situation in most schools in the country is very unsatisfactory so far as religious education is concerned. Attempts are now being made in various quarters to try to remedy matters but this is not easy owing to the lack of Christian teachers and a lack of agreement as to what constitutes the Christian Faith. Consequently in many places the subject is greatly neglected, while in other places what is taught is harmful to the children. At the same time humanists cry out for it to be banned and the schools to be completely secularised. If this cry were to be heeded it would be a lamentable step for the nation to take and we hope that it will be resisted. The Education Secretary has pledged that it will be continued. What is needed is that the question of its content be resolved. In the present climate of opinion in the country Religious Education is likely to continue a particularly intractable problem.

The Sabbath in Scotland

The Glasgow and Clydesdale branch of the Lord's Day Observance Society has sent out an open letter addressed to the Church of God in Scotland in which the Society refers to the steady deterioration of Lord's Day Observance by the people of God in the land. The letter reminds the Church of God in Scotland of the perpetual obligation to set aside one day in seven as holy to the Lord. The letter further points out that when Sabbath observance becomes a burden and begins to lapse it is a sign of apostasy from God.

It is surely a solemn matter when the Society has to address itself to the Church of God in this way. If the professed Church of God in the land has virtually abandoned the observance of the Sabbath then how low has the Church fallen.

Church Notes

Concerted Prayer

Five years ago the Synod called for concerted prayer for the revival of the Lord's Cause and for the awakening and conversion of sinners. The need of prayer to this end is no less now than it was then. The forces of darkness have made much headway in that time so we are called to be more earnest than ever at a Throne of grace.

Particularly, at this time we ought to remember before the Lord our Mission in Rhodesia. The situation in the land remains critical. Let us pray that it may be resolved in a way that would be to God's glory and for the good of His Cause there. Throughout the world Communism and Romanism advances. Let us pray for their speedy overthrow and the deliverance of millions from the awful bondage of those systems of darkness. Let us remember God's ancient people, the Jews. In their conversion shall we Gentiles also be blessed. Let us plead for the spreading of the Word of God and of the Gospel of His grace throughout all lands until the whole earth is filled with His glory. Let us remember, too, all who have gone forth, especially from our own midst, to the distant parts of the world to declare the good news of great joy which is to all people. In the words of the Catechism, let us pray "that Satan's kingdom may be destroyed; and that the kingdom of grace may be advanced, ourselves and others brought into it, and kept in it, and that the kingdom of glory may be hastened."

The Church Magazines

As is well known to our readers, the Free Presbyterian Magazine has been in existence over 80 years, its first issue having been sent out in May 1896. In that first issue, the Rev. James S. Sinclair, the first editor, stated that it was published in the interests of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland and for the maintenance of the doctrines for which the Church contended at the beginning, as well as to bear witness against the erroneous tendencies of the day. To these purposes the Magazine has endeavoured to remain true over the years and the need for its witness is no less now than it was in 1896. That the Magazine has in the past proved beneficial to our people we have no doubt. That it may continue to be of spiritual benefit to them by the Lord's blessing, is our fervent desire. This aspect of the Lord's work needs all the help and encouragement that can be given.

The Young People's Magazine has had a shorter life. Its first issue appeared in May 1936 in the interests of the young people of the Free Presbyterian Church. The Rev. Donald Beaton, the first editor, mentioned in the first issue that it was launched at a time when vital godliness was not what it once was. He desired that God would make the new periodical a blessing in instructing the young and directing their minds to matters of eternal interest and which concern His glory. The Magazine has continued to be devoted to the interests of the young ever since.

During the last two years the two Magazines were issued together but at last Synod it was decided to return to the former practice of issuing them separately. While this will necessarily involve greater cost, we are sure that all who love the witness of our Church will continue to support the Magazines as they have done in the past, and pray for and work for their increased circulation in this and other lands.

Deputy to Chesley, Ontario

Rev. Duncan MacLean, North Tolsta, left this country on Friday, 21st October, to supply the congregation in Chesley for seven Sabbaths. He is expected home again early in December (D.V.). We crave the prayers of the Lord's people that his labours in that part of the vineyard may be blessed and that he may be brought home again in safety to his family and congregation.

Price of Church Magazines

As from January 1978 (D.V.) the Free Presbyterian and Young People's Magazines will be issued separately. The price of the Free Presbyterian Magazine will be 30p per copy and the Young People's Magazine 20p per copy.

Financial Year End

As the financial year ends on 31st December 1977, Congregational Treasurers and Deacons' Courts are reminded that all funds in respect of 1977 should be in the General Treasurer's hands by Saturday, 7th January 1977, God willing. Funds received after that date will be credited to 1978.

List of Communions

The list of Communions on the inside front cover of the Magazine has been corrected for 1978. Would ministers kindly check whether any additional corrections are required.

Congregational Financial Statements

By appointment of Synod a copy of all Congregational Financial Statements should be sent to the Finance Committee. Statements in respect of 1977 should be sent to the General Treasurer by 31st March 1978, God willing.

London Church and Manse Building Fund

The Deacons' Court of the London Congregation are pleased to report that in accordance with the provision of the Most High, Zoar Chapel, Whitechapel, is now paid for and free of debt.

Members and Adherents wish to take this opportunity of expressing their grateful thanks to all friends at home and overseas, who by their generosity have enabled the outstanding mortgage on the church, opened 22nd June 1974, to be redeemed.

The fund, however, remains open for the purpose of clearing an outstanding debt, on the Manse, which on the 31st October 1977 stood at £12,086.72. We appeal to all congregations and friends to assist us in our desire, by God's grace, to remove this burden.

"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Correction

We regret that owing to printer's errors, the paragraph beginning at the middle of p. 403 of the November issue of the Magazine could not be understood. It should have read as follows:—

"They who have Christ in them, therefore, can alone bring men into living contact with God. Christ makes it plain that a new unction must visit His followers before the blessing spreads to the impenitent; and to look for an awakening, therefore, before we ourselves receive that baptism as with fire, is to expect the end without the means. A Church cannot long continue to display a living testimony, unless this fresh holy baptism is repeatedly renewed; and to hold forth, like many declining Churches of the Reformation, a form of sound words, when the Spirit is sinned away, is but like a sign-post carried down a swollen river. For it is not protests, etc. . . ."

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Western: At Laide on 13th December 1977, at 12 noon.

Northern: At Dingwall on 24th January 1978, at 2.30 p.m.

Skye: At Portree on 7th February 1978, at 11 a.m.

Acknowledgment of Donations

The General Treasurer, Mr W. D. Fraser, 20 Daleview Avenue, Glasgow G12 0HE, acknowledges the following donations with sincere thanks:—

Jewish & Foreign Missions Fund: Anon., I., £100; A. Forgie, £25.

Home of Rest Fund: Friend, Raasay, £1; Friend, Kinlochbervie, £10; Visitor, £1; Friend, Glasgow, £5; M.G., Glasgow, £10 per Rev. A.F.M.

Trinitarian Bible Society: £2 from Anon., St. Jude's plate.

Ingwenya: Toronto Ladies, 21.27; Vancouver Congregation, 3161.22; Vancouver Ladies, 173.06; Vancouver Sabbath School, 985.87; Free Reformed Congregation, Langley, 590.09; A. Van Driel, Dorcrecht, Holland, per Rev. A. 'Ndebele, 1253.45 for publishing Sindabele literature; Holland Mbumba Zending, 49,993.75 and 23,752.81; Vancouver Friend, per Rev. A. 'Ndebele, 393.69; Inverness Mission Group, 200.86 (all in Rhodesian currency).

The Treasurers of the following congregations desire to acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:—

Dingwall: J. & I. MacD., £5; Mrs M., Evanton, both for tar on Church grounds.

Dumbarton: A Friend, Aberdeen, £5; A. Friend, Inverness, £5; Friend, Edinburgh, £5; Elgin Friend, £5; Friends, Edinburgh, £2; from a Raasay Friend, £5 (all per T. MacRae and all for Manse Purchase); Friend, £3 per T. MacRae; M. & E., Edinburgh, £10 (both for Dumbarton Church Extension); For Communion Expenses, £10; For Communion Expenses, £5; Greenock Friends, £5; K.G., Glasgow, £5; A. McG., Glasgow, £5; Anon. F., £7 (last four for Manse Purchase).

Edinburgh: K.H., Glasgow, £5 per Rev. Donald Campbell for Italian Mission (Study Centre).

Fort William: Anon. for Church Door, £5; Glasgow Friend for Congregation Transport, £5; Mrs C., Onich, £1 (all per Rev. J.A. Macdonald).

Gairloch: Two Tolsta Ladies, £4 per Rev. A. MacDonald; late Miss Bella Bain, £50 (both for Sustentation Fund); in plate, £10; B.M., £3 per Mr T. Macleod (both for Communion Expenses); Hillbrand, Holland, £15 per Rev. A. MacDonald; in memory of late Mr John MacAskill for painting of Melvaig Mission House, £150.

Greenock: A Friend, £10; D.R.M., Glasgow, £10, both for Congregational Purposes and both per Rev. L. Macleod; R.C., N.I., £10 for Sustentation Fund.

Kyle: Envelope in plate, £20 (£10 for Sustentation Fund, £10 for Building Fund); Friend, Glenelg, £5 per Mrs B. Matheson; Envelope in plate, £10 (both for Manse Building Fund).

Laide: For Laide Manse, £5; Gairloch Friend, £5; in collection plate, £3, £5; Gairloch Friend, £10; in memory of loved ones, £7; Skye Friend, £10; Anon., £30; Two Friends, Raasay, £10; A.M., £10; D.G., £2; Friend, Opinan, £5; D.B., £3; Friend, Inverness, £10; New Zealand Friend, £24; Two Friends, Aultbea, £40; Anon., £5; Fort William Friend, £10; M.G., £5; B.R., £5; from the estate of the late Miss Bain, £50; Two Friends, Laide, £5 (all for Laide Manse Building Fund).

Oban: Adherent, £5 for Oban Congregational Funds per Rev. M. MacSween.

Perth: Anon., £20 for Perth Congregation, London postmark (regret delay of this insertion).

Portree: Anon., £3 for Church Property Maintenance Fund per Kensalyre Mission House Plate.

Raasay: A Friend, John 6:9. £5 per Rev. D. Nicolson; Friend, Inverarish, £2.50, both for Sustentation Fund; Friend, Inverarish, £2.50 for Congregational Fund (last two per J.M. Macleod).

Stornoway: A.M., £5 for Minibus; Anon., £5 for Sustentation Fund; Two Friends, Inverness, £10 for Congregational Purposes (all per Rev. J. Macleod); Anon., £20 for Minibus.

Strath: Friend of the Cause, £20 for Sustentation Fund per D. MacKay.

Watnish: M.N., £20 for Congregational Purposes.