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"My Father's Business"

It was the Lord Jesus who addressed these words to His mother, Mary: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" The words were spoken at the age of 12 years when the Saviour went up to Jerusalem at the feast time with His mother and Joseph. Unknown to them he had remained behind in Jerusalem and when they discovered that he was not with them they sought him for three days sorrowing. They found him at length in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors both hearing them, and asking them questions. To the question — "Why hast thou thus dealt with us?" — Jesus gave the reply — "How is it that ye have sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business."

What lessons there are for us in this incident and what a lustre and glory it sheds on the character of the Lord Jesus in the days of His humiliation!

We see how quickly the Lord Jesus corrects the remark of Mary when she refers to Joseph as his father. He immediately speaks of His Father which is in heaven. He has one Father, even God. He was the Son of the Father in truth and love. He never divested Himself of this relationship throughout His life in this world. He never ceased to be what He was from eternity — the only begotten Son of God. It is true that in the midst of His sufferings on Calvary, we do find Him, as it were, laying aside the use of the term "My Father" when He cried out in His agony, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" But this was not because in that extremity the Father had ceased to bear this relationship to Him, but rather because of His consciousness at that time of God the Father dealing with Him as the sin-bearer. Consequently, the Father was revealing Himself to Him as a sin-avenging God. Nor did the Father cease to own the eternal relationship that subsisted between Himself and

the Son, not even in the very midst of His sufferings. Even when the Father as a righteous God called for the sword of divine justice to awake it was against "My Shepherd" and "the Man that is My Fellow."

It was His Father's business that the Lord Jesus was engaged in when Mary and Joseph found Him in the temple. The spirit with which He was actuated is expressed in these words: "I delight to do Thy will, O my God." He had ever before Him the fulfilling of the Father's will. No master ever had such a devoted servant as the Father had in the Son in His sending Him into the world to seek and to save that which was lost. He came as the Servant of the Father to accomplish the work of redemption. He was about His Father's business. All other matters were subservient to this. He was to glorify the Father in finishing His work. The interests of the Father were His concern. No earthly lord ever committed the affairs of his house into the hands of a more faithful steward than the Father did when He committed into Christ's hands the affairs of His kingdom. The constancy of Christ in the task deputed to Him was not to waver even when the service required of Him was the shedding of His own precious blood on Calvary. Was this not evident as He went before His disciples on His way up to Jerusalem for the last time? It was as though He was pressing forward to render the greatest and costliest service that was ever to be rendered. "I have a baptism to be baptised with" he said, "and how am I straitened until it be accomplished." Should we not stand in awe and gaze in wonder on the spectacle of the Son of God in our nature suffering on the accursed tree. If in beholding Him there we begin to question, why should these things be? — the answer that comes to us from Calvary is: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

He who was so occupied with His Father's business here, is now occupied with it in glory. The concerns of the Father's house in everlasting glory are His concerns, as well as the concerns of the Father's kingdom in this world. With regard to glory itself, what is His intercession within the veil bound up with but His Father's business? What is His preparing a place for His people in glory, but a matter affecting the eternal blessedness of His people? And what is this but His Father's business?

In connection with Mary and Joseph going three days before being aware that Jesus was not with them and their subsequent searching for Him, does this not remind us of our need to enquire if the Saviour is with us? The Lord is with His people. This distinguishes them from others. But sometimes the Lord hides His face from them. It is then that a felt sense of His absence will make them seek Him. But may they not go

three days — and more — before they are aware that the One whom they thought was with them is now absent. With what sorrowful hearts they must seek Him till they find Him. Then will they be found saying with the Church: "Saw ye Him whom my soul loveth?" And when they enquire the reason for His absence, have they not oftentimes to confess that it was because they had not been about their Father's business as they ought? Let us remember then that in this as in all else Christ has left us an example that we should follow in His steps. May we be enabled by divine grace to do so and serve the Lord fully and faithfully in this world. If we are enabled to do this we will hear in the end of the day what was in effect said in a pre-eminent way of Christ as He entered into glory: "Well done, good and faithful Servant."

Heaven

by Robert Bolton

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The Saints in Heaven

Let us next consider the saints in heaven; and first, the beauty and blessedness of *their glorified bodies*. I do not here curiously inquire whether the glory of the body doth spring from the blessedness of the soul by a constant influence, or whether its excellent endowments are implanted immediately by the hand of God; but sure I am that the bodies of the saints shall be made like the glorious body of Christ (Phil. 3:21). And this is honour and happiness enough, inexplicably, supereminent!

But certainly, we shall not suffer from want of meat, drink or marriage; for we shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more (Rev. 7:16), and shall be like the angels of God (Matt. 22:30). Nor shall we suffer from want of sleep or medicine; for living by the all-sufficient Spirit of God, who never needs refreshing, we shall know no weariness, and shall enjoy perpetual impregnable health. Neither shall we suffer from want of dress; for we shall be clothed in long white robes of immortality (Rev. 7:9), which can never wear out, and shall be adorned with our own resplendent majestical brightness. Neither shall we suffer from want of the sun; for our God shall be our glory, and our everlasting light (Isa. 60:19). Indeed, we shall not suffer from want of anything; for God shall be unto us All in All (1 Cor. 15:28).

Besides their freedom from all defects and diseases, infirmities and

deformities, ills, pains and miseries, our bodies shall be gloriously crowned with many positive and high, heavenly endowments.

1. They shall be immortal (1 Cor. 15:54). Glorified bodies can never die. They shall last as long as God Himself, and run parallel with the long line of eternity. In this respect, our condition will be a thousand times more happy and glorious than if we had stood with Adam in his innocence. We shall shine forever in the highest heavens with no possibility of perishing.

2. They shall be incorruptible (1 Cor. 15:42). Every glorified body shall forever be utterly impassible, and unimpressionable with any corrupting quality, action or alteration. And this will be from an exact subjection of the body to the soul, as of the soul to God. The testimony of God's never-erring Spirit, in the text cited, is more than sufficient to assure every Christian heart that our raised bodies, re-formed by the almighty glorious hand of God, shall never more be exposed to violence or hurt from any external agent, nor become liable to the least disposition towards any inward decay, putrefaction or dissolution.

3. They shall be strong (1 Cor. 15:43). The substance of our souls is immaterial, like the angels of God, one of whom killed 185,000 in one night (2 Kings 19:35). But little know we, now that their excellency is dulled by sin, what strength they had originally in Adam. But when to the soul's native strength there is added a glorifying vigour, and the plentiful inhabitation of God's mighty Spirit, and a re-formed body which brings with it a serviceableness and sufficiency exactly apportioned to the soul's highest abilities, how incredibly powerful shall a saint in heaven be!

4. They shall be spiritual (1 Cor. 15:44) — not that our bodies shall be turned into spirits, but they shall be employed spiritually; first, because they shall be fully possessed with the Spirit, who dwelling primarily and above measure in Christ our Head, is communicated from Him to us His members, so that then we shall no longer live by our former natural helps, but shall be spiritual and heavenly, like the angels; second, because they shall in all things become subject to the Spirit of God, and be wholly, perfectly and willingly guided by Him, with a spiritual, angelic, most absolute and free obedience. 'As the spirit serving the flesh may not unfitly be called carnal,' saith Augustine, 'so the body obedient to the soul is rightly termed spiritual'; third, by reason of their nimbleness or agility, they shall be able to move from place to place with incredible swiftness, not being at all hindered by their weight. The body will be in an incredibly short time where the soul would have it be!

5. They shall be glorious (1 Cor. 15:43). The bodies of the saints in heaven shall be surpassingly beautiful, shining and amiable. Three things, according to Augustine, constitute beauty: a due and comely proportion of congruent symmetry; amiableness of colour; and a lively, lightsome aspect. All these concur eminently in glorified bodies: they shall be beautified by God's own blessed almighty hand with the utmost of created comeliness and matchless proportion; they shall possess the sweetest mixture of the liveliest colours; and they shall be preserved in perpetual freshness, being continually quickened with new supplies of heavenly vigour by a more glorious soul and by the infinitely more glorious Spirit of God, who shall plentifully dwell in them forever.

Such perfection the ancient fathers likened to the brightness of the sun. 'If we should compare,' saith Chrysostom, 'our future bodies even with the most glistening beams of the sun, we shall yet say nothing towards the expression of the excellency of their shining glory.' 'The beauty of the just in the other life,' saith Anselm, 'shall be equal to the glory of the sun, though seven-fold brighter than now it is.' 'The brightness of a glorified body,' saith Augustine, 'doth as far excel the sun as the sun our mortal body.' 'Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father' (Matt. 13:43).

But how can there be so much beauty and delight in such intense and extra-ordinary brightness?

1. The glorified eyes of the saints shall become impassible, elevated far above all mortal passibility, and fortified by a heavenly vigour to apprehend and enjoy all celestial light and glory with much ravishing contentment and inexplicable delight.

2. That omnipotent merciful hand of God which will raise our bodies out of the dust and re-form them anew, shall cause every one of our members to concur and consist in excellency. The eye shall delightfully contemplate Christ's glorious body, the shining bodies of the saints, and the beauty of heaven; the ear shall drink up with infinite delight the vocal harmony of hallelujahs with which heaven shall be filled, and every sense shall be inebriated with all possible perfection and pleasure.

Now, if the brightness of the body shall match the light of the sun, what, do you think, will be *the glory of the soul*?

I would be endless if I undertook to pursue the several glories and excellencies of every faculty of the soul, and when I had done, I would have come infinitely short of expressing them to the life. I will at this time, therefore, give you a taste only, with regard to *the understanding*.

And that shall be extra-ordinarily and supernaturally enlarged and

irradiated with the highest illuminations, largest comprehensions, and utmost extent of all possible comfortable knowledge of which such a creature is capable.

1. Human knowledge, of the arts, nature and created things, is delicious and much to be desired. Now in heaven, this kind of learning shall be fully perfected and raised to the highest pitch, so that the least and lowest of the saints there shall surpass in clear contemplation the deepest philosophers, greatest artists and most learned linguists who ever lived.

2. We shall be exactly acquainted with the causes, natures, beginnings, continuations and ends of all creatures, even the angels and our own souls.

3. We shall clearly see and comprehend the vanity and rottenness of all heresies, anti-Christian depths, Popish imposture, the very bottom of that most wicked and abhorred mystery.

4. We shall grasp the true, full and sweet meaning of all God's blessed Book — whether Jephthah sacrificed his daughter or only consecrated her to virginity; whether Naaman was a true or unsound convert; what is the meaning of 1 Corinthians 11:10 and 15:29 — and we shall with wonderful ravishment of spirit be admitted to the sight of those sacred secrets and glorious mysteries — of the Holy Trinity; of the union of Christ's humanity to the divine nature, and of the faithful to Christ; of the causes of God's eternal counsel in election and reprobation; of the angels' fall; and of the manner of the creation of the world.

5. We shall know one another; for as all comfortable knowledge shall in heaven be perfected, so our knowledge of one another, which is comfortable knowledge, shall be perfected. 'We shall know as we are known' (1 Cor. 13:12). And since we shall know every good thing which may increase our joy, then meeting, knowing and conversing forever with our old dear Christian friends, and all the glorious inhabitants of those sacred palaces, will mightily please and refresh us with sweetest delight. Society is not comfortable without familiar acquaintance. Be assured then, heaven shall not be wanting in the height and perfection of all glory, bliss and joy.

Nay, our minds being abundantly and beautifully illuminated with all wisdom and knowledge, we shall be enabled to know, not only those of former holy acquaintance, but also strangers, such as we never knew before, even all the faithful who ever were, are, or shall be. We shall be able to say: 'This was Father Abraham, this King David, this the Apostle

Paul; this was Luther, Calvin, Bradford; this my father, this my son, this my wife, this my pastor, this the occasioner of my conversion.' 'If Adam, created in the divine image, knew Eve as one taken from his body (Gen. 2:23), shall not we, being changed into the same image from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord, recognise his bodily features, made holy and blessed?' (Chemnitzius). 'By all means! Those who in future shall be filled with the Holy Spirit and wisdom . . . shall both see and recognise one another.' (Buchanan). If the apostles who accompanied Christ in His transfiguration, being vouchsafed but a glimpse of glory, were able thereby to know Moses and Elias, whom they had never seen (Matt. 17:4), how much more shall we, being fully illuminated and perfectly glorified in heaven, know exactly all the blessed ones, though never acquainted with them on earth? Christ tells the Jews (Luke 13:28) that they shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God; they shall therefore know them. And if the rich man, being damned, is said to know Abraham and Lazarus, who were saved, at so great a distance (Luke 16:23), much more shall the glorified saints know one another, being plentifully endued with all knowledge and supernaturally enlightened by the Holy Ghost.

Many of the ancient fathers are of the same mind. There was a widow in Augustine's time, who, craving consolations under that incomparable cross of her widowhood, desired him to tell her whether she would know her husband in the after life. In reply, he hits upon the sweetest, mightiest and most sovereign comfort which could possibly be imagined: 'You can by no means think yourself desolate,' saith he, 'who enjoy by faith the presence and possession of Jesus Christ, in the inmost closet of your heart,' and adds: 'This thy husband, by whose death thou art called a widow, shall be most known unto thee . . . There shall be no strangers in heaven.' 'There,' saith Anselm, 'all men shall be known by each particular man, and each particular man shall be known by all . . . Conceive, if thou canst, how comfortable that knowledge will be!'

Yet let me tell you, before I pass from this point, that we shall not know our old acquaintances by their former stature and features, neither in a worldly manner. For Paul saith: 'Henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more'. (2 Cor. 5:16). Our mutual knowledge in heaven shall not be in outward and worldly respects, but divine and spiritual, as we know one another in Christ, by the illumination of the Spirit.

6. Lastly, we shall be beatifically enlightened with a clear and glorious sight of God Himself, which divines call Beatific Vision.

In a word, we shall know all things knowable.

But how shall God be known in heaven? Some say that God shall be known by a form or appearance representing the divine essence, and by a light of glory elevating the understanding with a supernatural strength. Others, that the divine essence shall be represented to the glorified understanding, not by any form, but immediately by itself, yet still with a light of glory to illumine the understanding. Still others hold that to the clear vision of God there is required only that the divine essence be immediately represented to the glorified understanding, without either form or light of glory.

But it is sufficient for a sober man to know, that in heaven we shall see Him face to face.

Meditation, on the folly of carnal people, who feed falsely their presumptuous conceptions of the world to come with golden dreams and vain hopes, in the meantime using no means and taking no pains to enter into the holy path which leads to that blessed place: O what fools are they, who willingly deprive themselves of this endless glory for a few stinking lusts! O what mad men are they, who bereave themselves of a room in this city, for a few carnal pleasures! O what beasts are they, who shut themselves out of these everlasting habitations, for a little transitory pelf! O what senseless wretches are they all, who wilfully bar themselves out of this palace of infinite pleasure, for the short fruition of worldly trash and trifles!

Meditation on the glory of heaven

O with what infinite sweetest delight may every truly gracious soul bathe itself beforehand (even in this vale of tears), in the ravishing contemplation of this most glorious place, in which he hath already an eternal blissful mansion, most certainly purchased and prepared for him by the blood of Jesus Christ! Let us therefore spend many thoughts upon it; let us enter into deep meditations of the inestimable glory of it; let us long until we come into the possession of it, even as the heir longeth for his inheritance; let us strive and strain to get into this golden city, where streets, walls, gates and all is gold; let us eagerly anticipate that confluence of all possible heavenly delights, when Jehovah, God blessed forever, shall familiarly and freely communicate Himself to us, to be beatifically seen and fully enjoyed face to face by all the elect forever!

(Revised and edited by J.M.B.).

Fornaci in Seventy-seven

As readers of the Magazine will know, we visited Italy again in April of last year. We would record our indebtedness to the Most High for having made the visit possible; it was remarkable how suitable accommodation was made available at Barga, about three miles from Fornaci. I will try to give an account of some aspects of our visit to Fornaci here, and next month I hope to write some more about Franco Maggiotto's work.

Discussions about Roman Catholicism

These discussions involved the others in our little group as well, but I will present them principally as conducted with Arturo Mazzei, the friend of Emelia's family who attends the services we held in Emelia's home.

On Thursday, 14th April we had a frank talk arising out of an address based on Matt. 15:25. I tried to emphasise how the Syro-Phoenician woman came directly to Christ, and how evidently this whole incident presents Him as the one Mediator between God and men.

Arturo maintained that he had no time for Mass, nor for the Confessional. I said that I could not understand anyone attending Mass (which he does very infrequently), who did not believe in the necessity for it. He said that his occasional visits to Church were to enable him to think about spiritual things. He thought it a good thing that people should go to hear about their duty (not to kill, not to steal, and so on).

After a time he said that he thought it did not matter much whether one were Roman Catholic or Protestant. The important thing was, to believe in God. I tried to point out that if we say we believe in God, and yet think that it does not matter whether or not we follow the revelation of His will in the Bible, it is a god of our own imagination that we are believing in.

On Wednesday, 20th April, we had another set-to. Arturo seemed to be swinging from one extreme to another. One minute he would say that there was no difference between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism: next minute he would say that, if we were right, he couldn't see how anybody 'would be able to be saved'.

I tried to explain the gospel to him, mentioning the difference of emphasis between the question the Jailor asked (Acts 16:30) and the answer which Paul gave (v 31). I then asked him what he would look to when he came to die. He said he hoped God would pardon him for what he had done wrong. However, he went on to say that he tried to fulfil

God's will in sincerity, and that if he did wrong he did not mean to do it. I tried to show that, where the Spirit of God is, there is a clear sense of the only basis on which salvation is looked for, and illustrated the point by telling about the father of a friend of ours. This man was dying, and a visitor who called to see him said, 'Well, you didn't drink and you didn't smoke; you lived a good life, you'll be all right'. But the dying man raised himself on his elbow in the bed and said, 'If I die trusting in my own righteousness, I will be a sorry spectacle on the Day of Judgment. I hope to die trusting in the righteousness of Christ'.

On Friday of that week we were at Arturo's for tea: afterwards I spoke briefly on Ps. 106:4. Arturo was again asking what he could do, because it seemed to him from what was being said that no one could save himself. He seems to think quite deeply at times: the Holy Spirit alone can make him understand the truth as it is in Jesus.

The Children

Simonetta is ten years old now, and her mother spoke of her as a comfort to her. Emelia said that Simonetta understood that the Mass was wrong, and that Christ's offering had been made once for ever.

It was good to hear this from Emelia, but even better to see evidence of it for ourselves. She obviously had a sincere interest in the Bible, and it was nothing for her to be wide awake at 10 p.m. and later, listening to it being discussed.

On the last Sabbath morning that we were there I told them that the sermon was intended especially for the children. At this the grandmother told them that they should pay attention, because they would not long have someone to explain the Scriptures to them. The boys said nothing, but Simonetta agreed heartily with what her Granny had said.

The subject that day was the parable of the Sower. I mention this to explain the reference at the end of the following quotation. This is a paragraph which Simonetta wrote to us at the end of a letter of her mother's after we had left.

'Every time when I pray with my family I remember you and think of these days when we prayed together. I hope that the Lord will give me the strength to read in some free moments and that I will manage to understand what I read. When I play, this thought disappears, but I hope that the birds will never carry away what you by the word have sown in my heart.'

The morning after our discussion based on Matt. 15:25, Simonetta apparently asked her mother: 'But what do I have to do — go to Church

or not?' Of course, for a child attending school in Italy, to refuse to go to Church would be a scandal. And there is another matter, too. The issue of whether or not Simonetta will be 'confirmed' in Church will soon arise, and without a certificate of confirmation, she cannot get married as far as the R.C. Church is concerned.

The boys were willing to listen, too, although they do not show the interest that their little sister shows. They all need to be remembered in prayer.

Emelia

The loneliness of Emelia and her mother has been referred to in previous articles, and is no doubt appreciated. When Isobel kept a Bible Study with the two of them Emelia said that, though she had asked others to join them, they had not agreed to do so. She used to have a close friend, but since Emelia had begun to have services in her house the friendship had stopped.

We have referred already, too, to Emelia's awareness of change in her spiritual experience. She said that sometimes she reads and prays out of a sense of duty. But on occasion she can hardly contain herself when coming across some precious part of Scripture. When we were reading the story of Naaman one Sabbath morning, she was evidently struck by Naaman's protesting that Abana and Pharpar were 'better than all the waters of Israel'. Afterwards she asked if that meant that men chose to go to other doctrines than what they receive from the Lord.

On another occasion I referred to the fruits of the Spirit (Galat. 5:22f). Emelia was quite affected by the passage, and said that she could not see evidence of these beautiful things in her life. She also said that, when she had first become interested in the gospel, she had thought that, to have the new birth would mean to be raised above all weaknesses, to overcome all defects. But she had found it different in experience: it was a fight.

To conclude this first article, here are a few sentences from a letter which Emelia sent in May:

' . . . I read your letter to everybody while we were seated at table. Simonetta said that she well remembers that Parable; but sometimes it is difficult for her to understand other parts of the Bible. She is interested in reading and every morning, before she goes to school, we read a chapter. From the bottom of my heart I ask the Lord, who sees and knows everything, that He will enable me to preserve right to the end of my days — for my own good and that of my family.

'... I am at peace when I think, not of my merits, but of the merits of Jesus. Then I ask: will I have the faith to love the Lord with all my mind and heart as He wishes? Lacking assurance, I become sad; this is the life that I have — incomprehensible even to me.

'... I have to give you the good news that, on Sabbath morning, we began to read the Lord's holy word all together — even Claudio. He decided not to go to Mass because it was raining. You can imagine the joy which I experienced in my heart; and for this I thank God. I hope that in consequence we will not meet obstacles; but, if we do, I ask God for the patience to be able to bear it.'

J. T.

Capital Punishment

Introduction

It should be a matter of grave concern to all that the number of violent crimes, and particularly of murders, is increasing yearly. In a recent letter to the Clerk of the Southern Presbytery, the Secretary of State expressed his own deep concern, adding that the reasons for this increase are not known, but that the solution must lie in 'new social attitudes' to the problem. The subjoined letter and brief summary of the teaching of Scripture on the subject may be useful in reminding our people of our belief that for cases of deliberate murder, the murderer must forfeit his own life. The sword of civil justice must not be allowed to rust while vile men practice their evil deeds. The extreme penalty must be inflicted on all who break the 6th commandment and rob their fellow-men of the precious gift of life.

Letter

Dear Mr Munro,—Thank you for your reply on behalf of the Secretary of State. While the Presbytery appreciate the Secretary of State's deep concern over the increase in violent crime and especially murder, we are surprised to read your claim that the reasons for this increase are not known. The Word of God explicitly gives two fundamental reasons for the crime of murder: (1) the innate inclination of men's hearts by nature towards evil. Christ Himself said: 'For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, etc. (Mark 7:21); (ii) the removal of restraints and deterrents (see Romans 1:24-32). We suggest therefore that the new social attitudes you mention which

society should adopt are: 1. In general, that life is sacred, and must on no account be taken except where it has been forfeited by sin, and only then by the hand of lawfully appointed civil rulers (see Romans 13:1-4). 2. That violent crime, and murder in particular, should be allotted the punishment it deserves, according to the sentence of the Supreme Lawgiver and Judge of all the earth: 'Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed' (Gen. 9:6). — Yours faithfully,

John M. Brentnall, Presbytery Clerk.

The Argument from Scripture

It is true that the first murder, that of Abel by his brother Cain, did not receive the death penalty as its due reward. Although, as Calvin says, the 'shaft of divine vengeance' transfixed Cain's whole frame with terror as the intimation of his punishment (Gen. 4:13-14), the murderer did not lose his life, either by the immediate hand of God, or by the delegated authority of men.

We are not to infer, however, from the Lord's merciful dealings with Cain, that the crime of murder was relieved of its heinousness as a capital offence. Only a few generations later, when human violence reached unprecedented heights, the Judge of all the earth gave vent to His holy hatred of it by sweeping the entire race, except Noah and his family, clean off the face of the earth. Here was divine justice in all its terrible severity — the bodies of the offenders were drowned by the Flood (Matt. 24:39), and their souls were cast into the prison of a lost eternity (1 Pet. 3:19-20).

To reinforce the awful lesson given by His own example, the Lord, on reorganising human society immediately afterwards, issued to Noah as the new head of mankind 'a statute which has never to this day been repealed' (Thomas Watson): 'Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed' (Gen. 9:6). 'Here', comments Oswald Allis, 'we have the warrant for capital punishment'.

Centuries later, when the Jewish nation was constituted at Sinai, capital punishment for murder was written into its legal code: 'And he that killeth any man shall surely be put to death' (Lev. 24:17); 'Moreover, ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death: but he shall be surely put to death' (Num. 35:31).

That God never ceased to reprobate the sin of murder is clear from His repeated denunciations of it in Israel and Judah. Through David, He threatens that 'bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days' (Ps. 55:23). For the innocent blood shed by Manasseh, Judah was

to be invaded by Nebuchadnezzar, 'for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; which the Lord would not pardon' (2 Kings 24:4). The Lord's controversy with Israel, too, was partly on account of her wanton killing, by which 'blood toucheth blood' (Hos. 4:2). Dying Zechariah also testified against it, calling for the Lord's just vengeance upon his murderers (2 Chron. 24:22).

The teaching of Christ also confirms our obligation to punish every violation of the 6th commandment with death. In the parables of the Wicked Husbandmen (Matt. 21:33-41) and the King's Marriage (Matt. 22:1-7), our Lord plainly links the crime of murder with the death penalty. The slayers of both the king's servants and the householder's son were all to be destroyed.

At His arrest in the garden, in the same breath in which He rejects personal defence by the sword (because His kingdom is not of this world), the Divine Redeemer asserts that this ancient symbol of the magistrate's power is to be exercised in human society (Matt. 26:52). All who take the sword 'without a just calling' (John Trapp), by seizing it on private impulse, as Peter had done, must perish by the sword, as wielded by lawful public authority.

Again, towards the close of the canon of Scripture, the Saviour places murderers amongst those who 'shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death' (Rev. 21:8). If the One into whose hands all judgment has been committed will consign wilful murderers to a lost eternity, then clearly their crime is worthy of death.

The mind of the inspired apostles is likewise perfectly plain as to the justness of the death penalty for murder. Paul, defending himself against the Jews before the governor Festus, avows his willingness to suffer the extreme penalty if found guilty of a capital offence. 'For if I be an offender' he says, 'or have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die' (Acts 25:11). Nothing could be more explicit.

Paul's Epistle to the Romans expresses the same conviction: 'But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he (i.e. the civil magistrate) beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil' (Rom. 13:4). God, as Supreme Lawgiver and Judge, has delegated the right to punish evil-doers to the civil magistrate. 'For this purpose, God has put the sword into his hand, and has armed him with legal authority' (Robert Haldane). Being the instrument of decapitation in ancient societies, the sword here symbolises the magistrate's right to inflict capital punishment. To fail to exercise

this right is a most blameworthy dereliction of duty. Indeed, where multiple murder has been committed, the civil ruler himself becomes guilty of all but the first offence if he fails to execute the murderer.

This crucial verse in Romans proves also that capital punishment is the most effective deterrent to murder: 'if thou do that which is evil, be afraid'. As Dr Owen observes: 'Amongst other things, it (i.e. the sword) is peculiarly subservient to' God's 'holy providence, in obstructing the bringing forth of conceived sin'. God fixes the awful prospect of the death sentence on the intending criminal's heart, 'and by the dread and terror of it closeth the womb of sin, that it shall not bring forth'. Neither is there a greater deterrent in human society, for 'all that a man hath will he give for his life' (Job 2:4).

A similar passage in Peter's 1st Epistle shows that the apostle of the circumcision was no less certain of the duty of civil rulers to mete out deserved punishment to their criminal subjects (1 Pet. 2:13-14). Both the supreme civil magistrate and those under him are responsible for the punishment of evil-doers. Wilful murderers therefore must be put to death.

The Argument from Natural Justice and Experience

'Besides these arguments from Scripture, there are others drawn from natural justice. It is a dictate of our moral nature that crime should be punished, that there should be a just proportion between the offence and the penalty, and that death, the highest penalty, is the proper punishment for the greatest of all crimes' (Charles Hodge). So strong is this instinctive judgment in us that conscience immediately demands vengeance on hearing of cases of atrocious murder. And where rulers have failed to exercise justice in such cases, either individuals or tumultuous assemblies have outrageously taken the law into their own hands. The murderer of President Kennedy was himself murdered for his crime, as were Cardinal Beaton and Archbishop Sharp for theirs.

Experience also teaches us that wherever human life is cheapened, it becomes insecure; and that where murderers escape with impunity or are inadequately punished, new murders are fearfully multiplied. Our own times bear tragic testimony to this truth. The only effective way to preserve life is to take away the life of the murderer.

It is instructive to see the law of natural justice operating in the natives of Melita. When they saw the viper fasten on Paul's hand, 'they said among themselves: No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live' (Acts 28:4).

Knowing the viper's sting to be mortal, 'they concluded that his crime was that of murder, as the highest known to human laws, and one appropriately punished by the loss of life' (J. A. Alexander). We need not be surprised at the barbarians' verdict, for the law of natural justice, when free to testify without the sentimental perversions of a modern false charity, will always accord with the moral law of God (Rom. 2:14-15). Murder is punishable only by death.

Objections

Several objections to capital punishment have been made, some of which deserve our consideration.

First, it is objected that the death penalty itself violates the 6th commandment. This, however, is not so. To kill a murderer is not murder; it is the execution of justice. The word actually used in the 6th commandment means 'murder', whereas the word employed in connection with the death sentence signifies 'to put to death', as in 2 Sam. 14:32.

Secondly, it is objected that the civil laws of the Mosaic theocracy have now been abrogated under the Gospel dispensation, and indeed that they were never binding on Gentile nations at any time. In reply, it must be remembered that the law protecting human life by the death of the murderer was given by God to Noah, long before the civil code was delivered to Israel. Like the Sabbath ordinance, it was given to all mankind to observe for all time, and not merely to the Jews for a season. Besides, there is not the slightest indication anywhere in Scripture that it has been abolished or superseded.

Thirdly, the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount are often invoked to deny capital punishment (see Matt. 5:38-39). Such non-vindictive utterances, however, refer to the personal behaviour of His disciples, not to the principles of civil jurisprudence. Failure to distinguish between teaching governing Christian conduct between man and man, and principles regulating the administration of justice through properly constituted courts, is bound to produce confusion. To apply the injunction 'Resist not evil' to society at large without qualification is to dispense with all soldiers, police, magistrates, law courts and prisons, and to fling open the flood gates of restraint to moral anarchy. We have no warrant or right to transfer to the sphere of public justice ethical teaching which belongs solely to the realm of private behaviour.

Lastly, the argument that the innocent are sometimes punished instead of the guilty is urged against the death penalty. To this we reply, that while such miscarriages of justice are a sad comment on the imperfection

of all things here in a fallen world, including the best judicial system we know, they do not cancel our obligation to honour the law and execute justice on convicted criminals. In any case, British justice has always inclined towards mercy rather than severity, thereby leaving less room for the erring punishment of the innocent.

Conclusion

'From the above instances, it is evident that the infliction of the death penalty on the murderer by the civil magistrate is a punishment which is based upon the divine revelation of God's mind in the Holy Scriptures. The matter is solemn, and dreadful, and serious, and the Government of this country should not be swayed to depart from Holy Writ on this particular matter, or any other matter, by those who have no clear understanding of the Scriptural principles involved. Other arguments, however plausible they may seem in themselves, can only bring forth evil fruits, the inevitable result of departing from the fountain of Divine Wisdom found in the Word of God.' (Synod Resolution re Capital Punishment, 1962). The rejection of the Scriptural teaching on the crime of murder is thus fraught with awful consequences to those involved. Any nation which tolerates murder by allowing the murderer to live in its midst is guilty before God of that very crime, for He has solemnly stated that 'the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it' (Num. 35:33). Capital punishment for murder, therefore, should be retained on the nation's Statute Book, and executed on all fairly convicted of this awful crime.

J.M.B.

Obituary

Rev. William Grant, Halkirk

William Grant was born at Dornoch, Sutherland, in May 1886. He was sixth in a family of eight. He was to be spared in this world to his ninetieth year, nearly forty of these years being spent in the active ministry of the Gospel.

Like many others called to the office of the ministry, William Grant was nurtured in the Gospel. Brought up in a home where he saw vital godliness, he received early impressions of the reality of true religion. The obituary of his mother, who like her son was early called by grace, is given in the F.P. Magazine Vol. 33, page 429. His father did not make a public profession. His mother said that she saw a difference in William's

life before the age of eight years. In childhood he had several escapes from death which may have helped to wean him from the things of this world and present to him his danger in view of eternity.

He recalled one incident which made a lasting impression on him. In his young days the services in Birichen School were conducted by men like David Ross, Angus Murray and Andrew Tallach. One day Angus Murray said to David Ross, who always conducted the service in Gaelic, "Have you not a word for the boys?" David Ross, unwilling to venture to speak in English himself, asked Angus Murray to pray. In the prayer he said, 'Bonny boys, would you like a new suit? — Yes, a new suit of gold! What is that? Yes, the righteousness of Christ.' These simple words were not forgotten by at least one young hearer that day. William Grant could recall, too, going as a young boy with his sister, Elsie, to the riverside to pray for mercy. At Communion seasons their home would be full of people. On one occasion the room where they were sitting was so full that it was suggested that the children be put out. His mother answered, "Oh no, let them go under the table. They may hear something for the benefit of their souls." William said about this event that though he loved his mother before, this incident made him love her more than ever. This suggests that his heart was already knit in his young days to the people of God. As well as having the benefit of Communion seasons at Dornoch his mother would take him with her to other places, such as Wick and Lairg. At Lairg Sandy Gray took a great interest in him and told his mother to keep him at school because he would one day be a minister of the Church.

He obtained his schooling at Dornoch Academy and then joined a branch of the Caledonian Bank in Dornoch. After his training he served in other places before moving to London in 1907. A new era of his life opened with his transfer to London. There he met for the first time Donald Sutherland, who had shortly before been brought from darkness to light. (Donald Sutherland's obituary appeared in the F.P. Magazine Vol. 22, page 181). It was William Grant, along with Donald Sutherland, who were instrumental in starting the London Mission of our Church. The Mission was formed on 29th March 1908. The first Communion was held on 26th December 1909 and at that Communion William Grant made a public profession of his interest in the Lord Jesus Christ. The following year both he and Donald Sutherland were ordained to the office of the deaconship. This was the beginning of a work in London which was to prove of great benefit to exiled Scots in London and to others, and is still in existence seventy years later. The establishment of

the Mission was largely due to William Grant's zeal and enthusiasm for the Cause of Christ. He ever after took the closest interest in its welfare.

The first World War called him from his desk. In 1915 he joined the 2nd Battalion of the Seaforth Highlanders. After his training in the North of Scotland he was sent to Aldershot and from there to France. There he remained until ill-health removed him back to England. While in France he corresponded with Rev. Neil Cameron, Glasgow, to whom he was greatly attached. On his discharge from the Army he returned to London until he could no longer resist the call he felt to go and preach the gospel. He was received as a student in Glasgow and followed the prescribed Arts Course in Glasgow University. Afterwards he attended divinity classes with Rev. Donald Beaton in Wick. During those student days and afterwards he was closely associated with the band of young men received for the ministry after the first World War. They were James and John Tallach, D. J. Matheson, Finlay Macleod, John Murray, Donald Urquhart and Robert R. Sinclair, the last named being the only surviving member of this group. Most of these were destined to be of service to the Cause of Christ during a particularly trying period of our Church's history. On completion of his course William Grant continued for a time assisting Mr Cameron in Glasgow, engaging in preaching duties and pastoral visitation in that large congregation. That his work was appreciated was evidenced by the gift given to him by the congregation when eventually in 1926 he left Glasgow to settle in the pastoral charge of Halkirk and Helmsdale in the far north of Scotland.

His labours in the North of Scotland were to extend over the long period of 38 years. Though he received calls during that time from congregations at home and abroad yet he deemed it his duty to remain in that part of the Lord's vineyard to which he was first directed. His labours, however, were not confined to that area. At Communion seasons he would be assisting at different places throughout the Church. At different times the burden of interim-moderatorships over other congregations fell on his shoulders. Immediately the concerns of these congregations became his concerns. Early in his ministry he was asked to visit the congregations in Canada. From that time Canada had a place in his heart and prayers. He travelled as far as Vancouver and conducted the first Communion season in connection with our Church in that city. His work on the committees of the Church cannot be overlooked. He served on a number of them and as Convener of some of them. His interest in the establishment of a Church Home of Rest is well known. While it took several years for his desires in this respect to materialise,

eventually his endeavours were rewarded. The Home remains as a monument to his interest in the needs of the elderly, especially of his interest in those who were the Lord's true people. Besides these Church interests, he gave his whole-hearted support to the Trinitarian Bible Society from the time that the National Bible Society of Scotland altered its constitution to allow the printing of unsatisfactory versions. He did all in his power to further the interests of the Trinitarian Bible Society and was appointed a Vice-President of the Society.

With regard to his preaching and pastoral work — his preaching was plain and direct and interspersed with suitable anecdotes and illustrations. He went out of his way to gain the ear of the young, both in the pulpit and in private. He would tell a pointed story or leave a portion of the truth with them. He loved the young and yearned and prayed for their early conversion. He would urge them to seek the Saviour but not to rest in seeking. He would say, seeking is not finding but the promise is that those that seek shall find. In his preaching, whatever else he brought before his hearers, he endeavoured to leave the text firmly imprinted on their mind. A text such as, 'Buy the truth and sell it not,' would be constantly reiterated throughout the sermon, and it would be a very deaf nearer who would not carry it away.

Of his pastoral work we cannot speak too highly. He assiduously engaged in these duties. Homes and hospitals he regarded as a field for his ministerial endeavours, visiting not only his own congregation in times of health as well as sickness, but also the homes of many of the Church people in the north. His visits, though brief, were appreciated by many. These calls were also extended to many outside the Church, wherever sickness or death or other circumstances opened a door of opportunity for him. There he entered on his Master's business to commend them to Christ and to commend Christ to them. In public, in private and in secret he was much given to prayer, laying before the Lord, not only his own needs but those also of his congregation and the Church at large. He often pleaded for the glorious days promised in God's Word, for the ingathering of the Jews into Messiah's kingdom, as well as for daily grace to live to God's glory. He remembered the young, the old, the middle-aged, the sick, the dying. He ever sought the prosperity of Christ's kingdom and the sending forth of labourers into the harvest. These things seemed to be constantly before his mind.

What was said of the centurion — "he loveth our nation; and he hath built us a synagogue" — was true of him too. He was a true patriot, loving our nation, not only as the land of his birth, but as the land whose

soil was watered with the blood of the martyrs and covenanters, and as the land where the Reformation Church had reached its meridian glory. He prayed for Scotland, for Scotland of the Covenants, believing that these would yet be her reviving. In the Second World War, conscious himself from his experiences in the First World War of the dangers to which the young men, the flower of the nation, were exposed, he was deeply affected by their plight and ceased not to remember them at a Throne of Grace. At Helmsdale, the story is told of him taking aside for prayer a group of young soldiers from that village at the railway station as they prepared to return to the dangers which at that time confronted them. That these young men were preserved to come home again was attributed by some in the village to the efficacy of the prayer offered on that occasion for their preservation and safe return. With regard to his 'building a synagogue', the Church in Thurso is one instance of his desire to extend the Cause of Christ in this way.

In 1964 the time came when through increasing age and infirmity he had to relinquish his charge. He removed to Dingwall to spend his last days there in retirement, though he continued for a period to give help from time to time with services. Latterly he was confined to his home but he continued to labour in prayers for the good of the Church of God throughout the whole world. Many friends visited him during his closing days and found him with his mind stayed upon his God. On the 26th of January 1976 the end came when he was called away from this life to enter, we believe, the house of many mansions to be forever with the Lord whom he had served here below. Of him it was fulfilled:

"Then are they glad because at rest,
and quiet now they be
So to the haven He them brings
which they desired to see.

During his long life, he remained loyally attached to the Church in which he had been brought up. Its witness on the side of truth he prized and he endeavoured to uphold it with all his might. He longed to see its witness extended at home and abroad.

He now rests from his labours. His remains were interred at Kiltearn Churchyard where the remains of the godly Thos. Hogg were laid more than 300 years before.

In concluding this obituary we would express our prayerful desire that his widow, Mrs Grant, would be daily upheld by the God of all grace. We acknowledge our indebtedness to her for information given about her

late husband. For the large circle of relatives we desire that they be followers of those who are now inheriting the promises.

“And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.”
(Rev. 14:13).

D. B. M.

Eadar-Mhineachadh Air Salm CXXX

Cionnus a tha e gu feud creidich tuiteam ann an doimhneachdaibh do bhrìgh peacaidh — Nàdur a' chomhpairteachaidh a tha Dia a' deanamh air gràs a' choimheheangail.

Anns a' cheud àit, Tha *nàdur a' choimhcheangail* anns am bheil na creidich uile a nis a' gluasad maille ri Dia, agus anns am bheil an t-iomlan de'n ulluchadh a rinneadh air an son chum ùmhlachd fillte suas, 'ga fhàgail *comasach* dhoibh tuiteam anns na doimhneachdaibh sin a dh'ainmicheachadh roimhe. Fo'n cheud choimhcheangal cha d'ulluicheadh tròcair no maitheanas air son peacaidh sam bith. B' éigin uime sin gu'm bitheadh na's leòir de ghràs air a thaisbeanadh ann as a dheanadh an gleidheadh o gach úile pheacadh, air neo cha b' urrainn e 'bhi chum feum sam bith. Be's so a bha fireantachd nàduir Dhé ag iarraidh, agus b' ann mar so a bha. Nam bitheadh coimhcheangal air a dheanamh anns nach d'ulluicheadh maitheanas idir, agus anns nach do thaisbeanadh na's leòir de ghràs na dheanadh an dream a bh' anns a' choimhcheangal a ghleidheadh o fheum a bhi aca dha, cha bhitheadh e coimh-fhreagarrach ri maitheas agus ri fireantachd nàduir Dhé. Ach rinn e an duine treibhdhireach, ged a dh' iarr e d' a shaor thoil féin, iomadh innleachd a mach.

Cha-n ann mar so a tha 'chùis ann an coimhcheangal nan gràs; tha maitheanas air ulluchadh ann tre fhuil Chrìosd; cha-n'eil e uime sin gu h-iomlan neo-sheachanta gu fritheileadh Dia a' shamhuil sin de thomhas gràis as a dheanadh daoine a ghleidheadh gu h-éifeachdach o gach uile pheacadh. Gidheadh tha e air na h-uile cor r'a ròghnachadh air thoiseach air a' cheud choimhcheangal; oir, a thuilleadh air an t-saorsa sin a th' ann tre mhaithanas, nach robh idir anns a' cheud aon, rinneadh mar an ceudna mòran ulluchaidh ann an aghaidh peacaidh, nach d' rinneadh idir anns a' cheud choimhcheangal:—

1. Tha ulluchadh air a dheanamh ann 'an aghaidh gach uile pheacaidh a dheanadh an coimhcheangal a bhriseadh, agus a dheanadh dealachadh

iomlan a chur eadar Dia agus an t-anam a bha aon uair air a thoirt a steach 'na bhann. Tha an t-ulluchadh so *iomlan*. Ghabh Dia féin os làimh so fhaicinn air a choimhlionadh, agus an lagh sin a dhaingneachadh anns a' choimhcheangal, nach bi e gu bràth air a sgaoileadh le peacadh sam bith; Faic Ier. xxxii. 40. Cha-n 'eil seasmhachd a' choimhcheangail so an crochadh air ni sam bith a tha annainn féin. Tha gach uile ni a tha annainn r'a chur 'an cleachdadh mar mheadhon coimhlionaidh a' gheallaidh so; ach tha crìoch na cúis an crochadh gu h-iomlan air dèiseachd Dhé. Agus tha an t-iomlan de chinnteachd agus de sheasmhachd a' choimhcheangail an crochadh air éifeachd a ghràis a th' air a fhrithéaladh ann, chum daoine a ghleidheadh o gach uile pheacadh leis am bitheadh e air a bhriseadh d' an taobh.

2. Anns a' choimhcheangal so tha ulluchadh air a dheanamh air son *Sìthe agus comhfhurtachd sheasmhaich, a dh' aindeoin ciont nam peacaidhean sin d'am bheil creidich gach aon la buailteach*. Ged a tha iad a' utiteam ann am *peacaidhibh* gach là, gidheadh cha-n' eil iad gach là a' tuiteam ann an *doimhneachdaibh*. A réir comh-shuidheachadh a' choimhcheangail so, feudaidd mothachadh peacaidh chum irioslachaidh a dhol làmh air làimh ri comhfhurtachd làidir. An déigh do'n abstol a bhi 'cur an céill an iomlain de'n chòmhrag a tha aig creidich ris a' pheacadh agus na leòntan minic a tha iad a' faotainn uaith, a tha 'dùsgadh ar glaoideh air son saorsa, Rom. vii 24, tha e 'comh-dhùnadh dh' aindeoin so uile, nach 'eil a nis "dlteadh sam bith dhoibh." Air a' mhodh cheudna, 1 Eoin ii. 1, "Na nithe so tha mi 'sgrìobhadh do 'ur n-ionnsuidh chum nach peacaich sibh. Agus ma pheacaicheas neach sam bith, tha fear-tagraidh againn maille ris an. Athair, Iosa Crìosd am fìrean." Is e bu chòir a bhi 'na phrìomh chùram dhuinn, nach peacaidheamaid; ach gidheadh, air dhuinn ar cùram a's mò a chur an cleachdadh, "ma their sinn nach 'eil peacadh againn, tha sinn 'gar mealladh féin," caib. i. 8. Cìod, ma seadh, a tha creutairean bochda, peacach, gus a dheanamh? C' uime, rachadh iad a dh' ionnsuidh an Athar trid am fear-tagraidh, agus cha dlobair iad ann a bhi 'faontainn maitheanas agus sìthe. Agus, a deir Pol. Eabh. vi. 17, 18, "tha Dia toileach gu'm bitheadh againne comhthurtachd làidir, a theich chum dldein gu gréim a dheanamh air an dòchas a chuireadh romhainn." Ged a dh' fheudas sinne cionta peacaidh a bhi air ar làmhaidh, air am bheil an lagh a' bagradh bàis, gidheadh, air dhuinn teicheadh a dh' ionnsuidh Chrìosd air son dldein, rinn Dia cha-n e mhain dìon ulluchadh air ar son, ach mar an ceudna "comhfhurtachd làidir." Cha-n e mhain gu bheil maitheanas ann am fuil Chrìosd a' toirt cionta air falbh o'n anam, ach mar an ceudna buaireas

o'n choguis. Air an aobhar so tha an t-abstol ag innseadh dhuinn, Eabh. x., nach b'urrainn lobairtean an lagha an luchd-aoraidh a dheanamh foirfe, chionn nach d' thug iad riamh air falbh coguis peacaidh; is e sin, àmhgharan coguis do bhrìgh peacaidh. "Ach a nis," a deir e, "ann an coimhcheangal nan gràs rinn Iosa Crìosd 'a chaoidh foirfe iadsan a tha air an naomhachadh,' rann 14; ag ulluchadh dhoibh a' shamhuil sin de sìth agus de chomhfhurtachd sheasmhaich, as nach bi feum dhoibh na h-lobairtean ath-nuadhachadh o là gu là," rann 18. Is é so dlomhaireachd mhòr an t-soisgeil ann am fuil Chrìosd, gu'm bitheadh aca-san a tha peacadhadh gach aon là sìth ri Dia ré an làithean uile, ma's e's gu bheil am peacaidhean 'an leth a stigh de na h-anmhuinneachdaibh sin an aghaidh am bheil an comhfhurtachd so air 'ullachadh.

3. Tha ulluchadh gràis air a dheanamh ann, *a ghleidheadh an anama o pheacaidhean mòra agus anabarrach*, a tha 'nan nàdur féin ullamh air a' choguis a lotadh, agus an t-anam a thilgeadh ann an doimhneachdaibh imcheisteach anns nach bi suaimhneas no sìth aige. Anns a' choimhcheangal so tha ro phailteas gràis air a fhrithealadh o'n lànachd a th' ann an Crìosd. Tha gràs a rìoghachadh ann, a' ceusadh agus a' sgrios "cuirp a' pheacaidh."

Ach cha-n 'eil frithealadh an ulluchaidh so a rinneadh ann an coimhcheangal nan gràs an aghaidh pheacaidhean a tha 'fàsachadh sìthe agus suaimhneis an anama, gu h-iomlan gun chumha. Tha frithealadh gràis a' choimhcheangail ann an tomhas mòr an crochadh air a bhi 'gleidheadh àitheantan a' choimhcheangail. Tha faire, agus ùrnuigh, agus cleachdadh criedimh, a' claidheadh peacaidh, a' cathachadh 'an aghaidh bhuaireidhean, gu dìchiollach, seasmhach, air an àithneadh dhuinn air gach làimh; agus sin chum a bhi 'faotainn comhpairt de'n ghràs a dh' ainmicheadh. Is iad na nithe so air ar taobh-ne an cumha air am bheil an ro phailteas gràis sin air fhrithealadh a tha gus ar gleidheadh o pheacaidhean a bhitheas a' fàsachadh suaimhneis an anama. Faic 2 Phead i. 3, 5-7. Cha-n fhoghain e, ma seadh, gu'm bitheadh slol agus freumh nan nithe so annaibh o'n Spiorad Naomh; ach gu'n tugadh sibh mar an ceudna fainear gu'm bi iad a' cinneachadh; oir as eugmhais so, ged a robh am freumh annaibh, ionnus nach bitheadh sibh gu h-iomlan marbh gu spioradail, gidheadh bithidh sibh 'nur creutairibh bochda, neo-tharbhach ré bhuir làithean uile. Ach a nis, ma's e's gu bheil na nithe so a' meudachadh maille ruinn, an sin, deir an t-abstol, "Ma na sibh na nithe so, cha tuit sibh a chaoidh." Ciod! an e nach *tuit sinn a chaoidh anns a' pheacadh*? Ni h-eadh, cha-n 'eil sin anns a' ghealladh; agus an ti sin a their, air dha na h-uile ni a dheanamh, "nach 'eil peacadh aige, is

breugair e." No an e nach *tuit iad gu buileach a Dhia?* Cha-n e; cha-n 'eil gleidheadh an taghaidh o thuiteam air falbh gu buileach an crochadh air an samhuil so de chumhachaibh, gu sònruichte air tomhas sam bith dhiubh, mar a tha r' a thuigsinn, le bhi 'meudachadh annta. Ach is e seadh an abstoil nach tuit iad 'nan seann pheacaidhean, o'n robh iad air an glanadh, rann 9, — na peacaidhean garbha sin anns an robh iad beò 'nan staid neoiompaichte, a dheanadh an coguisean a reubadh agus a thruaillleadh. Uime sin, ged a tha ulluchadh na's leòir deanta ann an coimhcheangal nan gràs tre Iosa Criosd chum a bhi 'gleidheadh an anama o pheacaidhibh buaireasach, gidheadh tha an t-ulluchadh sin air a fhrithealadh d'ar taobh-ne ann an coimh-cheangal ri cleachdadh dhìchiollach nam meadhona a chomharaicheadh dhuinn chum a bhi 'ga fhaotainn.

Notes and Comments

Sun Myung Moon

Rev. Sun Myung Moon is the leader of the Unification Church, which in the last ten years has extended its activities to some parts of this country. The teachings of the Church are claimed to be based on a series of revelations from God received by its leader. Most of the false sects in the world have originated in the same way, that is, by supposed special revelations from heaven. This sect, therefore, is no exception. The organisation claims to be a non-profit making educational and cultural movement.

The leader of this sect belongs to South Korea — a part of the world which was signally blessed this century (see the Review of The Korean Pentecost in a later issue). Sun Myung Moon belonged to the Presbyterian Church of Korea but was excommunicated from that body. The rise of false prophets is no new thing but was predicted by the Lord. The end of such and of their movements is to perish finally.

Some have alleged against this sect that its teachings are psychologically damaging. However that may be, its rejection of the final authority of God's Word stamps it as an anti-Christian and pernicious movement which draws men and women as well as young people away from the one Saviour of men.

'Christmas' Tree

In December a great furore was raised in the public press over the refusal of Mr Ian MacDonald, headmaster of Kiltarn School, to have a

'Christmas' tree in his school. A group of parents went so far as to try and insist that the tree be erected in the school.

It is well for readers to know that only a minority of parents took part in this action and Mr MacDonald has received wide support, not only from other parents in the district and from some of his staff, but also from many people throughout the country.

From the religious side, it is altogether pathetic that persons in a gospel land should have so lost sight of Biblical Christianity as to require a pagan symbol to fully express, as they say, the 'Christmas' spirit.

Another disturbing aspect of the matter is that something having no bearing on education was used in an attempt to discredit the headmaster. It is to be hoped that the matter will be brought to a speedy end, but it does give warning of the difficulties that may lie ahead for persons with conscientious scruples to occupy high places in education. We are reminded too that oftentimes none are so intolerant as those who cry loudest for toleration.

Roman Catholic Propaganda

An advertisement which appeared in the "Daily Telegraph" in November was entitled, "How to be a whiz at being anti-catholic." It was inserted, as one might well surmise, by the Roman Catholic Enquiry Centre and offered to put anti-Catholics up-to-date on Roman Catholic teaching. Having this information "straight from the horse's mouth," as they said, the readers would have all the ammunition they needed "to be a whiz at being an anti-Catholic."

Having read the advertisement, one could readily say "You can trust the Romanists to be Romanists." Here subtlety and deviousness are linked with barefaced effrontery as the Romanists try to ensnare the unwary. How true this is to the spirit of Romanism — a religion that is founded on deceit. The lie inherent in the term 'anti-Catholic', too, is fully consistent with the spirit of Roman Catholicism. We may have opportunity in the future (D.V.) to refer to the subtlety of the propaganda put out by this organisation.

Church Notes

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

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

Southern: At Glasgow on 14th February at 6 p.m.

Helmsdale Communion

The Halkirk and Helmsdale Kirk Session wish to intimate that there will be no Communion in Helmsdale in June 1978. This decision is taken by the Court with regret after considering the wishes of the people in Helmsdale.

D. A. MACLEAN, Moderator.

Young People's Conference

It is hoped to hold the Young People's Conference in Dunningel Guest House, Kyleakin, April 6th-8th (D.V.). It is hoped that by holding the Conference in the West more from the Western seaboard will be encouraged to attend.

The Conference is open to young people between the ages of 16 and 30.

A more detailed notice of the programme will be given in next month's magazine (D.V.).

The committee hopes that some degree of subsidisation of the Conference may be possible this year.

S.F.T.

Acknowledgment of Donations

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

Sustentation Fund: "In memory of loving Free Presbyterian, Canada," £324.09; R.M.K., Harris, £10; Anon., Greenock, £30; Mrs D. Clark, Assynt, Sutherland, £6.

Home Mission Fund: "In memory of loving Free Presbyterian, Canada," £324.09; Anon., Greenock, £16.

Jewish and Foreign Mission Fund: "In memory of loving Free Presbyterian, Canada," £324.09; Anon., Greenock, £40; Portree Sabbath School, £100 for African Mission.

Aged and Infirm Ministers', etc. Fund: Anon., Greenock, £10.

College and Library Fund: Anon., Greenock, £7.

Organisation Fund: Anon., Greenock, £7.

General Building Fund: Anon., Greenock, £10.

Dominions and Overseas Fund: Anon., Greenock, £10; Mrs Zeigler, Texas, £52.34; Anon., Vancouver, £24.13; Anon., Vancouver, £120.67, last three for "Fede Viva."

Home of Rest Fund: Friend, £3 for petrol; Estate of late Miss A. C. Munro, £200; Daviot Harvest Thanksgiving, £55; Stratherrick Congregation, £43.55; Provost I. C. Fraser, Inverness, from Provost's Benevolent Fund, £200; Tomatin Congregation Harvest Thanksgiving, £36.

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

Applecross: In memory of loving Free Presbyterian, Canada, £486.13.

Barnoldswick: Anon., £2; C. MacK., F.P. Home of Rest, Inverness, £1 for Communion Expenses.

Bracadale: Mrs F., Carbost, £2 for Congregational Purposes; The Campbell Brothers, Carbost More, £2 for Sustentation Fund, both per Rev. D. J. MacDonald.

Dumbarton: Raasay Friend, £2 for Manse Purchase, per T. MacRae; L. F., Dumbarton, £1.40 for Magazine Fund; Sabbath School, £5 for Congregational Fund (in plate).

Edinburgh: Friend, Inverness, £5 for Edinburgh Congregational Funds; Friend, Glasgow, £12.50 for Italian Mission Fund (Study Centre); Anon., £12 (envelope in plate) for Sustentation Fund.

Fort William: Mrs C., Onich, £40 for Congregational Purposes; MacL., Tyndrum, £5; Mrs MacD., Tyndrum, £1; Inverness Friends, to be used where most needed, £5, all per Rev. J. A. MacD.; Envelope in plate, Car Fund, £1.

Glasgow: Anon., £5; M. M., £2; M. S., £2.50; M. and S. M., £1, per J. P. D.; Anon., £2; Anon., £2, all for Bus Fund; May God Bless, £7 for Home of Rest; M. G., £5 for Aged and Infirm Ministers, etc. Fund, per Rev. D. M.; Anon., £100 for College and Library Fund; Anon., £150 for Sustentation Fund; Mrs N. H., £1 for Sustentation Fund, per Rev. D. M.; M. S., £2.50; Anon., £5, both for Communion Expenses; Anon., £30 for Congregational Fund, per Rev. D. M.

Kinlochbervie and Scourie: For work in Italy from J. B., Dumbarton postmark, £5; In memory of loving Free Presbyterian, Canada, £486.13.

Lochinver: I. G., Stornoway, £5 for Sustentation Fund, per Rev. A. MacAskill.

London: Anon., £200 for London Church and Manse Building Fund.

North Harris: Tarbert Church plate, £10 for Church and Manse Maintenance; Friend, Stockinish, £3; Friend, Stockinish, £3, both for Church and Manse Property; Friend, Stockinish, £5 (£1 for Car Fund and £4 for Church and Manse Property); Two Friends, Stockinish, £6 (£2 for Car Fund, £4 for Church and Manse Property); Friend, Grosebay, £10 for Church and Manse Property; Friend, Harris, £1 for Car Fund; Friend, Tarbert, £5 (£2 for Car Fund, £3 for Church and Manse Property), last seven per Rev. A. MacKay; Friend, Bayhead, Meavag, £5 for Car Fund; Friend, Drinishader, £1 for Car Fund.

Perth, Stirling and Dundee: P. S. D., £5 for Church Extension Fund; Anon., £5 for Congregational Expenses; MacKay, £5 for Communion Fund, all in Church plate; Raasay Friend, £5; Mr and Mrs F. McL., Edinburgh, £6; Mrs P. MacK., Edinburgh, £2; Interested, Ness, £30; Anon., for furthering the Gospel in Covenanting Region, £7, all for Manse Fund; Friend, Stenhousemuir, £10 and £2; Glasgow Friend, £5; Anon., £5 (August).

Plockton/Kyle: Mr and Mrs A. M., Achmore, £5; Envelope in plate, £10 (twice); K. and C. MacA., Portree, £10; Friend, Edinburgh, £10; Friend, Edinburgh, £10; both per Mr I. MacDuig; Broadford Friends, £5; In loving memory of a dear father and loving husband, North Tolsta, £5; C. A. MacL., £10; Friend of the Cause, North Tolsta, £10, per Mr I. MacCuaig, Envelope in plate, £10; Friend at Laide, £5, per Rev. A. Murray.

Portree: Anon., £5 (Church plate); Anon., £3 per F. M., both for Braes Church Bus; Anon., £5 (Church plate); Anon., in memory of a dear father and grandfather, £10; Mrs R. L., £5, last two per F. M., last three for Congregational Purposes.

Raasay: Raasay Friend, £20 per Rev. D. Nicolson; Anon., £20, both for Sustentation Fund; Anon., £15 for Church door collection; Raasay Friend, £1; In memory of a loving sister, £120, both for Congregational Purposes; In memory of a beloved wife, £10 for Property Fund.

Stornoway: A Wellwisher, £2 for Mission Fund per A. Murray; Friend, £10 for Congregational Funds per Rev. J. Macleod.

Strath: Friend, Ardersier, £5 for Sustentation Fund (envelope in plate).

Ulg: Wellwisher, £40 per M. M.; M. M., Stornoway, £10; Mrs M., Valtos, £10; Anon., £5; Wellwisher, Stornoway, £5, all for Manse Repair; Mrs M., Valtos, £5; Anon., £5, both for Car Fund (last six by envelope in plate).