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Who is on the Lord's side?

This call was uttered by Moses at a most solemn moment in the history of the children of Israel — at the time when they worshipped the golden calf. Only a short time before this they had seen the power of the Lord's arm displayed in their deliverance out of Egypt. They had only lately seen the miracles of the Lord in the plagues on Egypt, the opening of a way for them through the deep and the destruction of the Egyptians in the Red Sea. As if that were not enough to constrain them to serve the Lord, the Lord had given a further display of His glory on Mount Sinai. But all this was soon forgotten and Moses in returning from the Mount finds them in the very midst of the idolatry which they had been specifically warned to eschew.

It would appear that Aaron was an unwilling partner in their sin. Fear of the people and fear for his life overcame him. He was conscious, no doubt, of the rascally mood of the multitude and that they would not be thwarted in their plans. This, however, did not excuse him in yielding to their insistent demand: "Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him."

That this defection of the children of Israel took place while Moses was in the Mount with God rendered them all the more culpable. There God was giving Moses laws and statutes for the people, including the moral and ceremonial laws, as well as various civil laws for governing the theocracy. Moses was a mediator between God and the people. The people had requested that God speak no more with them face to face so terror stricken were they at the sound of the trumpet and the voice of words. Yet how soon they forgot God. Moses returns to find them worshipping the golden calf and engaged in the shameful practices of the heathen. On seeing this, he casts from his hands the tables of stone

bearing the written law of God, breaking them in pieces, for his anger waxed hot when he saw the calf and the dancing. The calf he burnt in the fire and ground it to powder and made the children of Israel drink of it, and said to Aaron, his brother: "What did the people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them."

It was in this situation — a situation of gross apostasy from God — that Moses issued that searching and separating call: "Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me." To this standard all the sons of Levi gathered themselves and to them were issued specific instructions for the infliction of swift retribution upon the shameless idolaters in Israel. They were told: "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour," and there fell that day 3000 men. "Ye have sinned a great sin" was the verdict of Moses on Israel's sin. And how pathetic and heart-rending was his plea at the Lord's footstool: "Yet now if Thou wilt forgive their sin—, and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written."

"Who is on the Lord's side?" is a call that still goes forth. In a day of apostasy such as ours how applicable it is. It is a separating call to men to forsake sin and to take vengeance on their iniquities. In this day of abounding iniquity, when the love of many waxes cold, the cry is heard, "Who is on the Lord's side?" We must face this cry ourselves and give our response to it. How much is involved in being on the Lord's side. It involves separation from evil of every kind. Wherever grace is in the heart that person desires to cast off the works of darkness and to put on the armour of light. We need the new heart and a right spirit if we are to be truly on the Lord's side. We must be opposed, not only to the sin which we see in the world but also to the sin which we find within our own bosom.

"Who is on the Lord's side?" is also a separating call as it relates to allegiance to a Scriptural testimony in the Church of God in the world. We are not warranted to join ourselves to any Church or organisation merely because that Church or organisation cries out: "We are on the Lord's side." We must examine the claim of each in the light of God's Word. The Church of Rome cries out, not only "We are on the Lord's side," but also "**We only** are on the Lord's side." All the while her doctrines and practices declare her to be against the Lord and His Christ. The World Council of Churches cries out, "We are on the Lord's side," and goes on to claim, "We have the Spirit of Christ because we

seek outward unity among the Churches of Christendom." All the while the W.C.C. is an enemy of the true unity which the Word of God inculcates — that is, unity in the truth, which alone can lay the basis for God-honouring outward unity. So, too, must we examine the claims of all who say, "We are on the Lord's side," and establish in which respects such a claim is or is not honoured.

In the same way let us examine the claims of our own Church as to its witness on the side of Christ. Let us examine it in the light of God's Word in its teachings, practices, discipline and government. Are these Scriptural, or are they not? If not, then we must conclude that we have failed to maintain the witness for truth raised in 1893 by the Fathers of our Church — which was a testimony for the whole Word of God. If it is not still amongst us, we are warranted to go and seek it elsewhere. On the other hand, if it is still maintained in our midst in the face of much weakness and difficulty, then we are not warranted to forsake it, but to cleave to it and seek to maintain it with our whole heart, until it shall please the Lord to pour out His Spirit to revive His work throughout our beloved land, and throughout the nations of the world. If we have it still, then let us be thankful for it and be humbled in the dust because of it — for verily we are unworthy of it.

Sermon

by the late Rev. Malcolm MacSween, Oban

(Preached at Oban on Sabbath, 14th December 1975).

"So He bringeth them unto their desired haven." (Psalm 107:30).

The word 'haven' in Hebrew means a place of collection, of gathering, where ships collect. Spiritually, it is heaven, the gathering place of the people of God. May we this day be exercised with respect to what the Saviour says in John, about heaven, that it is the place for which all the Lord's people are being prepared, to be kept in their mind's eye, as the place to which they are hastening. This place is for a certain people, the Lord's people. If they are to be brought into the harbour, they must first come through the seas to reach it. And if their voyage is by sea, they must leave the land. And if they leave the land, it is because the Holy Ghost has awakened them to see their sin, their dire peril and their great need. Plainly, they could not stay where they were. They were shown by the Spirit of God that their native country is appointed to certain destruction. Like Christian in the "Pilgrim's Progress," they were told to

flee out of the city of destruction. Hence, they 'go down to the sea in ships,' they 'do business in great waters' (v. 23). They are drawn, driven forth, their eyes being opened to see that all else will perish, that sinners are under God's curse, and that that curse pertains to themselves. 'Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them' (Gal. 3:10). Hence, they are brought to feel that they can never satisfy God's holy law and its requirements. This is a mark upon them; let us try ourselves — this searching question fills their hearts: 'How can a man be just before God' (Job 9:2). But God by His grace in effectual calling separates them to seek Himself, to take a spiritual voyage, that they might come at last to the port of heaven.

There are four things to be considered in relation to the text and context:

- (1) They do business in great waters (v. 23);
- (2) The storms through which this tried people must go (v. 25-27);
- (3) They cry to the Lord in their trouble (v. 28);
- (4) 'So He bringeth them unto their desired haven' (v. 30).

(1) Some of you, my dear friends, can look back to those early days when you did business in great waters, searchings of heart, distress of soul, conviction of sin, fear of being lost forever. By divine grace, you were brought out of the world that you might cry to God in your great peril and need. You are a blessed people, and you will be occupied to all eternity in sitting around the Master's feet and telling the wonders of His love. It is common amongst mariners to tell of their experiences on the sea, the storms they passed through, the wonders they have seen and experienced. Thus, when the Lord's people get to heaven, they will be occupied in praising and blessing God and recounting His mercies to them by the way. They have seen His works, His great work in the plan of salvation. Did we ourselves? On your way to eternity this day, did you? How God eternally loved His people, sent His Son to die for them, to be the propitiation for their sins: how His spirit quickened the sinner and revealed to him his need and revealed Christ to his soul? These are the works of the Lord. O that a way was ever opened whereby a sinner can escape the wrath to come! Have you seen His wonders in the deep? Have you seen them in your own experience? For all the religion of some is in the head, with nothing at all in the heart. God knows all things. These people see much in the deep of electing love, rich grace, sovereign mercy — this is known and felt in their hearts. But it is a solemn thing to but seem to have. 'Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not (though he seems to have),

from him shall be taken away even that he hath' (Matt. 13:12). All spiritually living characters, saved sinners, see God's wonders in the deep — His works, the wonders of redeeming love. Those who are accepted in the Beloved, God gives them sooner or later, an earnest of heaven, the sealing of the Spirit. O how wonderful to them! 'What! O Lord, canst Thou love a sinner like me? Hast Thou put all my sins away by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ? Hast Thou promised to bring me through stormy waters and lead me safe into the haven of heaven?' Who can speak of these things as they should be spoken of? These wonders of God's grace and love to poor sinners!

(2) The Storms: It is a trying experience when at times the soul mounts up to heaven, then down again to the deep, and the soul is melted. There is a touch of this literally, on board ship. When a sailor emerges from the hatchway, and is thrown on the deck, he is fearful of being washed overboard, and is glad to grasp whatever is within reach. But all this is nothing compared with what the Lord leads His people through in their spiritual experience. They reel and stagger like a drunken man. O the bitterness of it, the pain and sorrow. The Lord only knows what they feel, yet they are not without hope that through God's infinite mercy, they are bound for the desired haven. God here gives them the earnest of the Spirit, and they shall have possession by and by. But O the storms and tempests through which the Lord's people pass — troubles, temptations, afflictions. Sometimes their hopes rise heavenwards, sometimes their fears bring them down to the depths. They are utterly helpless in their soul trouble. There may be some poor soul here today who is melted because of trouble: all your strength is gone, you are unable to stand against these things: you are at your wits end, reeling to and fro in secret before the Lord, staggering like a drunken man. The world thinks these people strange characters, yet they are all destined to come to heaven, to be forever with the Lord. But O the bitterness of their troubles! Their soul will ask 'Lord, shall I ever come through this trouble? Shall I ever survive these things?' The heart is so guilty and ashamed. They say 'Lord, have pity on a poor worthless worm. O, Lord, help me in my trouble. Thou who crossed the stormy waters of the sea of Galilee and spoke peace and calm to them, enable me to feel that Thou art with me, and that I shall never make shipwreck of my faith in spite of all I am and all that threatens me.'

Now observe carefully 'He commandeth.' We may say 'I have not been looking there. I looked at this cause and that cause. I was forgetful that it is God who commands and raises the stormy wind.' All comes from the

Lord. God has control of all the troubles and distresses of spiritual mariners. The proud, self righteous, conceited Pharisee may go on in his quiet way, while the child of God encounters grievous temptations, losses, trials, disappointments, and Satan thrusting at him and saying 'God hath forsaken him.' Surely that is a dreadful work to get in the midst of a storm. The great adversary Satan takes advantage of the deep trials of the children of God and says 'There is no help for you in God' (Ps. 3:2). Like David in Psalm 3 when he was fleeing from Absalom, they must say 'Many say of my soul, For him in God no succour lies' (v. 2).

(3) They cry to God in their trouble. This is also true of these spiritual mariners. Blessed be the Lord that they are ever brought to call upon His name! In their first distress, they cried 'Lord save me, or I perish,' so now, in their trouble, they seek God for help. Do we do that? Do you today on the way to eternity? Do not put it off until tomorrow or next year. Do it now. Cry 'Lord, save me, or I perish.'

Now, in their trouble, the Lord's people seek His help. You say: 'Do you yourself?' Not as I would, and not as I ought. How backward the Lord's people find themselves to pray. How slow to call upon the name of the Lord. How slow. How weak they think their prayers. Nevertheless they cry to God in their troubles, many times. Sometimes matters seem impossible. Some of your own matters may seem impossible today. Certainly you cannot put them right. Also, others cannot put them right. But all power in heaven and earth lies with Christ.

'They cry.' In our folly, we may speak unkindly sometimes of the people of God; but could we see them before God in secret, groaning to Him in their trouble, our hearts would be moved for them. We would weep with them, and help with their burdens, and pray for them. 'Then they cry.' Some of you may be ready to do that now, as we are endeavouring to speak to you in our poor faltering way. 'We are laying our case before the Lord,' you may say, 'but I am so tried about my prayers, because I seem to be asking for the same thing, time and time and time again, and often in the same words.' You are concerned about that and cast down about that. Well, why may you not do so? If what you have need of before God is still with you, you will ask in the same or similar words. Remember the Garden of Gethsemane where the Son of God prayed to His Father — we are told 'And He prayed the third time, saying the same words' (Matt. 26:44).

Now the Lord in answer to this cry sent these spiritual mariners calm. 'Then are they glad because they be quiet.' He takes their mind back to this place and that place in the spiritual ocean where the Lord in answer

to their spiritual cries sent a wonderful calm and quietness. Sometimes, it is found in the house of God; sometimes in their own home; sometimes outside; sometimes inside. The storm is hushed and the tempest for a while ceases. The winds no longer blow, and the Lord whispers peace to the broken heart. And the soul says: 'I shall get through, for the Lord is with me. He graciously hears my prayer. O that the Lord Jesus Christ would steer me over my grief and be my pilot in every storm.'

(4) 'So he bringeth them unto their desired haven.' There are at least three things wrapped up in this little word "so":

(i) It declares to us the faithfulness of God. 'So He bringeth them.' No storms and tempests could ever thwart the purposes of a faithful God. His people are not lost by the way. God's eternal purpose of love is not, nor ever could be, thwarted. No matter what His people are called on to pass through, nothing can frustrate their coming to the desired haven.

(ii) It also expresses the manner of their voyage and entering into the haven. 'So', it is so, in this way, in this manner, that their voyage is to be. Not on smooth seas, but in stormy waters. 'They mount up to the heaven; they go down again to the depths. Their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits end.' 'So,' in that manner, it is through much tribulation that the Lord's people must enter the kingdom. If our voyage is smooth and easy and calm, let us look well to it; this is not the way. Let us bless God indeed for temporal mercies, but let us see that they do not become a snare to us, to take us off from being diligent to make our calling and election sure. Let this be the thought of our heart if our passage seems smooth and is apparently unruffled, if we are not exercised before God. Let us fear the treacherous calm more than the tempest over our head.

(iii) It is an expression of God's power. God's almighty power is put forth for the salvation of weak and helpless men. 'So' . . . The haven is ever before the people of God. These precious things of the Gospel shall be spoken of forever and ever in heaven. Their desire goes out towards that heavenly country. O to see it afar off, and be given a sure persuasion that we shall reach it. 'So He bringeth them into their desired haven.' All the Lord's people will soon be landed on the shore of eternal happiness. There, their powers will be expanded, and they shall dwell forever where Jesus is. 'In My Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I should have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.' (John 14:2).

'So.' Heaven is often said to be the home of the Lord's people. Heaven is their haven. There is no better description of the Church of God than that of a ship. The ship is out at sea, the Lord's people are on their way

home. The bow is towards the good haven, the land of the blessed. In this fair haven, the land of promise, there are no storms, none within and none without. There is no sin there forevermore, no panics, no losses, no worries, but there the Lord's people are free from all the storms that ever tossed them on the sea of time. O friend, heaven is that haven from which the ship shall never make another voyage. She shall be home for good, no longer mortal, for this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruption shall put on incorruption. Whatever voyages she may make on the sea of time, all will be well in the haven forever and ever. Throughout eternity the people of God shall sail on a sea of glass. They will never say 'I am sick.' No, that is for the sea of time. That is where sin is, and trouble is. Heaven is the desired haven to all who have run to the haven Christ, with their sins in time. They may well long to be there where there is no sin, no trials, no troubles, no temptations, no sorrow, but only perfect happiness. Then they shall be with Jesus: where He is, there with their friends and brethren in Christ who have gone before. Friend, are you homeward bound, in the sense that you have come into the haven Christ as a lost sinner and are now looking to be in heaven for evermore? Most of all, heaven is their desired haven because Christ is there. O, will I ever get into Christ the haven? Will I ever get into heaven? Never, except the Holy Spirit bring me there. The Lord's people need not be astonished at the storms and tempests. Let the believer who is getting grey turn up his log book (of the memory) and see how many days generally he has been in smooth waters. How many? Not many. For all the experiences and storms he has come through, he may expect more than one storm yet before he reaches the celestial shore. But for all that: 'So he bringeth them to their desired haven.' Ah, He says 'Tribulation'; we say 'Surely not,' but He says 'Yes, you will have tribulation.' So the Lord's people are to endeavour to be of good cheer. The Saviour also says: 'Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world' (John 16:33). 'So He bringeth them to their desired haven.' Not every sinner is brought to Christ and heaven. Ah, the natural man does not desire to be brought to Christ. 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are spiritually discerned' (1 Cor. 2:14). The natural man, destitute of the Spirit of God, cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned. The natural man and the worldly wiseman receive nothing by faith. He will not acknowledge his need of the work of the Holy Spirit of God. He is a Pelagian at heart. The things of the Spirit are foolishness in the eyes of the natural man. They are spiritually discerned, because they are made known only by the revelation of the Spirit. Who are

they who are brought to the desired haven? According to the text and context, such as cry unto the Lord in their trouble. Now, the question we must ask is: Are you yourself a crying soul, in a spiritual Gospel sense? Are you pleading and entreating God's mercy and deliverance? You say 'I would pray with my whole heart, but I cannot get it out.' Well feel it within your soul, for God can see your heart, and hear your cry and your desire. He heareth the desire of the humble (Ps. 10:17). Oh see that you pray the prayer of the publican — 'God be merciful to me, a sinner' (Luke 18:13). See that you come to Christ the haven in time, and find rest for your soul that you can never find in any other way. 'All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me' (John 6:37). They shall come, not against their will, though they were unwilling. He has a way of making them willing, in the day of His power, by the power of the Spirit. Everyone who is given to Christ will come to Him, yes, even blind sinners, for He will lead the blind by a way that they knew not; even the dead spiritually: dead in trespasses and sins, for Christ quickens the soul. Oh, He makes a willing people in the day of His power to come to Him and be His forever. Why does Christ tell us that all who are given Him shall come to Him? To comfort ministers and preachers who preach sin and salvation in season and out of season. Though it is heartbreaking work preaching Christ to sinners who will not have Him, yet Christ says: 'Your labour is not in vain in the Lord, for all that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me.' If those who are first invited make excuses, others will accept the Gospel invitation. If the scribes and Pharisees stand away from the haven, publicans and harlots will make for it. None are cast out who come. 'Behold, I make all things new' (Rev. 21:5). 'If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature' (2 Cor. 5:17). If that is so when a poor sinner flies to Christ here, how much is it more so when a poor sinner arrives in the haven of glory.

In Revelation, Christ gives His names of honour as a pledge for the full performance of all He has promised to His people. 'I am Alpha and Omega.' Christ begins in time with His people savingly with His Word and Spirit, so He brings them to Himself in time, then in eternity. 'So He bringeth them unto their desired haven.'

Let thy hope of heaven master thy fear of death. Why shouldst thou be afraid to die, who hopest to live by dying.

William Turnall.

Nothing to Pay

(Continued from page 102)

After a few days I called again. "Well, Reid," said I, "how have you been since I saw you last?" "Bad," was his only reply. "How have you felt in your mind?" "I have my own thoughts," he answered gruffly; "but I don't choose to be questioned." "To your own Master you stand or fall," I said; "but you seem very ill — time flies — eternity is at hand — you must soon appear before God; and what is to become of your never-dying soul?" "Damned," he answered sternly. "May God fasten that upon your heart as a nail in a sure place," I said; "for so sure as He does, He will draw out the nail, and drop in its stead the blood of the Lamb." The man looked gloomy. "Well," said he, "I have thought of all you said to me, and it seems to me to mean this:—One man may try all he can, and if he is not chosen he cannot be saved; and another man may not try at all, and yet if he is chosen he shall be saved." "Just so," said I; "you are quite right. I would only add this to what you have said, all the trying that comes from sinful man will go for nothing, certainly; but those who are chosen of God will be taught by God to try rightly, for Jesus says, 'All that the Father hath given me *shall come to me*, and him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.' When God begins with a sinner, a sinner will begin with God, and never before." I saw Reid was greatly vexed I did not disapprove of his statement. "Well," he replied angrily, "I call that cruel. A man to do all he can, and get nothing — another never move a peg, and get everything; as if I'd believe that." "It is quite impossible to believe it savingly," I replied, "unless God reveal it to you." Reid looked as if he did not hear me, but was pursuing his own train of thought. "And now," said he, "how can God be just in punishing sinners that can't help it?" "Let God answer that," I replied; and taking up a Testament that lay on the table, I opened at the ninth of Romans, and began from verse 13 to 20 — the very words he almost literally uttered. "Thou wilt say then with me, Why doth He yet find fault? For who hath resisted His will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" The piercing eyes of Reid peered into the page, as if questioning whether I had read aright, or supplied the text for my own turn. "Now," said I, handing him the open book, "the Holy Ghost leaves it where you and I must, whether we like it or not." "And yet," said he, glancing at the text as he laid the book on the table, "it's unreasonable. Make all of the same lump — choose some, and damn the

rest." "Yes," replied I; "most unreasonable; for the Bible says, 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; *neither can he know them*, for they are spiritually discerned.' Man's reason, like all his other powers, is fallen and corrupt, and so he is incapable of judging the things of God — he puts bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter — darkness for light, and light for darkness. Nor is this the only truth beyond and contrary to man's reason; there are many more quite as unreasonable, but none hits so hard or comes so home as this. It pushes proud man into a corner he cannot get out of — it stops all boasting — it cuts down all human efforts — it says you are in or out — and it puts all the power in God alone. Hence fallen man hates this doctrine, and the devil, who lost heaven because he had no interest in it, hates it with a deadly hate, and stirs up the wrath of sinners against it." "Did you ever hate it then?" asked Reid with somewhat of softened inquisitiveness. "When dead in sin, I never troubled about it," I answered. "When living in a formal state of profession, I believed it to mean the Jews, chosen by God as a nation. When a little serious about my soul, I supposed people were chosen for good works God foresaw they would do; but — when brought to this point, *nothing to pay*, began to see salvation must be all of grace, and that my polluted hand could take no part in the work. At length, by the application of this scripture, 'Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated,' the Lord slew my enmity — brought me a willing captive to bow to His truth, and some time after gave me a precious experience that I had an interest in His electing love." "Well now," said Reid, as if gathering strength by silence. "is there not a great deal in the Bible that looks as if we could do something?" "No," I replied; "'God is of one mind, and who can turn Him?' There is much in the Scriptures that even God's people can neither explain nor understand, but there is nothing that, rightly understood, contradicts this truth — *God first in everything*. Much that in the Old Testament seems to favour your thought was addressed to the Jews as a nation, whom God placed in the midst of an idolatrous world, to keep up the knowledge and worship of the one true God; and He promised if they would outwardly honour Him, He would honour them; but God's chosen people among the Jews were saved by grace — free favour alone;" and, as I spoke, I marked in his Bible the 17th of the 2nd Book of Kings, and the 54th of Isaiah. "Well now," said Reid, "if all the trying in the Old Testament belongs to the Jews, what do you make of the trying in the New?" "Why," I replied, "the trying in the New Testament is the proof and evidence that God has been first. Just as the tender blade out of the

ground tells you the sower has gone before." "Well," said Reid thoughtfully, "trying can't hurt anybody." "What good will it do you," I asked; "since the Bible tells us our righteousnesses are only filthy rags?" He made no answer. "Reid," I said, "that viper will be crushed if ever Jesus is revealed to your soul; and instead of any hope that your trying will help your salvation, you will cry out, *I am vile*, and feel your *best* deeds would damn you, leave alone your *worst*." "Well," said Reid, "I have been a sinner — God knows I have," and he threw his head against the high back of his chair, and rolled it slowly from side to side; "but you say that goes for nothing too, unless I am chosen." "Quite true," I replied; "I am not afraid of God's truth, but if ever you are made to feel your sins, and love Jesus, these will be sweet signs that you *are* chosen. 'No man can come to me (said Jesus) except the Father draw him;' so if you are drawn, it is because God has been beforehand with you."

About ten days from this visit I saw Reid again. He received me gloomily. "Are you any better?" I asked. "No," he replied; "worse — every way worse — body and soul." "And what do you think about your soul?" "Think?" said he, with a look of rugged anguish, "why there is a load here that is crushing me — killing me;" and he struck his breast vehemently as he spoke. "Well," said I, "there is hope of a tree if it be cut down." "No," answered he, "there is no hope for me: I am dead — quite dead." "Dead people don't feel," I rejoined. "No, nor I don't feel," said he quickly. "When a man has death and hell staring him in the face, and nothing but sin to look at, 'tis no wonder he should feel; but I am hardened." "Do you pray?" I asked. "No," he replied; "I can't. I groan sometimes; but it isn't prayer." Now the very day before I had seen him these words were confirmed by his next-door neighbour, who told me for more than a week she and her husband could get no sleep, because Reid would sit up all night praying and groaning. Reid's wife also subsequently testified to the same; as often he would arouse her and his children in the middle of the night, and say, "I see the flames of hell — I smell the fire from the pit. Oh, my burden, my burden! where shall I lay it? I am lost — I am damned! Let us all get up and pray." And his timid wife and terrified children, amidst darkness and cold, would have to fall on their knees at his command, while, hour after hour, he groaned out bitter cries to God for mercy. "Well now, Reid," said I, "what if God should be teaching you this first solemn lesson — *nothing to pay*?" "Oh," he replied hastily, "I am not going to deceive myself with that — good as it is." "I neither mean to deceive you nor persuade you," I answered; "for if lifting up my finger would show you your interest in

Christ, and give you peace, I would not do it. *That* is the Holy Ghost's work, and all human persuasion is like water spilt upon the ground. I can only say, if those feelings you describe are from God, they will end to your unspeakable joy — if not, they will expire in darkness." I added a few words upon the fulness and freeness of God's great salvation — the completeness of Christ's finished work — and the blessedness that all the blood-bought family should come assuredly to taste the sweets of it here in grace, and hereafter in glory.

Yet from Me shall Spoilers Come

In my last article, I gave an account of our visit to Fornaci in April of last year. I would like now to write a little more about the work of Franco Maggiotto, whom we visited again at the same time. To illustrate his work, I quote here from an article which he submitted to the magazine of the European Missionary Fellowship. It gives the experience of one person with whom Franco came in contact recently.

My husband had gone off with a young woman and had left me all alone with two children. I was desperate and I was trying to drown my trouble in wine. I was almost always drunk. I no longer knew what to do when I remembered a relative of mine who had once spoken to me about God and a community of Christians at Finale. I went to see her. My aunt put me up and my two children too. I went with her to the meeting with torment in my heart. The pastor spoke to me with an open heart, but I couldn't follow the argument — I was too unhappy. He spoke to me about God and conversion when it was my husband I needed to chatter. But he talked in a different way from the others. He spoke to me as if the Authority did not come from him but from behind him . . . it was the Word of God which was telling me that I had sinned against God, and that this was the most serious thing.

He spoke to me of the love of Christ for sinners. The justice and with it the love of God penetrated my heart like oil. I felt that the more serious evil was not my husband running away from me but my sin which had the wrath of God as its consequence. Almost immediately I found that there was nothing in me. I felt so lost that I could do nothing but search for that infinite mercy which had prompted the Son of God to die for sinners. My only salvation was His infinite love for me. I wept for sorrow and for joy as never before.

Since that day I have experienced other days of unhappiness but

never of despair, because I know He is there and He loves me. I am studying the Word of God with the pastor's wife. My husband has come back . . . I know that it was God who brought him back to me, and that it is the love that He has put in my heart which has changed me and transformed our family. Still I am in great sorrow; my husband, although he has become a friend of the pastor, does not yet allow me to attend the services. I would like so very much to worship my Lord in the company of my brothers. Yet I know that the Lord can do all things and that all things "work together to good for them that love God."

I ask you to pray that the Lord should yet again take pity on me and give me the grace that my husband should let me take part in 'Sunday' worship. Pray and thank God with me.

From Franco himself we heard about the confused state of things in his native country. Many priests have either left the Church or are thinking of doing so. Franco feels that, in the case of many, this movement springs from a desire to find the gospel; but because there is no one to teach them the pure gospel they may well go astray. Some leave because of leanings towards Communism, and others may leave because of conscientious difficulties but still end up as Communists. He feels that he is called to present, in the midst of this unsettled situation, a point of reference where those who are asking questions may have the gospel clearly presented to them. He does not wish to rush. Many of these men are highly intelligent, but they cannot be forced to accept the gospel. They need clear teaching, but gentle leadership. This is why it is important for the *Fede Viva* magazine to go out, and for the Reformation Study Centre to be set up.

Regarding the magazine, Franco wrote in a letter dated 22/10/77 that in some cases postmen did not deliver it; however he went on, 'it is doing a great deal of good. Two weeks ago there was a meeting between all evangelical groups in Liguria and many thanked us because at last they are beginning to understand the gospel! In these days a letter arrived from the University of Milan in which the students thank me for *Fede Viva* and invite me to hold a conference on the authority of the Bible. I am in touch with two priests, and tomorrow I am going to the house of one of them.' On 7/1/78, Franco wrote, 'We are now preparing an issue with articles written by eminent ex-priests, and another on the conferences on the Bible held by me in different parts of Italy.'

As far as the Centre is concerned, most readers will know how

important it is to get this established at the earliest possible date. As Franco stated at meetings held in different parts of Scotland in May, and as he also explained to the meeting of Synod in Inverness, this building would be invaluable for at least two reasons. It would provide a place to which enquiring persons could come and be accommodated for a week or two, while they studied the doctrines of the gospel. Also, such a centre would provide premises for worship which the local group in the Spotorno area could use. For many reasons this would be preferable to the present arrangement, in which services are held in private houses.

It is now some time since this Centre project was first conceived of. It has been prayed over, and some contributions have been given to help make the dream come true. There have been some delays, for various reasons, but I am thankful to say that, following a *Fede Viva* Committee meeting in November '77, the way seems clear for developing the project with all possible speed.

The cost of a suitable building would be between £30,000 and £40,000. Those who are concerned to see the Lord's Kingdom come may feel led by many factors to support this particular project. I will just add to these the Scripture which I read in course just before visiting Franco las April. Is Franco Maggiotto one of those through whom this prophecy will be fulfilled regarding the Roman Catholic Church?

Though Babylon should mount up to heaven, and though she should fortify the height of her strength, yet from me shall spoilers come unto her, saith the Lord. Jeremiah 51:53.

J.T.

Obituary

The late Mr John Martin, Elder, Wick

Mr John Martin died unexpectedly during the night of 25th June, 1976, in his home at Wick. Some weeks before, he had attended the Synod in Glasgow as a representative elder, and had shortly before his death attended Dornoch Communion, giving assistance to the other elders there in his usual willing and active manner.

He was born at Bayhead, Harris, on 9th October, 1903, and died on 25th June, 1976. His father was a missionary in the United Free Church, in Harris. As a young man he trained to be a wireless operator, at Watt Memorial College, Greenock; and spent a number of years at sea, visiting countries throughout the world. From 1947 to 1966 he was a

Radio Technician with the Air Ministry and retired while stationed in Wick, in 1966.

Mr Martin became a member in Wick Congregation in October, 1962, and in the following year — 1963 — was elected an Elder, along with others, and thereafter ordained.

He was most kind and hospitable; and was most willing to help and assist others in any way possible for him. Along with Mrs Martin he gave a warm welcome to friends into their home.

In due course he was appointed Congregational Treasurer and took a keen and active interest in the finances of the Church. During his time, certain Collections were taken by book and Mr Martin never failed to call at the homes of the people for their donations. His kindly and Christian personality gave him a place in their hearts: and we know that there is sorrow that his friendly visits will no longer be enjoyed. Any practical business which needed to be seen to in regard to the Congregation, Mr Martin attended to promptly. In his retirement he was kept active serving the Lord in one way or other.

His love to the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, His gospel, His Kingdom, His believing people, was in no way 'hid under a bushel', but was like a shining candle set upon a candlestick, for all who came to know him, to see where John Martin stood in relation to the claims of his Saviour. He had a tender concern for sinners living without Christ in the world and saw with gracious vexation the state of the generation steeped in ungodliness and vanity.

He was highly intelligent and widely read and was evidently a student of the Holy Scriptures. By the grace of God and the gifts given to him, he was enabled to conduct services in the Sanctuary in Wick and elsewhere. His expositions of gospel truth were most acceptable to the people who heard him from time to time. This duty he always undertook most willingly to help and assist the minister. His removal from among us while apparently able for all his duties, was albeit according to the divine purpose. Yet, without hesitation it can be said: "What a loss to Wick and the Church!"

Tributes have been paid to this worthy man in different courts of the church wherein he was a member, as a representative of Wick Kirk Session. He had a competent and clear understanding of Church business and was a wise and interested office-bearer; sensible of his personal responsibility to the Head of the Church and to his Christian brethren with whom he worked so amicably. He was not afraid to express his personal convictions on any specific matter, if and when he conceived

this to be called for. He of course adhered to the Word of God as inspired and infallible, as our supreme, divine standard of faith and practice. The Westminster Confession of Faith, in its entirety, was the confession of his faith.

It should cause us who 'remain' to be exercised as to why the Most High is removing from our midst as a Church, those who were apparently some little time before their death, able and zealous in their Master's service. "Help Lord: because the godly man doth daily fade away." But they have entered into the joy of their Lord. Let us by the Spirit be truly followers of them, and of their divine Master especially.

A large congregation attended the funeral service of Mr Martin, in the Wick Church, consisting not only of intimate friends from far and near, but many from different sections of the Wick community where he spent a goodly part of his life. The Wick congregation and those present with them on this sad occasion gave expression to their sincere sympathy for Mrs Martin and her family and relatives, in their great loss and sorrow.

"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God" (Hebrews 4:9).
R.R.S.

Eadar-Mhineachadh Air Salm CXXX

Anns an dara àit, Tha peacaidhean ann, ged nach dean iad a' choguis a reubadh le ciont cho mòr riu sin a dh' ainmicheadh, gidheadh, do bhrìgh iomadh an-tromachadh a dh' fheudas a bhi coimhcheangailte riu, tha iad a' brosnachadh Dhé cho mòr as gu'n dean e iad 'nam freumh an-shocair do'n anam uile làithean a bheatha. Tha e 'g ràdh timchioll chuid a pheacaidhean nan aingidh, "Mar is beò mi, cha ghlanar an aingidheachd so air falbh uaibh, gus am faigh sibh bàs." Agus tha aobhairean-brosnachaidh 'na phobull féin anns am feud a' shamhuil sin a dh' an-tromachadh a bhi as nach leig e seachad iad gun an tilgeadh anns na doimh-neachdaibh, gus an éigin dhoibh glaothaich an airc an saoraidh. Thugamaid fainear cuid dhiubh:

1. Tha *mì-bheusan chreideach 'nuair a tha iad a' mealtuinn gràidh agus caoimhneis Dhé ann an tomhas comharaichte* de'n nàdur so. 'N uair a tha Dia air taisbeanadh soilleir a thoirt do neach sam bith de a ghradh, ionnus gur éigin da a ràdh le 'uile chridhe, "Is gràdh neo-thoillteanach so da rìreadh agus caoimhneas;" — ma's e 's gu faighear a nis e mì-chùramach 'na ghluasad maille ri Dia, tha mì-chaoimh-neas ann nach cuirear air dhì-chuimhne. Agus, aig aon àm no àm eile, coinnichidh

gach uile pheacadh a chuirear an gnìomh an déigh tràcairean comharaichte 'fhaotainn, ri achmhasanaibh comharaichte. Cha-n 'eil ni sam bith a's mò a leònas coguis a' pheacaich na bhi 'cuimhneachadh ann an dorchadas mar a mhi-bhuilich e solus; agus fo fhòlach gnùis Dhé, mar a rinn e a ghràdh a chur air dhearmad. Is ni so a bheir Dia dhoibh a bhi 'geur-mhothachadh. 'N uair a tha Dia 'na fhreasdal air buntuinn gu gràsmhor ri neach — theagamh ann an rathad a bhi 'ga fhuasgladh o àmhghar, 'ga shocrachadh ann an ionad farsuinn, réidh, 'ga choinneachadh le toraidhibh lionmhor a mhaitheis, 'ga bheannachadh 'na phearsa, 'na dhàimhean, agus 'na ghnòthuichean saoghalta, a' buntuinn gu maith r' a anam, ann an 'toirt dearbh-bheachd ghràsmhoir dha d'a ghràdh ann an Crìosd; — ma's e's gu'n tuit a' shamhuil so de neach ann am mi-bheusaibh peacach, ruigidh e cridhe Dhé, agus cha leig e seachad e.

2. Tha *peacaidhean a bhitheas air an gnìomhachadh ann no an déigh àmhgharan mòra de'n nàdur ceudna*. Cha chlaoidh Dia d'a dheòin, ni mo a tha toil-inntinn aige 'nar smachdachadh; tha e 'ga dheanamh a mhain chum gu'm bitheamaid 'nar luchd-comhpairt d'a naomhachd, Uime sin 'nuair a tha a smachdachadh air a chur 'an neo-shuim, ionnus gu'm bitheamaid mi-chùramach ann no 'na dhéigh timchioll oibreachadh a' pheacaidh, tha mi-chaoimhneas ann: "Bhuail mi e," deir Dia, "agus dh'imich e roimhe gu fiar, air slighe a chridhe féin." An d' rinn Dia do chuir anns an àmhuinn, agus an d' rinn e ann an iochd do chur a rìs 'am farsuinneachd? — ma rinn thu a ghnìomhara do d' thaobh a leigeadh air dhì-chuimhne, an iongantach ged a dheanadh e d' fhiosrach-adh a rìs le àmhghar ann ad anam?

3. 'N auir a tha daoine *roimh an iompachadh a' tilgeadh dhiubh oibreachadh coitchionn an Spioraid agus ceud thais-beanadh a ghràidh dhiadhaidh dhoibh*, tha so gu tric air 'ath-nuadhachadh air a' choguis 'na dhéigh sin. 'Nuair a tha an Tighearn le a Spiorad a' toirt dearbh-shoilleireachd chumhachdaich do'n chridhe mu pheacadh, agus a' fosgladh suas dha ni-éigin d' a ghràdh agus de òirdheirceas Chrìosd, ionnus gu bheil an t-anam a' tòiseachadh ri strìochdadh, air bhi dha ach ro bheag air aomadh gu bhi 'na Chrìosduidh; — ma's e 's gu'm pill e rìs a dh' ionnsuidh an t-saoghail no chum na féin-fhlèantachd, tha mi-chaoimhneas ann nach bi air uairibh air a leigeadh seachad.

4. A bhi gu *h-obann a' dì-chuimhneachadh thaisbeanan àraidh de ghràdh ro chomharaichte*. Tha Dia a' toirt rabh-aidh d'a phobull an aghaidh so: Salm lxxxv. 8, "Labhraidh e sìth r'a shluagh, agus r'a naoimh; ach na pilleadh iad chum amaideachd." 'Nuair a tha Dia aig àm sam bith a' teachd dlùth do'n anam le a Spiorad, 'na fhocal, le briath-

raibh gràsmhor gràidh agus sìthe, a' fàgail mothachaidh d'a chaoimhneas air a' chridhe leis an Spiorad Naomh; — ma thig an t-anam so a nis, le buaireadh, no mi-chùram, gu bhi 'leigeadh leis a' mhothachadh gràidh so a bhi mar gu'm b'ann air a dhubhadh a mach, tha mi-chaoimhneas ro mhòr coimhcheangailte ris. Faic D'an Shol. v. 1-6.

5. 'Nuair a tha *cothroman mòra seirbhis air an dearmad agus comasan mòra air am mi-bhuileachadh*, tha so gu tric 'na mheadhon air a bhi tilgeadh an anama ann an doimh-neachdaibh mòra. Tha tàlannan air an toirt do dhaoineibh chum a bhi 'gam buileachadh air son an Tighearna. Ma's e's gu'n leigear cothroman seachad agus gu'm paisgear an tàlann ann an neapaicin, crìochnaichidh a' chùis ann an trioblaid agus 'an àmhghar.

Book Reviews

Expositions of St Paul by Richard Sibbes.

Richard Sibbes (1577-1635) was one of the English Puritans whose preaching was greatly blessed. He was an eminent servant of Christ, and his ability and skill in handling the Word of God can be seen in his work "Expositions of St Paul", which has been published by the Banner of Truth Trust. While his *style* of writing, in my estimation, may not be as attractive as that of Flavel or Owen, his expositions of the Word are deep, lucid and searching.

When the reader takes up Sibbes' book, he must be prepared for hard study and follow him through every avenue of the text, until at length Sibbes carefully and thoroughly explores them all. At the end of the day the thoughtful reader will not regret his labour but will indeed find himself richly rewarded for patiently following this great divine.

The reader may realise that "the art of contentment" is something different from what some may fondly imagine. Sibbes shows that it is a long, painstaking process of learning self-denial, and receiving strength from Christ. His explanation of assurance of faith is precious and refreshing, and he shows that "a man never enjoys his own assurance of Christ's particular love but with a great deal of conflict." It can be truly said to his credit that Sibbes has much of Christ in his sermons.

The table of contents at the beginning of the "Expositions of St Paul" proves very helpful as a guide to the page where any particular subject may be found. This precious book of 450 pages costs £4.00.

A. McK.

The Unlisted Legion by Jock Purves. Banner of Truth Trust. Price 80p.

This paperback contains an account of missionary work in Baltistan and Ladakh in what was then North-West India (now North-East Pakistan) during the years 1926-30.

The opening chapter states the tremendous challenge facing missionaries in lands where Buddhism, Hinduism, Mohammedanism and Communism reign. The next chapter graphically describes Kashmir, the land of the Himalayas, through which the missionaries journey on their way to Baltistan and Ladakh. The descriptive writing throughout the book is masterly. It is as though we are there.

In reading this book we cannot but be moved at the thought of men leaving the comforts of a civilised land to become closely identified, for the sake of Christ, with an uncivilised race, so as to make known to them the way of salvation. The privations they endure are clearly brought out. That progress was slow in such conditions is not to be wondered at. Certainly in Baltistan progress was slow, the discouragements enough to make the stoutest hearts despond and the dangers many; whether from the zealots of Islam, the dangerous mountainous terrain, or the sudden avalanches and floods. The language barrier constituted a difficulty which had to be overcome and medical care had to be provided where there was none. Perseverance in such circumstances was at length to be rewarded. There were those, however few, who manifested that they had in their heart some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel and who professed Christ's Name in the midst of trials and persecution — men whose names are in the Lamb's book of life.

The book is a reminder to us of the multitudes yet in the world who are in need of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It should be an incentive to us to plead for the sending forth of labourers into the harvest — "for the harvest truly is plenteous but the labourers are few."

D.B.M.

The Man of Geneva by E. M. Johnson. Banner of Truth paperback. Price £1.00.

This little volume on Calvin, published by the Banner of Truth Trust, is exactly what it claims to be — an introduction to Calvin. One would hope that after reading "The Man of Geneva" interest would be aroused and a desire given to know more about this great man of the Reformation. The book is most interestingly written and gives a fairly clear outline of the outstanding events in Calvin's life. Boys and girls of from

10-12 years should be able to read and enjoy it. We would commend it to the young. L.M.

The Two Kingdoms by Elizabeth Whitley. Scottish Reformation Society. Paperback, £1.50; Cloth £2.50.

This book spans a most unimportant era in Scottish History — from the death of John Knox in 1572 to the Revolution of 1688. It is the story of the life-and-death struggle between the House of Stewart and the Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

The book is in 3 parts. The first part covers the period from 1572 to just after the signing of the National Covenant in 1638. During most of this period the Church of Scotland was at a low ebb. Her ablest and most faithful ministers such as Robert Bruce, Andrew Melville, John Welsh and others were banished, while the King used all his power to bring in episcopacy. In 1603 there was the Union of the Crowns. James continued his opposition to Presbyterianism to the end and it was then taken up by his son Charles I. With the signing of the National Covenant Presbyterianism once again gained its rightful place.

The second part covers the Civil War, Scotland's involvement, the Westminster Assembly, the Cromwellian Period, etc. One gets the impression here that the Westminster Assembly of Divines was a failure. While the uniformity aimed at was not achieved, yet when one considers the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Catechisms, etc. produced by this Assembly, its importance must not and cannot be ignored.

The third part deals with the witness and sufferings of the Covenanters from the Restoration to the Revolution. It is obvious that Mrs Whitley has a warm place in her affections for the men and women who suffered and died during the "Killing Times" — 1660-1688. She shows that they did not die in vain.

"The Two Kingdoms" is a frank and honest book. The craftiness, intrigues and vileness of James VI and of his son and grandson, Charles I and Charles II are exposed. Mrs Whitley knows her subject well. "The Two Kingdoms" is a book well worth reading. L.M.

The Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney by Thomas Cary Johnson. Banner of Truth Trust. 585pp. Price £4.00.

This massive biography — it is almost an autobiography, as it consists for the most part of Dabney's own letters — gives an account of one of the outstanding 19th century Southern Presbyterian theologians in the

U.S.A. Dabney lived from 1820-1898, a period particularly eventful in the history of the Southern States. He was born and laboured for a great part of his life in Virginia. It was there that he passed through the traumatic experience of the American Civil War. As a loyal supporter and fervent defender of the Confederate Cause, the defeat of the Confederate States was a bitter blow to him and was an outcome to which he was never reconciled. During the Civil War he had first hand experience of the conflict, being called for a period to act as Adjutant General to the Army under General (Stonewall) Jackson in which post he proved his worth. Later Dabney wrote an outstanding biography of General Jackson for whom he had great admiration.

With regard to his theological labours it is hardly possible to say too much. They were prodigious and his work was of outstanding quality. He was esteemed a leading theologian in the U.S.A. in a day when such persons as Shedd, Thornwell and the Hodges were on the scene. As a philosopher he was in the first class and spent eleven years as Professor of Philosophy at the University of Texas. Previous to that he had been first Professor of Ecclesiastical History and later Professor of Systematic Theology at Union Theological College, Hampden-Sydney. Besides these fields of study he was highly proficient in many others. His literary labours were extensive. Writing after writing on a wide variety of subjects, yet of the highest standard, flowed from his pen.

Here is a biography to engage the mind, and one which leaves us astonished as we realise the capacity, stamina and forcefulness of this Southern Presbyterian divine in accomplishing so much. Even in later years when blind and led by the hand of his little grand-daughter, his intellect is still alert and he is able to teach and to preach with unabated zeal. A Robert Dabney appears on the scene only once in a while. Yet his appearance reminds us of the great amount of good which can be achieved by one man when his talents are wholly laid out in the Master's service.

The text of the book is good. It is regrettable that the quotations which occupy so much of the work are printed in smaller type. The first 100 pages of the book are lacking in interest and could have been compressed lest any reader would weary before he reaches the part which holds his attention. Dabney's name will not be altogether unknown to readers as the Banner of Truth issued two volumes of his Discussions some years ago. We are glad to commend this reprint of the 1901 edition of Dabney's Life and Letters.

D.B.M.

Notes and Comments

R.C. Church and Ulster

The Roman Catholic Irish Archbishop, Thomas Fee, created a stir by demanding that Britain should get out of Ulster. This followed very closely on a similar appeal by the Eire President, Jack Lynch. These provocative statements show clearly the attitude of the Eire Government and the R.C. Church towards a settlement in Ulster. The Eire Government and the R.C. Church are not interested in maintaining the rights of the Protestant majority in Ulster, but only in seeking to undermine the Protestant position there. The Archbishop's statement should be a warning to our Government of the insidious role played by the R.C. Church in Northern Ireland.

Ahmadiyya Muslims Crusade

In June a three-day conference is to be held in London by the Ahmadiyya movement as part of a world-wide missionary campaign. This particular Muslim movement is completely separate from orthodox Islam. Begun in northern India in the 19th century it has spread to over 40 countries. Its leader claimed to be the promised Messiah. Consequently it denies the death and resurrection of Christ. The theme of the three-day conference is to be "The deliverance of Jesus from the Cross."

In these days of apostasy false sects and false religions are multiplying in the land. Having forsaken the true God and His Word and worship, it has to be said of the people of the land — what wisdom is in them. May the Lord revive His work in this dark day.

W.C.C. and Rebellion

The World Council of Churches has called on Christians to support what it calls "the just rebellion" of the black people. It is particularly with South Africa in mind that this call is made. The struggle of the black people in that country against apartheid the W.C.C. regards as a just rebellion.

The voice of the World Council of Churches in supporting the oppressed would sound more real if it was not so selective in deciding which of the Governments of the world are oppressive. A right wing government in South Africa and Chile are singled out for attack while left-wing orientated governments escape condemnation. So, too, while ready to condemn others the W.C.C. by the false teaching it propagates is itself busy enslaving the souls of men, offering them a social Gospel

while denying them the Gospel of God's grace, the only Gospel that can save them.

Church Notes

Letter from the Southern Presbytery to the Home Secretary

Dear Sir,

I am instructed to convey to you the deep concern of this presbytery over the activities of the group known as Paedophile Information Exchange, and urge you to condemn it publicly, by prosecuting its members for immorality, by withdrawing from it all financial support from public funds, and by launching a public campaign against the kind of licentiousness it represents. In a day when Christian standards of morality are being eroded at an alarming rate, nothing short of determined and effective government action will prevent the spread of this degraded and perverse form of libertinism.

Yours faithfully,

J. M. Brentnall (Clerk).

Summary of Reply from the Home Office

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter. The Home Secretary appreciates your concern, but — in a democratic society — it is not possible to prevent people from expressing their views on how the law might be changed. However, if people break the law, they render themselves liable to prosecution.

The Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis had a thorough investigation carried out in 1975 into the activities of P.I.E. and other similar bodies. After receiving a report of this investigation, the Director of Public Prosecutions advised that their activities provided no grounds for prosecution. The police, however, continue to watch this organisation, and will not hesitate to prosecute if the law is broken.

P.I.E. receives no financial assistance of any kind from the Government. A grant is made, however, to the Albany Trust, which provides help for those with psycho-sexual and socio-sexual problems.

The Government has no plans to amend the law in response to P.I.E.'s campaign for the lowering of the age of consent. A Committee on Sexual Offences is advising the Government on this matter. It will, of course, ultimately be for Parliament to decide upon the question.

Yours sincerely,

D. Hillier (Home Office).

Letter on Capital Punishment

Clerk:
Rev. J. A. T. van Dorp
Gisborne.

14 Thomson St.,
Gisborne.
28th March 1978.

The Secretary,
Parliamentary Committee on
Violent Offending,
Parliament Buildings,
WELLINGTON.

Dear Sir,

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

In considering solutions to the problem of violent offending your committee will be concerned amongst other matters with the aspect of capital punishment. The committee will be well aware of the incidence of violent crime involving murder and the many requests that have been made for the re-instatement of the death penalty. As the number of murders has steeply increased in the last decade, it is only logical to conclude that this is in no small way due to the abolition of capital punishment. Whilst this would be a sufficient reason for its re-introduction our desire should be to be governed by the moral criteria that ought to guide us in this solemn matter.

With this in view I respectfully submit the following Christian viewpoints:

1. It is essential to distinguish between personal principles of conduct and those principles that apply in the administration of law and justice. In our private conduct the Scriptures forbid personal revenge but in the administration of justice God requires punishment commensurate with the crime.
2. The death penalty is not a part of Jewish ceremonial law introduced by the laws committed to Moses. The death penalty was then re-affirmed; it was first authorised by the supreme lawgiver in His charge to Noah, many years before the existence of any organised Hebrew state: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man" (Gen. 9:6).
3. New Testament teaching is equally explicit. Jesus said in the sermon on the mount: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the

prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfil" (Matt. 5:17). All that the Saviour abolished by His coming were the Jewish ceremonial laws. The moral law of the ten commandments continues in full force today as it always applied, being the law of right and wrong and so do all the moral principles that may be deduced from it.

4. The apostle Paul in requiring obedience to civil government clearly implies the use of capital punishment where necessary: "Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil." "He is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil" (Rom. 13:3-4). The apostle himself was willing to submit to the death penalty if he had done anything worthy of death. "If I be an offender or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die" (Acts 25:11).

5. The reasons for which God authorised capital punishment may be resolved into three aspects:

- i. The evil that proceeds from the heart of fallen mankind: "out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, etc." (Matt. 15:19).
- ii. The dignity of man: "In the image of God made He man" (Gen. 9:16).
- iii. Cleansing: "The land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it" (Num. 35:33).

Yours sincerely,
J. A. T. van Dorp,
Clerk of Presbytery.

Meeting of Synod

The Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland will meet within St Jude's Church, 137 Woodlands Road, Glasgow G.3, on Tuesday, the 23rd of May, 1978 (DV). The retiring Moderator, Rev. A. MacPherson, Stratherrick, will conduct Public Worship at 6.30 p.m.

(Rev.) Donald MacLean,
Clerk of Synod.

Clerk of Australia and New Zealand Presbytery

The Rev. D. M. MacLeod, Auckland, has tendered his resignation from the position of Clerk at a meeting of Presbytery on 24th March,

1978, on account of his illness. The Presbytery has appointed Rev. J. A. T. van Dorp, Gisborne, to take his place.

Death of Rev. Malcolm MacSween, Oban

It is with deep sorrow that we record the passing away on Wednesday, 29th March of Rev. Malcolm MacSween, Oban. His removal leaves a great blank in his own congregation and in the Church. His services to our Church as a faithful and outstanding preacher of the Gospel, as Theological Tutor, and as Clerk of the Southern Presbytery for many years are well known. What was written concerning David has now been fulfilled of him: "After he had served his own generation by the will of God, he fell on sleep." We pray that the Lord will uphold his widow, Mrs MacSween, his son William and family, and also the congregation in their sore bereavement, granting them the consolations of His love.

Presbytery Meetings (DV)

Southern: At Glasgow on 13th June, at 6 p.m.

Outer Isles: At Stornoway on 20th June, at 11.30 a.m.

Northern: At Dingwall on 20th June, at 6 p.m.

Free Distribution Fund

The Magazine Committee wish to remind readers about the Magazine Free Distribution Fund. This fund helps to provide Church Magazines for public libraries, hostels and other public institutions. Owing to lack of support for the fund it may be necessary to cut down these grants. The Committee would welcome further support for the fund from Magazine readers.

Acknowledgment of Donations

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

Sustentation Fund: Mrs C. Hopkins, London, "in memory of dear parents, John and Betsy MacDonald, Knockline, North Uist," £50.

Home Mission Fund: Mrs Hopkins, London, etc. as above, £50 for Church Extension.

Jewish & Foreign Mission Fund: Mrs MacK., Ullapool, £20; Anon., Invergordon postmark, £35; Anon., Inverness postmark, £100.

Aged & Infirm Ministers' etc. Fund: Anon., Inverness postmark, £100.

Dominions & Overseas Fund: Mrs MacK., Ullapool, £20; Mrs Hopkins, London, etc. as above, £50; both for work in Italy.

China Mission Fund: Mrs MacK., Ullapool, £20 for work in Taiwan.

Home of Rest Fund: Visitor, Applecross, £2; Visitor, Raasay, £1; Visitor, Kishorn, £1; Anon., Inverness, for petrol, £5; Envelope in Church plate, Inverness, £10; Mrs MacK., Ullapool, £100; Mrs Hopkins, London, etc., as above, £50.

The Publications Treasurer acknowledges with sincere thanks:

Free Distribution Fund: J.W.M., £3; D.M.R., £1; Anon., £1.66; M.M., Gairloch, £3.

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Publication Fund: M.M., Gairloch, £3.

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

Barnoldswick: Mr and Mrs H.M., Aberdeen, £20.

Bracadale: Anonymous Friends, £20, for Church Repair Fund, per M. MacDonald. (Correction to April Magazine: In memory of my parents, £100, from M.S., for Struan Church Repairs, per treasurer).

Dumbarton: G.McL., Dumbarton, 40p; Mrs A.M., 40p; both for Magazine Fund; E.M.M. (in plate), £5; Anon., Finsbay, £5, per Rev. J.M.B.; both for Manse Fund.

Fort William: Two Friends, Caol, £5, for Communion Expenses, £5, for Minibus; £10 for Car Fund, per Rev. J. A. MacDonald.

Glasgow: Anon., £1, for Congregational Fund; J.C., £1; Anon., £5; Anon., £5; all for Bus Expenses; Anon., £25, for Sustentation Fund.

Glendale: I.N., £10, per N.M.P., for Church Funds; A.M.K., £6, for Sustentation Fund; I.N., £3.50, for Church Funds; A.M.K., £3, for Jewish & Foreign Mission; R.M.L., £5, for Sustentation Fund; Mrs E.K., £10, for Sustentation Fund; £5 for Home Mission; £5 for Foreign Mission Fund.

Greenock: A Friend, £5; A Skye Friend, £14; From Well-wisher, £10; all per Rev. L. MacLeod; R.H.C., £10; all for Congregational Purposes.

Kinlochbervie: H.M., Aberdeen, £25; D.N., Carnoustie, £5; W.T., Thurso, £10; Friend, Glasgow, £5; M.B., £5; A.M., £5; both per R.W.M.M.; Anon., Edinburgh, £5; Friend, Lairg, £10; A.R., Scourie, £20; Friend, Thurso, £10; per Rev. D. A. MacLean; all for Kinlochbervie and Scourie Manse Extension Fund.

Kyle: Two Edinburgh Friends, £8, per Mr I. MacCuaig; Friend, Edinburgh, £2, per Mr I. MacCuaig; Anon. (Envelope in plate), £10; Envelope in plate, £10; Old Friends, £10; all for Kyle Manse Building Fund.

North Uist: Friend, Harris, £40; Friend, £2; Mr and Mrs H. I. MacK., £5; Anon., Kyle, £5; Anon., Edinburgh, £5; Miss N., Carnoustie, £5; Stornoway Friend, £10; J.N.M., Harris, £10; Anon., Oban, £10; Mrs S., £5; Friend of the Cause, £100; Friend, Ness, £10; Capt. M. MacL., Aignish, £10; Friend of the Cause, Tolsta, £10; H. MacF., N.S.W., Australia, £10; Psalm 36:5, £25; Wellwishers, £20; Mrs C. MacL., Home of Rest, Inverness, £2; all for Manse Extension, per Rev. A. Morrison.

Raasay: In memory of my dear wife, £10; per Rev. D. Nicolson; Anon., Inverness, £6; Rev. 22:20-21, Dingwall postmark, £2; all for Sustentation Fund; Raasay Friend, £7; A Friend, £4; both for Church Repair and both per Rev. D. Nicolson; D. MacL., Portree, £6.75; Friend, Raasay, £1; In memory of loving parents, Raasay, £5; all for Property Fund.

Shieldaig: Anon., £5, for Rhodesian Mission; Anon., Edinburgh, £5, for Manse Extension.

Staffin: R. MacD., Grantown, £10; per J. MacK.; A Friend, £2; R. MacL., £5; both per M.M.I.; C. MacD., £5, per Mrs Buchanan; all for Sustentation Fund; Envelope in plate, £5, for Aged and Infirm Ministers Fund; Two Friends, Skye, £20; Friend, Skye, £130; both for Study Furnishing; Friend, Skye, £10; Friend, Staffin, £5; both for Minister's Expenses; last four per Rev. J. MacD.

Stornoway: Two Friends, Inverness, £10, for Congregational Funds and £5 for Communion Expenses, per Rev. J. Macleod.