

THE
Free Presbyterian Magazine
and Monthly Record

Vol. 83

July 1978

No. 7

Honesty

Even the world recognises that honesty is something which is very valuable. Without a measure of common honesty among men, it would be almost impossible to carry out commercial transactions. The handling of the financial affairs of large corporations and nations require a considerable degree of honesty and faithfulness in those who administer them. If, then, common honesty is so needful for the affairs of this world, how much more is true honesty of heart needful in view of eternity. This is an honesty that will make us honest, not only before men but also before God.

True honesty of heart is the gift of God. By nature none have it. We are by nature self-deceivers and hypocrites and nothing will make us truly honest before God but His own grace. It will not then be a question of whether we are regarded as honest by men, but whether we are viewed as honest by God. The soul that is taught of God is led into an understanding of the corruption of his own heart. There he finds, not honesty, but deceit and duplicity. Hypocrisy is natural to man; honesty is alien to him. It is true that God made man upright in the beginning but the Word of God also tells us that man has sought out many inventions.

It is the Lord alone who is able to make us honest. He does so by showing us first that whatever we possess, we do not possess honesty. Whatever we can glory in, we cannot glory in our straightness, for we are crooked. Honesty is begun in the soul when we are brought to confess that we are not honest. We will then acknowledge that we are neither honest towards God, or towards our fellow man or towards ourselves. Deceit and self-deceit lurk in our soul. When we are made honest before God we realise that God who knows all things knows us through and through. When He enlightens us as to our true condition then there is no hiding of the fact, and no hiding from the fact that we are by nature dishonest.

We must be made honest as before God. Nothing else will do. In our petitions at a Throne of grace we will have to include this one: "Make me honest, Lord". All our other petitions will be of no avail if this one is not answered, for we need not expect our prayer to be answered unless we come in truth and with honesty of heart before God.

Honesty, then, is of divine implanting in the soul. It is from heaven; it is of heaven. It is transparent. Imitations of honesty reveal themselves as being other than the real thing. Some graces are more difficult to counterfeit than others. This is one; humility is another. May we have the real thing and not the counterfeit. Where dishonesty is found there will be an excusing of sin. How different where honesty is found. Then a man will confess what is true though in doing so he condemns himself. In the Pharisee and the publican we have a clear example of one who is honest and one who is not; the one who is honest condemns himself, the one who is dishonest condemns his fellow.

It is not enough to be made honest, great as that blessing is, it is also necessary to be kept honest. Even where grace is found, deceit is always angling to find a place in the heart. Before the soul is aware this off-spring of Satan seeks to obtain a place in the heart and to keep it. It will rob the believer of his peace and his joy and only renewed supplies of grace from the fountain Head of all grace will be sufficient to overcome it. It is like pride, that multi-headed hydra which springs up in every corner of the soul. In view of this well might the soul cry out: "Oh, to be honest. Oh, to be honest before God!" It is certain that until we are honest before God we will never in truth be honest before our fellow men.

If we are made honest, to what do we owe it? We owe it to the grace of God, and to the God of all grace who is revealing Himself in Christ as the Saviour of sinners. Christ in His death has obtained gifts even for the rebellious. All the blessings of divine grace bestowed on the soul are the fruit of Calvary. At Calvary nothing was hidden. The transactions of the Cross required patent honesty in the Sufferer and patent honesty in the Inflicter of the punishment meted out. There sin appeared in its true colours; there the desert of sin appeared in all its awfulness. If we are not brought to Calvary we will never be made honest for there alone can the soul be delivered from deceit. Oh, what it cost Christ in His sufferings in order that He might establish a basis on the ground of which sinners might be reconciled to God. He paid the price in the coin of His life blood.

Until we are made honest before God we must remain not only

deceivers of God but of ourselves as well. What deceit has to be rooted out of us! A new heart, that is, an honest heart will have to be given to us. The old heart will have to be taken away. The flesh will have to be crucified if we are to be honest in heart and life. Grace alone will make us hate what is deceitful. It will make us hate all hypocrisy. It will make us love righteousness, truth, sincerity and every thing that is right. May the Lord be pleased so to plant His grace in us that we, by His grace, may in an honest heart bring forth fruit unto God, some thirty-fold, some sixty, and some a hundred-fold.

Sermon

by Rev. Jonathan Ranken Anderson

"And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born." — Zechariah 12 v. 10.

The Spirit of grace and of supplications is in Himself incomprehensible, and the only way in which we can arrive at a knowledge of His character, is by studying the works which He accomplishes. We accordingly set before you in our last discourse, some illustrations of His work as the Spirit of grace: and showed first, that the outward call of the gospel, and, secondly, that the inward and effectual call, are given by Him in this capacity. I endeavoured to show that in this work, as indeed in His whole work, He proceeds upon the redemption of Christ, which constitutes the foundation of all the favourable intercourse which God now holds with sinners of this world. "Grace reigns *through righteousness* unto eternal life by Jesus Christ."

I stated that the Spirit of grace actually visits and enters the dead and polluted soul, for the purpose of bringing about the design for which He is sent of the Son from the Father. "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

We now go on, leaning on the arm of omnipotent grace, to inquire into the work which in this visit to the soul He executes. And certainly, the *first* thing which claims our notice, because essential to all the rest, is the communication of a new nature. We sometimes speak of it as the

implantation of a new principle, and this unquestionably is true. But when it is recollected that this principle extends to all the faculties and affections of the soul, and takes the chief, and in due time the entire control of the whole, it must be plain that the nature of the man is not only improved, but is essentially different from what it was. "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

We do not dwell on the peculiar character of this new nature; suffice it to say, it is the gift of the love of God. "God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ." It is the fruit of the death of Christ. "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." It is the immediate production of the Holy Ghost; "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." It is not the effect of a change of sentiment, but the cause of any change that is radical: it is not the consequence of human efforts, but is the production of divine power: it is not the result of a gradual improvement brought about by the use of means, but the instantaneous work of the Spirit of grace; and instead of other steps in religion being necessary to it, it is indispensably necessary to every other: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." But beware, I entreat you, of saying that therefore you must keep your eye steadily fixed upon your own hearts, till you see the dawnings of light, and then look to the Saviour and seek salvation, and serve God and glorify Him. That were as foolish as if the Israelites had said they would look to the wounds of the fiery serpents till they saw them beginning to heal, and then look at the serpent of brass which had been erected by Moses for their cure. The command is given, and observe, it is given to all, and given to all as blind, and guilty, and helpless, to look to Christ that they might be saved; and the first decisive and satisfactory evidence of a change of heart is to get a sight of Christ as the Saviour. We may, even before this, have good hope concerning you, that the Spirit of grace has begun to deal with you: but we dare not, as we value the souls of men, and tender the glory of God, we dare not say, that any man is born of the Spirit, in other words, truly converted, till he sees Christ. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature:" or reverse it. If any man be a new creature he is in Christ Jesus. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God."

2. The *second* step in the work of the Spirit of grace on the soul, is the conviction of sin. And here we see the necessity of a new and spiritual nature; for the old carnal nature is not susceptible of genuine spiritual impressions, any more than a stone is fit to receive the impress of a seal.

A man indeed may have very strong convictions, and dreadful fears, and deep anxieties, and yet perish: but that is because they are all the result of men's natural feelings. And thus Felix trembled, as Paul "reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come," but said, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will call for thee."

In explaining the nature of spiritual convictions, I observe—

1st. That the Spirit of grace gives to the soul a discovery of the true God, in the person of the Father. My friends, this lies at the foundation of every solid conviction, and if we are without it, we cannot have any other of its elements. The children of men are by nature practical atheists, and this is far worse than by speculation to be so: for, in the latter case there is the opinion, in the former there is the wish, that there were no God. I know this is a very harsh doctrine to the ears of many; and rather than submit to it, they will rush against the thick bosses of God's buckler, and will with Heaven-daring insolence, call Him a liar. But the charge stands recorded in this Book against every child of Adam, and all the arguments and rage of sinners cannot expunge it. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts. There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God." I daresay you will reply that you have always believed that there is a God; and not only so, you have also worshipped Him as well as you could. And I am ready to admit this; but who is the God you have worshipped? Not the Father, the only true God; but an idol of your own imagination. He is called by the same name, but oh, how different! The god you worship is blind; he does not see your hearts, else you would be miserable: he is dumb and does not rebuke you for your iniquities, else you would be confounded and ashamed: he is deaf, and does not hear your vain talk, your worthless prayers, else you would tremble: he is altogether like yourselves, and you like him just as much as you like yourselves. "They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them."

And do what you will, heap up notions like the sand on the sea-shore, and labour in your minds till you are wearied, never will you form the idea of anything but an idol till you are converted: for your understandings are full of darkness, there is no light in you; your hearts are full of uncleanness, there is no purity in you; your souls are full of wickedness, there is no righteousness in you. And what can you make out of such materials but an object that is dark, and filthy, and abominable? But when by the Spirit of grace you get a new heart, and have from Him

divine light poured into it, then you will discover the true God; and the first feeling you will have is, I never saw Him before: I have been truly without God in the world: I have never known Him, never feared Him, nor served Him: Woe is me, for I am undone!

Now try, you that profess to be awakened, try if your convictions will bear this test. People may have some sense of sin, and fear of wrath, and desire of safety, and yet be "sensual, not having the Spirit." And it matters not what they have, nor how they feel, if they are not awakened to a discovery of God, as heretofore an unknown, a lost God. Nor is it a simple discovery of His Being that will do. His Glory is inseparable from Himself; indeed it is just Himself: and men may as well talk about seeing the sun without seeing his light, as seeing God without seeing His glory. We must not enter into detail, and therefore merely remark, that the soul, in saving convictions, has an apprehension of God as infinitely holy and just: that is, in His nature, essentially opposed to sin, and necessarily and immutably set upon its punishment. He that dreams of God's winking at sin, or not visiting it, either in the sinner himself or a surety, with condign punishment, hath not seen God, neither known Him. I do not ask, Is your view of divine glory clear? It may be very dim. I do not ask, Is it abiding? It may come and go; and yet even when it goes, it will leave some trace behind it, if not in the way of giving light, at least in the way of aggravating the sense of darkness. I ask, brethren, Do you know by experience anything of what I have said? If not, you are fast asleep in the deep dungeons of atheism: and in the threatened storm of divine wrath, I would come to you, as the sailors went down to Jonah, and cry, "What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon you, that you perish not."

The effect of this discovery is to convince the man that it is against God he has sinned, that it is His glory he hath assailed, His justice he has offended. In their natural state, men do admit they have sinned against God: but compare that with the admission that they have stolen, or lied, or murdered: in the latter case they are ashamed and downcast; in the former they are as much at their ease as if they were paying a compliment. Oh the brutal stupidity, the whole-hearted levity of sinners! This comes of their living and walking in the dark, far from His soul-piercing and heart-searching light. But let them be brought into it, and then levity is at an end: they stand before One clothed in awful majesty, and they feel it is no time to trifle now. My friends, we speak of convictions, and fears, and cries: were the God of glory now to show himself to sinners, and cause sinners to see themselves in His light, this place might be

called Bochim, a house of weeping; and we should have to say with Jacob at Bethel, "How dreadful is this place!" — "Surely the Lord is in this place, — this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." We have people amongst us that can offend against their brethren, and yet think it is with their brethren only they have to do: who get into trouble and are impatient under it, and imagine it is them or others they have to blame: who hear sermons, and think it is with the preacher, his matter and manner, they have to do. These are some of the forms of practical atheism. But let God appear and maintain His cause, sitting on His throne of righteousness, and you forget creatures, and cry with the psalmist, "Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in they sight."

2nd. In convincing of sin, the Spirit of grace opens up and applies the law of God to the conscience. In their natural state, men are ignorant of the law of God, and are indifferent to its requirements, and reckless of its denunciations. And yet, with an effrontery which is only matched by their blindness, they will tell you that they keep it as far as in them lies, at the very time they are unable to say what it commands. What would you that are parents or masters think of the child or servant who should say, I go your messages, while he did not know what your messages were? Now, that is the sort of service which God gets at the hand of all unconverted men, that are not open and avowed profligates, and in their case the only difference is that they betray, the others conceal, what they are and what they do. In proof that natural men are ignorant of the law, they will own they have broken some of the commandments, but have kept others. And they are ignorant of the sin of their hearts, in which they have violated every precept of the law; and they are ignorant of the principle, that he who offends in one point is guilty of all. But the Spirit of grace breaks in upon this darkness, and lets men see the law, and their sin by the law; "For by the law is knowledge of sin."

(1st.) He shows them the purity of the law. And how can it be other than pure, since it is an expression of His will, "who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity?" It strictly prohibits every, the least departure from conformity to the image of God, opposition to the will of God, or neglect of the honour of God; and frowns upon every vain imagination, every wandering desire, every foolish word, every unholy action. I know carnal hearts will rise against this doctrine; and you will say it is impossible for any man to be so pure as this. And what of that? Is the purity of the law to be given up because you are corrupt? How would you like it were one of your debtors to say, It is hard to demand payment of your debt

because I am so poor? But say as you will against the law, it maintains its hold of you, and its purity you will feel if ever the Spirit of grace visit you; and if not, the fire of judgment will declare it: "The law is holy and just."

(2nd.) He shows them the spirituality of the law. Men are very ready to think well of themselves if they maintain outward sobriety and decency: they know not, nor consider, that they may be but whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outwardly. The apostle Paul, while a Pharisee, was most exemplary in his outward conduct: "touching the righteousness which is in the law blameless." But when the commandment came, sin revived in him, and he died; and he who, like other Pharisees, thanked God he was not like other men, now knew no publican so bad, and therefore he called himself "the chief of sinners." The Spirit of grace so shows the spirituality of the law, as extending to the constitution of our nature, the inward frame of our souls, the dispositions, desires, and motions of our hearts, that the man discovers there is not one of the commandments but he has broken; he sees he is an atheist, an idolater, a blasphemer, a Sabbath-breaker, unfaithful to relative duties, guilty of murder, adultery, theft, false witness, covetousness; and that he has never rendered to the law one act of true obedience: "I had not known sin but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet."

(3rd.) The Spirit of grace shows them the perfection of the law. We may press the law closely upon men; they get off by saying they will do what they can, and what more can be done? But know, O sinners, that the law is perfect, and cannot be altered to suit your humour. If, therefore, you have not a perfectly sinless nature, a perfectly pure heart, a perfectly spotless life; if there has been but one vain thought, one loose desire, one sinful word, one unrighteous deed, you are offenders; and, observe, offenders against the whole law. If you have been angry without a cause, then the guilt of atheism, idolatry, etc., lies upon you: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." And the reason is, that one act of transgression shows a contempt for the law, and in that lies the essence of sin, for "sin is the transgression of the law."

By this means, a mirror is held up to the conscience, in which a man sees himself. And oh, what a hideous sight! My friends, it is well for us that the Lord mixes mercy with judgment in this, and in every other matter in the present state, else we could not live. People have cried out at the sight of their sin, and why should you wonder? If you saw a viper

on your arm, if you felt it in your bosom, if its poison were diffused through your veins, would you not fear and tremble? But what are all the serpents that creep on the face of the earth, to sin? I know many of you are quite at your ease though you live in sin, though it breathes in every breath, speaks in every word, moves in every step, and works in every action. But your eyes are holden that you do not see it. I am accused of over-severity, of needless earnestness, of rank enthusiasm, because I preach in such strains; but oh! dear brethren, I am very blind myself to the evil of sin, else I would show you more of its deformity. I am very little affected with its monstrous nature, else I would warn and beseech you with many tears; I can comprehend but little of its sad consequences, else would I be yet more earnest and importunate. But I trust I know enough to know that if you do not see your sin and flee from it, you will inevitably perish; and perish all the more miserably because of these warnings you have received. And if you once see your sin by the Spirit of grace, in the light of the divine law, you will say, The half was not told me, for sin is exceeding sinful.

But there is more than this which the Spirit of grace shows. The law which He opens up sheds a light upon the path of life, and clearly shows that it has been one unbroken chain of forgetfulness of God, and rebellion against Him; but it also pours its searching light into the deep den of iniquity that lurks in the heart, and leads to the conviction that sinful as is the man's life, and aggravated as his sin is, by the fact that it has all proceeded from the heart, yet it is as nothing compared with what is in the heart itself. We hear of people that have good hearts, kind affections, and amiable dispositions: let the most amiable person, man, woman, or child, in this assembly, be brought out into the midst of us, and what saith the God of truth of his or her heart? "It is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." And wherein lies its deceitfulness? It will practically deny and disown God, and withhold from Him all which He requires, and yet will puff up the soul with the idea that it fails only in a few insignificant particulars. And wherein lies its wickedness? It is bitterly, and determinedly, and irreconcilably set against God, in His being, and government, and law, and grace; and no power in heaven or earth can reconcile that heart to God: it must be consigned to destruction, and a new heart communicated, "for out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies; these are the things which defile a man."

The Spirit of grace further leads a man to the conviction of his apostasy from God, in the person of his first parent Adam. In some

cases, He begins the work of conviction at this point, in others, He leads to it through the corrupt stream that flows from it: but in all, it forms an essential part of His saving work. I am aware that here too I enter ground which proud and rebellious sinners cannot endure. The tongue cannot tell what iniquity has been committed by men, in opposing this part of the divine economy; for it is hardly possible for a man to submit to the first covenant in real earnest, who has not some subduing view of the glory of the sovereignty of God, in doing what pleases Him in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth. For into that it must be resolved, that we were in covenant represented by Adam, and that consequently we sinned in him, and fell with him, in his first transgression. Now it is not enough that men obey the law, and keep their hearts clean; they must, before they can be justified, undo what Adam did, or get themselves severed from their connection with him; but, by their efforts, either of these is impossible; and therefore, so long as they are under the first covenant, they must be held as sinners, and dealt with accordingly, "for by one man's disobedience many were made sinners."

3rd. In convincing of sin, the Spirit of grace applies with power the claims of the gospel of Christ. The remark I now make, applies especially to those who from their earliest years, have been under a gospel ministry, and, it may be, have professedly united themselves to the visible church of Christ; for the Spirit of grace deals with men according to the situation in which He finds them, and the sin of which they have been guilty. Now when He visits unconverted men with His grace, He finds them unbelievers, that is, persons who have refused to obey the command of God to believe on His Son, and who are therefore held guilty of the heinous iniquity involved in this offence. I know that to natural men it is a very light matter to be an unbeliever, even when we can get them to confess it. But this is very difficult, for they will insist on it that they never belonged to that base class of character. I have just to tell you, my friends, that if you never were unbelievers, you are not believers; if you never rejected Christ, you have never received Him; if you never made God a liar, you make Him that to this hour. Do you ask my proof of all this? It is at hand and very abundant. "Because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not." "He will reprove the world of sin, because they believe not on me." "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

But oh, how light you make of this charge! Were an officer of justice

to come into this church, and lay his hand upon any of you and say, I arrest you as guilty of high treason, you would turn pale and tremble; but you are charged with treason against the King of kings, and you are not in the least moved. Were he to arrest you for an act of daring robbery, you would blush and be ashamed; but you are charged with robbing God of His glory, and you do not tremble. Were he to arrest you as a murderer, you would not know where to look; but you are charged with the murder of the Son of God, and yet you are not abashed. And why is this? Is it because you are innocent? No: but because you are blind to your sin, and insensible of your state. But let the Spirit of grace visit you, and, like not a few that are around you, you too will be convinced that you are unbelievers; and that the boldest infidel is not so guilty as you are; for, like the Jews, you have been the betrayers and the murderers of the Prince of Peace.

APPLICATION.

1. Let me address you, dear brethren, who know and feel the truth of what has now been said; but who also know by experience the sufficiency of the remedy that is provided in the gospel of Christ. You do not require to go back to your first turning to the Lord, for evidence that all I have said of your natural character and state is true. For is not your daily experience just a repetition of the lesson you were then taught — and a repetition often attended with greater difficulties, and productive of deeper bitterness, then what you then experienced? The apostle Peter doubtless felt that he was undone when Christ called him; but how much more lively was his sense of this fact when he fell so foully, and when he went out and wept bitterly? Let it not surprise you, then, that you are made to possess the sins of your youth; that the ungodliness of your heart sometimes prevails to a fearful extent; and that what between corruptions from within and temptations from without, you are ready to say, "There is only a step between me and death." The design of all this trouble is, to bring out to view more clearly and more fully, the glory of Christ as the Saviour; and to try of what nature is the faith which you profess to have in Him. The honour of His name requires, and your safety is bound up in the same bundle, that you doubt not of His sufficiency to bring you through all the troubles that may assail. It was dishonouring to Christ that the disciples cried out, "Master, save us, we perish;" but the cause of it was, that their eye was fixed on the waves, and turned away from Christ. And just so you look to the dark tempest that rages within, and say in despondency, We sink. But oh! look to Christ, look to Him from

forth the thickest clouds, and keep your minds at the question, Is He not more in might by far than the noise of great waters? And dwelling on His sufficiency, you may find it as an anchor to your soul, both sure and stedfast.

2. We are anticipating the views which must come before us next Sabbath, if the Lord permit; yet we dare not send you away with the notes of alarm that have been sounded in your ears, without proclaiming the joyful sound of Christ's gloriously full and free salvation. And we do this at present, especially for your sakes who have been awakened from your sleep in sin. But I must clear away an objection which some may prefer: Our convictions are not deep enough, and therefore it is not for us to receive Christ. My friends, that is to say your wounds are not deadly enough, and therefore you will not apply to the Physician. Is not sin in its very nature mortal, and why then delay till more of its deadly poison has got into your system? To cut the matter short, however, though your convictions were as deep as the sea, you have precisely the same warrant to come to Christ with those that have no convictions at all. It is not having convictions that warrants, nor the want of them that does not warrant. It is the offer of Christ in the gospel to sinners, that is the warrant. We are glad you are convinced; because we can come to our work at once of proposing, and commending, and pressing Christ; and do not need to stand proving that you need Him, and what is still worse, that you do not have Him. It is your concern that you have Him not; it is your felt sin that you do not believe in Him; it is your fear that you may never get Him. But why this fear? You will tell me of something you have done, or something you are, or something you feel. Now, I do not wonder that you get fears from that quarter. It would be a bad symptom if you got anything else. And I trust that so long as you look in that direction your fears will increase, and your distress get worse and worse: just as Lot if he looked to Sodom saw nothing but cause of anguish and dismay. But look to Christ, and see if you can find in Him any ground for despondency or fear. Be it that you are deeply in debt, and have nothing to pay:—He has unsearchable riches and righteousness. Be it that you are absolutely lawless:—He is the end of the law for righteousness. Be it that you have crucified Him by your sin:—His blood cleanseth from all sin. And then He says to you, "Come unto me." But you will say, Oh! there is the point, this heart is so hard it will not move. And do you cry to God to move it; yea, to take it away and give you an heart of flesh. Let that be your employment while hearing of Christ; and you may find the truth of His Word, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power."

John Bunyan

by Rev. L. Macleod, Greenock

Who among the believers at the beginning of the Christian Church would believe that the persecuting, blaspheming Saul of Tarsus would yet be one of the great preachers of the Gospel — that he would be the great Apostle of the Gentiles? Yet this was God's plan for him. The Lord's reply to Ananias' protest (Acts Ch. 9 vv. 10-16) was, "Go Thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My Name before the Gentiles, and Kings, and the Children of Israel." And who among the people of God in Bedford, round about 1645, would believe that the noted swearer and blasphemer, John Bunyan would one day be a Trophy of grace and an outstanding minister of the Gospel? "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord" (Isa. 55 v. 8).

John Bunyan was born at Elstow, near Bedford, in November 1628. He frankly admits that he could not boast of noble blood, nor of high-born state, according to the flesh. His father was a poor man, a tinker by trade, a calling that Bunyan himself also followed. However, he goes on to praise the Lord for it all, saying, "All things considered, I magnify the heavenly majesty, for that by this door He brought me into the world, to partake of the grace and life that is in Christ by the Gospel."

He grew up without God in the world, without a thought about his state as a sinner, delighting in all manner of sin and ungodliness so that, to quote himself, "I had but few equals, both for cursing, swearing, lying, and blaspheming the holy name of God." He served for some time in the Parliamentary Army during the Civil War and, although he does not say much of his experiences as a soldier, he does mention one occasion, when, in the good providence of God, his life was preserved. Another soldier volunteered to go in his stead to a certain place that was being besieged, and while there was shot and killed.

After being discharged from the army, Bunyan married and, as he put it, his "mercy was to light upon a wife whose father and mother were counted Godly." The young couple were "as poor as poor could be," yet Mrs Bunyan had two books, "The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven" and "The Practice of Piety" left to her by her father when he died. It is likely that Bunyan thought but little of those books at the time and yet, in the wonderful providence of God, they were to play their own part in turning him from the error of his ways. As he and his young wife read the books together and as she told him of her Godly father's way of life, there was a

desire begotten within him to reform his sinful life. He began to attend the Church and was greatly attracted by the ritual and 'adored and that with great devotion all things belonging to the Church.' Still there was no real change. He frankly admits that with all his religion he still retained his wicked life.

About this time he heard a sermon on the Sabbath and the evil of breaking it, which affected him for an hour or two, for though he says he went home from the sermon with a great burden on his spirit, yet, after he had had his dinner, the whole thing began to go away and he was back at his Sabbath-breaking again. Later that day, in the midst of his Sabbath-breaking, he had a remarkable experience. 'A voice,' he says, 'did suddenly dart from heaven into my soul which said, "Wilt thou leave thy sins and go to heaven or have thy sins and go to hell?"' This certainly brought him to a stand, but he concluded that he was such a grievous sinner that he could never be forgiven — that it was now too late. "Therefore" he says, "I resolved in my mind to go on in sin." And so it was: his cursing and swearing continued, till one day he was put to shame by the reproof of one who was herself a noted sinner. She told him that his swearing made her tremble and that his ungodliness was likely to ruin the youth of the whole town, if they came into his company. Bunyan was silenced by this unexpected rebuke, and, strange as it may seem, he tells us that he never swore again.

He continued his efforts to reform his life by Bible reading and an outward conformity to the commandments. His neighbours took notice of this apparent change in his life and spoke of him among themselves as a truly converted man. With this Bunyan was well pleased for he tells us that he was proud of his godliness; nevertheless he was still ignorant of his true state as a sinner and had he died then, he concludes that his state would have been most fearful.

Then one day the Lord, Who leads the blind by a way they know not, led the proud Pharisee to Bedford, where he heard three or four women discussing among themselves what God had done for their souls. He drew near to hear what they said, and no doubt to join in the discussion, for he was by now "a brisk talker in matters of religion." However, he soon found out that they were far above him, for they were talking about the new birth, the work of God in their hearts, conviction of sin, etc. They also spoke of God visiting their souls in the love of Christ and how they had been upheld and comforted by the promises of the Word of God. To Bunyan they seemed so happy and gracious — he had never met their like before. Realising now that he knew nothing of the reality of true

religion, he was led to see his need as a lost and ruined sinner of a righteousness not his own. "I saw that I wanted a perfect righteousness to present me without fault before God, and this righteousness was nowhere to be found but in the Person of Jesus Christ."

Made conscious of the sinful years he had spent in the service of Satan, he was sorely tempted that the day of grace was past as far as he was concerned. After passing through deep and trying experiences he revealed his mind to those Godly women at Bedford. Understanding his case, they introduced him to their minister, Mr Gifford, who welcomed Bunyan to his house and "expounded to him the way of God more perfectly." After some time he was enabled to close in with God's way of salvation in the Gospel and to rejoice in God his Saviour. He was now so full of the love of God and the comforts of the Gospel that he says he felt he could not contain himself till he got home, but would tell to the very crows of the love and mercy of God. Bunyan thought this happy frame of mind was to last but, alas! it did not, and in a short time he began to question all.

The next stage in his spiritual experience was one of trials and temptations. The tempter caused him to doubt the veracity of the scriptures, yea even the existence of God. He tells us that what he met with now was twenty times worse than all he had met before. In this mysterious way the Lord was preparing the Tinker to serve Him in the Gospel of His Son and to be yet a comforter to countless numbers.

He had practically no education, no theological training, but as M. F. Harrison says in "John Bunyan — A Story of his Life," "the soul experiences through which he had passed had done more to equip him for what God has so definitely called him, than any academic training could do." He searched and studied the Word of God more than most, and one has only to read his sermons or any of his writings to see that he was 'mighty in the scriptures.' Spurgeon says of him, "Read anything of his and you will see that it is like reading the Bible itself — he had read it till his whole being was saturated with Scripture — Prick him anywhere, and you will find that his blood is Bibline, the very essence of the Bible flows from him. He cannot speak without quoting a text, for his soul is full of the Word of God." 'C. H. Spurgeon — The Full Harvest,' p. 159.

Under the faithful preaching of Mr Gifford, who was a Baptist, Bunyan made progress in the Christian way. He grew in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

After some years he was prevailed upon to begin preaching. At first he

was deeply conscious of his unworthiness for such work, yet little by little the Lord in His providence and by His Word showed him that he was called to the ministry. The Word of God spoke to him regarding his duty; The Lord's people encouraged him, and his labours were blessed. The Lord's people were edified and sinners were awakened. Hundreds came to hear him and he was called to preach far and wide. John Bunyan served the Lord with all humility of mind, calling sinners to "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

During this period Bunyan's wife died, leaving him with four young children, the eldest of whom was Mary, who was blind. After some time he remarried and this second wife, like the first, proved to be a true help meet and a source of strength to him in the sore afflictions he was yet to undergo.

With the Restoration of the Monarchy in 1660 there were many changes and most of them evil. The Episcopalians returned to power and those who refused to conform were persecuted. John Bunyan was arrested, and because he 'refused to leave off his preaching' he was imprisoned. For such a warm-hearted and affectionate person, this separation from his family was not an easy matter. When he thought of the sufferings and misery that his stand for the truth would bring upon his family it was breaking his heart — 'as pulling the flesh from the bones.' But the Lord was with him and Bunyan could say of the prison in Bedford what Jacob said of Bethel, 'this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.' On the whole his imprisonment was not too rigorous but it was to last for about twelve years — from November 1660 till May 1672 and then for about six months in 1676. It is generally believed that he was released from prison on this last occasion by the kindly intervention of Dr John Owen. Dr Owen was a personal friend of John Bunyan and according to some authorities told the King that he would 'willingly exchange all his learning for the tinker's power of touching men's hearts.'

It was while in prison that he wrote many of his great works including "The Pilgrim's Progress." As in the case of John, the beloved disciple on the isle of Patmos, the design of Satan to close Bunyan's mouth was overruled to the glory of God and the edification of the Church.

From the time of his release from prison in 1676 till he died in August 1688 Bunyan was continually engaged in the work of the Lord by preaching and writing. While still in prison he had been called by his old congregation at Bedford to be their Pastor but he also had the oversight of many congregations. He was in journeys oft, going as far afield as

London where he was held in great esteem — thousands gathering to hear him at times.

His end came rather suddenly. As he rode to London he was overtaken by a thunderstorm and drenched. A fever resulted and in about ten days, 31st August, 1688 the redeemed soul of John Bunyan entered the Celestial City — verily a brand plucked out of the fire. Of him it could be said that he had fought a good fight, he finished his course, he kept the faith. A few days later his mortal remains were laid to rest in the famous burying-ground of Bunhill Fields. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from hence forth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." Rev. Ch. 14 v. 13.

Letters

by Samuel Rutherford

TO MR HUGH HENDERSON

Our Trials Selected and Relieved by Divine Wisdom

BROTHER, since we must have a devil to trouble us, I think a raging devil best. Our Lord knoweth what sort of devil we have need of: it is best Satan be in his own skin, and look like himself: Christ weeping looketh like himself also, with whom scribes and Pharisees were at yea and nay, and sharp contradiction. You have heard of the patience of Job; when he lay in the ashes, God was with him, curing his boils, comforting his soul; and He took him up at last. That God is not dead; yet he will stop and take up fallen bairns. Many broken legs since Adam's days hath he healed, and many weary hearts hath he refreshed; bless him for comfort. Why? None cometh dry from David's well; let us go among the rest, and cast down our buckets into Christ's ocean, and suck consolations out of him; we are not so sore stricken but we may fill Christ's hall with weeping.

Aberdeen, March 17, 1637

TO THE MUCH HON. JOHN OSBURN, PROVOST OF AYR

The Joys Attendant on the Service of Christ

YOUR time will not be long; after your afternoon will come your evening, and after evening, night: serve Christ, back him, let his cause be your cause: give not a hair-breadth of truth away; for it is not your's, but

God's. Then, since you are going, take Christ's certificate with you out of this life, "Well done, good and faithful servant." His well done is worth a shipful of good days and earthly honours. I have cause to say this, because I find him truth itself.

In my sad days, Christ laugheth cheerfully, and saith, All will be well. Would to God, all this kingdom, and all that know God, knew what is betwixt me and Christ in this prison; what embracements, and love communings; I take his cross in my arms with joy, I bless it, I rejoice in it: suffering for Christ is my garland; I would not exchange Christ for ten thousand worlds; nay (if the comparison could stand) I would not exchange Christ with heaven.

Aberdeen, March 14, 1637

One Day in Seven

by Rev. Malcolm MacInnes, Toronto

The appointment of one day in seven, to be a day set apart for the worship of God, is almost as old as the human race. At a time when 'Sunday' is regarded by many as a day for sport or a day for family 'socials', it may not seem out-of-place to suggest that there is not only another name for the day, but also that it is a day with a history and a heritage. Churches and individual Christians must bear a large measure of the blame for the ignorance so common among people with respect to the Lord's Day. Ignorance of the law does not excuse the offender. Much blessing is lost, and great guilt is incurred when a nation forgets her 'Sabbaths.' The word sabbath means 'rest,' and when used properly it refers to the 'day of rest' in the revealed religion of the Bible. It is not merely a cessation from work engaged in on other days. It is a day in which we are to devote ourselves to religious duties.

The word sabbath is first mentioned in the Bible in Genesis 2v3, where we read that God 'rested from all his works' — the works of Creation. The institution of one day of 'holy rest' in seven days was evidently intended for man, because God needed no rest for Himself. 'The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary.' God must have had a view to man whom He had created. The first dawn seen by Adam, the first man, was the dawn of the Sabbath day. Man was created on the last day of Creation, so that his first complete day of life was to be given to God. The Sabbath was thus

given to man, that he should give it to God. In this light we may more readily understand the words of the Lord Jesus — 'The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath.' Notice that the 'day of rest' was first given to Adam, the father of the human race, not to Abraham, the father of the Jews. Had it been given to Abraham first, there might be more force to the argument that it is a Jewish institution. When God first gave the day, He was giving it to the whole human race. 'The sabbath was made for *man* . . .'

In Genesis Ch2v3 we are told that God 'blessed' and 'sanctified' 'the day of rest.' This informs us that the day should be especially devoted to the worship of God. Some will piously argue that every day is for God and that there is no need to stress the importance of one day above others. When God gave the 'day of rest' there was no sin in the experience of Adam, who, therefore, was more fitted for God's service than what we are now. Nevertheless, God saw fit to give him one day in seven to be set apart from a common to a holy use. If a day of rest for spiritual matters was needed then, when man was free from sin and from toil, how much more is it needed now by a world 'steeped to the lips in business, and drawn incessantly away from God by the enactments of the evil heart.'

As we read through the Bible we see that there were weekly intervals in the division of time. From Genesis Ch7v4, we see that God said to Noah, 'For yet seven days and I will cause it to rain upon the earth,' and in Ch8v10 we read that Noah 'stayed yet another seven days.' Further on, in Exodus Ch16v23, before the giving of the Ten Commandments, we see that the Israelites were to gather twice as much bread on the sixth day, because — 'Tomorrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord.' Where did the division of time into weeks come from? The division into 'day and night,' into months, and into years, we can see in the courses of nature, but there is no explanation with respect to the 'week.' It has its origin in the 'day of rest' appointed by God. 'It is no new religious appointment. It is the oldest sacred institution in the world; it is older than the Decalogue (The Ten Commandments), older than the Bible, and only a little younger than this earth.'

God, having delivered the Israelites from Egypt, and having already instructed them in the practical observance of the 'day of rest' to gather manna for two days on the day preceeding, gave them the Ten Commandments. There, in the Fourth Commandment, stands man's moral duty to 'Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy.' There, with other laws respecting blasphemy, murder, adultery, and theft, stands the

law which requires that we devote 'a day of rest from wordly employments to spend the time in the public and private exercises of God's worship.'

There seems to be much misunderstanding with respect to the example and teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ in the matter. Jesus did on the day of rest things which were condemned by the Pharisees. To understand His actions and their response to what He did, we must realise that they had lost sight of the 'weightier matters of the law' by stressing their own additions to it. A multitude of matters had been added to what God had said. Christ came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it. He came to show what was the true purpose of the law, and to show that there are works of necessity and of mercy, which not only *may* be attended to, but which *ought* to be done out of love and compassion.

The critic who is opposed to the Lord's day, and to the principle of the Fourth Commandment, will say that the Commandment states 'the seventh day,' and he will ask why should he keep the first day of the week as a 'day of rest' on that authority. What God did in Creation, and what the Fourth Commandment calls for, is a sequence of six days of work and a day of rest. That is what the Christian who keeps the Sabbath on the Lord's Day does. He observes the day of rest each seventh day, which in the rotation falls on the Lord's Day. As to the argument that the Saturday is the proper 'Sabbath,' as observed by the Jews, we should note that there are historians who question the fact whether Saturday is the Sabbath of Creation, because of the long period of bondage in Egypt. We ought also to consider that the incident recorded in Joshua Ch10v13, when the 'sun stood still,' makes the calculation of which day is the 'seventh in unbroken succession from Creation more complicated.' To insist on the necessity of the seventh day from Creation is to lose the spirit of the Commandment which requires a set portion of time for God. The Jews reckoned the Sabbath from what is our Friday evening to Saturday evening. The Commandment makes no mention of such details, and in that silence the wisdom of God the Lawgiver is further seen. There is in the Commandment scope for the different customs in reckoning time from country to country. Those who insist that the Sabbath must be from sunset to sunset are either ignorant of, or choose to ignore, some of the well-known differences with respect to hours of light or darkness that exist on God's earth. What Sabbath should there be where darkness reigns for months? The Law of God, properly understood and so applied, is applicable to every nation and every person. It is grievous that persons, calling themselves Christians,

should be so blinded and so legalistic as to insist that the Christian Sabbath must be on the day which they claim is the 'proper Jewish Sabbath.' The Seventh Day Adventists seem to be the greatest offenders in this respect. However, for them it was not primarily because the Fourth Commandment requires this. It was the outcome of a vision which Mrs White claimed to have. The Commandment existed before her supposed vision, but she followed outwardly the practice of the Christian Church in the matter until she had her vision. In this vision she claimed to have been shown the Tablets on which the Commandments were written, and around the Fourth Commandment she saw a soft 'halo' of light. It was then that she called her followers to observe the Saturday as the Sabbath, following the practice of the Jews. It seems more the product of a deranged mind than of sound judgment.

The Lord Jesus, before His death, observed the Sabbath Day according to the custom of reckoning time where He lived, because He was living under the Old Testament economy. However, after His resurrection on the first day of the week, the Apostles were accustomed to meet on the first day of each week. The Lord Jesus countenanced their meeting, making Himself known to them. In the Acts of the Apostles there are references to such meetings as the Apostles had on that day. There is a remarkable prophecy in Ezekiel Ch43v27 which states that 'it shall be, that upon the eighth day and so forward . . .' religious worship would be offered to God. It has been properly suggested that this finds its fulfilment in the assembling together of God's people on the 'eighth day' — which is the Lord's Day. The words 'and so forward' refer to the practice to be continued that on that day worship is to be offered to God. God rested from the work of Creation and that day of rest was appointed the Sabbath, until the Lord Jesus, the eternal Son of God, 'rested' from the great work of redemption, rising from the grave on the morning of the Lord's Day, which day has become the Christian Sabbath. What does the title 'Lord's Day' mean when used in the Bible, if it does not refer to a day which is different from the other days of the week?

Most of the Epistles were addressed to people who were not Jews, and who did not, therefore, have the Jewish tradition. If the Christian is to observe the Jewish Sabbath, it is more than remarkable that the Epistles do not instruct these non-Jewish believers to observe the Jewish Sabbath. For the Apostles, and for the early Christians, the great day of the week was the Lord's Day, because it commemorated the completion of the Saviour's triumphant work.

Many changes have come over lands and people. In some places,

where once the Lord's Day was a day loved and respected, we now see that the Sabbath is little known and less respected. To many people 'Sunday' is a day for sport and for wordly pleasure. They have not heard what John Bunyan heard, as he played his sport on the Lord's Day — 'Will you have your sins and go to hell, or part with your sins and go to heaven?' In many cases Churches are at fault in the matter. If they have not cancelled their evening service, it has been changed into a time for 'song' or for carnal entertainment. Little wonder that the people think so little of the Lord's Day, when the preachers set such a bad example. Do you think it sufficient that you attend church service *once* on the Lord's Day? Take heed lest your carelessness puts you into the category of those who hate the Sabbath of the Gospel. Do you 'sleep away' the hours of the Lord's Day? Take heed lest you 'sleep-away' God-given opportunities and you find yourself lost forever. The Lord's Day is a day which is intended to be rich with holy joy that comes from knowing what Christ has done by His death and resurrection. If the Lord's Day is to be enjoyed it must be prepared for. It is not easy to turn the mind from worldly things to spiritual things. To work unnecessarily late on the Saturday night almost invariably means that the body and mind are so tired on the morning of the Lord's Day that they become a ready reason for not worshipping God! The following quotation deserves our consideration. Referring to Saturday evening the writer says, 'The children were early to bed, for on Sabbath morning there was no shortening of the day by undue lying in bed. If no earlier, the family were no later in rising that day. They were taught to give God honestly a day of the same length as they gave themselves . . . It was a happy day, and all the memories it left behind were happy too.' Why should that type not be the rule, rather than the exception.

Toronto was once famous for its keeping of the Lord's Day. At one time Scotland was counted the model in this respect, but the following quotation, written in 1883, shows that times were changing. How they have changed since! The write says, 'Toronto, which is now (1883) said to surpass all other cities in the world in its Sabbath-keeping is called "a great object-lesson on the Sabbath." The Secretary admits that Toronto is the most perfect specimen of a Sabbath-keeping city that he has seen . . . The streets are quiet except for people going to Church. The cab stands are vacant and the tram-cars do not run. Even the ferrymen can rest most of the Sabbath, the ferries being allowed to cross to the island only at certain hours for the convenience of church-goers. No passenger trains are started and there are no Sunday papers, and the Churches are

full. We do not wonder that a Toronto publisher says "Our people like their Sabbath."'

Has not the picture changed since these words were first written? It must be said 'How are the mighty fallen.' Toronto, once famous for its Sabbaths, once named 'Toronto the good,' has fallen from that place of honour. Sin is in the streets, and judgments have come already.

What is true of present-day Toronto is true of many other cities around the world. God's Word and God's Day are trampled under the feet of pleasure-seeking sinners led on by blind preachers. In love to your own soul, and for the glory of the Lord of the Sabbath, 'Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy.' Find and frequent a place of worship where Christ and His finished work are offered to sinners as their only hope. Then you will call the Sabbath a delight, and say with the Psalmist, 'I joyed when to the house of God,

Go up, they said to me.'

(Reprinted from 'Faithful Witness' for February 1978).

Eadar-Mhineachadh Air Salm CXXX

Dleasdanas agus cleachdaidhean a' chreidich ann an àmhgharaibh o mhothachadh peacaidh — Aghaidh a chur air Dia, agus air Dia a mhain — Dian-thogradh agus dùrachd 'inntinn ann an deanamh sin.

II. Tha briathran nan rann so a' cur an céill mar an ceudna *mar a tha an t-anam 'ga ghiùlan fèin anns a' chor a bha sinn a' toirt fainear*; is e sin, ciod air am bheil e 'cur aghaidh air son fuasglaidh. "Ghlaodh mi riutsa, a Thighearna. A Thighearna, éisd ri m' ghuth; thugadh do chluasan an aire do ghuth m' athchuingean."

Anns na briathraibh tha asluchadh coitchionn air a dheanamh 'an airc cuideachaidh; anns am bheil r'a thoirt fainear, anns a' cheud àit, an tì a tha air 'asluchadh; agus is e sin Iehobhah: "Ghlaodh mi riutsa, Iehobhah." Rinn Dia an t-ainm so aithnichte d'a shluagh chum an creidimh a dhaingneachadh ann an seasmhachd a gheallaidhean, Ecsod. iii. Esan is e tobar nan uile bhith e fèin, bheir e gu cinnteach bith agus coimhlionadh d'a gheallaidhibh. Air do'n anam so, ma seadh, gnothuch a bhi aige ri Dia timchioll gheallaidhean a ghràis, tha e'ga asluchadh fo'n ainm so: "Tha mo ghlaodh riutsa, Iehobhah."

.Anns an asluchadh fèin feudar a thoirt fainear, — Anns a' cheud àit, Am dòigh-labhairt a tha e 'gnàthachadh. Tha e 'guidhe, "Thugadh do chluasan an aire;" mar is gnàth le daoineibh a tha gu dùrachdach a' toirt fainear ciod a tha air a labhairt riu, 'nuair a thionndaidheas iad a thaobh

o ni sam bith anns nach 'eil suim aca. Anns an dara àit, Dùrachd an anama anns a' ghnothuch a tha r'a aghaidh; a tha ro shoilleir a bhi 'dùblachadh an asluchaidh, "A Thighearna, eisd ri m' ghuth; thugadh do chluasan an aire do ghuth m' athchuingean;" agus mar an ceudna o na briathraibh ro bhrìghmhor a tha e 'gnàthachadh: "Thugadh do chluasan," a deir e, "aire dhìchiollach." Tha am focal a' ciallachadh dian-dhìchioll agus geur-aire: "Thugadh do chluasan aire ro dhìchiollach." Agus cò dha? — "Do ghuth m' athchuingean." "A Thighearna," deir e, "thugadh do chluasan an air do m' athchuingean 'an aire gràis agus tròcair," mar a tha am focal a' ciallachadh, "leis am bheil mi nis ann am theanntachd ro mhòr a' cur m' aghaidh ort." Agus anns an briathraibh so tha an salmadair a' taisbeanadh ann an rathad coitchionn cleachdaidh agus oibreachaidh an anama ghràs-mhoir air a thilgeadh anns na doimhneachdaibh agus ann an dorchadas do bhrìgh peacaidh.

Bithidh stéidh na dh' fheudar a lahairt fathast o na briathraibh so air a leagadh anns an dà ràdh so a leanas:—

Anns a' cheud àit, *Gu gheil an t-aon slighe saorsa a dh' fhàgadh do'n anam a tha air a ribeadh anns a' pheacadh a' coimh-sheasamh ann an aghaidh a chur air Dia a mhain:* "Ghlaodh mi riutsa, Iehobhah; a Thighearna, éisd."

Anns an dara àit, *Gu'n dean na doimhneachdan anns am feud an t-anam gràs-mhor tuiteam do bhrìgh peacaidh a chuir a dh' asluchadh Dhé le dian-dhùrachd cridhe:* "A Thighearna, éisd; a Thighearna, thoir aire." Cha-n e gnàth dhaoine a bhitheas ann an cunnart a' bhàis a bhi gu mairnealach ri glaothaich air son cuideachaidh.

A thaobh na dh' fheudar a mheas feumail ann an rathad coitchionn air son seòlaidh an anama sin a th' anns a chor a dh' ainmicheadh, labhraidh sinn uime gu h-aithghearr fo'n dà cheann so:—

1. Far am bheil *trioblaid, agus cunnart, agus an-shocair, cha-n e mhain a' bagradh nithe olc, ach a' fàgail mothachaidh dhiubh féin anns an iuntinn agus anns an anam, cuiridh iad dhiubh féin an dream sin anns am bheil iad a dh' iarraidh fuasglaidh.* Bu mhiann leis na h-uile ni gu nàdurra bhi aig fois. Ma tha duine ann an cunnart bàthaidh, cha-n 'eil aobhar a dhol a dh' earalachadh air an oidhirp a thoirt air a féin a theasairginn; agus cuiridh trioblaidean spioradail air a' mhodh cheudna daoine air obair chum iad féin 'fhuasgladh. D'an taobhsan nach gnàthaich meadhonan saorsa sam bith, tha iad aon chuid gn ro thruagh air an cruadhachadh, no fo bhuidhe an eu-dòchais, mar a bha Cain agus Iudas. Feudar a smuaineachadh, ma seadh, gur e prìomh ghnothuch gach uile anama th' anns na doimhneachdaibh a bhi 'g oidhirpeachadh fuasglaidh

thaotainn. Cha-n urrainn iad fois a ghabhail anns a' chor sin anns nach 'eil fois aca. Tha am meadhon air am bheil an t-anam gràsmhor a' cur aghaidh anns an oidhirpeachadh so air a thaisbeanadh dhuinn anns a' cheud ràdh a chuireadh sios. Cha-n 'eil e 'cur aghaidh air ni sam bith ach air Dia, Faic Hosea xiv. 3.

(To be continued)

Book Review

The Christian Soldier (An exposition of Ephesians 6:10-20). By Dr D. M. Lloyd Jones. Banner of Truth Trust. £3.50.

Perhaps the best feature of this book is the Doctor's dexterity in exposing subtle but common errors. By a series of quotations from Scripture, he unveils the fatal fallacy entertained by so many, that the Christian life is one of ease. With conviction and clarity, he indicates and emphasises the rigours of that warfare from which there is no discharge. The Christian is a soldier, called to a grim, stern battle requiring the exercise of all the faculties of the soul, all the members of the body, and the use of all the parts of the armour provided by the Captain of Salvation. The merely virtuous, and victorious life with its euphemistic slogan 'let go and let God' is portrayed in its true colours, as a flat contradiction of the truth, as well as a snare of the devil. An interesting difference is made between the 'girdle of truth' and the 'sword of the Spirit.' Though evidently familiar with Puritan Theology, the writer's independence of thought comes through. On page 325 he makes a revealing and devastating attack on the New English Bible's rendering of the 'Sword of the Spirit' with its serious undertones. The advice that rings throughout the whole volume is, 'avoid extremes.' The author's emphasis on the new ultimate authority is most welcome, at a time when the lack of conviction and the absence of supreme authority are regarded as signs of progress. The Doctor's assertion of the necessity of 'assurance of salvation' to engage successfully in truly spiritual conflict, requires clarification. His distinction between the 'old man' and the old nature is confusing and unscriptural in the light of Ephesians 4:22. More disturbing still is the writer's failure to recognise the Scriptural obligation of nations as well as individuals to acknowledge Christ. We agree that legislation cannot cure the corrupt heart of man, but if Christ had His rightful place as King of Nations, Scriptural measures against evil

would be legislated and implemented at national level and on a national scale.

Apart from these blemishes we regard the "Christian Soldier" as a worthy and useful addition to any library. The style and diction is adapted to the capacity of the average reader, and there is much in these pages which is calculated to instruct, direct, establish or reclaim, according to the several needs of the readers.

F.M.

Notes and Comments

Marriage of Prince Michael of Kent

The announcement that the Queen, after a meeting of the Privy Council, had granted permission to Prince Michael of Kent to marry Baroness Marie-Christine von Reibnitz, a Roman Catholic divorcee is a matter which will not gladden the hearts of Protestants throughout our land. The fact that the Baroness is not to renounce the Roman Catholic faith, and also that she has had her former marriage annulled by a Roman Catholic tribunal in order to open up the way for her to be married in a Roman Catholic Church, cannot but make Protestants fear increased Roman Catholic influence within the Royal family.

While recognising the fact that Prince Michael, through his marriage, is excluded from the succession to the throne, yet it would appear that this does not apply to any children of the marriage. Prince Michael, we understand, has stated that any children of the marriage will be brought up as Protestants. Yet while this is so, there is little doubt that any such children will be strongly influenced by their mother's religion, and as a loyal and devoted Roman Catholic she will be expected by her Church to do all in her power to win them over to the Roman Catholic faith. Consequently, we hold that renunciation of the Roman Catholic faith by the Baroness ought to have been made a condition for permission for the marriage to be granted.

(Since the above note was written the Pope has refused permission for the marriage to take place in a Roman Catholic Church).

Church of Scotland Minister and Cremation

In the May issue of Imprint, the Moray and Inverness supplement to Life and Work, the editor, Rev. Robert J. V. Logan, Inverness, gives his support to a proposed Crematorium for the North, and expresses surprise that, at the end of the 'Seventies, Aberdeen has still the only

Crematorium in the whole of the North. In our view, it is most regrettable that a Minister of the Gospel would give any support whatsoever to the provision of a Crematorium, seeing that cremation is a pagan method of disposal of the dead. Rather would we expect a minister to express opposition to such a proposal. For our part, we would wish to state our abhorrence of the proposal and our hope that Moray District Council will abandon this project.

Sabbath Collection of Letters

The delegates at the annual conference of the Union of Post Office Workers voted almost unanimously against the re-introduction of a Sabbath collection of letters. It is gratifying to know that the postmen's representative came to this decision though we know, of course, that it was not out of deference to the law of the Sabbath. The *Glasgow Herald* in an editorial entitled "Posties' Sabbath" criticised the postmen for their decision and then, after acknowledging that they were perfectly entitled to take that attitude, went on to lecture them that having established their right to 'Sunday' off that they should now respect the rights of others and make no demands on 'Sunday' workers. "This means," the editorial went on, "no family expeditions in the car, which would involve traffic policemen and petrol pump attendants; no telephone calls, no radio or TV, no golfing; and certainly no popping down to the local for a pint."

This is just how it should be, and we are glad of the *Glasgow Herald's* conversion to an outlook which our Church has advocated for over eighty years. Were this course followed, and the worship of God restored to its rightful place, what a different place Scotland would be.

Death of Rev. D. M. MacLeod, Auckland

It is with deep sorrow that we record the death of Rev. D. M. MacLeod, Auckland, New Zealand, after a serious and trying illness. His death is a great loss to the Church at home and abroad. He has now entered, we believe, into the joy of His Lord. To his widow and family, and to his large circle of relatives, as well as to the congregation in Auckland, we would extend our sincere sympathy at this time.

Acknowledgment of Donations

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

Dingwall: Friend, Harris, £5 for Church Door Collection per Rev. D. B. M.; Anon., £20 for Church Funds.

Dumbarton: Miss M. Buchanan, £25 for Dumbarton Church Extension per Messrs McL. Humble & Co.; N. McC. in memory of a beloved wife, £50; Anon., Inverness, £10 per W. D. Fraser; Friends, Kyle, £10; Friend, Uig, in memory of loved ones, £5; Friend, Broadford, Ps. 19, £5, last five for Manse Fund, last three per Rev. J. M. B.

Fort William: Mrs C., Onich, £1; D. C., Lochaline, £20; Mrs C., Drumnin, £10; MacLeans, Tyndrum, £5; Mrs MacD., Tyndrum, £1, all per Rev. J. A. MacDonald.

Kyle: Anon, Lairg, £20; Wellwisher, £5; Envelope in plate, £10, all for Manse Fund; Envelope in Plockton plate, Mrs MacDonald, £7 (£4 for Sust. Fund: £3 for Home Miss.).

London: Anon, Australia, £100 for London Church and Manse Building Fund per W. D. F.

North Harris: Friend, Meavag South, £10 (£5 for Communion Expenses and £5 for door collection); Friend, Grosebay, £5 for Communion Expenses; Friend, Leacklee, £10 for Car Fund; Friend, Meavag South, £5 for Communion Expenses; Friend, Kendelbig, £2 for Car Fund; Friend, Collain, £2; Friend, Leacklee, £2, both for Kyles Mission House Porch; Friend, Stockinish, £5 (£2 for door collection, £3 for Church and Manse property); Friend, Colossians 3:23, £1.50 for Kyles Mission House Porch, last three per R. M. C.; Two Friends, Tarbert, £4 for Communion Expenses per Rev. A. McK.; Anon., Kyles Collection plate, £2 for door collection.

North Uist: Friend, Stornoway, £5; Friend, Bonar Bridge, £8; Friend, Thurso, £10; Friend, North Harris, £5; In loving memory of loved ones, Uig, Skye, £5; Mrs C. H., London, in memory of her parents John and Betty MacDonald, Knockline, North Uist, £100; R. N., Inverness, £10; Friend, Ballifeary House, £1; Anon., £10; Anon., Maine, U.S.A. \$300; Friend, North Uist, £54; Friend, Ness, £5; Friend, Stornoway, £10; Friend, Harris, £5; Friend, Ness, £5; In loving memory of M. A. Matheson, £10; Haggai 2:8, £10; Friends in Canada, £25; Friend, Ness, £10; Christina MacD., 8 Kersavagh, £5, all for Manse Extension and all per Rev. A. M.

Perth: Friend, Inverness, £15; Anon., £20; Friend, Portree, £5; Friend, Inverness, £5; Mrs MacK., Ullapool, £20; Anon., Argyll, £10, last two for Manse Fund.

Raasay: J. F., £20; K. Gillies, £5, both for Sust. Fund; K. Gillies, £5; Envelope in plate, £5; Friend, Raasay, £1, all for Property Fund.