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The Bible — Man's Most Priceless Possession

To have the Bible in our possession is the greatest privilege that we can enjoy in this world, apart from having the Saviour revealed in the Bible as our own personal Saviour. God has given us His Word — a divine revelation of His mind and will and of the way of salvation for sinners through a crucified, risen and exalted Redeemer. This we possess when we have the Bible. Its value we cannot compute. It is priceless; more precious than rubies or silver and gold. It is true that we can buy a Bible at quite a small price, but that price gives no indication of its real value. Were we to try and estimate its true value by placing it on one side of a balance, all the riches of this world placed on the other side could not outweigh it. How then, we must ask, is the Bible so little valued by us, and so generally despised among men? The answer to this question we must find in man himself first, and then in the nature of the Bible itself.

What is it, then, that makes men undervalue or despise the Scriptures of truth? It is the fact that men are in a sinful and fallen state. Sin has so darkened the mind and understanding of fallen sinners that they are not able to set a proper value upon things of real worth. Though quite capable of estimating worldly treasures in their relative values with respect to one another, the carnal mind of man cannot grasp the superior worth of things that are heavenly. Consequently, that which is of comparatively little worth is prized, and that which is of superlative value is despised. This, then, is how we act towards the Bible — the most priceless possession that man can enjoy — until God in His infinite mercy opens our eyes to see it to be of infinite worth.

But what is it in the Bible that makes this priceless possession so unattractive to us? It is its spirituality. We are carnal, sold under sin. The things of God are spiritual, so we cannot as natural men and women

appreciate them, for these things are spiritually discerned. In order to value them through seeing the preciousness of them we need to be quickened. That is, we need to be made alive — spiritually alive. It is the Spirit of God alone in regeneration who can breathe in that spiritual life to our souls and hearts. Then we will prize the Bible, prize the message of the Bible, prize the Christ of the Bible. We will then say: "How did I never see it before? Here is life, here is salvation, here is eternal blessedness."

When the Bible is valued, what is then the result? That soul says, "What would I do without the Bible?" And the same soul goes on to say, "Oh that everyone might have the Bible." The awakened soul is convinced that without the Bible no soul can be saved. The revelation of God in nature may leave men inexcusable if they die in their sins but it cannot bring them to salvation. Only the Bible can do this by the blessing of God upon it.

By this then we may estimate our own love to the Bible — that is, by the desire we have that others should possess it, and by the support we give for its dissemination throughout the whole world. By this standard how do we measure up? Do we stand or fall? Who can but say that they come far short in the support they give to the work of spreading abroad the Scriptures? If so, should we not seek to amend matters and do all in our power to support the spreading abroad of God's Word? The opportunity to do so is open to us when we have a Bible Society — the Trinitarian Bible Society — which is dedicated to sending forth faithful versions of the Scriptures into the nations of the world.

Notes of a Sermon

by Rev. M. Gillies, Stornoway

"And beneath upon the hem of it thou shalt make pomegranates of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, round about the hem thereof; and bells of gold between them round about:

A golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the hem of the robe round about." — Exodus Chapter 28 Verses 33-34.

The pomegranate is a type of Christ. These golden bells had a special relation to the pomegranates — not one out of place. These golden bells would therefore typify something pertaining to Christ. Let us look back then, my friends, to a past eternity. Ah! do you see the pomegranate? There He lies in the bosom of the Father. Do you hear that golden bell

ringing in the hearts of angels who veil their faces before him crying, Holy, Holy?

I see the pomegranate again. Ah! what is happening? He is in consultation with his Father. Surely you hear the golden bell, child of God, it rings in the Covenant of Grace. It has been ringing in every believers' heart from the days of Abel: it still rings today, and it will ring when all the so-called joyous bells which the Devil has forged in his smithy in Hell have been put to silence for ever. No, my friends, eternity will not see that bell put to silence.

But see the pomegranate again. He walks in the Garden in the heat of the day. "Adam where art thou?" He says. What a black day! Man, an heir of Heaven, has become an heir of Hell. No golden bell this time you say. Yes, my friends, it rings in the promise. "The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent."

There were many golden bells and pomegranates on Aaron's robe, but how many more are there on the robe of the Great High Priest. I can only mention a few.

A pomegranate in Bethlehem's manger — God's dear Son and co-equal with the Father. Do you hear the golden bell? Ah Yes! Where? In the Angels' song. True! I hear another. Listen to it. What a sweet note! "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given." Make sure, my friends, that that promise is written deeply on your soul, if it is you should hear that golden bell. It is true enough, the babe of Bethlehem is all for you.

But see the pomegranate of the Church again. He sits at Jacob's well with a woman "who is a sinner." But all women and men, too, are sinners — yes, and great sinners. This one however, is a notorious sinner. Ah, He loves those who know themselves to be great sinners. Heaven is a place where those dwell who have been transformed from great sinners to great saints. What efficacy there is in the blood of Christ. Millions of sinners have been washed there and the fountain is as pure as ever for you.

There is a Fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins.

Do you hear the golden bell ringing. Yes, it rings in the woman's heart, Hear it. "Is not this the Christ?" The fact that he saved the Woman of Samaria should be as a golden bell to you drawing you to Christ. I pass by Lazarus, Martha, Mary, Nicodemus and many others.

Now let us take a view of Gethsemane. He, whom the pomegranate round the hem typified is lying in agony on the ground, sweating great drops of blood. No golden bell here, my friends. Ah you say, the angel who strengthened Him may have been as a golden bell ringing in his soul.

Godly Rabbi Duncan had a great desire to see this angel when he reached Heaven. What a wonderful messenger. A Created being sent to strengthen Him whom angels worship in awe. What a mystery! Eternity will not fathom it. Friend, there was a golden bell here, but its note was very dim at this instant. What was it? Well I believe it was this, "Who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame." That was it, "The joy set before him."

See now, the pomegranate hanging on a cross. Blood from these hands and feet drop on to the cold rocks of Calvary. Very little chance of a golden bell here. I hear at least three. One in the heart of a malefactor, "Today thou shalt be with me in paradise." One in the heart of angels rejoicing over one sinner which repented, and yet another in his own heart, "It is finished!" What is finished? The work of salvation? — not strictly correct. The work of salvation is not finished until the last son is brought to glory. But the road of salvation is finished. It has been paved by the blood of the God-Man. This rejoiced Him. Perhaps there is a golden bell ringing in your own heart in this connection, my friends. Well Calvary and Gethsemane constitute one of the Schools of Faith. In Gethsemane the disciples found the weakness of the flesh. They slept at the very time the Jews were marching to arrest their master. Here Peter learned to put his sword into his sheath for the time had come. At Calvary a centurion learned that this was a righteous man. Yes, my friends, you should often take a look at Calvary.

I must stop. What now? A pomegranate in Joseph's sepulchre — not Jesus' sepulchre. Oh, what poverty! "Though he were rich yet he became poor." There he lies in the stillness of death. Do you hear a golden bell? Yes at least four. One rings on the morning of the resurrection in the heart of Mary. What a joyous note — "Rabboni". Another rings in your heart. Why? because the resurrection of Christ is the title deeds of salvation. Again a golden bell rings in the heart of the two going to Emmaus. It rung so much that they admit their hearts burned within them. But a golden bell should ring in your heart on this account that the resurrection of Christ is a proof that all the children of God shall yet have their bodies raised incorruptible. When that trumpet shall sound, you shall be raised from your grave to meet the Lord in the air and so be forever with the Lord. There the golden bells will fill your soul with joy and you will spend the endless ages singing a New Song — forever new to angels, for they will never succeed in learning it. They know not what it is to be washed from their sins in His (i.e. Christ's) blood.

Friend begin to learn that song down here.

The Writings of John Bunyan

by Rev. Ian R. Tallach

Richard Baxter has succinctly defined Puritanism as 'a serious effort to live a godly life, and a desire to achieve further reformation in the Church'. Taking its rise in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, it was a movement of protest, first against the ceremonial of the Church of England; later, it became a protest against her ecclesiastical polity. Finally, it percolated to the ordinary people and became a way of thought and a way of life. Bunyan was a typical Puritan. In his youth, Puritanism had reached its zenith, and its influence was to be felt in all aspects of social and individual life. The chief stimulus to Puritanism was the open Bible. G. M. Trevelyan sees in the lonely figure of Christian, with Bible in hand, 'not only John Bunyan himself', but 'the representative Puritan of the English Puritan epoch'.

One of the distinctives of the Puritans was their vocalness. Hence the extraordinary flood of literature that issued from their pens and presses. Many may not realise it, but Bunyan was the author of no less than sixty books. In 1838, Charles Doe's *Circular* of 1691 was discovered at Bedford, and this document presents a complete list of Bunyan's works with their dates taken from the author's own lips before his death. Robert Philip who wrote a chronological critique on the writings of Bunyan stresses the importance of this discovery towards the study of the progressive development of Bunyan's intellectual powers. Whatever may be said of his development as a thinker and writer, an analysis of his works shows that the great impulse to write arose from his passion for souls. He was concerned above all to awaken men to a sense of sin, and to confront them with the cross for its remission. He was, as he himself puts it, 'laden with pain, and travailed to bring forth children to God'.

In 1644, at the age of sixteen, Bunyan was drafted into the Parliamentary army, but his military service was soon to terminate. The battle of Naseby in June, 1645, brought the First Civil War to an end, and we find Bunyan back at his anvil in Elstow. About 1649, he married a poor girl who brought with her two books which belonged to her father — *The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven* and *The Practice of Piety*. Although these books did not reach his heart 'to awaken it about his sad and sinful state', they did beget in him some desires to reform his godless life. It was not long, however, before he began to pass through those trying spiritual experiences which he so vividly details in his *Grace Abounding*, and which ultimately issued in his conversion.

In 1653, Bunyan joined a Christian fellowship under the pastorate of the 'holy Mr Gifford', a converted royalist major. Soon Bunyan was required to address his brethren, and this led to his preaching in the Bedfordshire villages. His preaching brought him into conflict with the followers of George Fox. In his *Some Gospel Truths Opened* (1656), which was Bunyan's first publication, he made a vigorous attack on the enthusiasms of Quakerism. Dr Southy describes it as 'a calm, well-argued, and well-supported statement of the Scriptural doctrines on momentous points'. It was to be the first of many polemics, as Bunyan was often involved in theological controversy. He was, however, 'more anxious to establish truth than to refute error'.

The death of Cromwell was followed by the downfall of Puritan rule, and the restoration of monarchy under Charles II. Those who had enjoyed the shelter of the Protectorate, soon found themselves exposed to the persecuting effects of the Restoration. Bunyan was among the first to suffer. He was arrested and committed to Bedford county gaol, where he was to spend twelve years of his life. During his period of imprisonment, Bunyan was not idle. It was at this time that he wrote *Profitable Meditations, Praying in the Spirit, Christian Behaviour, The Holy City, The Resurrection of the Dead, And Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, as well as some smaller works.

Bunyan's prime reason for writing *Grace Abounding* (1666) was not autobiographical. He wrote the book as a 'brief and faithful relation of the exceeding mercy of God in Christ' to himself, but it was 'for the benefit of the tempted and dejected Christian'. His concern was for his brethren who were in danger of fainting under persecution, and to demonstrate to them how God had brought him through severe trial to victory. In the preface to this work, he writes: 'I could have stepped into a style much higher, and could have adorned all things more; but I dare not. God did not *play* with me in trying me, nor did I play when I sank as into a bottomless pit, and the pains of hell got hold upon me; wherefore I may not play in relating them, but be plain and simple, and lay down the thing as it was'. Dr Cheever, one of the foremost authorities on Bunyan, remarks: 'As you read *Grace Abounding* you are ready to say at every step. Here is the future author of *Pilgrim's Progress*'.

Bunyan's next publication of importance is his *Justification by an Imputed Righteousness*. Although it was written in 1671, it was not published till after his death. In this treatise, Bunyan presents the reader with the following proposition: 'That there is no other way for sinners to be justified from the curse of the law in the sight of God, than the imputation

of that righteousness long ago performed by, and still residing in, the person of Jesus Christ'. In his explication, Bunyan has many excellent things to say. He stresses, for instance, that the righteousness of Christ is 'a justifying virtue only by imputation'. The righteousness is still in Christ, not in us, even when we are the beneficiaries of it, 'as the wing and feathers still abide in the hen when the chickens are covered and kept and warmed thereby'. He proceeds: 'It is absolutely necessary that this be known of us; for if the understanding be muddy as to this, it is impossible that such shall be sound in the faith; also in temptation, that man will be at a loss that looketh for a righteousness for justification in himself, when it is to be found nowhere else but in Jesus Christ. The apostle who was his craftsman as to this, was always "looking unto Jesus" that he may be "found in him", knowing that nowhere else could peace and safety be had. And indeed, this is one of the greatest mysteries in the world; namely, that a righteousness that resides with a person in heaven should justify me, a sinner on earth'. Of course, Bunyan had discovered the truth and virtue of this doctrine in the fires of temptation, as *Grace Abounding* evinces. It was then that a tattered copy of Luther's *Commentary on Galatians*, with its emphasis on justification by faith, came into his hands. Of it he wrote: do prefer this book of Martin Luther upon Galatians, excepting the Holy Bible, before all the books that ever I have seen, as most fit for a wounded conscience'.

In 1666, Bunyan was released from prison, but it was for only a short time. He had to return for another spell of six years. Robert Philip says that Bunyan had 'no concessions to make to his enemies'. Upon his release in 1672, he published *A Confession of My Faith and a Reason for My Practice*. In his preface he appeals to his enemies to judge if there was anything in his doctrine that savoured of heresy or rebellion. Rather than permit his approaches to God to be governed by 'the superstitious inventions' of men, he was determined, the Almighty being his help, to suffer, as he affirms, 'till the moss shall grow upon my eyebrows'. Nothing could make him violate his faith and principles. Because of the view he held of Open Communion, as well as his thoroughly Calvinistic creed, Bunyan was in conflict not only with the authorities, but with the whole body of general Baptists, and his *Confession* provoked their 'best and worst pens'. It may be of interest to observe that 'at least three of Bunyan's children were baptised in infancy — one a year after his own admission to the Bedford church by Mr Gifford, and another after his twelve years imprisonment for conscience' sake'.

As a result of the restoration of monarchy under the profligate Charles

II, the morality of the country quickly degenerated. While in prison, Bunyan wrote his *Christian Behaviour*, which has already been mentioned. Its design was the promotion of family morals, and it concludes with directions to backsliders. Upon his release in 1672, Bunyan was shocked to find ignorance and ungodliness rampant. From the moment he witnessed the apostasy, it haunted him, and he appropriately wrote his *Light to Them that Sit in Darkness* (1674). His object was to counteract some of the insidious errors into which the people of his itineracy had relapsed. The book recommends the gospel in its purity for their acceptance. 'I have ventured my own soul thereon with gladness', proclaims the author 'and if all the souls in the world were mine, I would venture them all.'

Bunyan's works are far too numerous to list or comment on here. We now come to his writing of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, which has had such a profound influence for good and for which Bunyan is justly remembered most of all. Ifor Evans, in his *Short History of English Literature*, asserts that the greatest fiction writer of the seventeenth century was John Bunyan. By fiction, Evans has in mind Bunyan's three great classics — *The Life and Death of Mr Badman*, *The Holy War*, and, of course, *Pilgrim's Progress*. Considered as literature, they are fictional, but because of their spiritual import they are among the finest of our religious writings.

The *Pilgrim's Progress*, it need hardly be said, is Bunyan's *magnum opus*. His biographer, John Brown, tells us that on the highest authority, that of Bunyan himself, we know that it was written in prison. For a time, it was thought that the world was mistaken in supposing the *Pilgrim's Progress* to be a prison production. But thanks to Dr Brown's researches, it was discovered that Bunyan was recommitted to prison three years after his release in 1672. When the first complete edition of the book appeared in 1679, by the side of the word 'den' in the text, Bunyan placed the marginal note, 'the Jail'. The reader will recall the opening words of the *Pilgrim's Progress*: 'As I walked through the wilderness of this world I lighted upon a certain place where was a den, and I laid me down in that place to sleep; and as I slept, I dreamed a dream'. How did the theme come to Bunyan's mind? Mediaeval and French literature, as well as English, has been ransacked for an answer. Often absurd explanations have been advanced. No doubt Bunyan was influenced to some extent by traditional literary ideas, but it was unconsciously. He claims entire originality.

*Matter and manner too, was all mine own,
Nor was it unto any mortal known*

Till I had done it.

It is notorious that Bunyan did not possess many books. The Bible and Fox's martyrology appear to have been his main companions. He informs us that he 'never fished in others' waters. My Bible and Concordance are my library in my writings'.

Dr Brown has attempted to define the elements which combine to make *Pilgrim's Progress* the classic that it is. Among these is its 'perfect spontaneousness'. It has 'all the simple freedom of life. There are no signs of toil, no inartistic traces of elaboration; the vision grows up like a flower, effortless and fair'. Then there is its 'dramatic unity'. The reader's interest is aroused and retained from start to finish. 'From the moment we see the man in rags setting out with his burden, our interest in his fortunes never flags till he is fairly within the portals of the celestial city.' There is also the 'great humanness' of the book. 'We have touches of pathos which, to use a favourite phrase of Bunyan's, make the water to stand in our eyes; and strokes of pleasantry which bring back the smile to our faces.'

It is, however, as a great spiritual classic that the book is most loved. Dr Cheever who is second to none in his analysis of Bunyan's work remarks that one of the 'supremest merits' of *Pilgrim's Progress* is that 'it belongs to no sect. It is Christianity, pure Christianity.' One 'cannot tell from perusal of that work that Bunyan was of any religious persuasion save that he was a living member of the Church of Christ.' Cheever proceeds: 'In Bunyan you do not meet with prejudices instead of truth, nor bigotries, nor reproaches, nor anything in the sweet fields through which he leads you that can drive away or repel any . . . He is a familiar friend, an angel from heaven, and not a partisan, walking with you through green pastures and leading you beside still waters; and conversing with you all the way so lovingly, so instructively, so frankly, there is nothing so delightful. You have in him more ubiquity, unity and harmony of divine truth, more of the pervading breath and stamp of inspiration than in almost any other uninspired writer.'

How many thousands, over the three centuries since the *Pilgrim's Progress* was written, have identified themselves with the woebegone figure of Christian, with his Bible and the burden of his sin, seeking salvation with tears! How many have followed him to the cross, and, looking upon Him who was pierced, have sung with him: 'He hath given me rest by his sorrow, and life by his death!' How many have pursued his onward pilgrimage to the Delectable Mountains! The *Pilgrim's* appeal is universal, but how much more so to those who understand its spiritual reference.

In 1684-5, the second part of the *Pilgrim's Progress* issued from Bunyan's pen. Here, the Pilgrim's wife, Christiana, and her children set out for the Celestial City. But before this addendum, Bunyan had published *The Life and Death of Mr Badman* (1680) and *The Holy War* (1682). The former of these is regarded as a counterpart to the *Pilgrim*. It is presented to the world in a familiar dialogue between Mr Wiseman and Mr Attentive. Bunyan, in the use of dialogue, followed Arthur Dent's *Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven*, a book that has already been referred to. Mr Badman is a solemn biography of a scoundrel who, despite a godly upbringing, step by step degenerates until he expires, in horror and despair. Some may be shocked by the book's 'lurid truthfulness,' but Bunyan's intention was to shock. At the conclusion, Mr Attentive speaks of Badman's death as 'a staggering dispensation'. It is, he says, 'full of the wisdom and anger of God,' and he craves Mr Wiseman's prayers, that God would give him grace that he may neither live nor die as Mr Badman. Apart from its seventeenth century connotations, it is a very modern book.

Bunyan's *Holy War* is an epic of magnificent proportions. Like the *Pilgrim's Progress*, it is written in allegorical form. Lord MacAulay estimates that if the *Pilgrim's Progress* did not exist, *The Holy War* would be the best allegory that was ever written. No doubt Bunyan's reminiscences of his military service in Cromwell's new model army, and his recollection of the siege of Leicester, were enlisted in the composition of this book. Here our author tells of the war 'made by Shaddai upon Diabolus for the regaining of the metropolis of the world; or the losing and taking of the town of Mansoul.' Dean Hutton writes that Bunyan 'had not been a soldier any more than he had been a doubter, for nothing.' All his experiences went 'hot-foot' into his writings.

Many of Bunyan's excellent productions have not even been mentioned in this article. Space will not allow. The past three hundred years attest to the permanent worth and relevance of what Bunyan wrote. Before his death in 1688, his *Pilgrim's Progress* had passed through at least ten editions. Since then, it has been translated into approximately two hundred languages. No doubt Bunyan's writings have been blessed to multitudes, and will continue to be used by God to the blessing of many more. Bunyan was 'not taught in the schools of Plato and Aristotle,' but he was an anointed genius, a star in the right hand of Christ. He still shines on. His work 'transcends its age and is permanent'. He was buried in Bunhill Fields, the *sancto campo* of the Non-conformists. It is said that many puritans 'begged with their dying breath' that their coffins might be placed as near as possible to his. On a visit to Bunhill Fields, Dr MacGinn,

a short while before his death, after stooping a long time in pensive thought over Bunyan's tomb, at last exclaimed: 'Sleep on, thou Prince of Dreamers.'

Holland Missionary Meeting — 1978

This year's "mission-day," as it is commonly called in Holland, was fixed for the 1st of May. Although it was cloudy in the morning, it remained dry and warm all day. When we arrived at Irene Hall in Utrecht at 10 a.m. it was fast filling up with people. A few empty chairs could be seen from the platform at starting time. Seven thousand five hundred chairs had been rented for the occasion, and there must have been nearly that number present at 10.30 a.m.

The day's proceedings were opened by Ds C. Smits, chairman of the Committee of the Mbuma Missionary Society. Psalm 89, verses 8-9, was sung, and Psalm 72 read. Mr Smits thereafter gave an address from Zechariah chapter 12:10: "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."

A very hearty welcome was extended by Mr Smits to Rev. A. Ndebele, Ingwenya, and Mr A. Mpofu, Elder, Zenka, both from Rhodesia, as well as to Rev. D. M. Campbell, Shieldaig, Scotland. Verses 1 and 2 of Psalm 91 were sung.

After the singing Rev. D. M. Campbell read an address based on Mark 14, verse 6: "Let her alone, why trouble ye her, she hath wrought a good work on me." The address was translated, and read by the chairman, Ds C. Smits. After this, part of Psalm 87 was sung, and the first collection was taken.

Ds A. de Waard read part of Acts chapter 2. He gave an address from verse 39: "For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Some verses from Psalm 22, verse 31 onwards, were sung.

An address was then given by Rev. A. Ndebele, Rhodesia. He spoke briefly of the situation in Rhodesia, and conveyed to the Holland people the greetings of the Mission staff, and those of the Rhodesian Presbytery, as well as the African people of the Free Presbyterian Church in Rhodesia. His address was then read in Dutch by Mr Van Waveren.

The meeting adjourned for lunch after Ds van de Poel asked a blessing on behalf of the whole gathering. When proceedings resumed, Ds A. Dorsman gave out Psalm 77:13-14 to be sung. He read Psalm 87, and returned thanks for the food.

Mr L. M. Scholten then gave an address from Romans chapter 11, verse 26: "And so all Israel shall be saved, as it is written, there shall come out of Zion the deliverer and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." He made a passing reference to the establishing of the state of Israel and their celebration of 30 years of independence, as well as to the fact that the Free Presbyterian Church has a Mission seeking the ingathering of the Jews. Psalm 130, verses 1-8, were sung, and a second collection was taken.

After that Ds J. van Prooijen gave an address from John 10:16: "and other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." He concluded by giving out Psalm 72, verses 17-18, to be sung.

Ds S. de Jong spoke from Acts 16:25: "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God, and the prisoners heard them, etc." He spoke about the cessation of Paul's work, in an apt way, I understand, referring to the situation in Rhodesia, and related the doors being opened, etc., to the prayers of Paul and Silas. Psalm 138, verses 7 to 8, were then sung.

Ds F. Mallan, as the vice-chairman, gave, as is customary there, the closing address. Both he and the chairman are strong and forthright speakers. He chose Psalm 113, and briefly commented on the first part, dwelling mostly on verses 7 and 8: "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill, etc." Psalm 113, verses 3 and 4, were sung, and then Rev. D. M. Campbell, on behalf of the Foreign Mission Committee, and the Free Presbyterian Church, thanked the gathering for their hearty liberality, quoting 2 Cor. 9:10.

Observations:

The Mbuma Society in Holland supports no other church in mission work, except the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. I understand that the reason for this is the confidence that they have in her, as a "sending church." The people at the annual meeting are of one mind with the committee on this matter. There is on their part first "a willing mind" (2 Cor. 8:12). The committee have a great responsibility. On the secretary, Mr Post, and the treasurer, Mr Reijers, falls the burden of organising the "mission day" meeting. Then, outside of the committee,

there is Mr Barth for one example, who spends *all* his free time sorting out used clothing donated by friends for Rhodesia. The labour expended on this well-intended venture by many other men and women, whom we do not know, is tremendous. Their "willingness" is demonstrated both by their support of the Free Presbyterian Church for the past 15 years and their having contributed by varied efforts over £70,000 for the collection taken on the 1st of May, 1978. This is not the total sum contributed during the year. This "willingness" is partly due to their persuasion that the missionary work they support (i.e. Free Presbyterian) is being carried out according to the pattern of Scripture. Ought we not to believe, undoubtedly, that God is providentially at the back of this movement working by the power of His Spirit? If He is, we should praise His name.

My own opinion is not based on the largeness, or the breadth, or the quantity of the work done. It is great in our estimation here in Scotland, but in Holland, the work of this Society is small when compared with that of other Societies there, and the numbers that support them. This Society with their beliefs and practice, are despised by the bulk of professed Christians in Holland. This, I believe, in our day speaks for itself. Thus it was that in Nehemiah's day his work was despised but that did not mean that the work of Nehemiah was insignificant.

If this is God's work, should not the thought encourage us to pray that he would preserve the remnant in Rhodesia that fear His name; that when the heathen rage, He would frustrate their evil designs, and that He would do "signs and wonders in the name of His holy child Jesus" in that far-off land (Acts 4:25-30). We should also pray that the ministers and elders who make up the mission Committee in Holland, would be encouraged in the face of opposition, and disappointments, to continue with the work if that is God's will, in His strength. "Even the youths shall faint and be weary and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint" (Isaiah 40).

Oh guard against declension in prayer: let there be no distance between God and thy soul . . . Regard that as injurious which touches the devotional fame of your mind; which abridges the hour of prayer, and removes the fine edge of its holy enjoyment.

Octavius Winslow.

Obituaries

Mrs James Hymers, Wick Congregation

Mrs James Hymers, the wife of Mr James Hymers, Achavarn Farm, Calder, Caithness, passed away to be with Christ, on the 10th of June, 1977.

She was born at Ha' of Durran, Olig, Caithness, on the 8th of August, 1917, her name being Chrissie Miller. Her father who is retired in Tain, Ross-shire, is an elder in the Free Church of Scotland. Mrs Hymers was brought up in a home where the Bible was given its proper place and she received a Christian example and upbringing from her childhood.

Before her marriage in January, 1948, she was no stranger to the services in the Free Presbyterian Church, Halkirk, and thereafter attended there regularly with her husband. For the last eight years of her life she, with her husband and family, attended the Wick Church regularly.

About ten years ago she began to have trouble in one of her legs and during November, 1969 had to have this leg removed in hospital in Edinburgh. When calling to see her the following day with Mrs James MacKay, Edinburgh, we were much affected by how composed and even bright, Mrs Hymers was in her mind and conversation. And the Lord was in her conversation.

It became more obvious to others at this time and thereafter, that Mrs Hymers possessed the grace given to believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and that Christ's grace was made sufficient for her in a great trial of affliction. During the rest of her life, although greatly handicapped in walking, she attended the house of God regularly on Sabbath and at the weekly prayer-meeting. Her husband assisted her as required. In her case it was made apparent to others that the direction of her affections was towards the Saviour, His gospel and the house of God and fellowship with the Lord's people.

Mrs Hymers was received as a member in full-communion in the Wick Congregation, by the Kirk Session, in October, 1973. At that time she mentioned that her interest in spiritual things and in the gospel of Jesus Christ, began under the ministry of the late Rev. William Grant, while he was pastor of Halkirk congregation and that later in Wick she obtained from the Lord help and encouragement.

For quite a while her trouble did not increase but later she had to enter hospital in Wick. On visiting her there and suggesting a Scripture

reading, she immediately asked that the first portion of the 14th chapter of John's Gospel be read viz. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." And when finally laid up in bed at home the aforesame part of the Word of God seemed to be precious to her heart and strengthening to her faith. A fortnight before she died she said "her heart was full of joy because she knew she was going to glory." On seeing her husband affected visibly in hearing this, she further remarked, "Don't grudge me to the Lord." She expressed the hope that all her family might follow her to glory. Her desire was that they would find her Saviour and life everlasting in Him. She died on Friday, 10th June, 1977. On the day of the funeral from the home at Achavarn, many gathered from a wide area, to show their respect for this worthy woman, and to express their sympathy with the sorrowing husband and family and relations. She is greatly missed in the Wick congregation.

"Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him" (1st Thessalonians 4:14).

R.R.S.

Mr Finlay Beaton, Inverness

This worthy man was born in the family home in Corran, Shieldaig, Torridon, the only son of a family of 4, the last surviving sister attaining a ripe old age in America, of God-fearing parents who brought up their children to fear God and keep His commandments. Before the end of the last century, the family moved to Inverness and in the house where the family ultimately settled on Greig Street, our friend continued to reside almost continuously till the day of his death. His education he received in the old Raining's School at that time under the Rector, Alexander MacBain, who is well known in Gaelic speaking circles for his Etymological Dictionary of the Gaelic Language. Mr MacBain, besides being an erudite Celtic scholar, was a successful teacher who left his mark on a succession of pupils who later occupied important positions in the town and throughout the country. Any promising youth with an inclination for study or an enquiring mind received in this school a thorough training for his future life. There is no doubt that from this period of his life may be traced those habits of concentration, clearness of diction and love of books which followed him through life. Finlay became dux of the school and used the money of the accompanying scholarship, valid, we believe,

for the whole Highland area, to further his education. Lack of funds prevented him from entering the university.

As a youth he trained to be a marine engineer in Glasgow and like many others who came from the Highlands to the city came under the ministry of the late Rev. N. Cameron, St Jude's. Eternity alone will reveal how many of the youths from the Northern and Western Highlands were moulded in their views and practices by the clear Calvinism of this eminent servant of Christ. After a few years of sea-faring life, he returned to Inverness some time around the outbreak of the First World War. He suffered much during the war years for his conscientious scruples over the lawfulness of armed conflict as a means of settling international disputes. He joined the Inverness congregation and in 1925 was elected to the eldership and thereafter his life ran in the quiet and uneventful channels of Church life and service. He was made missionary to the Stratherrick congregation where he went from home each Saturday evening to conduct the Sabbath services and returned on the Monday. This practice he maintained for many years, continuing to do so for some years after the joint congregation of the Strath had a minister of their own settled over them. A man of strongly held views which he could present when he liked with forceable arguments, he lived for the Cause of the Redeemer whom he served with single-hearted devotion, involving himself at times in controversy when he felt it to be his duty to act in defence of the faith of the Gospel. In the painful dispute which broke out in the Inverness congregation, leading to the departure of some of our families and the legal action which followed in the Court of Session, Edinburgh, he played a prominent part. That the congregation of Inverness, though sadly reduced, emerged from this trial with no greater loss or damage was largely due to the work of Finlay Beaton who encouraged the Session and people till a minister was settled over them. Although his health was not at any time very robust, he attained the great age of 90 years. He was unmarried and carefully tended by his sister, Bella, who predeceased him by some 2 years.

He has left a detailed account of his unusual conversion. At the age of 14 in July 1897, on a bright sunny day he with 3 companions was playing on the banks of the Caledonian Canal where rafts of huge square cut logs, imported from Norway, lay in the basin of the Canal, waiting to be removed to the sawmill. While attempting to cross over on the logs, he lost his footing on the slimy surface and slipped into the water. He felt that the end had come and the whole past of his life came vividly before him, in a swift panorama all the sins of his life came flooding in. "My

sins stood between me and heaven," he says, "the sky was blood-red and all my sins were written in letters, some large and some small, but I read them all, quicker than lightning. My conscience was saying, 'These are your sins'." He assented to the righteousness of the sentence if he were sent to a lost eternity for his sins. The cold water numbed and paralyzed him but somehow he managed to grasp the hand of one of the boys and was pulled out of the water to safety. This experience had shaken him and he heard his companions exclaim, "Look at him, you would think that he had seen a ghost, he is so white." Looking back years later, he could see that the black writing against a blood-red sky typified the blood of Jesus Christ which lay between his sins and God. He had to wait many years before he obtained the relief which he sought, but at length the words in John xvi, verse 24 came with power and convictions: "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." These words were blessed to his soul and brought the deliverance of the Gospel. His joy was indescribable, accompanied by a profound sense of sorrow. "I got joy with it. Oh, what joy. Just overwhelming joy and immediately behind it I saw that my sins were the cause in part of the Son of God suffering on Calvary's tree. I was on my knees, weeping and mourning." The words of this passage which brought such consolation were confirmed to him about this time in a sermon preached by the late Rev. N. Cameron. It was his conviction, born of this harrowing experience, that evangelical faith always precedes true repentance.

He was an inveterate and steady reader of books, rising at an early hour in the morning that the first hours of the day might be given to uninterrupted study. He gathered information from every source, the Press, Commentaries, Church History, books of Economics, Local History, of which he was an expert, but mainly he made the daily prayerful study of the Bible his chief business. And he read with the pen in his hand that he might mark and with copious notes fix and retain in his memory the most important matters which appealed to him. He was, therefore, ready with full information to discuss doctrines of theology, or abstruse subjects of the Bible in any company which made him an interesting companion in the home or travelling by the wayside. His interest in unfulfilled prophecy was well known for, having made a careful, life long study of the prophetic books of the Bible, he was at times inclined to dwell inordinately in his public exercises upon the calculations of Daniel or the highly symbolical language of Revelation. On the doctrines of the faith, however, he was always fresh and full, and

at communion seasons was listened to with interest by our people in his public prayers and at the Fellowship Meetings.

He was a man of wide sympathies. His interests were not confined to the service of his own Church but he was ready to aid the Cause of the Redeemer on all occasions. For some years he acted as Secretary of the old Scottish Sabbath Observance Committee covering the North of Scotland. The great gatherings at Inverness in the cause of the Sabbath were organised by our friend, at which well known speakers were invited to give an address. His journeys in the defence of the Sabbath brought him often to London to consult the Northern M.Ps. when some fresh attack upon God's Holy Day was being prepared in Bills coming before the House of Commons. On one occasion he was called unexpectedly to address a meeting of the Northern Members and others in a room of the House of Commons, as a member of a delegation, and left a deep impression because unlike other members, he kept close to the facts and realities of the Sabbath problem. The flood of Sabbath desecration of modern times saddened him, but not more so than the deep, stolid apathy which has penetrated the country, even in the evangelical districts of the Highlands.

He continued to do what he could as strength permitted to serve his Master to the end. He was one of the last links with the early days of the Free Presbyterian Church, as he knew personally Rev. D. MacFarlane and Rev. D. MacDonald and most of the Constitutionlists who took part in the events of 1893 and was not an uncritical observer of their actions. In 1971, at the age of 88, he went as a member of a visiting party to the Holy Land and was particularly interested in the spot where Stephen was stoned to death and "the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet whose name was Saul." Three weeks before the end, he went to his old congregation of Stratherrick and delivered his last address on part of the 7th chapter of Revelation, verses 12-17, concentrating especially on the last 2 verses: "They shall hunger no more neither thirst any more . . ." The liberty and unction with which he spoke impressed the hearers with the conviction that his own soul was enjoying the foretaste of the heavenly blessedness and glory which await the saints. His death so soon afterwards heightened this conviction. He was about to enter our Ballifeary Home of Rest at Inverness, when on the morning of 5th December 1974 in Raigmore Hospital, he heard the summons to go up higher. He will be greatly missed. His memory will be cherished by many. "The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance" — Ps. cxii, verse 6.

A.F.M.

Eadar-Mhineachadh Air Salm CXXX

2. Anns a' ghnòthuch so tha'n t-anam *dùrachdach, dìchiollach, dìan*; an dara ni a bha r'a thoirt fainear. Cha-n e so an t-àm a bhi ri màirneal. Tha cuid an anama gu léir an cunnart. Cha dean asluchadh fuar, codalach, air Dia an ghnòthuch a nis. Mur 'eil tuilleadh deanta a nis na mar is gnàthach cha-n 'eil ni sam bith deanta. Tha cuid 'na shamhuil so de chor a tha a' meas ma dh' fhanas iad 'an ceann nan dleasdanas gnàthach, gu falbh an trioblaidean dhiubh féin; agus ged a tha iad aig an àm a' mothachadh an cunnairt, gidheadh gu'm bi sìthe aca aig a' chrìch: smuaintean anns am bheil mòran tarhuis deanta air Dia. Tha cuid eile a' seargadh as fo dhìobhail misnich 'nan teanntachdaibh. Ach tha an dà sheòrsa dhaoine so fo bhuaidh na leisge spioradail. Faiceamaid an cor so a tha r' ar n-aghaidh air a thaisbeanadh ann an neach eile. Tha eisempleir againn anns a' chéile, Dàn Shol. iii. 1-3. Chaill i làthaireachd Chrìosd, ionnus gu'n robh i anns an dearbh chor a chuireadh an céill roimhe, rann 1. Bha an oidhche aice,—àm dorchadais agus dubhachais; agus tha i ag iarraidh an déigh fir a gràidh: "Air mo leabaidh anns an oidhche dh' iarr mi an ti d' am bheil gràdh aig m' anam." Bha Crìosd as a sealladh, agus rinn sin a fàgail anns na doimhneachdaibh; uime sin tha i 'ga iarraidh. Ach, mar is gnàth leis a' mhòr chuid a dheanamh anns a' chor cheudna, cha-n 'eil i idir a' leasachadh a dìchill no a' meudachadh a saothrach os ceann nan dleasdanas gnàthach anns an robh i air a cleachdadh aig àmaibh eile. Ach ciod a thachair? A deir i, "Cha d' fhuair mi e." Cha-n e so idir an dòigh air a bhi 'faotainn air ais a' mhothachaidh sin d' a ghràdh a chaill i, no 'bhi 'ga faotainn féin air a saoradh o imcheist. Uime sin, tha i a nis a' cur aghaidh air slìgh eile; tha i tòiseachadh ri smuaineachadh ma dh' fhanas cùisean d' a taobh mar a tha iad gu'n téid as dhi, "Tha mi, gun amharus, a' coimhlionadh dhleasdanas fathast; ach cha-n 'eil agam làthaireachd fir mo ghràidh." Ciod, ma ta, a deir i, "Eiridh mi a nis," rann 2;—"Crathaidh mi dhiom gach socair a tha leantuinn rium." Is iad rùintean, ma seadh, timchioll ghnòthuich dhùrachdaich, neo-ghnàthaich a dheanamh gun tàmh ri Dia, ceud cheum an anama sin a tha fo imcheist peacaidh chum a bhi 'faotainn leigheis. "Eiridh mi a nis." Agus ciod a tha i 'deanamh air dhi rùnachadh mar so? "Théid mi mu'n cuairt anns a' chaithir," tha i 'g ràdh, "anns na sràidibh, agus anns na slighibh farsuinn iarraidh mi esan d' am bheil gràdh aig m' anam. Cia b'e air bith slighe, no meadhon anns an robh Crìosd riamh air a mhealtuinn, no sìth riamh air a faotain, annta sin iarraidh mi e, agus cha ghabh mi tàmh gus am faigh mi e."

Agus ann an so tha suidheachadh agus rùn cridhe a dh' ionnsuidh am feum gach aon anam teachd a tha anns na doimhneachdaibh, ma tha sùil sam bith aige ri saorsa. A thaobh dhaoine gu coitchionn, tha "an creuchdan lobhta, breun, air son an amaideachd," mar a tha an salmadair a' gearain, Salm xxxviii. 5. Tha iad air an lotadh leis a' pheacadh, agus air do'n leisg spioradail buadhachadh orra, tha iad a' dearmad an leigheis; tha so 'gan gleidheadh fo bhuaireas là an déigh latha: gideadh cuiridh iad suas leis an iomlan, a roghainn air an socair fheòlmhor fhàgail, agus gnothuch éifeachdach, neo-ghnàthach a dheanamh ri Dia. Bha a' chùis air sheòl eile maille ri Daibhidh: Salm xxxii. 3. Bha e ri "bùireadh fad an là," agus "ré na h-oidhche uile a' cur a leabaidh air snàmh," Salm vi. 6. Ciod a tha 'cur air, gu bheil e mar so ri glaothaich, agus osnaich, agus bùireadh air feadh an latha gu léir, agus re na h-oidhche uile? Ah! na cuiribh dragh air, tha e ann an searbhadas anama; tha e anns na doimhneachdaibh; tha an Tighearn air a ghnùis 'fholach uaithe; tha trioblaid dlùth do làimh; seadh, tha e làn imcheist do bhrìgh peacaidh; cha-n 'eil sàmhchair idir aige, no fallaineachd idir ann; uime sin tha 'ghearain mar so 'ga dòrtadh, gun fhois, gun tàmh, an airc fuasglaidh. Mo thruaighe! cia cho aineolach as a tha daoine an diugh mar is tric air an t-suidheachadh cridhe so! Cia cho beag as a tha r'a fhaotainn de chleachdadh an spioraid so annta! Agus nach e so a's aobhar dha, gu bheil tuilleadh meas againn air an t-saoghal, agus ni's lugh do mheas air nèamh agus air nithibh néamhaidh, na bha aige-san? —gu bheil e ni's usadh dhuinn a bhi beò gu'n mhothachadh de ghràdh Dhé ann an Crìosh na bha e dha-san? Agus nach e so an t-aobhar gu bheil sinn a' faicinn gach là cho liuthad firaideachaidh sheargta, a tha ann an seadh air gach uile chomh-chomunn ri Dia a chall, saor o bheagan aideachaidh teanga; ionnus gu bheil breunachd an creuchdan lobhta na h-oilbheum do gach uile dhuine ach dhoibh féin? Is amhuil sin a ghabhas iad rompa, ullamh gu bàsachadh, a roghainn air iad féin a bhrosnachadh suas mar a rinn an duine naomh so ann an cur aghaidh air an Tighearn. Bha Heman mar an ceudna cosmhuil ris, Salm lxxxviii. 11, 12. Tha a féin a' cur an céill mar a bha e 'mothachadh nan doimhneachdan anns an robh e, rann 3: "Tha m' anam," deir e, "làn truaighe, agus tha mo bheatha dlùth do'n uaigh. Agus ciod e an dòigh a tha e 'gabhail anns a' chor àmhgharach, mhuladach, dhubhach anns am bheil e? C'uime, deir e, "A Thighearn", a Dhé mo shàinte, a là agus a dh' oidhche ghlaodh mi a' d' fhianuis: thigeadh m' ùrnuigh a' d' làthair: aom do chluas ri m' ghlaodh," rann 1, 2,. A là agus a dh' oidhche tha a ghlaodh ri Dia a shlàinte, agus sin gu ro dhùrachdach, liosda. B'e so a

phrìomh ghnòthuch, b'e so anns an robh e air a chleachdadh ré a làithean uile.

Is e so, ma seadh, a tha air ar n-aire:— 'Nuair a tha anam gràsmhor air a thoirt a dh' ionnsuidh nan doimhneachdan a chuireadh an céill a cheana, do bhrìgh peacaidh, agus an uair a tha an Tighearn a' rùnachadh a threòrachadh a dh' ionnsuidh saorsa, tha e 'ga chur thuige, air chor as gu bheil e dùrachdach, liosda, gun fhois, anns gach uile dhleasdanas anns am feud e aghaidh a chur air chum fuasglaidh fhaotainn. A nis, air dhuinn beagan de nithibh a thoirt fainear a tha cur thuige an anama anns an dùrachd cridhe so ann a bhi 'g asluchadh Dhé, cuiridh sinn 'an sin an céill gu h-aithghearr ciod anns am bheil an dùrachd féin air mhodh àraidh a' coimh-sheasamh:—

(1.) Tha *ro mheud chùraman dhaoine* nan nithe a dh' fheudas da rìreadh an cur thuige ann an cleachdadh an dùrachd so. Cha-n e gnàth dhaoine a bhi buntuinn ris na gnothuichibh a's cudthromaich a th' aca, le spioradaibh mairnealach, leisg. Tha Daibhidh ag innseadh dhuinn gu'n robh ni's mò de chùram air timchioll "soluis gnùis Dhe," na bha air daoine an t-saoghail timchioll an "arbhair agus am fion," Salm iv. 6, 7. Bha e 'na chomharadh air mi-chùram neo-mheasarra air taobh Ionah, gu'n robh e trom 'na chodal anns an luing a bha ullamh air dol gu dìth air a sgàth. Agus am bheil mi-chùram an anama sin idir ni's lugha, a tha ann an stoirm feirge agus dlomaidh o Dhia, a chuireadh a mach do'n doimhne 'na dhéigh, ma 's e's gu'n dean e a dhearmad, agus gu'n coidil e, mar a tha Solamh ag ràdh, "air bàrr croinn-siùil ann am meadhon na fairge?" Cionnus is urrainn iad gun ghlaodh Iob a thogail, "Och, nach robh mi mar anns na mìosaibh a chaidh tharum, mar anns na làithibh air an do choimhid Dia mi! 'nuair a thug e air a lochran dealrachadh air mo cheann, agus a bha rùn-diomhair Dhé air mo phàillion?" caib. xxix. 2-4; no maille ri Daibhidh, "Aisig dhomh gàirdeachas do shlàinte," Salm li. 12, oir "leagadh sìos m' anam an taobh a stigh dhìom: uime sin cuimhnichidh mi orts, O mo Dhia, o thir Iordain," Salm xlii. 6. Cha-n urrainn iad a bhi beò as 'eugmhais. Ach ged a theireamaid gu'm b' urrainn iad seòrsa de ghluasad bochd a dheanamh am feadh a tha cùisean sàmhach, réidh m' an timchioll, ciod a ni iad 'nuair a tha deuchainnean agus àmhgharan an leth a muigh air iadhadh umpa, 'nuair a tha doimhne a' gairm air dhoimhne, agus aon trioblaid a' leasachadh agus a' geurachadh trioblaid eile? Tha fios aca nach dean ni sam bith an cumail suas an sin ach sin a tha nis a dhìth orra; mar ann an Hab. iii. 17, 18; Salm xxiii. 4: air chor as gu bheil cudthrom a' ghnòthuich a tha r'an aghaidh 'gan cur thuige chum an dùrachd a dh' ainmicheadh.

Book Reviews

Anglican and Puritan Thinking. Papers read at the 1977 Westminster Conference, pages 102, price 95 pence. Published by Westminster Conference, 75 High Street, Warboys, Huntingdon, Cambridge.

The fundamental difference, dividing Puritan and Anglican thinking and outlook which finally led to the Anglican and non-conformist Churches going their separate ways, concerned the question of authority. Where must the authority of the Church be placed? The Puritans maintained that the Scriptures constitute the sole authority for Church Doctrine, Discipline and Government, while for the Anglican Scriptures must be supplemented by "natural reason." This question runs through the whole of the 6 papers read at the Westminster Conference for 1977. The first paper therefore by Hywel R. Jones is on Authority. The paper opens with the public debate which broke out in the pulpit of the Temple Church in the Strand on 3 successive Sabbaths in March 1586. In the morning Richard Hooker, Master of the Temple Church, gave the classic Anglican answer to this question — Hooker at the time was in course of preparing his great work on Ecclesiastical Polity — and in the afternoon Richard Travers, the Reader, spoke for the Puritan party. The historian Fuller says: "The pulpit spoke pure Canterbury in the morning and Geneva in the afternoon." This paper set the course of the rest of the Conference.

The second paper on the Church is by Paul E. G. Cook, the longest and in some ways the most interesting read at the Conference. The puritan idea of the Church as a "society of visible saints" was first given practical expression at Frankfort where in 1554 the English exiles from Marian persecution set up a church under John Knox solely founded on scripture. Knox himself is described as "the founder of Puritanism." Of interest is the account of the rise of the Presbyterian party within the Anglican Church which, however, did not survive the Great Ejection of 1662. Surprising enough is Cook's statement that Dr J. Owen was a "convinced Presbyterian." Very few references in the paper dealing with the nature of the Church are made to the Westminster Confession of Faith or to the Directory of Public Worship. It is recognised that Hooker gave Anglicanism a theological foundation. Cook's view is that Anglicanism in England still remained "a mood rather than a system," and his final assessment is "the spirit of Anglicanism expresses all the features of our national temperament, but when grace prevails over nature the Englishman becomes a Puritan" — page 40.

Episcopacy, whose Church government rests upon the 3 orders of bishop, priest and deacon, remains the characteristic of the Anglican Church. Today this is still the hall-mark of Anglicanism. Modern works, such as "Growing into Union" by joint authors among them Dr Packer, still insist on submission of all its clergy to this 3-fold order. Such an ecclesiastical hierarchy was abhorred by the Puritans. The paper by Maurice J. Roberts discusses this question.

The next 2 papers deal with the external worship of the Church. The paper by Robert W. Oliver on the External of Worship, discusses buildings, ceremonies, vestments, etc., and Leslie A. Rawlinson in Worship in Liturgy and Form, the liturgy, set prayers and other forms of public worship, all of which were rejected by the Puritans who contended for a scriptural form of worship more in keeping with the simplicity of early apostolic days.

In Puritan thinking, prior place had always been accorded to the sermon and here too the fundamental difference which separated Anglican from Puritan appears. The final paper by Dr Martyn Lloyd Jones, in a wide ranging, informative and decisive treatment of the subject, is on Preaching. The sermon today has fallen into disfavour being displaced by conference, debate, dialogue, but Dr Lloyd-Jones draws upon his wide experience of long years in the ministry to reinstate the sermon to the central position of public worship. "The supreme need of our day and generation is the declaration of the Word of God in the power of the Holy Ghost" are his concluding words.

These Westminster Conference papers are well prepared, clearly the result of careful study and will amply repay the close attention with which they deserve to be read.

A.F.M.

Meditations of the Sacred Humanity of the Blessed Redeemer. By J. C. Philpot, M.A. Gospel Standard Strict Baptist Trust. Price £2.25 plus 26p postage.

In the preface to these pages, allusion is made to the origin of this production, namely, the review of a book by Henry Cole. This fact should be kept in view, but our lack of acquaintance with that book makes us write with caution. The subject of these Meditations by Mr Philpot, is indeed most precious, yet very deep and difficult. At a time when so much that is flippant and blasphemous has been written on this sacred

theme, the reproduction of Mr Philpot's sweet thoughts on this holy doctrine are peculiarly welcome and refreshing. Those who have a spiritual palate will relish the reverent and devotional flavour of the author's remarks on this glorious subject. Polemical tones there are too, as the writer refers to heretics who attacked the doctrine of the true and perfect humanity of Christ. As one might expect from the pen of this great experimental preacher, the subjective element is strong, but there is the definite doctrinal content. One might have expected him to say more about the holy human soul of the Saviour, but possibly he was guided by that wisdom that is profitable to direct. We cannot however agree with Mr Philpot that Christ did not die a violent death. It was violent of itself, though voluntary on His part — for violence is not opposed to voluntary, but natural. (cf Works of John Flavel, Vol. I, p. 322 and Letter cccvii in Rutherford's Letters). This point the writer has apparently failed to grasp. Another blemish is the sombre note on which the book ends. According to Mr Philpot there are no glorious days of spiritual blessing to look forward to, and consequently no ingathering of the Jews as promised by the Lord in His Word. At least, that is certainly the impression created by the predictions on the last page of an otherwise edifying and thought provoking production.

F.M.

Westminster Confession of Faith. Free Presbyterian Publications. £3.50.

The Publications Committee has issued a large print edition of the Confession of Faith, including the Larger and Shorter Catechisms. This edition will be particularly useful to persons whose eyesight is not good, as the proof texts in the former smaller edition appeared in very small print. In addition to this large book, the Westminster Confession of Faith alone has been printed in booklet form and should prove useful for classes studying the Confession of Faith.

Muckle Kate and the Highland Kitchen Maid. Free Presbyterian Publications.

These two well-known stories are issued in one booklet printed in large type. It is a publication especially suitable for the young. The price is 20p.

Notes and Comments

World Council of Churches and Terrorism

The support shown by the W.C.C. to terrorist organisations has come to the fore again with a grant of £40,000 given by the W.C.C. to the Rhodesian guerrillas of Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo. It is gratifying to know that on this occasion considerable opposition to this action has been expressed by some Church leaders and politicians. The action of the W.C.C. deserves forthright condemnation by all right thinking people.

It is obvious from the attitude taken up by Mugabe and Nkomo — in recent times especially — that they have little interest in a truly democratic African government in Rhodesia but wish to establish a government of their own choosing and with their own leadership, and with support from the Russian Communists. The ultimate result would be the establishment of a Marxist regime, similar no doubt to that in the neighbouring country of Mozambique, through which religion would be progressively suppressed.

Satan's forces are legion and today are very active on every continent of the world seeking wherever possible to stamp out Christianity on every hand. It is in the Lord's power, however, to say to Satan, "Thus far shalt thou come and no further," and then beyond these limits Satan and his hosts cannot go. It is, therefore, for us to plead for divine intervention in these critical days in the history of the world and for the turning back of the powers of darkness in the earth. Unless they are halted and turned back we need not think that we shall escape but that they shall overflow our own land also.

Death of the Pope

Before the inexorable messenger of death even the Pope of Rome had to bow. In view of the place accorded him (as Vicar of Christ) by his infatuated followers, one would have thought that if the messenger of death would fail to visit any place, that place would be the Vatican in Rome and in particular the person of the Pope of Rome. But death has had dominion over him. The gates of the Vatican or of the other papal residences were not strong enough to keep out the last messenger. At last it is seen that notwithstanding the worship and adulation of multitudes Pope Paul VI was but a worm of the dust. He had to answer his last summons and give in his account. It is a solemn thought — he went to

his own place. Claiming to be Christ's representative on earth, he now knows the truth, if he did not know it before, that Christ eternally is to have the pre-eminence and that all His enemies are to be made His footstool.

Pope Paul has died: but the organisation of which he was Head has not died. The anti-Christian system of Romanism is not an organisation with only one ruler. The Pope is the anti-Christ as the Head of that anti-Christian system known as the Papacy or the Roman Catholic Church. But the anti-Christ is a succession of personages elected to fill that heaven-defying and heaven-provoking office of Vicar of Christ, "who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." (2 Thess. 2:4).

Another Pope will be chosen, and this evil system will continue to carry on its opposition to Christ and His kingdom. Nor should we be surprised if, in order that it may carry on its diabolical work, it come to an accommodation with atheistic communism and seek to establish its hegemony more surely on the back of that satanic power. But you will say, How will it go with the true Church of God in the world then, when the visible Church will almost wholly have succumbed and fallen under the sway of Rome? One thing is certain and that is that the Lord will always have a people to serve Him on earth. Another thing is this — that He knows how to hide his people from the persecuting power of their enemies. It was so with the Saviour when Herod sought His destruction. The Lord had a hiding place for Him in Egypt.

But what of the future if these things should take place? Of the future we have no need to fear. The future is bright with promise. The Lord has promised to destroy anti-Christ (in his own good time) with the brightness of His coming — and will He not do it? As He had to say of Christ, "I have called my Son out of Egypt," so shall He call His servants out of those hiding-places which He prepared for them in the evil day, and will send them forth to proclaim the great Evangel and will accompany their ministry with the power of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Before it all the panoply of anti-Christian superstition and pomp shall crumble and Christ only shall be exalted in that day. May we plead for it even now, believing that He who has promised will be faithful to the word that has gone forth from His mouth.

Church Notes

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Outer Isles: At Stornoway, on 5th September, at 11.30 a.m.

Southern: At Glasgow, on 12th September, at 6 p.m.

Northern: At Bonar Bridge, on 17th October, at 3 p.m.

Skye: At Portree, on 24th October, at 11 a.m.

Committee Meetings (D.V.)

The following Committees will meet at Inverness Church, on Tuesday, 3rd October and Wednesday, 4th October:—

Tuesday, 3rd October

9-10 a.m. — Church Extension

10-11.30 a.m. — Church Magazines

11.30 a.m.-1 p.m. — Religion and Morals

2.30-4.30 p.m. — Finance and Publications

7-9 p.m. — Jewish and Foreign Missions

Wednesday, 4th October

2.15-3.45 p.m. — Dominions and Overseas.

Letter from the E.I.S.

The Synod have instructed that this letter should be printed in the F.P. Magazine for the interest of our readers and the encouragement of any teacher who may be faced with the difficult position in which Mr Watson found himself when he was dismissed for teaching the Biblical truth about the opening chapters of Genesis.

Rev. Donald MacLean

Clerk of Synod

Synod of the Free Presbyterian

Church of Scotland

13 Kingsborough Gardens

Glasgow G12 9NH.

Dear Mr MacLean,

As Mr Thomasson promised in his letter of 10 February, your letter to the Secretary of State for Scotland regarding the dismissal of Mr D. C. C. Watson was placed before the Executive Committee when it met recently.

The Executive noted the terms of your letter and asked me to say that they did not think that such a thing could happen in Scotland.

If, however, one of our members were ever threatened with dismissal

over such an issue, the full resources of the Institute would be employed to assist him. — Yours Sincerely,

Frederick L. Forrester,
Organising Secretary.

Acknowledgment of Donations

The Publications Treasurer, Mr R.W.M. MacKenzie, C.A., Hilton of Cadboll, Fearn, desires to acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:—

Free Distribution Fund: Anon., Tarbert, £5, per W.F.

Welfare of Youth Fund: M. MacI., Deed of Covenant Tax Refund, £12.02; Inverness Congregation, £100.

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

Applecross: In memory of Anne (Dolly) Dixon and the Rev. Dr R. MacDonald from Mr L.B. Dixon, £50, for Congr. Purposes per Rev. A. Murray; In memory of our mother Dolly Dixon from Joan and Eleanor, £20, per Rev. A. Murray for Congr. Purposes only.

Barnoldswick: Mrs J. M., Helensburgh, £5, for Congr. Purposes; Laide Friend, £10; Anon., £50; Anon., £6, last three for Communion Expenses; Two Friends, Staffin, Skye, £15, per Mr Mackinnon for Congr. Purposes; Miss N., £20, per Rev. J.M.B.

Bracadale: A. and C.M., Garrymore, £20, for Sust. Fund, and £20 for Church Repair.

Dumbarton: A.E.A., Glasgow, £50, for Manse Fund; Inverness Friend, £5; Inverness Friend, £5, both per T. MacRae for Manse Fund; Inverness Friend, £10, per T. MacRae for Dumbarton Church Extension.

Glasgow: A Friend, Glendale, £5, per J. McL., for Benevolent Fund; Hearnach in Exile, £25; Anon., Holland, £50, last two for Congr. Fund; M.M., Cardonald, £5; J.M.D., £5; N.M., £1; Anon., £2; Anon., £5; Anon., £10, all for Bus Fund; M.S., £2 for Welfare of Youth; Anon., £6, for Fede Viva; Anon., Holland, £20, for Sust. Fund; Anon., Holland, £10, for Jewish & Foreign Mission Fund; In memory of Mrs C. MacCuish, £50, for Home of Rest.

Greenock: From the Estate of the late Miss C. Banks, Dunoon, £1,500, for Congr. Purposes per General Treasurer.

Kinlochbervie: Anon., Uig, Skye, £5; Anon., £10; Anon., Inverness, £101; M.M., Poolewe, £10; Mrs H.R., Lairg, £30, all for Manse Extension Fund.

Kyle/Plockton: Inverness postmark, £10, per Mr I. MacCuig; Anon., Plockton plate, £5; Friend at Communion, £5, per Mr Van Woerden; Wellwisher, £5; Envelope in Kyle plate, £10, all for Manse Fund; Envelope in plate, £2, for Kyle Sust. Fund.

Laide: In collection plate, £10; Friend, Inverness, £10; In collection plate, £10; Friend, £20, all for Manse Building Fund; Two Friends, £5, for Laide Communion Expenses.

Portree: Envelope, £10, for Foreign Mission Fund (In Church plate); Friend, £10, for Manse Expenses; Raasay Friend, £1, for Church Bus; Mrs McR., £2, for General Purposes, last three per F.M.

Raasay: A Friend, £5, for Sust. Fund per M. MacLean; J.C., Glasgow, £3, per J.M. MacLeod; In remembrance of Roderick MacKay, my beloved husband, £30, per M.D. MacKay; J.F., £20, for Trinitarian Bible Society; Inverness Friend, £1, for Communion Expenses, per M.D. MacKay; A Friend, £5, for Comm. Expenses; Friend, Inverarish, £5; Mr & Mrs D.J.M., Bishopton, £5, both per J.M. MacLeod; Envelope in plate, £10; D.M., £5, last four for Property Fund.

Stornoway: Glasgow Friend, £50, for Sust. Fund; Friends, Swordale, £20, for Swordale Church Repairs; A Friend, £20, for Congr. Funds, all per Rev. J. MacLeod.