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## Letter from Australia

Sydney, N.S.W.,  
Australia.

My Dear Friends,

I write this letter from a distant part of the world, where the Lord has been pleased to bring me in His good providence.

You will remember that when Peter was sent of the Lord to preach the Gospel to Cornelius and his household at Caesarea, he had to say, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34, 35). As Peter found it in Caesarea, so have we found it at Sydney in Australia. Here also the Lord has a people who fear Him and love His name and serve Him. The grace of God is the same wherever it is found. It manifests itself; it cannot be hid. So have we found it here in Sydney among a people who desire to hear the Gospel of God's grace, and to live a life of faith upon the Son of God.

When Paul was on his way to Rome as a prisoner after his shipwreck in the Mediterranean Sea, the brethren in Rome came to meet him, "whom when Paul saw, he thanked God and took courage." As it was then, so it has been here in Sydney. We cannot but rejoice to see the grace of God in those who fear the Lord and think upon His Name. May the Lord be pleased to raise up many more such by His grace.

In view of the size of this city — Sydney has three million inhabitants — what need there is for a wrestling spirit to plead with the Lord for the further establishing and extension of His kingdom in this city and land,



and in every part of the world. The Saviour in instructing His disciples in answer to their request, "Lord, teach us to pray", taught them to say, "Thy kingdom come". How extensive is this request when it embraces the Cause of Christ in every part of the inhabited world! It includes a request for the coming of Christ's kingdom in our own souls, and in those of our loved ones, our friends and neighbours, as well as in our cities, our communities, and our nation, and in the nations of the world.

In earlier days the Lord had a number of His noted servants in this distant part of the world, who preached the Gospel of His grace with authority and power to poor lost and perishing sinners. Sydney's greatest need today, and that of New South Wales, and the whole of Australia as well, is that the Lord would be pleased to raise up many faithful preachers of the Gospel; men who would not shun to declare the whole counsel of God; men who would not fear the face of man; men ready to expose the evils rampant in Australia as elsewhere, especially the sins of idolatry and Sabbath-breaking; men ready to face obloquy and shame for the kingdom of heaven's sake.

The need of the land, too, is for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, so that the Gospel might be preached with the power of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, in order that sinners might be converted from the error of their ways. Nothing less than this will effect the change required. It is through the Holy Ghost being *sent down* from heaven that all genuine evangelical revivals have taken place which have changed the face of congregations, communities, yea, and of nations as well in the past. It was *never* by revivals *got up* by men.

How is this to be brought about? The answer is plain. The Lord Himself has been pleased to give the answer in His own Word. "Thus saith the Lord God; I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock. As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts; so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men: and they shall know that I am the Lord" (Ezek. 36:37, 38). Seeing then, that the answer is given, let us on our part confess our helplessness, our sinfulness, and our utter impotence to effect any change. It is our duty at the same time to return to the Lord, for He is saying, "Return unto Me, and I will return unto you" (Mal. 3:7). Let us, according to His own direction, say, "Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously" (Hosea 14:2). He is to be entreated of — "I will yet be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them" (Ezek. 36:37). "Look unto Me," He says, "and be ye saved, *all the ends of the earth*: for I am God, and there is none else" (Is. 45:22).



May the Church at home and overseas be richly blessed by Him, who holds the seven stars in His right hand, and who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.

Your sincere friend,  
*The Editor.*

## John Welwood

### Biographical Sketch

John Welwood was a native of Dumfriesshire, and son of the minister of Tundergarth — James Welwood. He was born about the year 1649. After the usual course of training, he was appointed to the work of the ministry. With great self-denial and fidelity, he attended to the duties of his high calling. The period of his service on earth was not of long duration, for he passed away in the thirtieth year of his age.

It was John Welwood's lot to live in troublous times. When he was yet twelve years of age, his young heart would doubtless be stirred with terror at the tidings of the persecution which was beginning to break forth around him. Still he was not deterred from prosecuting his studies with a view to the exalted office whose duties he observed his father discharge with holy love and sweet composure. He entered upon the labour of his life when fines, banishment, hunting on the mountains, the scaffold, and the stake were the rewards of fidelity to Christ. In his days, settled pastorates among those ministers who protested against the defections of the times and braved the wrath of the backsliders, were almost unheard of. It is true that the parish of Tarbolton, in Ayrshire, called Welwood to be their pastor, and that he accepted the call. If ordained, however, his residence in that place must have been brief, for the Privy Council resolved upon his ejection from the parish and his apprehension, and he is found engaging in His Master's service throughout various parts of the country as opportunities presented themselves. He went hither and thither preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, offering the water of life to thirsty souls, and comforting the suffering heritage of the Lord.

One of the most interesting of the "relations" concerning Welwood respected one of his last sermons. Preaching at Boulterhall, in Fife, from the text, "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called," he remarked, toward the conclusion, "If that unhappy Prelate Sharp die the death of all men, God never spoke by me." A



servant of the Archbishop was one of the audience, having come with a brother with whom he had been sojourning who lived in the neighbourhood. The livery of the servant attracted the notice of the preacher, who concluded, and rightly too, that he was in the Prelate's service. Having, after the sermon was ended, desired this man to stand up, as he had a message to deliver to him, Welwood proceeded to say:—"I desire you, before all these witnesses, when thou goest home, to tell thy master that his treachery, tyranny, and wicked life are near an end, and his death shall be at once sudden, surprising, and bloody; and as he hath thirsted after and shed the blood of the saints, he shall not go to his own grave in peace." When Sharp was informed of these words of the minister he made light of them, but his wife said, "I advise you to take more notice of that, for I hear that these men's words are not vain words."

But John Welwood was soon to pass beyond the reach of the persecutor's fury, and to enter upon eternal peace and rest. Being naturally of a weak constitution, having to undergo much discomfort and exposure, and being much cast down by reason of the condition of the Church and cause of the Redeemer throughout the land, he contracted a consumption which brought him to an early grave. During his illness, and particularly as he advanced near to the gates of death, he had many clear views of the King in His beauty and of the land afar off. His conversation bore much upon the downtrodden interests of truth, on the duty of persevering in a full and faithful testimony for Christ, and, though the prospects of a change were dark as midnight, he always declared his full confidence that a bright period was before the Church, and that the morning of Reformation would dawn once more. As to his own personal interest in the Saviour, he had the most comforting assurance. "I have no more doubt," said he to those around him, "of my interest in Christ than if I were in heaven already." On another occasion he said, "Although I have been for some weeks without sensible comforting presence, yet I have not the least doubt of my interest in Christ. I have oftentimes endeavoured to pick a hole in my interest, but cannot get it done." When the light of the morning before he died began to break into his chamber, he said, "Now eternal light, and no more night and darkness to me." The night following, his spirit was borne to the spirits of the just made perfect, and to God the Judge of all. He died at Perth, in the beginning of April, 1679.

Information having been obtained by the authorities that an outlawed minister had died in the city, measures were instantly adopted to have the dead body seized. At first the Magistrates resolved to prevent the



interment, and they called out the soldiers to support their decision; but they were afterwards prevailed upon to allow the friends of the dead to carry the body out of the town, and bury it where they might choose. Some of the people of Perth who went out with the funeral were imprisoned. On their arrival at the churchyard of Drone, whither they had sent before two men to prepare a grave, those who carried the body found the gates locked, and they could not prevail upon the minister of the place to grant them the keys. Passing over a dyke near the churchyard, the "narrow home" was prepared for the remains of this faithful servant of God, and his body was laid in that resting-place in certain hope of a blessed immortality. "The upright shall have dominion over them in the morning."

## Sermon IV\*

by Rev. John Welwood

*"And if the righteous scarcely be saved where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" — 1 Peter 4:18.*

It is a great matter for a man to come to heaven, even for a man that is very serious and faithful. It is true there are many that think to be saved; yea, I think there are few of you that do not think to come to heaven. But I fear that not the tenth, nay not the twentieth man of you will come there. Nay, even very profane and ungodly men will think to come to heaven. This, however strange, is evident to any person that will but observe the delusion of the sons of men. Speak to godless men, or natural men, who know nothing of heart-work or experiences in religion. Ask them if they think they are in favour with God, or think to obtain heaven? Yea, they think that everyone will get there. I believe ye think that heaven will be, so to speak, a cage of unclean creatures. But I tell you there is no such thing at all. Few folk will come there. "Lord, who shall dwell in thy holy hill? Who amongst us shall dwell with devouring fire? Who amongst us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" And who will be able to stand before Him in that day?

Now we shall hint at some things in general, and shall give you some reasons why the righteous are scarcely saved.

\*This sermon is said to have been preached at Bogle's Hole, Parish of West Monkland, Clydesdale.



1st, Because none are so righteous as to be without their own faults, their own sins and failings. None are so righteous but that they have their own strayings. David confesses this, "I have gone astray like a lost sheep, seek thy servant."

2ndly, Because God is a very holy and a spotless God, and therefore it is very much, so to speak, to live with Him. Not that He is an unmerciful God or any way cruel, but He is so holy a God in His nature and divine perfections; and these being compared, the corruptions that remain in the holiest of men, and the spotless holiness of God, and that infinite indignation that He hath against sin — I say, comparing these together, it is no wonder that the holiest of men find a difficulty in coming to heaven. David speaks of broken bones, and of roaring all day long. But leaving the doctrinal part, we shall add some few uses.

Use 1. — Is it so, that the righteous are scarcely saved? Then I think we may conclude that there will be few saved in this generation, when the Lord comes to count and reckon with it. For, if ye consider the revolutions of these times, we think it more than probable, considering, too, how long God hath spared us, that there are sad days coming upon these lands, when God will judge and bring wrath and anger upon them. It will then be hard for the most godly and serious who have kept clean garments to be saved in that day. Indeed, Abraham, Lot, Jacob, Caleb, and Joshua escaped when the Lord poured out His wrath on the generations wherein they lived. But indeed they were a strange sort of persons. Then consider if it has been so done in "the green tree, what will be done in the dry?" If the Lord hath chastened His own people; if He has so sharply smitten them, that their blood hath been shed and their heads have been set up in the view of the world; if they have met with troubles and tossings, then what shall become of an ungodly party? What will come on malignants and prelates? What will come on our Church and State folk? What will come on our magistrates, and clergy, and upon the ungodly people of the land? Think ye, that if the Lord hath dealt so sharply with His own house and people, that He will pass by them? Nay, I will tell you, that the Lord hath a sword prepared for our king, our counsellors, courtiers, and nobles, for declaration-takers, for prelates, curates, and lukewarm gentlemen, "For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse to judgment." I am sure it will be a hard matter to escape at that day. There are many folk who think that they will bend down, and let the blast go over them. Many think that they will live at ease in Zion, and



others think they will be wise and keep a whole skin, and keep their estates, lands, trades, &c., and will not appear for God when He calls them to witness for Him.

Well, then, the Lord will send some strokes that will not only come on the folk that are not for God but it will come upon all sorts of people. Truly, we think it is terrible to think of that day of the Lord that is a-coming. As for our rulers, they have acted strongly and mightily against the Lord; and they say, "The Lord hath forsaken the earth." Yea, but He hath not. And they say the Lord will not require what they have done. But as the Lord lives and reigns, He will repay them to their faces, all of them together, even from the greatest unto the least of them, from the king to the lowest. Without omitting one of them, He will repay them severely for all the mischiefs they have done. What are they? As many kings and counsellors as would lie betwixt us and the sun, are no more but a pile of grass before God. They are as nothing, and less than nothing. He will care no more to beat the abominable party that we call rulers down to the lowest hell, than I would do to tread a worm under my feet. Yea, His own people who have many sad days and nights about their sins; who wash and do all to keep themselves from their sins; yet they have sore bones, and enough to do with it. And do you think that such an abominable party, that have affronted Jesus Christ to His face — yea, we may say of our rulers, that they have cast out a flag of defiance against God, and have defied Him before sun, moon, and all the world — do you think that such shall escape? No, but He will come out in battle array against them, and as He lives He will lay them in the dust ere it be long. Will ye believe, Sirs, that our great folk, our abominable curates, and selfish wicked noblemen — do you think that these gentlemen will escape the hand of God? I say, they shall not at all. As He lives, He will thresh them down and their houses, and make their posterity beggars. He will bring his indignation over them, so that the generation to come will hiss at them. I profess this, that any person that considers matters at this day will see this generation gone perfectly out of their right wits. I confess it is a hard matter for a man to be saved, even when he is most circumspect and watchful. But, oh! to think, what will come upon this generation! I will tell you, that not only the wicked persecuting party and the complying party will be overthrown, but even His own people shall not escape. We verily believe this, and he who believes shall see it. Even His own people — even those who have the root of the matter in them — God will overthrow. He will send them in His anger through death, and He will spare few ministers, few non-conformist ministers. He will have them die



in the wilderness. So there shall be but a few that shall come through, and see the glory of the Lord. I fear there are but few that will be found for God. I will tell you, I trow, there are but few ministers that will be found what they ought to have been, and few people what they should have been as to the keeping their garments clean. This hath been a blackening time, a tempting time. At first it sullied all sorts of folk. Alas! people were all defiled in the beginning with hearing the curates, complying with prelacy; and many folk grew secure, wary, and crafty. All have bent their tongues to lies, but none have been valiant for the truth up and down Scotland. Few have been free for God; but a deep sort of compliances prevails amongst all sorts of folk. I will tell you truly what I think is the Lord's mind. It is this: I think that the Lord will rid Himself of this generation; I think that He hath sworn in His anger that until He have their heads under ground He will never do good for Scotland. He hath sworn that until He have this generation, ministers and professors, in their winding sheets, and the worms eating them up, He will stretch forth His hand against Scotland. They have been a party that have not acted for God. I do not deny but that a remnant shall be saved. But I trow, ye need not thatch houses with them that shall be saved. They will not be so many as folk think. I assure you, they will be odd sort of people whom God will save. They will be but a few ministers, professors, and Christians, that He will spare. But He will have their carcasses dragged out of the way. I profess I think the land is gone quite wrong. As for our rulers, what are they but incarnate devils? And as for our nobles, we can hear tell of none of them for God. Indeed, we deny not but there are some of them better than others are. Some have some sort of religion at heart, but dare not avow it. As for all our gentlemen that we can get in Scotland, we may write them in three inches of paper; and as for ministers, they are few; of Christians there are some more, but not many. And I will assure you, spare whom the Lord will, He will not spare professors. I think if He spare any, it will be ignorant people in the north who have not known His name. But as for them that have known Him and His mighty works, He will have them dragged out of the way. I think He may spare the young people that are rising, the young ones that know nothing; but as for the old Christians that have not been for God, He will have them taken out of the way. He will not let them live at all that have so exceedingly corrupted themselves.

It would not have been thought that Scotland would have beecome so naughty. I think professors in Scotland will turn incarnate devils, and of all the noblemen and gentlemen in Scotland, there shall not be twenty



that will appear for God. I trow I have doubled them. Who would have believed that Scotland would have been so naughty? Scotland hath been a nation full of hypocrisy — nothing but a whited wall. But stay until the play be ended and God will make a clean land. He will not come with a rake, so to speak, but with a besom that shall sweep malignants, prelates, noblemen, gentlemen, &c. It will sweep them and their posterity away. It will sweep professors away also. I assure you, as to the very godly that have been most free for God in their personal and particular walk, it shall be much for them to win through — it shall be much for them not to be overthrown in the deluge of wrath that is coming. I warrant there be many saying that “they shall never be moved.” Many say in their hearts with wicked men, “I shall not be moved, for I shall never be in adversity.” But stây till God arise and plead, and He shall bring adversity on those “that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountains of Samaria,” and can carry handsomely in troubles. “These shall go into captivity with the first that go into captivity.” For I think that many in this land do not believe that there is a God; or that He will do either good or evil. I see that this is so settled in the imagination of all ranks of people in Scotland, that I profess if the Lord stay many years away, Scotland will become a company of devils and desperate atheists; and they will call the proud happy, and say “It is vain to serve the Lord,” and shall think those the finest folk that can comply most, and follow the course of the present times. I will tell you, I trow many folk have been dreaming of deliverances, both ministers and professors; but if ye dream aright, ye will dream that God will come, send wrath and indignation, make Scotland tremble, and overwhelm it as by the flood of Egypt. I’ll tell you, if Scotland had deliverance, it were not telling them. The professors in Scotland would run mad. They are fitter for the grave. God must rid Himself of this generation, and that is a great part of its delivery. These things are but dreams with many who fancy the Lord hath no such thoughts. I assure you they shall be odd folk that shall stand when He appears. They shall be folk that have neither touched, tasted, nor handled the corruptions of these times. If ye will take the deliverance right, take this of it: when the Lord shall deliver Scotland there shall be glorious days in it. But it shall be a costly deliverance, and He will have the most of all sorts, especially ministers, swept away ere the deliverances come; and He will have folk that will not seek their own things but His things. For if He cannot get a Church to His mind He cares not for it. He cares not to cast it into the depths of the sea. What cares He for the laws of men, or for kings or councils? They are before Him but as the dirt of the streets. He will have a Church fitted for glorifying Him or



else none at all. "Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith the Lord, Have I not brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt? and the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Assyrians from Kir?" *i.e.*, "What am I concerned with you? What art thou, Scotland, unto me more than the Turks or Americans?" What cares He for ministers and professors? He can make as good out of the stones. He will have them out of the way. I will tell you, that I think there are few downright for God in anything that I can take up. There are very few Calebs and Joshuas. It seems a very strange thing that many think God will take polluted despised Scotland. Nay, He will have Scotland swept. He will have it turned upside down ere it be a platter for His service. There are many who think He will take Scotland, and all the filthiness and sins that are in it; and why may He not make our rulers repent? and a number of such things. Indeed, He can make them repent, but truly I tell you He hath a mind to hurl them out of the way. Nay, He hath a mind to hurl the godly out of the way also. He will rid Himself of the godly that have the root of the matter in them and yet have not been even down for Him. And do ye think that He will spare the malignant party? No, they shall not be spared. For if one part of hell be hotter than another they shall have it.

USE 2. — "Are the righteous scarcely saved?" I would speak a word to them that are here. Whence is it that several of you have the confidence that ye shall be saved, since "the righteous are scarcely saved?" I think whoever is most godly, will say, that it is very much for him to get the hopes that he shall be saved. I remember a saying of a godly man\* in Ayr, when he was dying:— "For a long time," says he, "I have not gone the length of the market cross without thoughts of God and Christ; yet I am in doubt now about my salvation." What think ye of that, Sirs? It is reported of one who lived many years a retired life, wholly taken up with the matters of his salvation, that after so long a time's retirement, he was still in great vexation and perplexity about his soul's state. We speak not this to discourage you as if the work of religion were a hard and intolerable work; but I will tell you the even-down truth of the matter: the man that is saved, goes through the severest trial, and it is well if he escapes with the life. It is a very great truth, that the man who shall wrestle, weep, and cry, and shall lie out of his bed when others are in it; shall keep at a distance from sin and be humbled for it; shall have so much religion that all his neighbours shall wonder at it — when such a man hath been many days, nights, weeks, and years seriously taken up with the work of his salvation, minding nothing in comparison of it, daily mourning over sin, mortifying

\*Mr. Stuart, Provost of Ayr.



a body of sin and death, yet after all, it is much for that man who hath taken all this pains to attain unto the peace of God. I tell you, I think religion is another business than folk think it to be. I wish that many of those folk who have but a clipped religion, that will not carry them to heaven, knew the exercises of the truly godly. I think, that is made out in this generation, that many who in words "have a form of godliness, yet indeed deny the power thereof." I tell you we have observed there would come out of a place three or four thousand, and amongst all those four thousand, in most places in Scotland, ye shall not get me fifty that, in the judgment of charity, are truly righteous. And again take those fifty, and ye shall think it much if there be forty that have the experience of heart-work. Ye may possibly think this severe language; yet we say we have observed that there would come out of a place three or four thousand, of whom there would not be fifty, that a judicious person, in the judgment of charity, could say upon examination were religious and Christian indeed. They have perhaps another walk than others, praying in their families and alone, and have a good meaning. But heart-religion is a strange thing. It is a serious business "to take the kingdom of heaven by violence." It is a great matter for a man to get an eye to Christ, to get corruption mortified, and his heart set on things above. I remember what one says of people mistaking of grace. "Grace is nothing but Christ conquering, triumphing, and fighting in the soul. Where grace is, there is much hammering between grace and corruption." I assure you it is no small matter for a man to be redeemed from death; from a devilish creature to become a heavenly creature; to have his "life hid with Christ in God." Truly, religion is an uncouth business. I have heard of the seriousness of some folk. I have thought it strange that all their religion is to give the Lord a good evening and a good morning in prayer and hearing of sermons. Such never knew what it was to be pursuing after salvation to purpose; never knew what it was to be concerned for their souls so as to forget all other things in comparison of this; never knew what it was to see the Lord Jesus and His sufficiency, and a new way struck out unto them that they knew not before — what it was to prevent the morning with their cries. It is a very great truth, that the most part of professors prove foolish virgins at the end of the day. I tell you that I am sure of it, if thou art a wise virgin thou has suspected thou wast a foolish virgin, and it has been a great work unto thee to get it cleared that thou wast one of the wise virgins. Was it not unto thee, to get "that new name and white stone?" But I profess I know not what you mean to do, and how you intend to be saved, and on what grounds ye have builded. For my part when I have conferred



with folk, I found few of them that could give me a reason of their hope; but they would senselessly say that they hoped to come to heaven, and could say no more. But I would say that the "righteous are scarcely saved." I know some serious persons that have been Christians fifty years that still have fears about their salvation. But I think there are several of you that have little religion, so little that a man would buy your religion over dear at one shilling, so to speak. Ye think, however, you are going to heaven. Ay, but few come there. But I say if ye knew the religion of those who are religious to purpose it would astonish you, and make you wonder. The daughters of Jerusalem said when the spouse was seeking her Beloved, "What is thy beloved more than another beloved?" I assure you it is another Christ, another salvation, another heaven, another glory they are aiming at, than the most part of folk are seeking. If ye knew the religion of many ye would stand astonished at it. Will ye but answer this question? Ye know that there is a heaven and that there is a hell. In which of these two doth every one of you hope to land at the end of the day? Whether hope ye to be saved or damned? Which of these two will ye land in; whether in salvation or damnation? All will have hope; but I will tell you that the devil and your own hearts have conspired to make you fools. I think some of you have hope, but you dare not say you are certain or that you have sure grounds to build upon. But I beseech you, if ye can hearken to it, try whether your hope be right hope or not. There are some folk that build their hopes upon an unsure foundation, and their hopes are false. And what if your hopes be builded on such a foundation? The most part deal with slipping fingers in a matter of so great importance. Cast not away your souls nor ruin them eternally. In the meantime ye know not but ye shall have your lot eternally in devouring fire! For many are sleeping, and the devil is, as it were, drawing the very throat out of them. But says another, "It may be I am in Christ." But what if ye make pillows of that sort, until the devil carry you away to hell? I tell you, you are an atheist that build upon such grounds. Maybe ye are in Christ. It may be that ye will go to heaven; but it may be ye will be damned eternally. "Nay," says another, "it is more likely that I am in Christ than that I am not." Now how prove ye that it is more likely that you are in Christ? That is a strange business. It is an herb that grows not in every garden. Truly atheists think that it is likely they may go to heaven. Everybody hath a thought of going thither. But happy are they that have not their hopes built on such a foundation. The foolish virgins thought they would certainly get to heaven. It is very difficult for a man to have the persuasion and experience of serious heart work. I have seen folk



very serious, and yet it was to them a strange difficulty to be sure whether they would be saved; whereas atheists, who have nothing of religion, hope to be saved, and yet sleep in a sound skin. I will tell you all is not gold that glitters. There are many religious curates in the land that will not be such in eternity. Everyone would think that such a man is religious, but his religion will not be current above. But I say unto you, man, if thou hast not tried it by the touch-stone of the Scripture, and found thy religion to be good and current, I trow thou art a perfect atheist; for the way that men try whether gold be couterfeit is by the touch-stone. Now the touch-stone that folk should betake themselves to is the Scripture. Canst thou prove thy hope by the Scripture, the Spirit of God letting you see by that touch-stone that you are religious? But I trow, take and weigh many of us in the balance of the sanctuary, we will be found very light. I could wish that many of you were doubting of your clipped religion. It is the ruin of the most part of the world that they are like such as take money, and look not whether it is good or bad, and so they are cheated. Many folk never question nor examine themselves about this. But remember that the righteous are scarcely saved. I can assure you it is much for one to attain unto salvation even when he is wonderfully serious. I can assure you that many have watched day and night, and have cried and repented, and yet to this day are stark naught. Many such religious men are in hell this day that had greater religion than many of us have. I know a man still alive who is now a drunkard and a declaration-taker,\* that was once so serious that he hardly slept, being so taken up about his salvation, and then lived godly, and yet is an atheist at this day. I believe that many of you never had a perplexed day about your souls, and yet ye think ye are religious; and if ye had any convictions, they were but cutted fingers that were soon healed again, like the scratch of a pin. If I had but one word to say, it would be this: Be sure that ye be in Christ, that the devil and your own deceitful hearts be not cheating you. I pray you, take heed and have oil in your lamps, for there are many lukewarm people in this generation.

USE 3. — There is a third word of use. There are some truly godly; and ye have difficulty in attaining to the light of His countenance, to grace, to dominion over sin. Ye are often saying with the Church, “Is there any

\*I suppose that Mr. Welwood means that declaration imposed Act XI., Parliament 1661, in which the taker acknowledges the absolute unlimited power of the king, condemns the most innocent means of seeking the redress of grievances, and abjures our Solemn Covenants. — See Wodrow's “Church History,” and Crookshank's “Church History.”



sorrow like unto my sorrow?" But be content, for the truth is, as Mr. Rutherford saith, "We would have two summers in one year, heaven here and heaven hereafter." But it is very fair, if we go to heaven though it be in a bloody winding-sheet. Asaph was soon puzzled in that case, that he should be set in such an afflicted condition as he was. "Verily I have cleansed my hands in vain, and washed mine hands in innocency, for all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning." And for mine own part, I know one that these seventeen years hath been in a constant terror of soul. I trow many here have never had so much all their lifetime as that person hath had in one hour. So I say it is very well that you are saved and go not to hell eternally. It is very well though a man should be tossed in body and soul if he get to heaven in the end. If he should lose health, means, wife, and children, and be troubled every day, and yet get to heaven at last, it is well. I confess there are many in this generation that would have all conveniences; but I think it very well when the Lord is plucking up what He hath planted, and throwing down what He hath built, if a man gets his soul for a prey. While it is so, "seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not." If ye get heaven, though ye swim through a sea of troubles, it is very well. There are two things that every man should labour to be at till he be a conqueror —

1st, He should labour to be above sin, and that he be in hazard by it no more.

2ndly, To be above every cloud of desertion, and to sail fair before the wind. But when he has lived an age, he must be content to have clouds and to have a body of sin and death to wrestle with; he must fall and rise; ride the ford as he finds it, and take it as he comes to it. So, my friends, be content if ye get heaven, and have any assurance of that. It may be if the Lord will He will hold up His own. But the truth is, ye will have a sea voyage before you step within the gates of heaven. Corruptions will follow you, and will not leave you till ye be within the threshold thereof. Till then Satan will pursue you. But when you are there, all your enemies will take the retreat and shall never vex you any more. But resolve ye must to meet with trouble and perplexity, and waves roaring. But here is comfort; ye shall not be made shipwreck of. There shall come upon you mountains of waves as if they would overwhelm you, but they shall not prevail. "Surely in the floods of great waters, they shall not come nigh unto you, for I think many serious folk cannot get sin under foot, and cannot sensibly have God's countenance. Yet ye must be content. Ye may say, "If I could get the assurance of heaven, I would be better content." Nay, my friends, ye must be content to have darkness as well as



assurance. Ye must be content with what ye meet with, for unbelief and sin are the cause of it.

Well, if folk get to heaven, it is very well though your escape should be with the skin in your teeth. I warrant you ye would be at ease. Our indulged folk must be at ease. And when the deceitful liberty was coming, all dreamed of ease and of sleeping in a sound skin. But hold your tongue! You shall be safe enough in heaven. But let us take God's way as long as we are here. It is a strange business! What would folk do with so much ease? If we were to live here eternally folk might look for ease. But we will not be long here, therefore, let us be faithful for God. Truly I would never shed a tear although God overthrow all these lands. The Lord hath shaken a few out of their ease and He is coming. Is it then time for you to sit at ease? Is it "time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste?" God cannot now get a house to set His gospel in; but he must have your ceiled houses. I should not care though He should burn Edinburgh and Glasgow both, and all that will not act for God. Many thought it strange to see a stately piece of Glasgow burning, but I thought nothing of it. Why? Because they have burnt the covenants and destroyed the work of reformation; "They have laid our pleasant things waste;" and what, though these cities should be both burned? A great business indeed! If God be honoured let none care whether or not people and houses should be cast "unto the bottom of the sea." It is a generation that hath blasphemous thoughts within them. They think, so to speak, that God was made for them, that Scotland was made that they might build houses in it and dwell in them. But the world was made to serve God, and if they will not use their power for Him, what need is there for many of them, be they kings, noblemen or malignants? A great matter though He should send them down to destruction! They are worth very little altogether. Folk's thoughts are clean wrong.

USE 4. — But for a fourth word of use, "Are the righteous scarcely saved?" Then I would say, truly ye had need to be exact, watchful and diligent; for, I suppose, ye are all wrong that are not at this work. God's anger is great against this generation. But ye will say, "How shall we be watchful and diligent, as that we may be on good terms with God, and that He may have no controversies against us when He comes." Are ye thinking this; God is coming against Britain as He lives; in battle He shall come and drive down kings, nobles, and prelates; and He will send forth hell and damnation amongst them, He will take vengeance on this land. Then, whether or not are ye studying to walk uprightly? Now I will tell you that religion which would serve to carry a man through in Montrose's



days, and at Dunbar, will not carry a man through in these times of Scotland's trial. I assure you he will be a strange man who will not be hit with a stroke when God comes in fury against these lands. I believe there are several that have not the least doubt but that they shall escape the wrath that is coming upon these lands. But many shall escape eternal wrath that shall not escape it. Therefore, ye have need to be exact in your walk. Ye have need to be on your watch-tower. I profess, that not only the foolish but even the wise virgins will be found sleeping when God comes. I trow, there shall be few that shall not be made to tremble at His coming; those that are most righteous will scarcely be saved. I confess that God will yet mow down the professors in Scotland, even as a man moweth down grass. The sinner in Zion and the hypocrite in heart shall be mown down. There will be few but He will have somewhat against. Unto some He will say "Ye have heard the curates, and never mourned over it;" and to others He will say, "Ye preached not at all hazards, and ye were not instant in season, and out of season, but shifted and shunned hazards;" to others, "Ye gave no faithful warning;" and to others, "Ye did not redeem the time; many sermons ye have heard but little instruction ye have taken;" and to others He will have it to say, "Ye have made a confederacy with mine enemies." To gentlemen He will have it to say, "The things ye minded was only dung; but I shall make soul, body, and all smart for these things." So, I trow, there will be few but He will have a sore and sad ditty against at that day. He will have uncouth things to say unto folk, and He will find very few such as He would have them be.

Therefore I beseech you to be religious to purpose, for God is coming. Noah and Lot preached to the old world, but they were nothing the better. And this generation seem to be persuaded that hell and damnation will be in the end, and yet they are hardened and given up into the devil to be deluded. Truly, I will tell you it is well if there be one righteous in a parish. For my part I find few ministers, or professors either, but what are quite wrong. As for people's public and private walk, there are few serious seekers of God so as to redeem the time when the days are evil. Oh! I will tell you, where I think the life of religion lies; it is about the Border, about Teviotdale, and about the Mearns and Angus; and those professors that do not offer them help must be swept away; those have got such a wrong cast, that they cannot be serious; they cannot seek the Lord, there is such a spirit of stupidity amongst them. I pray you, who are acquainted with this parish, to tell them that God shall give to West Monkland such an awakening, as shall make all their heads find the



smart of it. They once had a minister who took much pains for their sakes, when he was not present with them; yet, as to the generality of them, they have become inconstant like Reuben. If they get something for the back or belly they care for none of these things. But I tell you, the wicked Borderers up and down shall rise up and condemn this parish; even those Borderers who have become zealous for the truth. If God plague not West Monkland, except there be serious repentance, I am far mistaken. They say they have got some dirt of the world, and they hug that in their arms, and they care for no other thing; but I could wish it were rather in the bottom of the sea, I wish it were quite away. But I will tell you this one thing, I am sure that for those men that prefer dung to Christ and duty, the Lord shall sweep both them and it away. I am sure that there are many that will yet curse the day that ever they were laird or lord, that ever they had riches; but shall wish that they had gone begging from door to door. This is the thing, if I could word it, ordinary religion and diligence will not do the business, I assure you. Ye have need to get the thing very clear, and have your testificate lying beside you. Hast thou been dying daily? Hast thou been suffering daily? That is to say, Hast thou been forecasting these things in thy mind? Hast thou been thinking, "What shall I do, if the Papists should rise and cut the throats of both the great men and the mean men of this generation?" Our king and council are all dreaming; and that is no strange matter, for readily great folk are still dreaming. But professors, and even the godly, are dreaming too. There are few now awake, few upon their feet, and few upon their watch-tower this day. In a word, all will have enough to do, when the Lord shall come out "of his place, to punish the inhabitants of the earth."

Use 5. — "Are the righteous scarcely saved?" Do not, I pray you, then, misinterpret things, when judgments come upon these lands. When it comes to that, say not that they had no religion in them. When God comes to punish Scotland, many a man that had his heart right with God will go to the grave that day. Mistake not His way, when God smites some. Think not that ye are righteous, and they wicked; and that He hath burnt many folk's houses, think it not strange; it is well if folk be not burnt themselves. It is a small matter they have met with in comparison of their sin; it is nothing at all. I wish you and all others to escape though ye had twenty houses burnt down to the ground. I wish you may escape though the house be pulled down, for I assure you many an honest man hath been killed in his bed, his body being cast to the dogs, and his blood spilt upon the ground. This was the way he went to heaven. But this I would say unto you, Do not mistake these things that the people of God meet with. We



have heard of some godly folk that it would grieve one's heart, and make one's hair stand upright, to see or hear the afflictions they were in. So do not misinterpret that fire, by thinking these were greater sinners than others or more guilty than yourselves. Nay, these wicked bishops' houses escaped, and those churches that are polluted, and that proves the contrary. But I will tell you what was the language of it, not only to those who were under the present danger, but to the rest of the city and country adjacent, who beheld it. And

(1.) This was the language of the rod to the rulers, king and council: Will ye not let out the prisoners? Yet, it says, God can let them out, and that shall prove your damage. There is one whom they took before, and they have taken him unjustly again and that contrary to their own laws, therefore he must escape. I tell you there is a day coming when God shall consume Britain, and until that time His prisoners shall never altogether be freed. But then He will cause His desolating fire to loose them, and the wicked shall be inclosed in fire eternally. I remember the words of Jeremiah to Zedekiah, when they were commanded to let the servants go free. Says Jeremiah, "Therefore, thus saith the Lord, ye have not hearkened unto me, in proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother, and every man to his neighbour: behold, I proclaim a liberty for you, saith the Lord, to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine, and I will make you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth." Well the Lord shall proclaim liberty to those, and He will let the prisoners go free; and for that end the sword must go up and down the city until the Lord proclaims a liberty to hell and destruction to receive them down, if they repent not. I could wish they would repent, but they are still running on in this evil way, and hardening themselves, it seems, until the Lord make Himself rid of them.

(2.) It cries also, "Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come." Fear Him that can burn houses. There is such a fear of councils, troopers, and soldiers; but the Lord can do that in a short time that they cannot do in a long time. I believe the Lord hath done more hurt to Glasgow by the fire\* than the council and troopers have done all these years bygone. It is He that maketh the summer and winter, yet we show no due fear of Him. but strong is the fear of men. These lands are soon frightened for any little thing whereby they may be exposed unto

\*The burning here, no doubt, means that fire which broke out in Glasgow in 1677, on which occasion several prisoners were released by the humanity of the inhabitants. Among these prisoners was the worthy laird of Kersland, who seems to be the person said to have been retaken. A little after he went over to Holland, where he died November 14, 1680.



trouble. Ye fear not to break the laws of God, but ye fear to break the laws of men. What need we care so much for them? Let us rather fear Him and serve Him.

(3.) This burning spoke this: "Labour not for that meat which perisheth; but for that which endureth unto everlasting life. Set your affections on things above, and not on things on earth." Lay up "your treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt." It had this cry also, that men should not trust in uncertain riches. I warrant you many a man took much pains to rear up these stones that the fire hath burnt down, that forgot God in prayer. I warrant you there were more pains taken in building up these stones than were taken by many about their salvation.

(4.) It cries, Have ye treasure in heaven? Are ye making sure of something that shall not, nay cannot, be taken from you? "Mary hath chosen that good part, that shall not be taken away from her." So set not your affections upon the things of this world. Ye see lairdships and lordships sold and turned over from hand to hand, and yet some men will not stand to sell their souls for a bit of ground to their posterity, and it may be he that comes after them will squander away all. It says, Seek a kingdom that cannot be shaken and a habitation that cannot be dissolved.

(5.) It cries this, Is it a time to plaster your houses, while God's people are reduced to wandering and hardships. It is observable that it is the best piece of Glasgow that is burnt. And I trow both Glasgow and Edinburgh shall be in the hollow ere all be done. Many gentlemen's and noblemen's houses shall go all to desolation ere all be over.

(6.) And it hath another cry. It says that much sin was committed in these houses. And be what houses they will, sin might have been the cause of the wall being smitten again. And

(7.) It cries, "If ye repent not, ye shall all likewise perish." It says to thee, O Glasgow, if ye fear not and seek not God, He will send some sad thing against you; for when He sends His judgments they have a loud call to others to take heed, therefore I beseech you to take heed. These people that had their houses burnt dreamed as little of such a judgment the night before as ye do now. Prelates and malignants are dreaming little of judgments, and the devil thinks long, so to speak, to have them, and perhaps he will get them time enough. Many of you think there are no judgments coming. But what ground can ye have for that? Why! ye are so secure. They are indeed happy that are secure upon good grounds. Therefore, I beseech you by the mercies of God, as ye love the welfare of your own immortal souls, search your own souls, try your ways, and turn unto the Lord. Few spend time in prayer as they ought.



Now shall we say no more but this; search out the evil of your ways, and pray for enlightening grace. The Lord make you consider these things, and to His name be everlasting praise. Amen.

## The Dangers of Self-Deception

by Rev. John Angell James

(Continued from page 274)

Thirdly, we now contemplate the *consequences* of this self-deception.

It corrupts the purity of the church. Members in this state, are the wood, hay and stubble in the walls of the spiritual temple, which disfigures its beauty and impairs its strength. They are Achans that trouble the camp of Israel, and bring down the displeasure of the Lord upon its hosts. They are the disease of the spiritual body, which swells its bulk, but destroys its health. Do they by their prayers bring down the blessing of God upon the pastor or the members? Alas! they pray not for themselves. Do they by their piety diffuse vitality and energy through the community? They are cold, lifeless, dead. Do they by their consistency attract others to the Church? On the contrary, they disgust and repel. Instead of aiding the force of that concentrated light, by which the Church shines upon the dark world around, they envelope it with a smoke. Instead of acting as the salt of the earth, they bring corruption into the kingdom of Christ. They are not only negatively an injury, but positively: they do harm at all times, but especially on occasions of strife, they are the fuel that feeds the flames of discord.

As it respects religion, they disparage and injure it, not so much by raising against it the cry of hypocrisy on the ground of their immortality, as by lowering its standard, depreciating its value, diminishing its power, carnalising and secularising it, and reducing it to a greater conformity to the spirit of the world; so that many persons seeing no difference between such professing Christians and themselves, except the mere circumstance of profession, think such a religion not worth their notice.

But, as to the nominal professing Christian *himself*, how truly awful is the consequence of his delusion. He is perhaps the most hopeless character on earth. Before he assumed the name of Christ, there was hope of him that he would be impressed, convinced, and converted by some of those discriminating discourses which point out the difference



between a regenerated and an unregenerated man; those pungent appeals to the conscience which are so often blessed in awakening them that are without — but now he is proof against all these. He is a professing Christian, a Church member; and with this as his shield he wards off every arrow of conviction from his heart. These things he says are for the unprofessing, not for him. Quietly his conscience sleeps amidst all the thunders that roll from the pulpit, while the lightnings, carried off by the conductor of his profession, touch not his false hopes, and leave him, amidst all, secure. He puts away from himself all the threatenings of the Word, though they are pointed at him, and takes to himself all the privileges and consolations of the righteous, though he enjoys none of them. If at any time the power of the deception begins to be shaken by the efforts of a half-awakened conscience, and there rises up a suspicion that he is not a truly religious man, Satan aids him to regain his delusive quietude by the usual suggestion, “that he is a professing Christian, a Church member, and that though he is not perfect, he is not further from it, than many others; he only partakes of the general infirmity of the times, and if he be wrong, who is right? Besides, what is he to do? He is a Church member, and would he begin again? Would he repent, believe, and be converted *now*?” Such logic is generally successful, and the poor creature lies down again to sleep on, the sleep of death. Notwithstanding the great number of professing Christians which exist, and the great numbers of unconverted ones too, how rarely do we meet with any who were converted after they became professing Christians? How seldom do any such come to their pastor, and express a fear, and follow it up, that they have never been truly changed.

Hence it is, that some ministers feel it to be the greatest perplexity of all their pastoral avocations, to give answers to persons, who come to advise with them on the subject of making a profession. If from suspicion that the hearts of these individuals are not yet right with God, they dissuade them, they may be discouraging those whom they ought to receive and encourage; sending away a babe that ought to be laid in the bosom of the Church; breaking the bruised reed, and quenching the smoking flax: while on the other hand, if they encourage the enquirer to come forward, they may be strengthening the delusion of a self-deceived soul, and become accessory to the ruin of an immortal spirit. Some conscientious men have found and felt this to be the very burden of their lives, and from which there is no way of gaining relief or ease, but by laying down the marks of true conversion, begging the querist to bring his heart to this test, stating what is implied in a Christian profession, and making him, as



has been already said, responsible for the judgment of his own case, and all its consequences too.

But extend your views to another world, and anticipate if you can the consequences of self-deception as they exist, and are perpetuated through eternity. Bunyan, in his inimitable allegory, the "Pilgrim's Progress," after representing the rejection of a false professor of religion, called Ignorance, who had knocked at the portals of heaven, and asked admission, concludes his book with these awfully impressive words, "*Then I saw that there was a way to hell, even from the gates of heaven, as well as from the city of destruction.*"

*A professor of religion in hell!!* Tremendous idea! Horrifying thought! After spending his time on earth in the nominal communion of saints, to spend his eternity in the real fellowship of devils in hell! After belonging to the society of God's people; joining in all their services and their privileges, transacting with them the business of His kingdom; uniting with them in the expulsion as well as reception of members — then to be sent away, into the prison of lost souls. O how dreadful would it be to be separated from the Church of God now, to pass under the sentence of excommunication, to be excised as a corrupt member of the body, and given over to Satan — but what is this to the sentence of excommunication from the Church triumphant, pronounced by Jesus Christ Himself at the last day? O to hear HIM say *depart!* — Who does not feel the force of those impressive verses?

Thou lovely Chief of all my joys,  
Thou Sovereign of my heart.  
How could I bear to hear Thy voice,  
Pronounce the sound depart.

The thunder of that dismal word  
Would so torment my ear,  
'T would tear my soul asunder Lord,  
With most tormenting fear.

O wretched state of deep despair,  
To see my God remove,  
And fix my doleful station where  
I could not taste His love.

(To be continued)



# Extracts of Diary

by Rev. Donald MacFarlane

## Preaching

Speaking of the message of reconciliation, I said that it was the most blessed work in this world to be employed in proclaiming the Gospel to a perishing world, and that after being taken home to the eternal rest, if the Lord would send me back to the world again, and give me my choice of works — would certainly choose to be employed by him to preach the message of peace and salvation to my fellow sinners; I would say: 'Lord send me'. There were no doubt difficulties and trials to be met with in performing the Lord's work, but he that called his servants to that work was able to strengthen, comfort and sustain them in the midst of all their troubles.

## Christ's Death

Christ's death is the greatest and most wonderful event that ever occurred in this world; nothing so great has ever occurred in the past, and nothing shall ever occur like it in the future. It is a unique event — and it is a glorious event for the redeemed.

## Number of our Days

What do we require in order to be enabled to number our days aright? To be taught of the Lord. Teach us to number our days, without we cannot number our days, as they ought to be numbered — just like children, who never attended school, were never taught — give them exercise in Arithmetic, sums to make up, and they can't manage them. Their calculations are sure to be incorrect. So it was with the rich man who sinned. Soul thou hast many good things laid up for many years, when he had not even one day. The Lord's people in the days of their ignorance numbered their days in the same way, but they have through grace, discovered that their calculations were incorrect and have felt the new way of being taught of the Lord. So they pray, teach us to number our days! We are not competent for this work ourselves, so we must be taught. The Lord offers to teach us by His Word, Spirit and providence. 'Learn of Me' Christ says.

## Lot in Providence

Are you resigned to your lot in Providence? Do you believe that your measure has been taken from all eternity? As to your lot, your neighbour's suit would not fit you, nor would yours fit him. Christ sits



upon the circle of the earth, all power in Heaven, and on earth are given Him. What do you say of His providence of His dealings with you? Can you say, blessed providence, blessed dealings, blessed afflictions? That is just the very thing you should say of them. He shall make all things work together for good to His people.

### **Trials**

The Lord will use severe trials to bring His people back to Himself when they wander from Him. I seek to add my Amen to His dealings in this respect. I have cause to say, at least in some measure, 'It is good for me that I was afflicted. It is good to wait on the Lord in prayer, to receive the best of the wheat and the honey from the rock, to drink at the Fountain Head. The most difficult part of this work is to begin it, once that difficulty is overcome by grace, it is easy, pleasant and profitable.

### **Christ's Question**

Will ye also go away? The occasion of the question — when many of the disciples went back. They were not real disciples but were followers of Christ attracted to Him, and made to follow Him for a reason — partly from curiosity and partly from selfish motives, because they did eat of the loaves. Their apostasy appears to be final and fatal, for it is said they walked no more with Him. That which occasioned their apostasy was the sublime and spiritual doctrines which Christ set forth in His address to them. From the miraculous manner in which He had fed them a short time previously, He took the occasion of directing their minds to Himself as the bread of life, and to His death, as the procuring cause of that life, and the necessity there was of a living and spiritual participation in those blessings in order to Salvation. At this they took offence, and said: "This is a hard saying who can hear it?", and as the result of the offence they went back and walked no more with Him. It was on that occasion Christ asked His disciples "Will ye also go away?"

This question may have been put to the disciples, first to remove the doubts of some as to their being in a state of grace. To illustrate this, I may mention an anecdote I heard about a godly woman. After professing the Lord publicly she was assailed by the temptation that she was not a genuine believer. This temptation followed her so hard that she made up her mind to "send back", as she said, her profession. Accordingly she went to the minister on that errand. The minister knowing that she was a good woman, that she was suffering from Satan's fiery darts, took a wise way of extricating her from the temptation. He expressed his readiness to accept of her resignation (so to speak) of her profession. He at once got



paper and pen and wrote down to the effect that the tempted woman was to have nothing more to do with Christ. When this was produced for her signature, she exclaimed: "I would not do it for the whole world."

The disciples reply: "Lord to whom shall we go?" By this reply they show their unwillingness to go away. The question Christ put to them had respect to the state of their will. The will has the power of choosing or rejecting, and by the choice people make, the condition of their will may be made known. If people make choice of Christ, like Mary, that plainly indicates that the will is renewed by grace and if, on the other hand, people make choice of the world that shows that the will is unrenewed.

To whom shall we go? We shall not, will not, go to any of the false systems of religion which are of men's devices. There is death in all these — no salvation.

#### **Not to be Anxious. Phil. 4:6,7.**

This is an exhortation not to be over-anxious about anything. Our over-anxiety about anything in worldly matters is a sin. It indicates distrust in God, is dishonouring to Him, and hurtful to the interests of the soul. It distracts the mind and unfits it for serving the Lord. Be not therefore careful, that is, over-anxious for anything pertaining to this world. The antidote to over-anxiety is prayer. What should be the matter of your prayer? Everything relative to time and eternity, to soul and body, but the things of eternity first. Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. This is the order in which they are given in Scripture, and it is also the order in which the awakened sinner views them when the Spirit of God begins to take saving dealings with him. It is not so with the unconverted. They put the things of time first, which God puts last. But one thing is needful above all other things, and there is no profit though a man gain the whole world, and lose his precious soul. Happy are they who are taught of the Spirit to make everything pertaining to the salvation of their souls a matter of prayer, and these things first. Everything lawful, pertaining to this life should be made a matter of prayer; everything relative to yourself, personally, to your family, to your worldly estate, ought to be laid before the Lord in prayer as circumstances demand, as there is nothing too great to be presented before Him at the throne of grace, so there is nothing too small to be brought forward — all blessings great and small come from the Lord, and He ought to be acknowledged as the Author and Bestower of them. This by making everything relative to time and eternity a matter of prayer. We acknowledge our dependence upon God and give Him the glory. We are to make known our requests to



God. This does not imply that our desires are unknown to Him, before they are expressed in words. No! He knows all our thoughts, and desires whatever they may be; He knows all things, but the Lord likes to hear the desires of His people from their own mouths. Let me hear thy voice. Thy voice is sweet. He may hear the prayers of others on your behalf but he prefers to hear your own cry. Therefore make your requests known to Him. Tell Him your case in simple and plain words.

### **The Elect**

Dr. Love was preaching one day on the elect people of God and said: "I'm told that they were a small number in comparison to the non-elect." A woman who was hearing him, said to him after coming out of church, "You were making the number of the elect very small but though there should be but two chosen unto life, I will try to be one of them."

### **The Idiot**

An idiot was asked by a minister: "Have you a soul?" To which he replied: "No." The minister then asked him: "Had you a soul?" He answered: "Yes." "What did you do with it?", the minister asked. To which he replied: "As I could not take care of it myself I gave it to Christ to keep for me." This agrees with what the apostle said: "He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him."

### **The Lord's Righteousness**

To whom should we declare the Lord's Righteousness? "Unto a people that shall be born." This is, the Lord's people who are passing away, shall declare this to the rising generation — that the Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works. (Psalm 144:17). We are indebted to our forefathers, the instruments in God's hand for our religious instruction in the word of God, and it is our duty to transmit the same to the rising generation, to the young, on whom it will be incumbent to tell their children the things which God has revealed in His Word.

### **The Command to Labour**

*John 6.27.* The command to labour — to labour for the meat that endureth, is a duty binding upon all. We ought to labour for this meat because God commands it; we ought to labour for it also because we need it. We are not, however, to think that we can earn this bread by our labour. It is so natural for us to think so. Some teach this as a doctrine. Those that engage in this duty aright are attracted by several things to labour. (1) A sense of need given by the Spirit of God, (2) Some hope of obtaining, which hope is founded upon the Gospel revelation, (3) getting



a taste of this meat. This last makes those who are in any measure made partakers of it persevere to the end. We need to begin to labour and to continue to labour, day after day and year by year. No sooner does the farmer get his corn secured than he begins to labour for another crop. Last year's crop is spent, and so will this year's, hence the need for perseverance in labouring; continued needs demand continued labour. The needs of God's people are increasing the longer they are in a state of grace. A grown-up person, or one who has attained to manhood, requires new food. This is a fact in nature, it is also a fact in grace. God's people labour to receive spiritual food from the Lord, but they are soon poor and needy again. What would you think of a farmer who had a number of cornstacks standing in his corn-yard for ten years. In a spiritual sense you would be apt to say that he himself was dead. Such are those who consider themselves rich, and have no need of anything, but the Lord's people are different. How much soever they receive from their heavenly Father, they feel themselves poor and needy.

### FAMILIAR TERMS BUT NO GOSPEL

The reason for reading had been a passing interest in Romans 16 v. 1-16, but, having noted the gifted writer's comments, we read on to find what he had to say on the next four verses. They referred, he said, "*to a serious spiritual peril in the Roman community*" which must be handled even if only briefly, before Paul closed his epistle. There were men who talked much of a mystic freedom, and they were "*free indeed from the accepted dominion of the Redeemer — but all the more they are enslaved to themselves.*" These men might have had special hopes of beguiling the Roman Christians with their "good words and fair speeches" because of their well-known readiness to submit with the submission of faith, to sublime truths. Paul, however, "*would not have their holy readiness to believe, distorted into an unhallowed and falsely tolerant curiosity. He would have their faith not only submissive but spiritually intelligent; then they would be alive to the risks of a counterfeited and illusory 'Gospel'. They would feel, as with an educated Christian instinct, where decisively to hold back, where to refuse attention to unwholesome teaching.*"

The apostle concludes his exhortation by likening this spiritual mischief to a serpent, to a stratagem of their arch foe, that old serpent the devil, showing in this way his antagonism to Christ and his people. "*But the*



*Enemy's Conqueror, working in you, will make the struggle short and derisive."*

The writer went on to ask what was the mischief, and who precisely were the dangerous teachers spoken of so abruptly and urgently by Paul. And having agreed that the question is not easily answered, and also dismissed the idea that they were an extreme school of theoretical "liberty" such as chapters 14 and 15 might suggest, he decided that Paul had in mind men whose purposes and teachings were nothing but evil, and who should be avoided; not met in conference, but solemnly refused any further hearing.

What he said next caught our special attention. Last year those attending the Theological Conference were alerted to the dangers of a new religious theory going by the name of the Theology of Liberation. Since then, several clergymen stationed in depressed industrial areas had been heard putting over what sounded like simplified forms of this teaching in the early morning religious talks. And, more recently, Gerald Priestland, the religious correspondent of the BBC had been heard discussing this Liberation Theology as it affected religious life in many parts of Latin America today. This programme had been tuned into accidentally, and in circumstances which, unfortunately, allowed only a short part of it to be heard.

In that brief period we heard several exponents of the new theology give their interpretation of some parts of the Gospel in which the freeing of persons from hunger, disease, etc is described. The Gospel was presented as a message solely for the benefit of the literal poor. The words in Luke 6 v. 20 — "Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God," were in an authoritative and plausible manner made to mean, "Blessed are you who have been made poor" (by the oppression of rich men), for yours is the kingdom of God." And, of course, much was made of the woe pronounced on the rich a few verses further on. Several passages were treated in like manner, divested of all spiritual meaning, and applied to the poor, the underprivileged, the oppressed, and so on. The Gospels were by this treatment made to yield a political, not a religious message.

With this in mind we read on — *"In our view, the case was one of embryo Gnosticism. The Romans, so we take it, were troubled by teachers who used the language of Christianity, saying much of 'Redemption', and of 'Emancipation', and something of 'Christ', and of 'the Spirit'; but all the while they meant a thing totally different from the Gospel of the Cross. They meant by redemption and freedom, the liberation of spirit from*



*matter. They meant by Christ and the Spirit, mere links in a chain of phantom beings supposed to span the gulf between the Absolute Unknowable Existence and the finite World. And their morality too often tended to the tenet that as matter was hopelessly evil, and spirit the unfortunate prisoner in matter, the material body had nothing to do with its unwilling and pure Inhabitant: let the body go its own evil way, and work out its base desires.*

*"Our sketch is taken from developed Gnosticism such as is known to have been a generation or two later than Paul. But it is more than likely that such errors were present, in essence, all through the Apostolic age. And it is easy to see how they could from the first disguise themselves in the special terminology of the Gospel of liberty and of the Spirit.*

*"Such things may look to us, after eighteen hundred years, only like fossils of the old rocks. They are indeed fossil specimens — but of existing species. The atmosphere of the Christian world is still infected from time to time — perhaps more now than a few generations ago, whatever that fact may mean — with unwholesome subtleties in which the purest forms of truth are indescribably manipulated into the deadliest related error: a mischief sure to betray itself, however, (where the man tempted to parley with it is at once wakeful and humble), by some fatal flaw of pride, or of untruthfulness, or of an uncleanness however subtle. And for the believer so tempted, under common circumstances, there is still, as of old, no counsel more weighty than Paul's counsel here. If he would deal with such snares in the right way, he must 'turn away from them'. He must turn away to the Christ of history. He must occupy himself anew with the primeval Gospel of pardon, holiness and heaven."*

The Gnosticism referred to above was a serious danger to the Church in the second and third centuries. It was a gross perversion of the Gospel, but was presented in much of the familiar language of the Gospel. Satan has repeatedly employed what he has found to be a successful device for luring souls away from the truth. It is being done still by Protestants teaching liberal doctrine, by some of the modern sects, and now by the exponents of the Theology of Liberation. *"Saying much of 'Redemption', and of 'Emancipation', and something of 'Christ', and of 'the Spirit'; but all the while they meant a thing totally different from the Gospel of the Cross."*

A flood of pernicious errors has engulfed the visible church in our time. They are all the more dangerous when couched in the hallowed, familiar language of the salvation of God. We are apt to be affected by the imposing facade of human learning, and the ingenious and plausible



mixing of the invented and the true. When, additionally, there is a plea for the elimination of gross social injustice, and the whole flavoured with some of the language of the evangel; why, we may wonder if there is not something in it after all!

When perplexed, or even tempted in this way, we should at once go "to the law and the testimony", and ask some pertinent questions. Does the new teaching glorify God, or concentrate on man? Has it to do with men's souls and their eternal destiny, or their earthly wellbeing? Does it stress the evil of sin as transgression of God's law? Does it account for the death of Christ by the satisfaction of divine justice? Does it emphasize man's lostness, and the need for a spiritual rebirth by the Holy Spirit? Even these few questions will generally be enough to test the doctrine, whether it be carnal or spiritual. Of the Freedom Theology it may be said that under the profuse screen of Scripture quotations and orthodox terminology, there is no religion worthy of the name, but much dangerous political theory.

The Theology of Liberation is not Christian at all, and Paul's counsel as to its propagators should be followed — "Avoid them"; give them no place as teachers, and condemn their teaching outright as ruinous to souls. As far as poor Roman Catholics in South America are concerned, it is the exchanging of one deadly doctrine for another, and they are to be pitied and prayed for.

A.McP.

## Letter from Rev. Dr James Tallach

Ingwenya Mission

Zimbabwe 19th September, 1980

Dear Mr MacPherson,

In the kind Providence of the Lord we had a safe and comfortable journey. The warm send off we experienced from family and friends at Dalcross Airport, Inverness, on Tuesday evening was matched by the welcome we received from Mission staff at Bulawayo airport 22 hours later. Such is modern travel — and such also, we trust, is the concern for the spread of the Gospel.

We arrived on flight number 114 to a first impression of dust, dryness and cloudless skies. The number and impression recalling psalm 114:8.

"Who from the hand and story rock  
did standing water bring.  
And by his power did turn the flint,  
into a water spring."



May this be our experience of the grace of the God of Jacob in Zimbabwe!

There appears to be no immediate prospect of moving up to Mbuma due to the presence of a few armed men variously called Dissidents or Bandits (they were Freedom Fighters or Heroes a few months ago). They have effectively stopped all medical services in the Nkai district except a clinic at Nkai itself. This is at a time when malaria, measles and anthrax are causing considerable suffering. It is hoped that the next few months will see an improvement and meantime we will be fully employed at Bulawayo, D.V.

Kindest regards  
Yours sincerely *J.R.T.*

## Church Notes

### **Day of Humiliation and Prayer**

The Synod decided that November 26th 1980 be observed throughout the Church as a Day of Prayer to confess our increasing religious and moral decadence at all levels, and to pray for an outpouring of the Divine Spirit to generate faith and deep repentance among us.

### **Deputy to Australia and New Zealand**

We are happy to report that the Rev. D.B. MacLeod arrived in Sydney after a safe but very tiring journey. He held services for the small group that meet there, and then went on to Auckland on the 19th August. After spending six Sabbaths in New Zealand, including one at Gisborne, he plans to return to Australia and assist at Grafton communion on 5th October. He hopes to devote the last three Sabbaths of his tour to Sydney, before returning home on 31st October. If it be God's will, we trust that these plans will be fully carried out, and that the Free Presbyterian cause in these distant parts will benefit from Mr MacLeod's ministry. The prayers of all readers are again asked for the deputy's health and wellbeing, and the work in which he is engaged. Also for our congregations there, and their ministers.

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**At the beginning of the academic year we in university cities naturally think in a special way about the student section of our congregations.**

**If you have any connection with the Church, and are coming to study in Aberdeen this session, please be good enough to contact me. Or, if you know of anyone else in this situation, please let me know. The manse address is: 18 Carlton Place; the telephone number (0224) 25250.**

**Thank you for any help you may be able to give.**

*John Tallach*



# Acknowledgment of Donations

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

**Sustentation Fund:** Anon., Canada, \$20.00; Anon., £100.

**College and Library Fund:** Anon., £50.

**Dominions & Overseas Fund:** Anon., £50.

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

**Achmore:** In loving memory of Donald MacLeod, from Mrs C. MacLeod and family, £100 for Sustentation Fund, per Rev. J. MacLeod; Envelope in collection plate, £20 for Sust. Fund.

**Dumbarton:** Anon Cardross, £10 in plate, for China Mission; "from friend", £5 in plate, for Church Extension Fund; Friends, Mansfield, £5 for Manse Fund. **Note:** Dumbarton Church Building Extension: This project has been postponed. Donations already received will be carried forward in the Congregational account until Financial, and other problems are resolved (D.V.)

**Flashadder:** W.S., £5 for Communion Expenses, per John Campbell.

**Greenock:** Anon, Envelope in Plate, £10 for Trinitarian Bible Society; A Friend, Lochcarron, £10 for Sust. Fund per Rev. L. MacLeod; A Friend, Lochcarron, £5 for Sust. Fund per Rev. L. MacLeod; R.A. Conway, Bangor, £15 for Congregational purposes.

**Ingwenya:** Miss I. Steedman, \$300 (Canadian); Mbuma Zending, \$32,465.99.

**Kyle:** Envelope in plate, £5, churchdoor collection per Treasurer; Envelope in plate, £10 for Manse Fund per Treasurer; Friend, £100 for Manse Fund per Treasurer; Kyle Friends, £200 for Plockton Church Decoration, per Treasurer.

**London:** Two Friends, £5 for Sust. Fund per Rev. A MacPherson.

**Oban:** A Friend, Ardgay, £5 for Sust. Fund per J.M.

**Portree:** Anon, Envelope in plate £20 for Foreign Mission Fund; 'Friend', £5 for Manse expenses per F.M.; Anon, £5 in Plate for Braes bus; Anon, £10 in Plate for Foreign Mission Fund.

**Raasay:** A. MacLennan, Glasgow, £5 for Sust. Fund per J.M. MacLeod; M. Macleod, Inverness, £5 for Sust. Fund per J.M. MacLeod; J. Nicolson, Harris, £5 for Sust. Fund per J.M. MacLeod; D. MacLean, Inverarish, £5 for Sust. Fund per Treasurer; In remembrance of husband and family, Mrs MacLennan, Ardineaskan, £20 for Property Fund, per Treasurer; Raasay Friend, £5 for Property Fund, per Treasurer; D. MacSwan, Glasgow, £5 for Property Fund, per M.D. MacKay; D. MacLean, Inverarish, £5 for Communion Expenses, per Treasurer.

**Shieldaig:** Anon, £10 for Church Maintenance.

**South Harris:** Lewis Friend, £10 for Sust. Fund, per Rev. D. MacLeod; Tarbert Friend, £20 (Congregational), £20 (Car), per Rev. D. MacLeod; Glasgow Friends, £25 (Car), per Rev. D. MacLeod; Wellwisher, £5 for Congregational purposes, per N. Mackay; Friend, Geocrab, £5 (Congregational), per N. Mackay; N. Shaw, Kyles, in memory of Mrs A.M.L. Finsbray, £10 (Congregational).

**Staffin:** Mr. C. Macdonald, £5 for Sust. Fund per Mrs Buchanan; Friend, £5 for Sust. Fund per M.M.I.; M.N., £2 (Sust. Fund), £3 (Car expenses), per M.M.; A Friend, Harris, £5, "Where most needed", per M.M.I.; Two Friends, Inverness, £10 for Congregational purposes, per Rev. J.M.D.; J.N. Davidson, Envelope in Plate, £20 for Manse expenses.