

THE
Free Presbyterian Magazine
and **Monthly Record**

Vol. 90

SEPTEMBER 1985

No. 9

Knowing the Time

It was laid to the charge of the Pharisees and Sadducees by the Saviour that whereas they were adept at reading the face of the sky in order to forecast the weather they were very backward when it came to discerning the signs of the times. In the light of Scripture all the signs of the Messiah were being fulfilled in Him. They were seeing and hearing such things as many prophets and kings had desired to see and hear in their own day but had not done so, the time for their fulfilment having not yet arrived. In answer to John the Baptist's query, "Art thou He that should come, or look we for another?", the Saviour merely drew attention to the miracles, wonders and signs which showed that He was the one approved of God and that Scripture was being fulfilled before the very eyes of men. If we, guided by Scripture, discern aright the signs of the times we live in our duty in these circumstances ought to be plain enough to us.

Paul writing to those in Rome who were "beloved of God, called to be saints," seemed to take it for granted that they were exercising their spiritual discernment in taking stock of their surroundings and cognizance of the nature and character of the period or season in which they had been allotted their portion. Having directed attention to the duties owed to the civil magistrate and the obligation they were under to perform all social and relative duties, he further wrote, "And that, **knowing the time**, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep . . ." Here we have, of course, the mind of Christ and what Paul wrote is of perpetual obligation being an integral part of that Word which reveals to us what we are to believe concerning God and what duty God requires of men.

In **knowing the time** they were bound to recognise it as one of Gospel

privileges. The same is true of our day. The righteousness of God without the law is **now** manifested; He is declaring **at this time** His righteousness. The Gospel reveals it. Christ in the glory of His person and finished work is set before men but on taking stock we fear that they are but few who are seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. For the most part, Gospel hearers are made up of those who give every appearance of being asleep in the grave of spiritual death. It is high time, the very hour, when such should awake. "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." "Behold, **now** is the accepted time; behold **now** is the day of salvation." Even the professing Church seems in large measure to be lulled into a wise-virgin-like slumber. To it these words are particularly addressed. Knowing the time and realising the preciousness of Gospel privileges it is high time to awake in order to watch and pray.

The present time is one of conflict. The same enemies are abroad as in Paul's day and still endeavouring, however much in vain, to separate believers from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus their Lord. Believers in Ephesus were also reminded of this conflict: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." We cannot both sleep and withstand in the evil day, or emerge out of the conflict "more than conquerors", without having girded on and proved the worth of the whole armour of God. The warrior does not put on his armour to sleep in it. Bunyan's Christian slept in the pleasant arbour located midway to the top of the Hill Difficulty and in doing so lost his roll. He experienced much distress and sorrow before eventually recovering it. However mountainous the difficulties and numerous the enemies the Christian's victory through Him that loved him is sure. "The sufferings of **this present time** are not to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed in us". The time is short and so is the triumphing of the wicked.

The falling away or apostasy spoken of by Paul in Second Thessalonians continues in our time. The "mystery of iniquity" was already at work when he wrote but the "Wicked" was not to be revealed until the Roman Emperor was taken out of the way. That "man of sin, the son of perdition" has now long since come on the scene and continues to sit "in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." So strong is the delusion in 1985 that we find the Roman Pontiff held in almost universal regard as the foremost Christian of our day and the apostate Church of Rome as **the** Christian church. The Rome-ward trend in the Church of

England has now almost brought it within the embrace of "the woman arrayed in purple and scarlet colour". We are to pray, "Arise O God, plead thine own cause!" How easy for Him by an outpouring of His Spirit to bring to nothing the many false religions of our day and to gather in the nations of the world to become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. On fulfilment shall be plainly understood what Paul meant in describing Israel's restoration: "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" **Knowing the time**, his heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel was, that they might be saved. We do not know how far spent the long night of apostasy nor how near at hand the dawn of the millennial day but we do know that He who has determined the times and seasons would have us pray: "Thy kingdom come".

The Labourer Worthy of his Hire

The following sermon was preached by the Rev. Christopher Munro in the year 1876 and at Strathy where the last 15 years of his ministry were spent. Mr Munro was eminently godly and left a fragrant memory behind him. The Free Church General Assembly had apparently laid ministers under the obligation of preaching to their flocks on the Christian duty of supporting the Church and gospel ordinances. It is probably true of most ministers that they find this duty far from easy and it is interesting to see how this man of God sets about it.

"The labourer is worthy of his hire."—Luke 10: 7.

"Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel." — 1 Cor. 9: 14.

"Let him that is taught in the Word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things." — Gal. 6: 6.

"Not because I desire a gift; but I desire fruit that may abound to your account." — Phil. 4: 17.

"Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." — 1 Cor. 16: 2.

Our General Assembly at its last meeting enjoined upon all our ministers to preach on the duty of her members and adherents to contribute of their means for supporting ordinances within her bounds, and extending her operations at home and abroad. In obedience to this in-

junction, I am today to direct your attention to the following propositions taught in the passages of Scripture now read:—

- I. The right that labourers have to their hire.
- II. The parties bound to give this hire.
- III. The directions given for being in a condition to contribute, namely, a stated laying by a portion of what the Lord bestows on every one.
- IV. The light in which contributions for this purpose should be regarded, namely, as a fruit of the Gospel.

I. The Saviour in sending forth His apostles commanded them to take nothing for their journey, and led them to look for support from those who should receive them, and declared that they had a right to look for this support, not as alms but as hire or reward; and He shows the reasonableness of this view by comparing their condition to that of a labourer. The obligations of an employer to remunerate the person employed by him, and the right of the latter to what is just and equal, are acknowledged by all rational and civilised men. And as a consequence, the denial of the labourer's hire is acknowledged to be an unrighteous thing on the part of an employer. Christ sent out His disciples as His servants, and appointed them their work. Christ, as Lord of all, has many servants. The sun, moon, and stars; the air, rain, heat, and cold are all His servants, doing His work. Kings and rulers — judges of the earth — all having authority to rule others, are His servants. Many of them may be wicked, or unrighteous stewards, but their offices are of His appointment, to Him they are responsible, and by Him they shall be judged. Thus we see that He who is the Almighty One has appointed means and instruments for carrying on His work. He has appointed means in His Church for the end of accomplishing His purposes of mercy and grace towards all His people, such as the sending forth of His disciples on the occasion referred to. The work He assigned to them was to preach the Gospel and perform miracles. The power of working miracles was given to the apostles only, and so was not to continue in the Church. But the preaching of the Gospel was to continue to the end of the world, and therefore He continues still to send forth labourers to do this work. He sends them forth by endowing them with gifts and graces necessary for the work to which He appoints them, and He prompts them by His Spirit to desire this work and enter thereon at His call, and the call of the Church. They are under obligations to serve Him and to give themselves wholly to His service. They are also servants to the Church, and not lords over God's heritage. However much qualified they may be, however

disinterested, unselfish and zealous, they are but men of like passions with others, needing food and raiment, and a place wherein to lay their head. This is what Christ means by hire, and they have a right to it, just as other servants have.

II. Consider the parties whose duty it is to give this hire. The Lord, according to one of our texts, has ordained that they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel, that is, that they should have a livelihood for their labour. They who ministered at the altar were partakers with the altar, that is, they lived on the portions of the sacrifices assigned them of the Lord. We have seen what was assigned to the apostles — they were sent to preach the Gospel to all; they were told that some would not receive them; and they were instructed as to how they should deal with such, namely, to shake off the dust from their feet as a witness against them. When any received them as His messengers, they were commanded to abide in such houses, and to take such things for their sustenance as might be set before them. They possessed no money to pay for what they had received. Suppose one should say to them, “You must pay for all we have given you, and for all the trouble to which you have put us,” their reply, no doubt, would have been, “Our Master, who sent us forth, and in whose name you have received us, bade us to take no money in our sumps, and told us that it was your duty to entertain us as hire for our work.” On hearing the Lord’s instructions, they either would readily comply with them, and so obey Him, or they would insist on payment; and when none was forthcoming, would turn them out of doors, and thus be guilty of rejecting Him and His servants. For He had said, “He that receiveth you, receiveth Me; and he that receiveth not you receiveth not Me.” It is therefore, the duty of those to whom any of Christ’s servants preach to give the preacher his hire; that is, to give him of their means that he may have the necessaries of life. This is nothing more than what is clearly written in one of the texts at the head of our sermon, “Let him that is taught in the Word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.” Some may think that as Paul, when he went first to Corinth, worked with his own hands to support himself, all who are sent forth as preachers should do the same, and not be a burden on poor people. But we should remember, that when Paul went first to Corinth, there was no one there who professed to be a follower of Christ, they were all heathens or Jews, and so not of the class whose duty it was to support him. From the view of men he took in that city, it would appear that he was making up his mind to leave them at once. The Lord,

however, appeared unto him, and prevented him from putting his resolution into execution, letting him know that He had much people there, and bidding him to stay, and not be afraid. It would have been vain for him to look at once for sustenance from a heathen people; and as he had learned in his youth to earn his bread by the work of his hands, he determined to work at his trade of tent-making. But this was not his ordinary way; and he plainly tells the Corinthians, after they had professed faith in the Gospel, that it was their duty to give of their means for the support of the Gospel. In writing to them, after they had been troubled by some teachers who said that Paul was not an apostle, and that they were not a Church founded by an apostle, he asserts that he was an apostle; that he preached the Gospel; that he did the works of an apostle, for he wrought miracles; and that the Gospel had proved to many of them the wisdom and the power of God; and he then asks, with all confidence, "What was it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except that it be that I myself was not burdensome unto you? Forgive me this wrong." Here Paul evidently declares that all other Churches did communicate to those who taught them; that the Church of Corinth was an exception; and that his abstaining from being burdensome unto them was a wrong done them. He could not more clearly and strongly have stated that it is both a duty and a privilege to contribute of one's means to support the cause of Christ. It is possible there may be many connected with our own Church who grudge much the little they give for this cause, and who would gladly be rid of giving it. I do not hear that there are such here, but it is not impossible that some such may be here, as elsewhere. There are others, who, I think, consider it not only a duty, but a privilege, and who would therefore feel it a wrong done them, if they were prevented from giving of their means for the maintenance of the means of grace, and the ordinances of God's house.

III. Let us consider the directions given in Scripture for providing the means that enable one to have something to give. "On the first day of the week let every one lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him." Here the Apostle addresses professing disciples, and makes no exception, "Let every one of you." It is incombent on all Christians to do what is commanded, "On the first day of the week lay by in store," etc. The first day of the week is the Sabbath, which all are commanded to keep holy and not to think of worldly matters, yet here there is a command to lay up a store, which shows clearly that the giving of means to the Lord is not a worldly duty, but a sacred thing, a service which, when properly performed, is well pleasing to the Lord. The children of Israel were com-

manded to give a tenth of all they had to the Lord, and this they brought to His house which was holy, and it was laid up in what was called the Treasury of the Temple, or of His house. This was a part of the service they owed Him, and by the performance of which He was honoured. The Lord's commands are all righteous, and to obey any of them from the heart is according to His will. The command here is not to earn money on the Lord's day, and give that to Him, but to lay it by, implying that the money was honestly earned before the first day of the week came round. To give as the Lord prospers is the rule as to the amount one should give. Some have more and some less, but whatever one has, it has been given him by the Lord. Some may look on what they have as their own, the product of their own industry, and therefore what they may use as they please. It is true that what a man has gained by honest labour is his own so far as his fellow-creatures are concerned; for no man can lay claim to it, except on grounds that stand the test of law. To all who have no claim on him he can say, "You have no right to anything of mine." But can he say that to the Lord? Can he say, "I have honestly laboured for it — quite independently of Thee — and so I can use it as I please, and give Thee no account thereof"? No man can say that, and God claims a right to all a man has, and will one day call men to give an account of all He has intrusted to them. David, the King of Israel, became very rich, and in the latter days of his reign thought of building a house for God, but was not permitted to do so. Though thus disappointed of being the builder of the temple, yet he did all in his power to help him on whom this honour was conferred. He set apart much gold and silver for this purpose, and invited his princes to do the same; and thus he laid by a store for the Lord, and in doing so he solemnly called on the name of the Lord, and confessed that what he gave was not his, but the Lord's. Thus, whilst the gathering of the treasure cost him much labour, and whilst he would fight to prevent wicked men from robbing him of it, he freely acknowledges that, in giving it for God's house, he gave only what belonged to God, and not to him. Thus we see that by a solemn act of worship this renowned king gave to the Lord as He had prospered him, and from our text we may learn that this mode of giving ought to be adopted under the New Testament. Everyone should, on his bended knees, address God, saying, "Thou hast given me thus and thus, and at Thy request I give Thee so and so, for it is Thine, and not mine, and Thy house needs maintenance." Many are unwilling to give any part of their means to the Lord, while they spend much in ways that are ruinous to themselves. The Lord, in the first place, calls all men to give themselves

unto Him, and to live to Him, and not to the flesh, nor to the world, nor to the devil. Whosoever refuses this, He will at last cast away; and surely, if He has a right to one's self, He has a right to all one has.

IV. I shall now state some of the truths implied in these offerings being characterised as fruits, and not as gifts. Fruit is what is natural for the tree to bring forth. A fruit tree brings forth fruit according to its kind, even when in a wild state; but when subjected to skilful culture, it brings forth better fruit, and in greater abundance. It is a good tree that brings forth good fruit. An unconverted sinner brings forth evil fruit, and a regenerated man brings forth the fruit of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is, in one word, obedience to the Divine Will, that is, to all God has commanded. There is an external obedience which comes not from the heart. There is a lip-confession that is not honouring to Christ. The fruits of the Spirit may be said to consist in hearty obedience to the Gospel of Christ. This obedience includes faith in the Gospel as a faithful saying, and a reception of Christ in the Gospel. There is faith in Him, and He is precious to all who believe. He is a great King, possessed of all authority, and girt about with might, and He is precious on this account. Therefore they desire to see His power and glory as He had been seen heretofore; that is, the gracious display of His power and glory as the only-begotten Son of God. He is precious as a Prophet who teaches savingly the ignorant and the simple. He is precious as Priest and Advocate. He is precious as the Beloved One, the fairer than the sons of men — the Saviour from sin and wrath. He is precious as a Brother, Friend, and Husband, as the Resurrection and the Life, the Hiding-place and the Rest of His people. There is in Him, therefore, enough to constrain to obedience, and to draw forth the soul's desire towards Him. His laws are not grievous. His yoke is easy, and His burden is light. All His ways are right and holy; whatever command He gives to those who know Him must be received by them, and regarded as an expression of His holy and blessed will. This is fruit — the fruit of faith and of saving knowledge of Jesus. In giving obedience to Him the believer meets with opposition in himself, in the world, and in the temptations of Satan. But Christ makes His grace sufficient, He gives His Spirit to work in them, both to will and to do, to guide them in this way, and to uphold their goings; and thus He clothes them with power, so that they are enabled to resist every temptation that would lead them astray from the right path. If, then, what we are considering is a command of Christ, genuine obedience thereto is to be counted a fruit of His saving grace, and it is a fruit that shall abound to their account, and which Christ shall acknowledge on the great day, as

a work of love done to Him. Christ's people and servants are dear to Him, and what is done from love and obedience for any of them that are strangers, hungry, thirsty, or naked, He shall on that day acknowledge as done to Him.

At the Disruption those who stood faithful to Christ and His crown-rights had to forsake all earthly things for Him; and were it not that the people followed them and gave of their means to maintain them, they would have been houseless, destitute, and naked. There were then thousands of Scotland's best sons and daughters who found it not a burden, but a delightful duty, to give of their means to meet their wants, and who confessed that it was a blessed thing to give for Christ's cause. They looked upon it as a privilege, and not as an uncomfortable burden. And were it not that they and other Dissenters continue to do so, there would be no Church in Scotland today to uphold Christ's banner, as sole King in His Church. We see, then, that giving according to Christ's law is a Christian fruit. The Lord loves a cheerful giver, such as David was, and such as the widow was, who cast into the Treasury of the Lord all that she had. In our day many a poor man and woman give in the same spirit, and find it a real privilege to do so. I heard of a poor woman in Skye on whom, because of her poverty, the collector had not called. This grieved her very much, so much so that she sent a message to the session, asking of what wrong conduct did they find her guilty, when they debarred her from the privilege of giving to the Lord. There are some who regard the seeking of this fruit as begging, and those who ask it, they call beggars. Was Paul a beggar? Were the Apostles beggars? No; they were servants of Christ, whose office was an honourable one, the honour of which Paul vindicated when it was assailed by lukewarm friends, or bitter enemies and scornful cavillers. But you will say these were the apostles, and very unlike ministers nowadays. Of course, they were apostles, and the only apostles ever in the Church; but ministers are servants of Christ, and of the Church; and Paul had their office and rights in view, as well as those of the apostles. I, for one, repudiate the position of a beggar, and stand on the rights with which Christ has invested all His ministers, who serve Him in the Gospel; and I am sure all other ministers who understand anything of the nature of their office, and who know Christ's law, as laid down in Scripture, will do the same, and if they do not, they are not worthy to be called His servants. In the passages of Scripture read, you may clearly see the propositions on which I have been commenting. If there be any one who does not see this, he should read the passages again and again, and consider them carefully and prayerfully; and if then

he comes to understand them, he will not fail to see that ministers of the Gospel are entitled to maintenance — that it is the duty of the Church to provide this for them — that in doing so they do it to the Lord; and that to all who do it, from the heart, as a fruit of faith, He shall acknowledge it as done unto Him. Some may evade all this, and instead of acknowledging their duty, condemn ministers, as if they cared for nothing but for money. But whatever character some ministers may have, there is no question as to the law of Christ, and none can set aside or refuse obedience thereto without sinning against Him, as King of Zion, to whom all men and angels owe obedience. Amen.

Adam's First Transgression

Herman Witsius (1636-1708) was Professor of Divinity at Utrecht. "The Economy of the Covenants," from which the following (slightly edited) was extracted, was his great work. James Hervey, the English divine, commended it to every student of divinity and said, "I would not scruple to risk all my reputation upon the merits of this performance." We have here some of his thoughts on the fall of man.

Of the Violation of the Covenant of Works on the part of Man.

As the scripture does not declare, how long this covenant, ratified and confirmed, continued unbroken, we are satisfied to remain in the dark. And we would have a holy dread of presuming rashly to fix the limits of a time which is really uncertain. It is however evident, that man wickedly presuming to eat the fruit of the forbidden tree, incurred the guilt of violating the covenant. Nor ought that to be deemed a small sin, (as the apostle in Romans 5 calls it, the *offence, disobedience, and transgression*) because it may seem to have been committed about a thing of no great importance: For the meaner the thing is, from which God commanded to abstain, and for which man despised the promise of the covenant, makes his transgression of it the more heinous; as may be illustrated by the profaneness of Esau, which was so much the greater, as the mess was of so little value, for which he sold his birth-right. In that sin, as divines generally observe, there was, as it were, a kind of complication of many crimes. But it is our chief purpose to shew, that this was the violation of

the whole covenant, not only the precept concerning that tree, which was the trial of universal obedience; but likewise the covenant in its whole constitution, was violated by that transgression; the law of the covenant was trampled upon, when man, as if he had been his own lord and master in all things, did, in defiance of his Lord, lay hold on what was not his property, and throw off the yoke of obedience that was due to God: the promises of the covenant were set less by than a transitory gust of pleasure, and the empty promises of the seducer; and that dreadful death which the author of the covenant threatened the transgressor with, not considered and thought of in all its dreadful effects, but he presumed to act in opposition to it. And thus *Adam transgressed the covenant*.

Though Eve had the first hand in this crime, yet it is usually in scripture ascribed to Adam: *by one man sin entered into the world*, according to Paul and whom he declares to be Adam: For Adam was the head of the covenant with whom, even before the creation of Eve. God seems to have transacted. Adam was the root of all mankind, and even of Eve herself, who was formed out of one of his ribs: neither is it customary to deduce a genealogy from a woman: nor was the covenant judged to be entirely broken, till Adam also added his own crime to that of his wife's. Then it was that the Creator, first acting in the character of a judge, summoned to his bar the inconsiderate pair, already condemned by their own conscience. But we are not to think that this inheritance of sin was so derived from our Father Adam, as to excuse our mother Eve from that guilt: for as by marriage they were made one flesh, so far they may be considered as one man. Nay, Adam is not considered as the head and root of mankind, but in conjunction with his wife. To this purpose is what Malachi says, that God, *seeking a godly seed, made one: one pair, two into one flesh*.

It was doubtless a wicked spirit who seduced man to this apostacy, and who, tormented with the horrors of his guilty conscience, envied man his happiness in God, and God the pleasure he had in man, and sought to have the wretched consolation of making one a partaker of his misery. And, the more easily to insinuate himself into man's favour by his ensnaring discourse, he concealed himself in the serpent, the most subtle of all animals, and at that time not less acceptable to man, than the rest of the obsequious creatures. The great *du Moulin* conjectures this serpent was of a conspicuous form, with fiery eyes, decked with gold, and marked with shining spots, so as to draw the eyes of Eve to it; and that he had before that time more than once insinuated himself by his soothing sounds, into Eve's favour, in order that having preconceived a good opi-

nion of him, she might be brought the more readily to yield to him. In fine, he was such, that what Moses says of the subtilty of the serpent must be applied to him only, and not to the whole species. To this conjecture it is also added, that Eve, perhaps such was her simplicity, did not know whether God had bestowed the use of speech on any other animals besides man. But all this is apocryphal. We are not to advance such romantic things without any scripture authority. Whether this was the first, or the only apparition of the serpent, as having the use of speech, I shall neither boldly affirm, nor obstinately deny. But what we are told as probable, of some extraordinary serpent so curiously spotted and set off, and now made familiar to Eve, by an intercourse repeated several times, are the pleasing amusements of a curious mind. The subtilty of serpents is every where so well known, that among many nations they are proposed as the distinguishing character and hieroglyphic of prudence. To this purpose is what our Saviour says, *Be ye wise as serpents*. It is also injurious and reproachful to our mother Eve, to represent her so weak, and at so small a remove from the brutal creation, as not to be able to distinguish between a brute and a man, and to be ignorant that the use of speech was the peculiar privilege of rational creatures. Such stupid ignorance is inconsistent with the happy state of our first parents, and with the image of God, which shone so illustriously also in Eve. We are rather to believe, that the devil assumed this organ, the more easily to recommend himself to man as a prudent spirit, especially as this looked like a miracle, or a prodigy at least, that the serpent should speak with human voice. Here was some degree of probability, that some spirit lay concealed in this animal, and that too, extraordinarily sent by God, who should instruct man more fully about the will of God, and whose words this very miracle as it were seemed to confirm.

As this temptation of the devil is somewhat like to all his following ones, we judge it not improbable, that Satan exerted all his cunning, and transformed himself, as he usually does, into an angel of light, and addressed himself to Eve, as if he had been an extraordinary teacher of some important truth, not yet fully understood. And therefore does not openly contradict the command of God, but first proposes it as a doubt, whether Adam understood well the meaning of the divine prohibition; whether he faithfully related it to Eve; whether she herself too, did not mistake the sense of it; and whether at least that command, taken literally, was not so improbable, as to render it unnecessary to think of a more mysterious meaning. And thus he teaches to raise reasonings and murmurings against the words of God, which are the destruction of faith.

Next, he undermines the threatening annexed to the command; *Ye shall not surely die*, says he; God never meant by death what you in your simplicity are apt to suspect. Could death be supposed to hang on so pleasant and agreeable a tree? or do you imagine God so envious as to forbid you who are his familiars and friends to eat the fruit of this delicious tree, under the dreadful penalty of death? this is inconsistent with his infinite goodness, which you so largely experience, and with the beauty of this specious tree and its fruit; and therefore there must be another meaning of this expression which you do not understand. And thus he instilled that heresy into the unwary woman, the first heard of in the world, that there is a sin which does not deserve death, or, which is the same thing, a venial sin. The false prophet, the attendant on Anti-christ, *who hath horns like a lamb, and speaketh as a dragon*, does at this very day maintain this capital heresy in the church of Rome, and nothing is still more usual with Satan, than by hope of impunity, to persuade men to sin.

He adds the promise of a greater happiness; *your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil*. He presupposes what in itself was true and harmless, that man had a desire after some more perfect happiness; which he made to consist in his being made like to God, which John affirms to be, as it were, the principal mark of salvation, that we *shall be like God*. He says farther, that this likeness was to be joined with the opening of their eyes, and a greater measure of knowledge. Now, this is not unlike the doctrines of the scripture, which affirm that we *shall see God*, and that *as he is*, and *shall know him, even as we ourselves are known*. And thus far indeed it might appear, that Satan spoke not amiss, blending many truths, and those evident to the conscience, with his own lies, the more easily to deceive under the appearance of a true teacher. But herein the fraud lies concealed: *1st*, That he teaches them not to wait for God's appointed time, but unadvisedly and precipitantly lay hold on the promised felicity. Man cannot indeed too much love and desire perfection, if he does it by *preparation*, and *earnest expectation*; preparing himself in a course of holy patience and subjection to the will of God, desiring not to anticipate, even for a moment, the good pleasure of God. *2ndly*, That he points out a false way, as if the eating of that tree was either a natural, or, more probably, a moral mean to attain the promised bliss; and as if God had appointed this as a necessary requisite, without which there was no possibility of coming to a more intimate communion with God, and a more perfect degree of wisdom; nor, in fine, of obtaining that state in which knowing

equally good and evil, they would be no longer in danger of any degree of deception. And it is most likely he perverted the meaning of the name of the tree. But all these were mere delusions.

At last this disguised teacher appeals to the knowledge of God himself; *God doth know*. Most interpreters, both Jewish and Christian, ancient and modern, interpret these words, as if Satan would charge God with open malignity and envy, as if he forbade this tree, lest he should be obliged to admit man into a partnership in his glory. And indeed there is no blasphemy so horrid that Satan is ashamed of. But we are here to consider whether such bare-faced blasphemy would not have rather struck with horror, man, who had not yet entertained any bad thoughts of God, than recommended itself by any appearance of probability. For why? is it credible, that a man in his right senses could be persuaded that the acquisition of wisdom, and a likeness to God depended on a tree, so that he should obtain both these by eating of it, whether God would or not? and then, that God, whom man must know to be infinitely great and good, was liable to the passion of envy, a plain indication of malignity and weakness; in fine, that there was such a virtue in that tree, that, on tasting it, God could not deprive man of life: for all these particulars are to be believed by him who can imagine, that out of envy God had forbid him the use of that tree. It does not seem consistent with the subtilty of Satan to judge it adviseable to propose to man things so absurd, and so repugnant to common notions, and the innate knowledge which he must have had of God. May it not be made more proper, to take that expression for a form of an oath? as Paul himself says, 2 Cor. 11: 2. *God knoweth*. And thus the perjured impostor appealed to God as witness of what he advanced.

Some think that Adam was not deceived, and did not believe what the serpent had persuaded the woman to, but rather fell, out of love to his wife, whom he was unwilling to grieve; and therefore, though he was conscious of a divine command, and not exposed to the wiles of Satan, yet that he might not abandon her in this condition, he tasted the fruit she offered; probably believing, that this instance of his affection for the spouse whom God had given him, if in any measure faulty, might be easily excused. To this they refer the apostle's words.

"For Adam was not decieved, but the woman being deceived, was in the transgression." But this carries us off from the simplicity of the divine oracles; the design of the apostle is plainly to shew, that the woman ought not to exercise any dominion over her husband, for two reasons which he urges: 1st, Because Adam was first created as the head,

and then Eve, as a help meet for him. *2ndly*, Because the woman showed she was more easily deceived, for being deceived first, she was the cause of deceiving her husband, who was likewise deceived (though not first) but by her means: For we commonly find in scripture, that some things seem to be absolutely denied, which we are to understand only as denied in a restrictive sense; John 6: 27. and Phil. 2: 4. are instances of this. Nor can we conceive how Adam, when he believed that what he did was forbidden by God, and that if he did it he should forfeit the promised happiness, nay, incur most certain death (for all this he must know and believe, if he still remained uncorrupted by the wiles of Satan), would have taken part in the crime only to please his wife. Certainly if he believed that the transgression of the divine command, the contempt of the promised felicity, and his rash exposing himself to the danger of eternal death, could be excused only by his affection for his wife, he no less shamefully erred, nor was less deceived, if not more, than his consort herself. Nor can it be concluded from his answer to God, in which he throws the blame, not on the serpent's deceit, but on the woman whom God had given him; that the man fell into this sin, not so much by an error in the understanding, as giving way to his affection; for this subverts the whole order of the faculties of their soul, since every error in the affection, supposes some error in the understanding. This was doubtless an error, and indeed one of the greatest, to believe that a higher regard was to be paid to his affection for his wife, than to the divine command. It was a considerable error to think that it was an instance of love to become an accomplice in sin; because it is the duty of love to convince the sinner, and as far as may be restore him to the favour of God, which certainly Adam would have done, had he been entirely without error. In whatever light therefore we view this point, we are obliged to own that he was deceived: the only apology Adam would make, seems to be, that his beloved consort had, by her insinuations which she had learned from the serpent persuaded him also, and that he was not the first in that sin, nor readily suspected any error or deception by her, who was given him as an help by God.

Gleanings from Samuel Rutherford (1)

CONFESSION OF SIN.

I have seen my abominable vileness; if I were well known, there would none in this kingdom ask how I do. Men take my ten to be an hundred; but I am a deeper hypocrite and a shallower professor than every one

believeth. God knoweth I feign not. For my part, despair might be almost excused if every one in this land saw my inner side. If I could be saved, as I would fain believe, sure I am I have given Christ's blood, His free grace, and the bowels of His mercy, a large field to work upon.

When I look to my guiltiness, I see my salvation one of our Saviour's greatest miracles, either in heaven or earth. I am sure I may defy any man to show me a greater wonder. But seeing I have no wares, no hire, no money for Christ, He must either take me with want, misery, corruption, or then want me.

O how loathsome and burdensome is it to carry about a dead corpse, this old carrion of corruption! O how desirable is a Saviour to make a sinner rid of his chains and fetters!

AFFLICTIONS, ETC.

Glad may your soul be, even to walk in the fiery furnace, with one like unto the Son of man, who is also the Son of God. Courage up your heart; when you tire, He will bear both you and your burden.

Do you think your daughter lost, when she is but sleeping in the bosom of the Almighty? Think her not absent who is in such a friend's house. Is she lost to you who is found to Christ? He is an ill debtor who payeth that which he borroweth with a grudge. Prepare yourself — you are nearer your daughter this day than yesterday. It is self love in us that maketh us mourn for them that die in the Lord.

I am glad that you have been acquainted from your youth with the wrestlings of God, being cast from furnace to furnace; knowing if you were not dear to God, and if your health did not require so much of Him, He would not spend so much physic upon you. All the brethren and sisters of Christ must be conformed to His image in suffering (Rom. 8: 17); and some do more fully resemble the copy than others.

When you are come to the other side of the water, and have set down your foot on the shore of glorious eternity, and look back again to the water, and to your wearisome journey, and shall see in that clear glass of endless glory nearer to the bottom of God's wisdom, you shall then be forced to say, "If God had done otherwise with me than He hath done, I had never come to the enjoyment of this crown of glory."

It is a benefit to you that the wicked are God's fan to purge you; and I hope they shall blow away no corn nor spiritual graces, but only your chaff.

Every man thinketh he is rich enough in grace, till he take out his purse, and tell his money; and then he findeth it but poor and light in the day of a heavy trial.

Our Lord took your husband to Himself, that He might make room for himself.

I find it most true, that the greatest temptation out of hell is to live without temptation; if my waters would stand, they would rot. Faith is the better for the free air and the sharp winter-storm in its face. Grace withereth without adversity. The devil is but God's master-fencer, to teach us to handle our weapons.

If I had not sailed this sea-way to heaven, but had taken the land-way, as many do, I should not have known Christ's sweetness in such a measure.

Go on in your journey to heaven, and be content with such fare by the way as Christ and His followers have had before you, for they had always the wind on their faces; and our Lord hath not changed the way for us, for our ease, but will have us following our sweet Guide.

When Christ draweth blood He hath skill to cut the right vein; and when He openeth a vein, He taketh nothing but ill blood from His sick ones.

Subscribe a blank submission, and put it in Christ's hands.

As night and shadows are good for flowers, and moonlight and dews are better than a continual sun, so is Christ's absence of special use, and it hath some nourishing virtue in it, and giveth sap to humility, and putteth an edge on hunger, and furnisheth a fair field to faith to put forth itself.

I think it a sweet thing that Christ saith of my cross, "Half mine;" nay, that I and my cross are wholly Christ's.

What love you did bear to friends now dead — they stand now in no need of it — let it fall as a just legacy to Christ.

I pray you, sister, learn to be worthy of His pains who correcteth, and let Him wring, and be you washed; for He hath a father's heart and a father's hand who is training you up for heaven.

Think not much of a storm upon the ship that Christ saileth in; no one shall fall overboard, but the crazed ship and sea-sick passengers shall come safe to land.

So narrow is the entry to heaven, that our knots, our hunches, and lumps of pride, and self-love, and idol-love, and world love, must be hammered off us that we may squeeze in, stooping low, and creeping through that narrow and thorny entry.

The thing we mistake is the want of *victory* — we hold that to be the mark of one who hath no grace; nay, I say, the want of *fighting* were a mark of no grace, but I shall not say the want of *victory* is such a mark.

Unbelief — the Greatest Sin

by Stephen Charnock

"Of sin, because they believe not on Me." John 16: 9

That unbelief is the greatest sin, appears.

1. Because God employs the highest means to bring men to a sense of it. This is in the text. It is the work of the Spirit to convince of this sin. The odiousness of sin to God appears by his sending Christ to expiate it; the odiousness of unbelief to God appears by his sending the Spirit to reprove it. That which calls for the Spirit's descent from heaven, in order to a conviction of it, is attended with black aggravations. This is the great errand of the Holy Ghost to the world; the first thing he does is to open the understanding, the eye of the soul, to see the malignity of other things, in order to convince the conscience of this before he changeth the will. This is the principal fort against which the Spirit plants his battery, and it is the last that is surrendered. A terrified sinner would run from the shot that is showered about his ears; he would reform, he would be holy, but cries out still, loath to believe. The prodigal will be next door to starving, before he will come to his father; and the woman with the bloody issue will spend all her estate before she will come to Christ.

And indeed it is a sin so deeply rooted that,

(1.) Reason cannot convince of it. Christ, the object proposed, is above the reach of a rational eye, and therefore the sin against him is not discerned in its blackness by mere reason. Reason will not inform a man of the stupendous love of God in sending his Son to die for men, that were and would be unprofitable servants. Neither doth it consist with the natural notion men have of the justice of God, to lay upon an innocent person the sins of guilty offenders. It cannot naturally enter into any man's heart, that he that by power and wisdom made the world, should design by the cross and the foolishness of preaching to save it; that he that is infinite in love and mercy should make his Son to suffer. It is not therefore by the sparklings of bare reason men can see the blackness of this sin. Other sins may be known by natural light, because the duties to which they are opposite may be known by the light of nature. As the Spirit only discovers the greatness of Christ, the excellency of his person, the preciousness of his passion, so it also only shews what a sin it is to reject Christ. As faith is "the gift of God," Eph. 2: 8, a grace more peculiarly the birth of heaven, so the extirpation of its opposite must only be from God.

(2.) Natural conscience of itself helps not in this conviction. It indeed

maintains the quarrel against other sins, and plains the way for the Spirit's victory. But in this case there is no auxiliary force from conscience, nothing of a natural interest to plead for faith. It finds all the powers of the soul prejudiced against it, maintaining a war against the doctrine of the gospel; and the tide of our own natures carry us forcibly against it. The Spirit enters the lists singly and maintains the duel alone. So that what was said of the temple may more properly be said of this, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord."

2. It is a sin against the gospel; not as a killing law, but an healing command; a blacker sin, because against a better covenant. It is his peculiar gospel command; a precept of the highest valuation with him: 1 John 3: 23, "This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ." Not only in regard of his authority (for so others were his commands), but in regard of the affection he hath to it, it being most pleasing to him, as ver. 22 intimates. The disobedience of this command, then, is most disgustful and hateful to him; it is his command, as being the last that ever he will give; it is a dispensation from the rigour of these commands in the covenant of works, but is to be followed with no dispensation by any other. The sin against it, then, is against the utmost gracious command that God will ever give. Other sins are against the precepts of his sovereignty, this against the precepts of his grace, as well as his sovereignty. The keeping this command brings him near to us to abide in us, ver. 24, the breaking this command sets him at a distance from us, and makes our persons and services loathsome to him. Wickedness against the gospel is greater than wickedness against the law, because the evangelical revelation hath more of grace and more of glory, the sin against it hath more of contempt and more of heinousness; a sin against that is a sin dyed seven times blacker, and will have a furnace seven times hotter. It is against the gospel, which is so holy a declaration of God's will that there cannot be an holier; so good in itself, so profitable for man, that nothing can be better; the sin therefore against it is so bad, that nothing can be worse. The law or covenant of works never discovered the object of faith, and therefore never enjoined any such formal act of faith in a mediator, and therefore takes no cognisance of this sin of unbelief. It, not making known the person to be believed in, cannot make known the sin of not believing. If the law commanded faith in relation to the object of Christ crucified, it must then acquaint us with Christ crucified. It would be an unreasonable law to enjoin an act about such an object, and never discover one syllable of that object to us. It doth not appear that Adam had any knowledge of Christ; the revelation

of that bears date after his fall, at the time of the first promise. If unbelief were a sin only against the law, then those that reject the gospel would be liable to no more punishment, than if they had been only under the law; but they will, as will appear in the sequel of this discourse. This faith is the peculiarity of the gospel; and when Christ is said to come "preaching the gospel," the matter of it is, "repent and believe," Mark 1: 14, two things that never entered into the heart of the law to conceive. It is therefore a sin against the whole gospel, since the design of that is to remove our suspicions of God, and establish a trust in him; upon which account the Gentiles, that are without the gospel, are described by the title of men "without hope," 1 Thes. 4: 13. Unbelief is a making ourselves without ground of hope, contrary to all the encouragements of hope which God gives us in the gospel.

3. Unbelief is a sin against the highest testimony. It is against the two greatest witnesses that ever were, or can be, viz., the Father and the Son. The Father in the Old Testament, the Son in the New: John 8: 17, 18, "I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me bears witness of me." What did they witness? That Christ was the light of the world, ver. 12. The Father witnessed this in the Scripture: Isa. 69: 4, "I will give thee for a light to the Gentiles;" and by the works he did, John 10: 37. Christ the eternal "logos" (the word) bears witness to his human nature. Since the testimony of two men of credit is worthy of belief, much more the testimony of two persons in the Deity, infallible in their testimony, in whom there can be no suspicion of falsity. Therefore Christ saith to Nicodemus, John 3: 11, "We speak that we do know, and testify that which we have seen." *We*, i.e. my Father and I; in answer to Nicodemus, who, ver. 2, acknowledged him a teacher come from God; therefore, saith Christ, we, God who hath sent me, and I, witness this. The witness follows, ver. 15, that "whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." It is a sin against the witness of the whole Bible.

4. As faith is the choicest grace, so that which is opposite to it must be the greatest sin. It hath as high a place among sins, as faith hath among graces, and hath the precedency of all other sins, as faith hath the pre-eminence above all other graces; and what faith is in the nature of grace, unbelief is contrary to it in the nature of sin. Faith glorifies God, unbelief vilifies him; one justifies him the other condemns him. "Faith works by love," Gal. ver. 6, excites a love of God, and is excited by it; unbelief works by hatred. Faith is the spirit that quickens all obedience; all the fruits of the Spirit grow upon the root of faith; all the fruits of the flesh

grow upon the root of unbelief. Faith turns common works into acts of grace, as the chemist doth metals into gold; unbelief turns all into dung and poison. Faith makes every prayer, though weak, an acceptable sacrifice; our prayers can no more enter into heaven by unbelief than the Israelites could enter into Canaan. As Christ is "precious to them that believe," 1 Peter 1: 7, so is he odious to them that believe not; as faith is a consent to take Christ for an husband, so unbelief is a flat refusal of him. Faith cuts off all self-exaltation: Rom. 3: 27, "Boasting is excluded by the law of faith," and by the grace of faith too; unbelief supports it. It is a keeping up a pride greater than that of Adam's, a pride against God; it is indeed the Beelzebub, the prince of all those legions of sinful devils that quarter in the heart of a natural man.

5. It is more odious and loathsome to God, and hath in some respect a greater demerit in it, than sins against the light of nature. "The killing an ox is as the slaying a man," Isa. 65: 8. Not simply the killing an ox, but by reason of the unbelief in the Messiah, the ground of keeping up the ceremonial worship by sacrifices after the exhibition of Christ in the promise, which made a worship formerly instituted as odious as murder, which was a disparaging the image of God. Salom was not defiled by its pollutions, as Capernaum was by refusing Christ. Who can think of the sin of Sodom without indignation and horror? Yet the punishment of unbelievers being greater than theirs, implies the sin to be more grievous; because the unspotted righteousness of God would not inflict a punishment above the merit of the offence; he exacts no more than iniquity deserves, Job 11: 6. Now, "it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for" a city or person that rejects the offers of the gospel, Mat. 10: 15. That city was an epitome of hell both for sin and judgment, yet that defiling sin hath less guilt, less filth than the rejecting, purifying gospel grace. The punishment of Sodom should be like that of the whip to the punishment of rebels under the light of the gospel, which should be as the torment of a rack. The sin therefore is of a lighter tincture, like petty larceny to murder. All other sins indeed strike at some one or two attributes of God, and of God as considered as Creator; but this is a formal injury to God in all his perfections, and as appearing in the richest dress. Other sins being conversant about some created matter, preferring some creature before God, this is a preferring that very sin, the loathsome thing under heaven, before a God of glory and an excellent Saviour. Other sins are conversant immediately about some inferior object, that strikes directly at God himself. It is therefore called *the sin*: Heb. 12: 1, "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin

which doth so easily beset us." The name of weight is given to other sins, but unbelief is called *the sin*. Most understand it of original concupiscence; but since it is the use the apostle makes of the former doctrine, Heb. 11, concerning the excellency of faith, I think it is more consonant to understand it of unbelief, the sin contrary to that faith he had been so highly commending. This is the provocation: Num. 14: 11, "How long will this people provoke me, and how long will it be ere they believe me?" They were guilty of many other provocations, but God reckons their incredulity as the top of all. It flings most dirt upon all the attributes of God, and doth not only wrong the Deity singly considered, but bears a spite at all the three persons.

Obituary

The late Mr Anthony MacPherson, Elder Gairloch

Mr Anthony MacPherson was born in Badachro, Gairloch, in the year 1909, into a home where he was early instructed in the Scriptures. At that time, and for many years afterwards, the Free Presbyterian Church in Gairloch was in a flourishing condition being blessed with very rare ministries which excelled in both piety and learning. As a young man, Anthony waited upon these ministries and was further privileged when on moving to Glasgow he came under the ministry of that revered servant of God, Rev. Neil Cameron. In connection with the use of the means of grace and Lord's blessing upon them, Anthony found the Saviour whom he professed to know.

At the beginning of World War II, Anthony was employed in Greenock, and there he proved himself to be a great help to the worthy servant of Christ, the late Rev. James MacLeod. To the present minister of the Greenock congregation he rendered the same service. After his retiral he settled in Glasgow, where his home was. Upon the death of his wife he returned to his native place.

It was in Gairloch that Anthony was ordained to the office of eldership — a position which he filled with admirable dignity. In the Kirk Session and in the Deacons' Court he gave much help and acted at all times with the utmost sincerity and uprightness, and evidenced a high degree of humility and meekness. With a single eye to the glory of God, he was ready to help in the conducting of services, and his efforts, in this connection, were valued by the true people of God. In his walk and conversation he left a witness to all who knew him that he was not of this world

and that his whole interest was in the Cause of Christ. He was a most loyal Free Presbyterian and had a good grasp of the separate position of the Church. Of his goods, he gave liberally and largely to the Cause. His secret life of reading the Word of God and of prayer could be gathered from his public exercises. He was no stranger to the conflict between grace and corrupt nature.

On the first sabbath of this year, Anthony appeared, as usual, at the morning service and it was on the way home from that service that he slipped on the ice thereby breaking his ankle. After a short time in hospital he died there suddenly on 19th January, 1985.

The Cause of Christ in Gairloch is much the poorer for his departure, yet we have reason to believe that he now knows the meaning of these words — “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.” Our prayer is that the Lord would favour us again with men of such calibre. To his surviving two sons (his complete family) we would extend our sympathy and wish for them what, above all, their father desired, that they would seek the Lord. For his sister, the only surviving member of a large family, we pray that she may have experience of the consolations that are in Christ Jesus.

A. E. W. Macdonald.

Book Reviews

The Doctrine of Justification by James Buchanan, Banner of Truth Trust, £7.95

This robust classic of James Buchanan on the Doctrine of Justification, is biblical, solid, refreshing and edifying. It is strong meat, and requires a spiritual palate and diligent concentration if we are to profit from it. A subject of such permanent and central significance for the Christian faith surely merits no ordinary degree of application.

The book is divided into two parts. The first section treats of the history of the Doctrine from Old Testament times, through the Apostolic and Patristic eras, on to the Reformation and Post Reformation times. With skill, clarity and thoroughness Buchanan traces the course of this doctrine, even from Old Testament times when all true believers enjoyed its blessings while other nations wandered in the maze of heathen philosophies that just had no answer to the great question, How can man be just with God? He follows it as it wends its way through opposition in the Jewish church itself, where, though never altogether extinguished, it

was sadly obscured and corrupted in the later ages of her history. Its fall and rise through succeeding generations, when buried under the debris of Rome; its ultimate triumph at the Reformation, with the subsequent controversies that followed, are all mapped out clearly and succinctly by the author's facile pen. By exposing the subtle unbiblical and corrupting interpretations of the Doctrine, he paves the way for the second part of the volume, namely The Biblical Exposition of the Doctrine itself.

The real questions to be resolved are adroitly disentangled from those surrounding them and subordinate to them. This measure facilitates Buchanan's attempt to spell out clearly the true meaning of justification. By explaining the antithetic, co-relative and equivalent terms used in Scripture to denote justification, he is greatly helped to determine categorically the sense in which the Bible speaks of this blessed doctrine. Scriptural usage takes precedence of etymology and rightly so.

Even the appended notes at the end of the book are stimulating and interesting and indicative of the scope and breadth of the author's research and knowledge. Protestant preachers should be rooted and grounded in this glorious doctrine, not only because it was honoured of God to rock the Papacy to its foundations, but for the pure spiritual comfort it affords believers. Under the blessing of the Holy Spirit this precious doctrine properly preached will have the same dual effect today. If the initial publication of this volume then, was necessary and welcomed in 1867, how much more is it now in an age of shallow theological thought and sinister Romanising influences.

We heartily recommend this book to our readers, and tender our thanks to the Banner of Truth Trust for its reappearance in such an attractive format, in large clear print. F. M.

Tenaciously Maintaining the Truth by Rev. L. J. Joosse, Groningen, Netherlands. Obtainable from F. P. Church Bookroom, Glasgow. £3.50.

This booklet of under 100 pages traces the history of the Church — its development and divisions — from the time of the Apostles to the present day, with particular reference to The Netherlands, Churches of Dutch origin in the U.S.A. and Australia, and also in Scotland. Inevitably the survey is brief, and one must doubt whether justice can be done to the topics raised in a review of this size. There are references to our own Church, its origin and some of its trials, which are favourable.

However this work suffers badly from the author's apparent unfamiliarity with the syntax of the English language. It would have benefited by editing before publication. This could perhaps have thrown light on such

statements as “. . . the church experienced more rifts in the first 1000 years of the new covenant.” Page 34. Again on Page 37. Because of this problem, the booklet may not have a wide appeal in this country.

The reproduction of Justinian and Constantine with the Virgin and Child (page 25) is undesirable in a booklet such as this. R. K. M.

The Free Presbyterian Magazine. Vol. I. May 1896 - April 1897. Free Presbyterian Publications. £3.90.

The first volume of the Free Presbyterian Magazine which is full of interesting and varied material has been reprinted by the Publications Committee. The volume is of interest historically to us as a Church as it contains much information related to the position of our Church in its stand for the truth subsequent to the passing of the Declaratory Act of 1892. It also contains much that will be of spiritual benefit to those who read it, such as sermons by the early ministers of the Church, letters of Rev. Hugh Martin, the diary of Wm. Sinclair, Gaelic articles, an interesting letter from Canada through which our Canadian Mission was begun, and the able editorials of the Rev. James S. Sinclair, the first editor of the Magazine.

The book is well bound in hardback and extends to 480 pages. It is being sold at the exceptionally low price of £3.90. We would heartily recommend this volume to the people of the Church and we hope that there will be no household in the Church without a copy. The volume we are sure would also commend itself to others outwith the Church because of the variety and high quality of the articles contained in it.

D. B. M.

The St. Andrews Seven by Stuart Piggin and John Roxburgh. Banner of Truth Trust. 130pp. £2.95.

This paperback has as its sub-title “The Finest Flowering of Missionary Zeal in Scottish History.” It is different from the usual pattern of Missionary books in that its purpose is not merely to give an account of the St Andrews Six, along with their Professor, Thomas Chalmers, who made the seventh, but also to trace the origin and growth of the missionary movement in Scotland in general and in St Andrews in particular in the early 19th century. Of the six missionary minded students at St Andrews University at that time — Alexander Duff, John Urquhart, John Adam, Robert Nesbit, William Sinclair Mackay and David Ewart, only the name of the first is well known, yet all six were to labour in India on the Mission field.

This book, we feel, is a useful addition to missionary literature and of

a higher quality than much that is published today. Though it relates to a time a century and a half removed from the present day yet it has much that would be helpful to those contemplating missionary work today.

D. B. M.

Notes and Comments

"Live-Aid" Concert

More than a billion people were estimated as having participated in this much-publicised international event which began in London on a Saturday and finished in New York on the following Sabbath. Many thousands were present in the stadia where the various groups appeared on stage but the vast "audience" was really comprised of millions throughout the world watching by satellite television or listening to the radio. Tens of millions of pounds were raised, we are told, to help famine victims in Ethiopia.

While we regard the raising of funds for this purpose laudable in itself, we cannot agree with the principle, no more than Paul, "Let us do evil, that good may come?". We regard pop and rock music to be evil and sinful whatever day of the week it is played on but especially heinous when there is added to it the desecration of the Lord's Day. The world may applaud these so-called musicians, heap honours on the young man who organised the concert, even suggesting that the Nobel Peace Prize be awarded to him, but the Divine disapprobation remains: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Women Clergy in the Church of England.

According to press reports, the Synod of the Church of England decided by a large majority (320-83) at a meeting in early July to allow women to become ordained deacons. The new deacons, like their existing male counterparts, will be ordained members of clergy, authorised to perform marriages and baptisms, entitled to be called Reverend, but, according to the Scotsman, "still unable to perform the communion service." Evidently much of what opposition there was to this development came from Anglo-catholics, one of whom claimed that making women deacons would "increase tension among deacons and increase pressure for women priests." The level of reported objection by General Synod members makes sad reading. Thus, according to one lady, "We have the reputation of being middle-class and middle-aged and male. If we reject

this our name is going to be mud.” One parish priest’s wife is quoted as saying, “in the absence of any clear and weighty and theological conclusions,” she couldn’t support the motion. She, and others there seem totally to ignore the injunctions in God’s Word, which enjoins silence of women in the churches, and indicates clearly that “it is a shame for women to speak in the church.” (1 Cor. 14: 34, 35) Our readers will realise that the new office of women deacon is quite distinct from the existing office of deaconess, which is a lay appointment, and of course quite different, as is the existing office of male deacon in the Church of England, from the Biblically based Presbyterian lay office of deacon.

— L. McI.

Church of England and Proposed Changes in “Sunday Trading” Laws.

It was initially encouraging to read in the press that the General Synod of the Church of England, meeting in early July, decided to “resist deregulation of shop hours on both social and spiritual grounds.” This decision relates to Government plans to alter “Sunday” trading legislation for England and Wales. The reasons quoted, however, for their opposition, are, as usual nowadays, weak and watered down, and lacking appeal to the authority of Scripture. Thus the Synod said, “Society needs a publicly expressed day of rest and recreation, and also needs symbols which point beyond market forces as the determining aspect of our life in the community.” The Bishop of Birmingham, the Rt. Rev. Hugh Montefiore, stated, “No one in their senses could approve of the present trading laws. . . .” Although he went on to object to . . . “railroading through legislation which is bound to detract from the present ‘family’ character of Sunday,” we doubt whether his first statement is intended to convey that the present laws are already too lax!

While we welcome any opposition to Government proposed legislation to increase Sabbath trading in England and Wales, we deplore omission of any reference to the Fourth Commandment, or the clear consequences of Sabbath observance, as of Sabbath desecration. The duties to be observed, and the practices to be refrained from, by communities and nations as well as by individuals and families, are stated in clear and precise detail in the Fourth Commandment. Isaiah, Chapter 58, verses 13 and 14, indicates the blessings accompanying Sabbath observance: “If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day: and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable: and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words, Then shalt thou

delight thyself in the Lord: and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

The whole of Leviticus, Chapter 23, is well worth reading in connection with blessings and curses attendant on keeping and breaking God's laws, with special reference to idolatry and sabbath-breaking. The solemn warning to Israel, contained in verses 34 and 43, "Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land . . ." must become prophetically true for Britain too, as it did for the Jews, unless we turn, nationally, from Sabbath desecration, and the desire to have unrestricted "Sunday" trading.

— L. McI.

Continued Efforts to Ban Human Embryo Experiments.

We are encouraged to learn, especially after the failure of Mr Enoch Powell's Bill in June, that the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children have launched a new major campaign to force the Government to ban all human embryo experiments. Sir Bernard Braine, chairman of the cross-party Parliamentary Pro-life Group, is quoted as saying, "We demand that something is done to stop activities which place greater value on things than on human beings." In a speech at a London public meeting, Mr Enoch Powell alleged that, according to a member of the Warnock Committee, which recommended continued embryo experiments, this Committee had suppressed the answers to certain important, but presumably "awkward" questions which had been raised. "The gap in the Committee's work was not due to idleness or inadvertence; it was due to guilt. . . . the Committee was afraid to give the answers." Mr Powell is to be commended for his sustained efforts in this vital cause. Our people should pray earnestly that every effort to stop embryo research would prosper. The sanctity and vitality of the human being, from conception is clear from God's Word;

"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." (Ps. 51: 5).

"I was cast upon thee from the womb; thou art my God from my mother's belly." (Ps. 22: 10).

We all should be aware of the "eugenics movement," concerned with planned human genetics, which reached its awful climax in Nazi medical laboratories, and also of the mass embryo murder consequent on changes in the abortion laws and still continuing! Large-scale practices, possibly beyond our worst fears, and contrary to God's word, to human

decency, and to normal, healthy married family life, are liable to arise, unless God in his mercy prevents continued human embryo experiments.

— L. McI.

R.C. Schools Closure "Battle" in West Lothian.

Plans have been approved by Lothian Region for a new £4.7 million secondary R.C. school at Livingstone. Controversy has arisen, according to press reports, between the R.C. Church hierarchy and Broxburn parents who object to the closure of Our Lady's High School, and the phased transfer of their children to St Mary's Academy, Bathgate, also due for closure in due course. According to the parents, who recently obtained a Court of Session interim interdict against closure of Our Lady's High School, not only did the Roman Catholic representative on the Education Committee agree to this closure when approving of the Livingstone proposals, but the R.C. church hierarchy were inactive thereafter in seeking to reverse such closure proposals. Now, however, the R.C. hierarchy publicly welcome the interim edict, Father Michael Fallon, a church spokesman indicating that the church had been totally in support of the Broxburn school, with repeated public statements to that effect by Cardinal Gordon Gray! In our opinion the supposed controversy between parents and church, now of course explained away by the hierarchy as due to a "misunderstanding," is part of sustained political machinations to secure, ultimately, the continuation of all three schools. (The survival of Craiglockhart College of Education, Edinburgh, as an annexe of St Andrew's College, Bearsden (formerly Notre Dame) is a similar instance). Thus in covenanted Scotland, does the false religion of the Man of Sin advance its kingdom, using schools as useful bases, and all at great expense to the Exchequer. It should be added that the reason for reorganising R.C. secondary schools in West Lothian is falling pupil numbers. Evidently there are now only 1900 such pupils there! — L. McI.

Church Notes

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Western: At Laide on 17th September at 11 a.m.

Northern: At Dingwall on 24th September at 2 p.m.

Southern: At Glasgow on 24th September at 6 p.m.

Australia and New Zealand: At Auckland on 24th January, 1986 at 2.30 p.m.

Committee Meetings (D.V.)

The following Committees will meet at Inverness Church:

Tuesday 1st October

- 9.00 a.m. — 10.00 a.m. Church Interests
- 10.00 a.m. — 11.00 a.m. Training of Ministry
- 11.00 a.m. — 12 noon Church Magazines
- 12 noon — 1.00 p.m. Publications
- 2.00 p.m. — 3.00 p.m. Welfare of Youth
- 2.00 p.m. — 4.30 p.m. Finance
- 3.00 p.m. — 4.00 p.m. Sabbath Observance
- 4.30 p.m. — 5.30 p.m. Dominions and Overseas
Religion and Morals
- 7.00 p.m. — 9.00 p.m. Jewish and Foreign Missions

Notice to Congregational Treasurers

It is hoped to place an order for Collection Envelopes with the printers later this year (D.V.). Will any congregation requiring a supply please advise Mr Kenneth Gillies of their requirements not later than 30th September 1985. Orders should be in "sets" — one set per contributor per year. Each set consist of 12 Sustentation and 10 Special Collection envelopes and it would be reasonable to cover requirements for a 4/5 year period. The address is 137 Woodlands Road, Glasgow G3 6LE.

Sponsors Requested

We have been requested to take into our school a few above-average-intelligence blind pupils who would benefit by being integrated into a class of sighted children. After much consideration we have agreed to this proposal and it is suggested we start in 1986 with 2 or 3 Form 1 (1st year) pupils and to increase up to 10 pupils in four years. The Government has promised to supply and pay for a teacher who will act as an "interpreter" between the ordinary teachers and the blind children but will not teach them separately. The Council for the Blind will provide the text books in Braille and the equipment (typewriters and cassette recorders) needed.

Our main need is for friends who would be willing to sponsor a child while at our school as it is expected these will come from poor homes unable to support a child at a private boarding school. Each pupil will be with us for four years. At present rates, the cost for a year will be about

\$300 (£150-£200), for boarding fees plus about \$100 (£50) for uniform, stationery and other necessities.

We are therefore asking for sponsors either personally or in groups who would be willing to agree to support a child for a year or more. We are quite prepared to give more details of individual pupils once we know them and to give to those involved an exact account of how any money is spent. Smaller gifts to help directly with this project are welcome and we also request that any money for this be sent to the school and not just be included in Mission Collections which go to a variety of needs.

We hope that those who choose to become involved in this project will also find a place in their prayers for those needy boys and girls and also for the work here in general.

(Miss) Marion M. Graham,
Headmistress.

Post of Doctor at Mbumba Mission Hospital

The Committee feel concerned that no applications have been received for this important work on the Mission field, and with nursing staff at the hospital since May the work is being considerably curtailed in the absence of a doctor. The whole of the Nkai District with a population of 100,000 is presently without the services of any medical practitioner. In Mbumba itself there are some 22,000 persons so deprived.

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., £50; Anon., £30; Anon., G., £120.

Home Mission Fund: Anon., £30; Anon., G., £50; Anon., £20.

Foreign Mission Fund: Anon., G., £20; Bookroom Famine Relief Box, £31.80.

College etc. Fund: Anon., G., £10.

Organisation Fund: Anon., £10; Anon., G., £50.

General Building Fund: Anon., £10; Anon., G., £20.

Dominions etc. Fund: Anon., G., £20.

Chesley Church Building Fund: Anon., £8.

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

Barnoldswick: Anon., £25 for Property Fund; Anon., £15 for Foreign Mission Fund, per Collection Plate; E. K., £20 for Communion Expenses; P. C., £25 for Communion Expenses; Anon., £20 for funds where needed; Anon., Dingwall, £10 per Dr. McCuish.

Beaulieu: W. S., £10 for Communion Expenses per Rev. F. Tallach.

Fort William: Friend, Caol, £10 for Sustentation per Rev. J. A. Macdonald; A. McG., £5 envelope in plate; Anon., £12 envelope in plate; Friend, Caol, £20 for Sustentation per Rev. J. A. Macdonald; C. and A. McD., £10 per Rev. J. A. Macdonald; Mrs S., £5 envelope in

plate; Mrs McC., £5 per Rev. J. A. Macdonald; Mrs McC., £2 for Sustentation per Rev. J. A. Macdonald.

Glasgow: Mrs Mackinnon (2 donations), £9 for Congregational; P. W. (?), £5 for Congregational; Anon., £20 for Sustentation per W.D.F.; Anon., £20 for Jewish and Foreign; Anon., £100 for Home Mission per W.D.F.; Matt. 6: 3, £10 for Bus. Fund; Anon., £5 for Bus. Fund; Anon., £2 for Bus. Fund; Anon., £2 for Bus. Fund.

Inverness: Anon., £5 for Communion Expenses per Rev. A.F.M.

Kames: Anon., Glasgow, £10; Friend, Balfron, £10 both for Church Funds.

Lochinver and Stoer: A Rogart Pensioner, £20 where most needed per A. Matheson, treasurer.

North Tolsta: Interested, £20 for Bible and Scripture Distribution per plate; In memory of our beloved parents, £15 for Church Heating per plate; Friend, £20 for Church Painting per treasurer; Loving memory of a beloved husband and a dear father, £20 for Congregational Purposes per plate; In loving memory of my dear cousin D. Munro, Lochside, from C. Rawlins, £10 for Congregational Purposes per plate; In memory of a beloved husband, £20 for Congregational Purposes per D.M.K.; Maclellan Family, £30 for Fabric Fund per plate; In loving memory of our dear friend D. Munro, Lochside, A. and J. Burns, Glasgow, £5 for Congregational Purposes per plate; In loving memory of my beloved wife, son and daughter, £10 for Congregational Purposes per plate; Anon., £20 for Frin. Bible Society per plate; Anon., £30 for Frin. Bible Society per plate; To the memory of a dear mother, £10 for Congregational Purposes per plate.

Raasay: In loving memory of dear husband, £15 where most needed per treasurer; Friend at Communion, £3 where most needed per J. M. MacLeod; MacLeod's Suishnish, £10 for Sustentation Fund per J. M. MacLeod; Rachel and Sheila, Inverarish, £12 for Communion Expenses per treasurer; Mr and Mrs D. MacSween, Glasgow, £25 for Communion Expenses per treasurer; The Gillies, Inverarish, £30 for Communion Expenses per treasurer; In memory of loving sister and Aunt, £20 for Communion Expenses per treasurer. Correction from May should read — Mr and Mrs Nicolson Belfast, £50 for Sustentation Fund per treasurer; Mrs Gunn, Inverarish, £20 for Sustentation Fund per treasurer.

Stornoway: Friend, N.T., £15 for Sustentation Fund per Rev. J. Macleod; Anon., £20 for Sustentation Fund per treasurer; Anon., £10 for Foreign Mission per treasurer; Anonymous Friend, £100 for Sustentation Fund per Rev. J. Macleod; Anon., £100 for Church Funds per Rev. J. Macleod; "Strictly Anonymous", £50 for the cause per Rev. J. Macleod.

Uig, Isle of Lewis: In memory of the late John Macleod of Uig, Lewis, £200 for Church Repair Fund per J. Buchanan; Mrs Jones, £10 for Church Repair Fund per envelope in plate; Friend of the Cause, £10 for Church Repair Fund per envelope in plate; Toronto Friend, £3 for Church Repair Fund per envelope in plate; Anon., £10 for Communion Expenses per envelope in plate; Anon., £10 for Communion Expenses per envelope in plate; Anon., £10 for Communion Expenses per envelope in plate; Anon., £5 for Communion Expenses per envelope in plate; L. Matheson, £5 for Communion Expenses per envelope in plate; J. M. L., £10 for Carpet Fund per envelope in plate.

Ullapool: M.R., £10 in appreciation of Hearing Aid System per Rev. N. M. Ross; Anon., (April), £10, Anon., (May), £10, Anon., (June), £10 all Sustentation Fund per collection plate; Anon., (May), £250 for Congregational Fund per collection plate.

Wick: Anon., £50 for the cause per Rev. R. R. Sinclair.

Zimbabwe Mission — Post of Administrator/Treasurer

An immediate vacancy has arisen for this important post. The work covers our Mission's financial operations along with the general administration of the activities in Zimbabwe and calls for a considerable degree of skill and dedication on the part of the successful applicant. Enquiries and applications for the post to Rev. A. Murray, Clerk to the Missions' Committee, F.P. Manse, Lairg, Sutherland, IV27 4EH. (Tel: 0549-2176).