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The Lord Reigns

The Psalmist had to say: "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof." Amidst all the darkness of this world, amidst all the perplexities which try the hearts of the children of men, there is this one cheering note — the Lord reigns. There is One who is in control of all events and ruleth ever by His power. Men may think that they are in control of their own destinies and of the destinies of others, but it is not so. It is the Lord who is reigning and ruling in heaven above and in the earth beneath. Whatever calamities overtake men — and men are exposed to many dangers of every kind — yet the Lord is ruling in the midst of it all — "doing according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth."

When the whole world begins to tremble because of a nuclear explosion in the Soviet Union, near Kiev, wondering what will be the outcome of these things, when their hearts are failing them for fear because of the difficulty of controlling a power that is too strong for them, let men remember that the Lord reigns. He sees the end from the beginning for all things are included in His plan which is from eternity. His purposes cannot be thwarted. Nothing can take place without the divine permission from the greatest to the least event. Yet men are so blind to this and cannot see past second causes. Well it were for the nations if their eyes were opened to see the God of heaven sitting upon the circle of the earth. Men have lost sight of the glorious reality of the God of heaven exercising His rule in the earth. What reason we have for thankfulness to the Most High that He has not resigned control of the universe which He has created for His glory. Satan would do his utmost to wrest control of the Universe from the One in whose hand its destiny lies but he will never succeed. Even when Satan does apparently seem to have some success, even there the Lord is overruling all things and causing them to fall out in a way that only furthers His own plans and designs. How utterly outwit-

ted Satan was in his stirring up the hearts of wicked men against the Son of Man. Instead of winning the day he only helped to bring to pass the very devices which infinite wisdom had devised for the salvation of lost sinners of Adam's fallen race. Let us rejoice then in this that the Lord reigns.

As the Lord is exercising His reign and dominion in the world, so is He reigning also in the midst of the Church. Though at times it may appear to men as if the Lord has forsaken His Church in the world, yet it is not so. His people and His Cause are dear to Him, and His people and Cause He will never forsake. In the midst of all the trials and difficulties through which the children of God have to pass in this world let them ever remember that the Lord reigns. Let them never lose sight of it or they will be greatly discouraged. So, too, with His own Cause in the world, exposed as it is to many adversities, to many assaults and dangers, let the people and servants of God in the world ever remember that the Lord reigns. When adverse providences overtake the Lord's Cause in the world, the people and servants of God are discouraged and they wonder what the end of these things will be. Let them not be discouraged but take heart on the remembrance of this — that the Lord reigns. Adverse things are overruled for good by the One who ruleth ever by His power. The things which happened unto me — adverse things — the Apostle Paul could say, have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel. The Lord has not resigned the charge of His Church and Cause in the world and never will. He has formed it for Himself to show forth His glory and He will so order things in connection with it that it shall show forth His glory. Let us take comfort then in the fact that the Lord reigns and be not unduly discouraged whatever comes the way. With Him alone is the power to turn the tide in the cloudy and dark day and let us look to Him for it.

The day is coming when men shall see that the Lord reigns. Today they may flout the very thought of it. But when the Lord appears in the last day in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, then men will be left no longer in any doubt as to who it is that reigns. None in that day will question who it is that reigns, and none will dare to question His right to reign. He who sits on the throne of the Universe, will in the Person of His Son sit on the Throne of judgment to administer justice and judgment. Men who in this world gave no thought to the claims of Christ will tremble then. The thought that He now reigns and that He shall reign for ever will fill them with terror and they will hear from His lips their dread sentence: "Depart from me, ye cursed". Not so

the righteous. The glorious fact that He reigns and that He shall have everlasting dominion will not fill their hearts with the dreadful foreboding of the wicked but with inexpressible delight. Then they shall know to the full the meaning of these words: "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof."

The Blessedness of Those who Mourn

by Rev. James S. Sinclair

"Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted." Matt. 5:4.

The Lord Jesus, in the opening sentences of His remarkable Sermon on the Mount, delivers to His disciples and the multitude a number of striking beatitudes, brief in form, but profound, searching, and comforting in character. He declares those persons blessed who are possessed of certain spiritual characters which were not unknown in the letter to the many among His hearers who were acquainted with the Old Testament, or in personal experience to the small company who truly feared the Lord, but characters which were foreign to the general religion of the day as represented by the Scribes and Pharisees. Such gracious dispositions, as poverty of spirit, godly sorrow, meekness, hunger and thirst after righteousness, to which He attaches the divine blessing, were conspicuous by their absence. His was indeed strange language to those who were "rich and increased in goods", and had "need of nothing", because they were ignorant of their spiritual wretchedness, poverty, blindness and nakedness. And even those who knew something already of themselves and of spiritual truths He addresses, in order that they might grow in the knowledge, appreciation, and experience of those graces with which the favour and blessing of God are so vitally connected, and without which no sinner can have a place in the kingdom of grace here, or in the kingdom of glory hereafter. "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted." It is to the second beatitude that we desire at present to call attention, and in doing so we shall notice, first, the special character Christ gives of those He pronounces blessed, and secondly, the blessedness which He holds forth as attached to that character.

I. — The special character Christ describes: it is "they that mourn."

1. Observe that the mourners spoken of are plainly the true children of God as such. They are a mourning people. The wicked, who are careless and indifferent about divine things, are not included, or referred to at all. The context proves this. It is the same class of persons who are

described throughout the beatitudes, though viewed from different standpoints. The mourners are the poor in spirit and the meek. Their mourning springs from poverty of spirit and is attended with lowliness of heart. Moreover, they are declared to be a blessed people. None of these things are asserted in the Scriptures of those who are still in their sins. It is written certainly that "many sorrows shall be to the wicked" (Psalm 32: 10); but these are sorrows which flow not from the blessing but from the curse.

Still further, is not the beginning of divine life in the soul, when a sinner passes out of darkness into light, associated with mourning, the mourning of true repentance? "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15: 10); and repentance here plainly includes the whole motion of a soul that turns savingly to God; it carries with it saving faith as well as repentance strictly so-called. The true child of God is a mourner at the beginning of his experience. He mourns under a sense of his guilt as a breaker of God's most holy law, "Against thee, thee only have I sinned"; and he mourns under a sense of his guilt in relation to Christ and the gospel; "they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for an only son." He rejoices and mourns at the same season. A sight by faith of a crucified but risen Redeemer fills him with the joy of deliverance, pardon and peace, and at the same time with a heart-melting contrition and sorrow for the sins whereby he has dishonoured so gracious a Lord, and brought Him to the dust of death. There is thus a strange commingling of joy and mourning in the heart of the believing soul at the time when he enters into Gospel liberty. No doubt these emotions differ in degree in the experience of true Christians. In some, the sorrow may predominate; in others, the joy; but none are wholly strangers to either.

We must go still further and affirm that the children of God are mourners in more or less degree all through their life on earth. Jesus here says not, "Blessed are they that have mourned," but "Blessed are they that mourn." The tense is not past, but present. The mourning is not something left behind at conversion; it continues as a gracious exercise of the believing soul, and will be the Christian's companion until death. As long as there are grounds for sorrow within the heart itself or in the world outside, the child of God will be among those "that mourn". Not "until the day break and the shadows flee away" will sorrow and sighing take their departure for ever. And this leads us to observe:

2. Some of the evils on account of which the children of God mourn. They may be summed up under two heads, personal and general.

(1) Personal evils. Though the true children have passed from a state of nature to a state of grace, they are not as yet perfect in their souls, or their circumstances. They mourn on account of "*the body of this death*", the old man who is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts. (Rom. 7: 24; Gal. 5: 17; Ephs. 4: 22). The flesh wars against the spirit, and the poor believer has much occasion for mourning in connection with the violent motions of indwelling sin. His cry is (though in weaker degree) with the Apostle Paul when he exclaimed, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Happy is he if he can also add with the apostle, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Let all those professors who mock at this phase of Christian experience be reminded that if they know nothing about it, it is not because they are more advanced in religious attainments, but because they are ignorant of the new birth without which we cannot see the kingdom of God. They mourn, also, on account of *the sin which doth so easily beset them*. The apostle exhorted the Christian Hebrews to lay aside this sin, which some have understood to mean indwelling sin in general, others, the special sin of unbelief. Apart from this discussion, it may be noted as a matter of observation and experience that men in general have some besetting sin or other, a sin that carries them more easily captive than others. One is afflicted with one evil; another with another. The children of God are painfully conscious of this, and every one who is in a healthy condition of soul, will be frequently mourning over his besetting sin. It is not a sign of piety when people are found sparing and nursing their besetting sins. The sincere children of God are mourners over the sin which doth so easily beset them; and they long for its complete mortification. Again, they mourn on account of *how little conformity they have to the image and will of Christ*. They oftentimes feel as if they had no conformity at all. The standard is, "Be ye holy, for I am holy," and they discern so much impurity in their thoughts and affections and so much unholiness in their lives that they have abundant materials for sorrow. Still, where this mourning is, there is a deep, intense desire for deliverance from all corruption, and nothing will satisfy but that ultimate perfection which Christ designs and promises to bestow upon His Church when she will not have spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but be holy and without blemish (Ephs. 5: 27). Still, again, they mourn on account of *Satan's temptations*. The temptations of the adversary are greedily swallowed by the careless sinner, but they are a great source of trial and sorrow to God's people. They often mourn under his insidious assaults, and especially when they find themselves yielding to his suggestions. "For

the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath smitten my life down to the ground; therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me" (Ps. 143: 3,4).

Lastly, as to personal evils, they mourn under *the hiding of God's face*. They do not always walk in the light of comfort, but experience many changes in this respect. None, as far as our observation goes, bask in unchanging sunshine. The Lord, in the exercise of His wise sovereignty, or as a chastisement for sin, often hides His face, and manifests His fatherly displeasure. When this is so the true believer mourns and will continue to do so, until "the Sun of righteousness" again arises "with healing in his wings".

(2) General evils. It is the native tendency of the true grace of God in the soul to be concerned not only about individual welfare but about the welfare of others — the prosperity of the cause of God throughout the world. Thus it is, that where there is godly sorrow for private and personal evils, there is the same for public and general ones also. The genuine followers of the Lamb are deeply concerned about the inroads of evil, and the signs of God's displeasure, wherever these are to be found.

They mourn on account of *evils in the visible Church*. These are not few in the present day. They lament, for example, the absence of convincing and converting work. They see that the Spirit of God has withdrawn His presence largely from the public means of grace. Apart from the multitudes who disregard divine worship altogether, they observe it is only a very few among those who regularly attend the means of grace, who are abidingly impressed with what they hear. No doubt, the Holy Spirit is sovereign in His operations, but still where these are withdrawn to a great extent, it is an evil sign upon the generation. Zion's spiritual barrenness is ground for godly sorrow. The children of God very particularly mourn the absence of converting work among their families and friends, whether under the drop of the gospel or elsewhere. Again, they mourn the removal of God's witnesses by the hand of death. The prophet Isaiah regarded it as a sign of coming evil when the righteous and the merciful were taken away, and he also deplored it as an indication of great declension and spiritual death when no man laid this to heart. "The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart." No doubt it is well with the righteous in death — and this is the only idea that occurs to selfish professors of religion — but it is not well with the generation who are deprived of their example and influence, and so the truly exercised followers of Christ sorrow deeply over their removal. Such, we further observe, also mourn the presence of lukewarmness, coldness, and worldliness among those who profess to love the gospel. These are evils too common

in our time and are a source of grief to them who are lively in the things of God. Still again, they mourn the introduction of unscriptural innovations and carnal practices into the worship and service of the Most High. If ever there was a day in which men have gone mad in the adoption of their own inventions in this respect it is the present. "Bright and Attractive Services," "Pleasant Sunday Afternoons", "Christian Brotherhood" entertainments, and so forth are all the cry, poor deluded blind leaders of the blind thinking that by such fleshly methods they will advance the true kingdom of God in society. They are only bringing down the Church to the level of the world, and sending people on to eternity with a flimsy profession, labelled as Christians, while all the while destitute of the saving grace of God. What a fearful awakening such professors will have at death! These things are an occasion of sorrow to God's true people. Finally, we observe that they mourn the maintenance and preaching of unsound doctrine in the professing church. Error in a hundred forms is popular in the present age. The infallibility of the Holy Scriptures is denied in the larger number of religious communities and a false Arminian scheme of salvation is proclaimed from the pulpits. The wise mourn over this widespread apostacy from "the faith which was once delivered to the saints".

They mourn also on account of *evils in the State*. These also are many in our age. Three can only be mentioned meantime. There is, for one thing, abounding Sabbath desecration. The Lord's Day is trampled under foot, and treated as a common holiday. The loss of the Sabbath is not merely an interference with a day set apart for bodily rest, but also for the worship of God and the preaching of the gospel. Sinners, therefore, who set at nought the Sabbath, despise everything that is sacred and necessary for the salvation of their souls. Law and Gospel are thrown away as things of no value, and carnal pleasure and amusement are chosen instead. They prefer the world to Christ, hell to heaven. This is a sorrowful state of things indeed. Again, they mourn as they see Popery making rapid progress in our land. It advances under the guise of Ritualism in professedly Protestant Churches. And every person who has the cause of Christ at heart must regard this as a matter of real lamentation and grief. Then, thirdly, they mourn over how little dread of this evil appears among nominally Protestant people. Here is the greatest danger of all in this connection. There is so much false charity among Protestants, and some of those who stand upon Protestant platforms are nourishing the very seeds of the evil they profess to condemn, in their own immediate sphere of labour. These things are occasions of sorrow to

those who desire to be faithful to Christ and His truth.

So much at present for the evils, both personal and general, which are deplored by those of whom Christ speaks in this beatitude. We now go on to notice:

II. — The blessedness which belongs to them that mourn.

1. It is plain that they are "blessed", because they are mourners after a godly sort. Such are, to begin with, true penitents for their personal sins, and repentance on earth gives joy in presence of the angels of God, yea, to God Himself. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." The Lord rejoices over His penitent people with joy and singing. "Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant child? For since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still" (Jeremiah 31: 20). They are blessed in this way, because they are manifestly made new creatures — possessors of the image of God renewed upon their souls. Godly sorrow for sin is one of its first and most constant exercises. Then, they are blessed in virtue of their union to Christ. All those who have looked upon Him by faith and mourned, are brought into vital union with Him, and are thus under the blessing and favour of a reconciled God. The curse has been eternally removed, and they are blessed in Christ, and shall be blessed world without end.

2. They are blessed, in virtue of the promise of comfort: "they shall be comforted". The Lord has provided comfort for His mourners — partial comfort in time, and perfect comfort in eternity.

"They shall be comforted" as to *the personal evils* over which they sorrow. He promises to give deliverance from the body of corruption. It is already under sentence of death — condemned to be destroyed — in consequence of Christ's victory and death. "Our old man is crucified with him" (Rom. 6: 6). They may depend upon divine help against it now, and look forward to complete deliverance at death. "They shall be comforted" as to the sin that doth so easily beset them; for the inspired apostle saith, "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Rom. 6: 14). Sin may obtain temporary victories, but it shall not reign permanently over those who deeply mourn its presence. "They shall be comforted" as to their want of conformity to Christ's image and will. "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1: 6). He will gradually conform them more and more in the spirit of their minds (largely perhaps unknown to themselves) to the blessed image which they will one day wear in perfection. Oftentimes the children of God, who are deeply

exercised, are more conscious of "the old man" than of "the new creation". They discern their sins and not their graces. This is overruled for the great ends of sanctification — that sin may be effectually mortified, and that the new creation may rise into its full development without spot or wrinkle at the end of the day. "They shall be comforted" as to Satan's temptations. The Lord will not allow them to be tempted beyond measure, but will make "a way of escape". The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (Rom. 16: 20). And "they shall be comforted" as to the hiding of the divine countenance. He will not be angry for ever. "For his anger endureth but a moment, in his favour is life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Psalm 30: 5). Here is their blessedness.

"They shall be comforted as to *the general evils* which they mourn." Though the Lord is not doing convincing and converting work in the visible Church to the extent that He has done in past days, yet He still liveth and reigneth, and they may hear occasionally of one here and another there brought to the feet of Christ. Things in general indeed seem to be getting darker and darker, but still the Lord has promised to have His witnesses while sun and moon endure, and He may raise up some to stand for His name and cause at times when least expected. He may also introduce reformatations into Church and State in dark days when things get into extreme disorder. It is written that "when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him" (Isaiah 59: 19). He had given many great and precious promises in His word concerning glorious days that are yet to come upon earth, when "the kingdoms of this world" shall be "the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ," and they must draw encouragement from these promises in backsliding and discouraging times. These promises are intended for their comfort, and when they are brought home with power, "they shall be comforted". Then, lastly, we remark that the fundamental grounds of their comfort with respect to all God's purposes in relation to His kingdom upon earth are embodied in the thoughts from which Christ, their glorious Head, derived comfort in the days of His flesh, thoughts expressed in such words as these: "All that the Father giveth me *shall* come unto me: and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out . . . And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." Here He rested and was comforted, and here must they also find abiding rest, and everlasting consolation. "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted."

Prayer

A man may reach heaven without learning, or books, or knowledge, but no man ever reached heaven without prayer.

Prayer is the life-breath of a man's soul. Without it we may have a name to live, and be counted Christians, but we are dead in the sight of God. The feeling that we must cry to God for mercy and peace is a mark of grace, and the habit of spreading before Him our souls' wants is an evidence that we have the spirit of sonship.

Prayer is the appointed way to obtain the relief of our spiritual necessities. It opens the treasury and sets the fountain flowing. If we have not, it is because we ask not.

Prayer is the way to procure the outpouring of the Spirit upon our hearts. Jesus has promised the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. He is ready to come down with all His precious gifts, renewing, sanctifying, purifying, strengthening, cheering, encouraging, enlightening, teaching, directing, guiding into all truth. But He waits to be entreated.

And here it is that men fall short so miserably. Many fall on their knees to say a form, but there are few who pray, few who cry unto God, few who call upon the Lord, few who seek as if they want to find, few who knock as if they hunger and thirst, few who wrestle, few who strive with God earnestly for an answer. Yes, few men pray. It is just one of the things assumed as a matter of course, but seldom practised; a thing which is everybody's business, but which hardly anybody does.

Believe me, if your soul is to be saved, you must pray. God has no dumb children. If you are to resist the world, the flesh and the devil, you must pray; it is vain to look for strength, in the hour of trial, if it has not been sought. You may be thrown with those who never pray, you may have to sleep in the same room with someone who never asks anything of God; still, *you must pray*.

I can quite believe you find great difficulties about it, difficulties about opportunities, and seasons and places. I dare not lay down too positive rules on such points as these. I leave them to your own conscience. You must be guided by circumstances. Our Lord Jesus Christ prayed on a mountain; Isaac prayed in the fields; Hezekiah turned his face to the wall as he lay upon his bed; Daniel prayed by a riverside; Peter, the apostle, on the housetop. I have heard of men praying in stables and haylofts. All that I contend is this, you must know what it is to "enter into your closet." There must be stated times when you must speak with God face to face; you must every day have a time for prayer. *You must pray*.

Without this, all advice and counsel are useless. This is that piece of spiritual armour which Paul names last in his catalogue in Ephesians 6, but it is in truth first in value and importance. This is that meat which you must daily eat, if you would travel safely through the wilderness of this life. It is only in this strength that you will get onwards toward the mount of God.

I have heard it said that the needle-grinders of Sheffield sometimes wore magnetic mouthpieces at their work, to catch all the fine dust that flew around them to prevent it from entering their lungs. Prayer is the mouthpiece you must wear continually, or else you will never work uninjured by the unhealthy atmosphere of this world. *You must pray.*

Be sure no time is so well spent as that which a man spends upon his knees. Make time for this, whatever your employment may be. Think of David, King of Israel — what does he say? *“Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice”* (Psalm 55: 17). Think of Daniel: he had all the business of a kingdom on his hands, yet he prayed three times a day. See there the secret of his safety in wicked Babylon. Think of Solomon: he begins his reign with prayer for help and assistance, and hence his wonderful prosperity. Think of Nehemiah: he could find time to pray to the God of heaven, even when standing in the presence of his master, Artaxerxes. Think of the example these godly men have left you, and go to do likewise.

YOU MUST PRAY.

— J. C. Ryle

Letter of James Bourne

(To One who said there was no Hope)

London, 7th October 1835

Dear Friend,

I know of nothing so disheartening, though very common, for young professors to take the seat of judgment and finally decide what the Lord means to do, and then to hold their notions so fast as to think it must be as they judge, and can be no otherwise. They are not aware that this snare is a masterpiece of hell and a death-blow to spiritual life; for they generally add, “It is no use seeking God — I am so sinful that he cannot have mercy.” Now, if natural things were so treated, a man of natural commonsense would soon discern the fallacy. I cannot but believe that the Lord allows all this for the humbling of our pride, and the bringing down of our native strength, which till this trial comes on, we think is

wonderfully great. We are suffered sometimes to labour here for long, to be more deeply convinced of our totally lost condition. "He shall by means like these thy stubborn temper break; soften thy heart by due degrees, and make thy spirit meek."

You are yet not able to understand the deep necessity of the chastening hand of God. I wish I could prevail on you to make your present despair a plea, and not hastily conclude that God's purposes towards you are only final destruction. One says, truly and wisely, that it is not the office of the Holy Spirit to bear witness to this. Therefore let me entreat you in prayer to dispute the point, and to refuse to give up crying for mercy while the Lord gives you breath. You can but despair and sink into ruin, if you pray in vain; but where will you find one that was ever finally lost who looked to Jesus Christ for help? He was sent unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Luther remarks that though David says, "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid, the sorrows of hell compassed me about and the snares of death prevented me," and these were so overwhelming as to leave no room for hope or help, for he was completely surrounded and overpowered by them, yet in his distress he called upon the Lord, and cried unto his God; and his cry entered into the ears of the Lord (Psalm 18: 4-6).

These things are left on record as an especial check to our rebellion, and ought to stop our mouths from daring to decide what God in His sovereignty has in all ages chosen to keep a hidden mystery. I cannot but yet hope that your trouble is what is called "Jacob's trouble," of which it is said, "Alas for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it" (Jer. 30: 7). John Bunyan was two whole years labouring in this despair, which the Lord suffered him to know, in order that he might have a clear conception of the cases of many poor lost sinners to whom he would have to preach, and set forth Jesus Christ as the only source of help and redress against all the objections that can be raised.

I myself have been long at the point of despair, not having in my apprehension the least shadow of a hope that the Lord could have any purpose of mercy towards me. I could neither eat nor sleep, thinking it could be of no use to mind anything, seeing I was doomed to destruction. I lay in this state long without any interval of hope; but about six o'clock one evening in my desperation I cried to the Lord with much agony of spirit, that if there could be mercy shown, He would show it to me; and presently these words were whispered in my heart, "Thou shalt return in the power of the Spirit." I put it away, because I thought it was only spoken

of Jesus Christ; but it came a second time, and was repeated seven times before I could receive the power of it upon my heart, I had so many objections, and was so fearful that it was impossible any mercy could be shown to me. But the power became so great as to remove all my objections, and fill my soul with joy and peace in believing. The effect was the most sensible self-abasement, while I enjoyed such sweet holy familiarity and access as I had never known before. How sweetly did the Bible speak to me! That which was lately full of vengeance and judgment was now all mercy.

One day a cloud came over me which caused much heaviness that I knew not how to bear the loss of the sweet things I have written above. I made many lamentations and confessions, and earnestly begged of the Lord to return; and these words were spoken upon my heart with great sweetness and power, "What woman, having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle and sweep the house, and seek diligently, till she find it?" (Luke 15: 8). The word *diligently* was greatly impressed on my mind, and I cried, "Lord, give me this spiritual diligence," and I found my spirit would not rest from crying, and the Lord again restored to me the light of His countenance, and I once more went on my way rejoicing. In that light I had often a sweet discovery of God's especial favour towards me, telling me the battle was not mine, but His, and that He would never leave me nor forsake me. This sweet way of living continued some time, but a foolish backsliding heart again insidiously drew me aside into the spirit of the world, and again I required heavy strokes. Under the apprehensions of death I felt much despair, sometimes to such an extent as to alarm my friends, till they sunk with me, and thought my case hopeless; but here also the Lord did not judge me as man judgeth. When He had humbled my pride, and made me effectually feel my lost condition, He showed me that "the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock." The discovery came with such power as to counterbalance all my despair, and the Lord was pleased to turn my captivity, and spoke these words to me, which were unspeakably sweet in the unfolding of them, "Thou shalt again go forth in the dances of them that make merry" (Jer. 31: 4). This was spiritual, and was fulfilled by the joy unspeakable that He gave me, restoring me to health both of body and soul. This conflict lasted four years at least, but His faithfulness never fails.

After this also I gradually and foolishly went back again to a distance from the Lord. In this melancholy and fearful trial my feelings were such

that even the remembrance of them makes me shudder; but I must say, O Lord, I can by Thy grace acknowledge that Thou art clear when Thou judgest. I knew not at the time what the Lord would do with me. His judgments are a great deep. My heart has gone astray from Him, and I read these words, "Ye have forsaken me and served other gods, wherefore I will deliver you no more. Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen" (Judges 10: 13, 14). My spirits sank, I seemed to have no hope, nor to find any way of escape. The terrors of the night almost overcame me, and I fully concluded I should go in the bitterness of my soul all my days. None seemed to care for my soul, and none could help me. Yet here also the Lord appeared for me, and these words came with such power and divine authority as to fill my soul with the greatest joy: "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall *doubtless* come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

All these things I desire to set before you, at the same time knowing that the natural mind of man is more obstinate than a mule, and more violent in opposition to God than can be set forth. This will join you in affinity to Satan, to set the shoulder against all that God has left on record in His Word, and against all the sweet deliverances He has wrought for His people, under the most distressing despair. O do pray, and let not a rebellious spirit tempt you to refrain, "lest your bands be made strong." Think of Esther's memorable words, and try them, "If I perish, I perish." Joel asks, "Who knoweth if the Lord will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him?" You are not yet where Jonah was; there seemed no hope for him; yet he cried and found deliverance. Do not limit the Holy One of Israel. May He prove Himself better to you than all your fears! and pray, do never again say anything more about your knowing that God's judgments were denounced against you, which you can never prove.

Yours, etc.,

J. B.

The Evidences of True Faith

(Extracted from Westminster Confession of Faith)

"Ye shall know them by their fruits."

The Practical Use of Saving Knowledge from which this extract is taken was written by two illustrious and godly men David Dixon and James Durham. This portion of the Westminster Confession of Faith has been owned of God by the blessing of it to many. It was written of

McCheyne, that the reading of *The Sum of Saving Knowledge* brought him to a clear understanding of the way of salvation.

The final portion of "The Sum of Saving Knowledge," which is reproduced here, entitled "The Evidences of True Faith," follows two other sections. The first deals with conviction of sin, showing how sinners come short of the glory of God by breaking God's holy law, and how men are convinced of sin, righteousness, and judgment, by the gospel. Next comes the free offer of the gospel in the section — Warrants to Believe. Finally, to show the true nature of conversion "The Sum of Saving Knowledge" closes with "The Evidences of True Faith." Throughout sections one and three of "The Sum of Saving Knowledge" we have the true scriptural teaching about the use of the law, first by way of conviction, and then AFTER CONVERSION, the attitude of a true believer to the law. The historic article rejects, as totally defective, the widespread idea today that the law is done away in Christ. It also rejects the current plea of Antinomians that we are not under law but under grace. Such as misuse these words of scripture, tearing them out of context, must also face the apostle's experience. "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man," and again, his theology, "Do we then make void the law through faith, God forbid, yea we establish the law."

This extract displays the copious light of the Reformation, upon forgotten, scriptural principles, concerning this vital issue, of the believer's relationship to the law, summed up by the Apostle Paul, "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of the spirit not in the oldness of the letter."

"It is time for thee, Lord to work: for they have made void thy law" (Ps. 119: 126).

(Rev.) E. A. Rayner

THE EVIDENCES OF TRUE FAITH

So much for the laying the grounds of faith, and warrants to believe. Now, for evidencing of true faith by fruits, these four things are requisite: 1. That the believer be soundly convinced, in his judgment, of his obligation to keep the whole moral law, all the days of his life; and that not the less, but so much the more, as he is delivered by Christ from the covenant of works, and the curse of the law. 2. That he endeavour to grow in the exercise and daily practice of godliness and righteousness. 3. That the course of his new obedience run in the right channel, that is through faith in Christ, and through a good conscience, to all the duties

of love towards God and man. 4. That he keep strait communion with the fountain Christ Jesus, from whom grace must run along, for furnishing of good fruits.

For the first, viz. To convince the believer, in his judgment, of his obligation to keep the moral law, among many passages, take Matt. 5: 16.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. Verse 17. Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. Verse 18. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Verse 19. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. Verse 20. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Wherein our Lord.

1. Giveth commandment to believers, justified by faith, to give evidence of the grace of God in them before men, by doing good works: "Let your light so shine before men (saith he), that they may see your good works."

2. He induceth them so to do, by shewing, that albeit they be not justified by works, yet spectators of their good works may be converted or edified; and so glory may redound to God by their good works, when the witnesses thereof "shall glorify your Father which is in heaven."

3. He gives them no other rule for their new obedience than the moral law, set down and explicated by Moses and the prophets: "Think not (saith he) that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets."

4. He gives them to understand, that the doctrine of grace, and freedom from the curse of the law by faith in him, is readily mistaken by men's corrupt judgments, as if it did loose or slacken the obligation of believers to obey the commands, and to be subject to the authority of the law; and that this error is indeed a destroying of the law and of the prophets, which he will in no case ever endure in any of his disciples, it is so contrary to the end of his coming, which is first to sanctify, and then to save believers: "Think not (saith he) that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets."

5. He teacheth, that the end of the gospel and covenant of grace is to

procure men's obedience unto the moral law: "I am come (saith he) to fulfil the law and the prophets."

6. That the obligation of the moral law, in all points unto all holy duties, is perpetual, and shall stand to the world's end, that is, "till heaven and earth pass away."

7. That as God hath had a care of the Scriptures from the beginning, so shall he have a care of them still to the world's end, that there shall not one jot or one tittle of the substance thereof be taken away; so saith the text, Verse 18.

8. That as the breaking of the moral law, and defending the transgressions thereof to be no sin, doth exclude men both from heaven, and justly also from the fellowship of the true kirk; so the obedience of the law, and teaching others to do the same, by example, counsel, and doctrine, according to every man's calling, proveth a man to be a true believer, and in great estimation with God, and worthy to be much esteemed of by the true church, Verse 19.

9. That the righteousness of every true Christian must be more than the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees; for the scribes and Pharisees, albeit they took great pains to discharge sundry duties of the law, yet they cutted short the exposition thereof, that it might the less condemn their practice; they studied the outward part of the duty, but neglected the inward and spiritual part; they discharged some meaner duties carefully, but neglected judgment, mercy, and the love of God: in a word, they went about to establish their own righteousness, and rejected the righteousness of God by faith in Jesus. But a true Christian must have more than all this; he must acknowledge the full extent of the spiritual meaning of the law, and have a respect to all the commandments, and labour to cleanse himself from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and "not lay weight upon what service he hath done, or shall do," but clothe himself with the imputed righteousness of Christ, which only can hide his nakedness, or else he cannot be saved; so saith the text, "Except your righteousness," etc.

The second thing requisite to evidence true faith is, that the believer endeavour to put the rules of godliness and righteousness in practice, and to grow in the daily exercise thereof; holden forth, 2 Peter 1: 5.

And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; Verse 6. And to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; Verse 7. And to godliness, brotherly-kindness; and to brotherly-kindness, charity. Verse

8. *For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Wherein, 1. The apostle teacheth believers, for evidencing of precious faith in themselves, to endeavour to add to their faith seven other sister graces. The first is Virtue, or the active exercise and practice of all moral duties, that so faith may not be idle, but put forth itself in work. The second is Knowledge, which serves to furnish faith with information of the truth to be believed, and to furnish virtue with direction what duties are to be done, and how to go about them prudently. The third is Temperance, which serveth to moderate the use of all pleasant things, that a man be not clogged therewith, nor made unfit for any duty whereto he is called. The fourth is Patience, which serveth to moderate a man's affections, when he meeteth with any difficulty or unpleasant thing; that he neither weary for pains required in well-doing, nor faint when the Lord chastiseth him, nor murmur when he crosseth him. The fifth is Godliness, which may keep him up in all the exercises of religion, inward and outward; whereby he may be furnished from God for all other duties which he hath to do. The sixth is Brotherly-kindness, which keepeth estimation of, and affection to, all the household of faith, and to the image of God in every one wheresoever it is seen. The seventh is Love, which keepeth the heart in readiness to do good to all men, whatsoever they be, upon all occasions which God shall offer.

2. Albeit it be true, that there is much corruption and infirmity in the godly; yet the apostle will have men uprightly endeavouring, and doing their best, as they are able, to join all these graces one to another, and to grow in the measure of exercising them: "Giving all diligence (saith he), add to your faith," etc.

3. He assureth all professioned believers, that as they shall profit in the obedience of this direction, so they shall profitably prove the soundness of their own faith; and, if they want these graces, that they shall be found blind deceivers of themselves, Verse 9.

The third thing requisite to evidence true faith is, that obedience to the law run in the right channel, that is, through faith in Christ, etc. holden forth, 1 Tim. 1: 5.

Now, the end of the commandment is love, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.

Wherein the apostle teacheth these seven doctrines:

1. That the obedience of the law must flow from love, and love from a

pure heart, and a pure heart from a good conscience, and a good conscience from faith unfeigned: this he makes the only right channel of good works: "The end of the law is love," etc.

2. That the end of the law is not, that men may be justified by their obedience of it, as the Jewish doctors did falsely teach; for it is impossible that sinners can be justified by the law, who, for every transgression, are condemned by the law: "For the end of the law is (not such as the Jewish doctors taught, but) love, out of a pure heart," etc.

3. That the true end of the law, preached unto the people, is, that they, by the law, being made to see their deserved condemnation, should flee to Christ unfeignedly, to be justified by faith in him; so saith the text, while it maketh love to flow through faith in Christ.

4. That no man can set himself in love to obey the law, excepting as far as his conscience is quieted by faith, or is seeking to be quieted in Christ; for "the end of the law is love, out of a good conscience, and faith unfeigned."

5. That feigned faith goeth to Christ without reckoning with the law, and so wants an errand; but unfeigned faith reckoneth with the law, and is forced to flee for refuge unto Christ, as the end of the law for righteousness, so often as it finds itself guilty for breaking of the law: "For the end of the law is faith unfeigned."

6. That the fruits of love may come forth in act particularly, it is necessary that the heart be brought to the hatred of all sin and uncleanness, and to a stedfast purpose to follow all holiness universally: "For the end of the law is love, out of a pure heart."

7. That unfeigned faith is able to make the conscience good, and the heart pure, and the man lovingly obedient to the law; for when Christ's blood is seen by faith to quiet justice, then the conscience becometh quiet also, and will not suffer the heart to entertain the love of sin, but sets the man on work to fear God for his mercy, and to obey all his commandments, out of love to God, for his free gift of justification, by grace bestowed on him: "For this is the end of the law indeed," whereby it obtaineth of a man more obedience than any other way.

The fourth thing requisite to evidence true faith is, the *keeping strait communion with Christ*, the fountain of all graces, and of all good works; holden forth, John 15: 5.

I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing.

Wherein Christ, in a similitude from a vine-tree, teacheth us,

1. That by nature we are wild barren briers, till we be changed by coming unto Christ; and that Christ is that noble vine-tree, having all life and sap of grace in himself, and able to change the nature of every one that cometh to him, and to communicate spirit and life to as many as shall believe in him: "I am the vine (saith he), and ye are the branches."

2. That Christ loveth to have believers so united unto him, as that they be not separated at any time by unbelief: and that there may be a mutual inhabitation of them in him, by faith and love; and of him in them, by his word and Spirit; for he joineth these together, "If ye abide in me, and I in you," as things inseparable.

3. That except a man be ingrafted into Christ, and united to him by faith, he cannot do any the least good works of his own strength; yea, except in as far as a man doth draw spirit and life from Christ by faith, the work which he doth is naughty and null in point of goodness in God's estimation: "For without me (saith he) ye can do nothing."

4. That this mutual inhabitation is the fountain and infallible cause of constant continuing and abounding in well-doing: For "he that abideth in me, and I in him (saith he), the same beareth much fruit." now, as our abiding in Christ presupposeth three things; 1st, That we have heard the joyful sound of the gospel, making offer of Christ to us, who are lost sinners by the law; 2nd, That we have heartily embraced the gracious offer of Christ; 3rd, That by receiving of him we are become the sons of God, John 1: 12, and are incorporated into his mystical body, that he may dwell in us, as his temple, and we dwell in him, as in the residence of righteousness and life: so our abiding in Christ importeth other three things, (1.) An employing of Christ in all our addresses to God, and in all our undertakings of whatsoever piece of service to him. (2.) A contentedness with his sufficiency, without going out from him to seek righteousness, or life, or furniture in any case, in our own or any of the creature's worthiness. (3.) A fixedness in our believing in him, a fixedness in our employing and making use of him, and a fixedness in our contentment in him, and adhering to him, so that no allurements, no temptation of Satan or the world, no terror nor trouble, may be able to drive our spirits from firm adherence to him, or from the constant avowing of his truth, and obeying his commands, who hath loved us, and given himself for us; and in whom not only our life is laid up, but also the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily, by reason of the substantial and personal union of the divine and human nature in him.

Hence let every watchful believer, for strengthening himself in faith and obedience, reason after this manner:

“Whosoever doth daily employ Christ Jesus for cleansing his conscience and affections from the guiltiness and filthiness of sins against the law, and for enabling him to give obedience to the law in love, he hath the evidence of true faith in himself:

“But I (may every watchful believer say) do daily employ Jesus Christ for cleansing my conscience and affections from the guiltiness and filthiness of sins against the law, and for enabling of me to give obedience to the law in love:

“Therefore I have the evidence of true faith in myself.”

And hence also let the sleepy and sluggish believer reason, for his own upstirring, thus:

“Whatsoever is necessary for giving evidence of true faith, I study to do it, except I would deceive myself and perish:

“But to employ Christ Jesus daily for cleansing of my conscience and affections from the guiltiness and filthiness of sins against the law, and for enabling me to give obedience to the law in love, is necessary for evidencing of true faith in me:

“Therefore this I must study to do, except I would deceive myself and perish.”

And, *lastly*, Seeing Christ himself hath pointed this forth, as an undoubted evidence of a man elected of God unto life, and given to Jesus Christ to be redeemed, “if he come unto him,” that is, close covenant, and keep communion with him, as he teacheth us, John 6: 37, saying, “All that the Father hath given me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out;” let every person, who doth not in earnest make use of Christ for remission of sin, and amendment of life, reason hence, and from the whole premises, after this manner, that his conscience may be awakened:

“Whosoever is neither by the law, nor by the gospel, so convinced of sin, righteousness, and judgment, as to make him come to Christ, and employ him daily for remission of sin, and amendment of life; he wanteth not only all evidence of saving faith, but also all appearance of his election, so long as he remaineth in this condition:

“But I (may every impenitent person say) am neither by the law nor gospel so convinced of sin, righteousness, and judgment, as to make me come to Christ, and employ him daily for remission of sin, and amendment of life:

“Therefore I want not only all evidence of saving faith, but also all appearance of my election, so long as I remain in this condition.”

Church Socials

Take these things hence — John 2: 16

Quasi-Religious social evenings are becoming an unmitigated nuisance. This sort of thing began in treats for children as inducements to attend, and as rewards for attending, the Sabbath School. But it did not stop there. We have now congregational social evenings, at which an annual opportunity is taken of parading the work done, and the money raised, during the past year, flattering speeches are exchanged by those who take kindly to be licked all over with an oily tongue, and a great deal of vapid sentiment is mixed up with exaggerated statements as to success seasoned with bits of drollery, and interspersed with sensational music. The attempt to sanctify all this by the Word and by prayer is successful only as a sacrilege. What should be exalted is degraded, and the alliance of religion and the world, in that as in every other instance, is all to the gain of the latter. It would be folly to expect a spark to live if placed in the midst of ice. The ice could not be fuel for the spark, but would by the contact dissolve in water to quench it. So must it fare with spiritual fervour in contact with the surroundings of a social evening. — *The Present Cast and Tendency of Religious Thought and Feeling in Scotland.* — John Kennedy. D.D.

Voluntaryism

“Voluntaryism”, in the words of Principal Cunningham, “amounts in substance to this — that the only relation that ought to subsist between State and the Church — between civil government and religion — is that of entire separation, or in other words, its advocates maintain that nations, as such, and civil rulers in their official capacity, not only are not bound but are not at liberty to interfere in any religious matters, or to seek to promote the welfare of the Church of Christ as such. This theory, if true, supersedes the necessity of all further enquiry into the principles that ought to regulate the relation between Church and State; for it really implies that no connection should subsist, or can lawfully subsist between them. (Historical Theology Vol. 1, ch. 13).

“Under the general head of the Civil magistrate, or the civil magistracy — that is, in the exposition of what is taught in Scripture concerning the functions and duties of the supreme civil authorities of a nation, whatever be its form of government — the Reformers were unanimous and decided in asserting, what has been called in modern

times, the principle of national establishments of religion — namely, that it is competent to, and incumbent upon, nations, as such, and civil rulers in their official capacity, or in the exercise of their legitimate control over civil matters, to aim at the promotion of the honour of God, the welfare of true religion, and the prosperity of the Church of Christ. This principle, which comprehends or implies the whole of what we are concerned to maintain upon the subject of national establishments of religion, we believe to be fully sanctioned by Scripture; and we can appeal, in support of it, to the decided and unanimous testimony of the Reformers — while the Anabaptists of that period seem to have been the first, if we except the Donatists of the fifth century, who stumbled upon something like the opposite doctrine, or what is nowadays commonly called the Voluntary principle.” (Historical Theology Vol. 11, Ch. 27).

VOLUNTARYISM POSTULATES A SECULAR STATE

“Voluntaryism”, wrote Professor G Smeaton, D.D., in *The Scottish Theory of Ecclesiastical Establishment*, “proposes to substitute a non-religious state — that is, a state purely secular without a religion and without a creed . . . Never till the dawn of the French Revolution did this theory gain much attention or influence. For though we find it among the Anabaptists, the Quakers, and the untaught fanatical sects of the commonwealth time — men who regarded the State as belonging to the empire of an evil power — it never menaced the institution of the Christian State till the fury and impiety of the French Revolution insinuated themselves into other nations. The heathen philosophers, Plato and Cicero, speak with a deeper view of the religious character of States, than Voluntary divines evince. We are naturally led to enquire, what description of person must be the ideal ruler of the Voluntary theory, if that could ever be reduced to practice in any country? The answer can only be, that in order to be a MODEL RULER he must be a BAD MAN, a man denuded of the fear of God, to whom all religions are alike, and none worthy of encouragement.”

VOLUNTARYISM ESSENTIALLY ATHEISTIC

“The Voluntary principle,” said the Rev. John Duncan, L. L. D., professor of Hebrew and of Oriental languages in the Free Church College, Edinburgh, (usually known as ‘Rabbi’ Duncan), “is not only anti-Christian but atheistical.” “Apply the Voluntary principle to the British Constitution and Administration and the Imperial policy,” wrote Dr. James Kerr, “and at one fell blow, all references to Christianity in them

must be instantly demolished. The Protestant Succession to the Throne must be abolished, the Bible must be expelled from the National Schools, prayers in Parliament and the Court of Assize must end, and all laws in favour of the Lord's Day must be repealed. In short, in obedience to the demands of Voluntaryism, the whole laws and policy of the British Empire must be so fashioned and conducted, that they would not show whether the God of the Mohammedan, or the God of the Christian was Governor and King of Nations. Voluntaryism bolts the door of all public institutions against the entrance of the universal Lord. It is thus more Erastian than the Erastianism against which it is continually protesting. Thus imperiously Voluntaryism will thrust God out of the rulership of part of His own dominions and require the nation as such to conduct its affairs without any recognition of Him."

VOLUNTARYISM "THE OFFSPRING OF UNBELIEF"

In a speech which the late eminent Dr. Kennedy, Dingwall, made in 1881 before leaving for Mentone for his health, he said, "The decay which generated the fungus of disestablishment (Voluntaryism) accounts for the growth of sensationalism in worship. The taste indulged in the drawing room and in the concert room, craves for gratification in the house of God. Of course some plausible excuse must be devised for urging such a change, but it is weariness of Scriptural worship that causes the fashionable desire for innovations. The coincidence of the development with that of disestablishment is sufficient to indicate the character of both. And the current change has passed on to unfaithfulness as to the custody of God's Word. A revolt against the regulations of Scripture can only result from defective views of its Divine perfection and authority. To one, who traced to growing unfaithfulness, the two former changes of feeling, there can be nothing unaccountable in the extent to which the Word of God is degraded within our pale. In a Church such as ours, Voluntaryism, Arminianism, and Sensationalism, must be the pioneers of Rationalism for they are all the offspring of unbelief."

VOLUNTARYISM ESSENTIALLY SECTARIAN

"At an early period of the Reformation on the Continent," writes Dr. McCrie, "certain sects of separatists from the body of Protestants appeared, who began to propagate peculiar opinions about the nature and exercise of the office of civil magistrates among Christians, the nature of the kingdom of Christ, and Christian liberty, especially in reference to religion, as to which every person and sect were to be left to their own humour or liking, without respect to public authority. Among these, the

Anabaptists, Socinians, and those denominated Libertines were distinguished; by whom commotions were excited in various places, both in civil and ecclesiastical society . . . In England, during the sitting of the Westminster Assembly, after some progress had been made for settling religion by authority, according to the Solemn League a number of sectaries appeared, who, in order to hinder a new national establishment, vented these tenets in their discourses and writings, and insisted for a general toleration and liberty; and rested not, until those who favoured their scheme wrested the sword out of the hands of the Presbyterians, and seized on every part of the government, which they employed for their own purposes, involving all the three kingdoms again in troubles and bloody wars, and restricting considerably the due freedom of the ministry and ecclesiastical courts; though under the republic and usurpation of Cromwell, for political reasons, the laws that had been made for settling religion were never repealed but only restricted and new-modelled . . . Sectarian principles are opposed to unity and uniformity in religion, and to the proper means for promoting these, whether by civil or ecclesiastical society.”

It must be observed that the religious body once known by the name of Puritans, became Presbyterian both in principle and practice, partly before and thoroughly during the time of the Westminster Assembly . . . And of the whole two thousand who were ejected by the Act of Uniformity, above nine-tenths were Presbyterians (History of the Westminster Assembly by W. H. Hetherington, D. D., L. L. D., p 325).

Dr. McCrie shows that Voluntaryism is essentially sectarian and that churches and bodies which have renounced the Establishment Principle have fallen from the Reformed and Scriptural position taken by the Churches at the Reformation. That sacred unity with which they upheld the Supremacy of Christ as King of Nations, with the consequent duty of nations as such and civil rulers in their official capacity to honour and serve Him by recognising His Truth and promoting His Cause, Voluntaryism has shamefully violated. It has cast to the ground that royal diadem of glory and beauty, and under the banner of a spurious sanctity it has confounded “the state” with “the world” and has allured its devotees into the jungle of sectarianism. However divergent the sects may be in doctrine and practice, from the ultra-orthodox to the false and the fantastic, they all with one accord pay homage to the great Diana of Voluntaryism. “It is questionable,” to quote again Dr. Begg’s condemnation of Voluntaryism, “whether Popery itself more directly robs Christ of His glory — the glory of having all power in heaven and on ear-

th.” “Voluntaryism is not only anti-christian,” said “Rabbi” Duncan, “but atheistical.” It is sad indeed to see churches and organisations professing to uphold the Calvinistic doctrines of the Reformation succumbing to the deadly spell of Voluntaryism. To all such the exhortation applies, “Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”

This Achan in the camp, this accursed thing in the eyes of the Most High must be destroyed. Let us turn a deaf ear to the siren voices of Voluntaries however Calvinistic they may claim to be, and not be drawn by them into the wilderness of the sects. Let us keep to the King’s highway trod by martyrs and Reformers, and in the name of our God display our banners that Christ is the Prince of the kings of the earth, and that the nation and the kingdom that will not serve Him and His Cause shall perish, yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted. “The Establishment Principle,” said the eminent Dr. Kennedy of Dingwall, “is not only worth living for, but a Principle worth dying for.” “Voluntary churchmen, out of an Establishment, talk of the independence of the church: OUR FOREFATHERS WITHIN ONE, BLED AND DIED FOR IT.” (Dr. C. J. Brown).

W. M.

Obituary

The Late Miss MacColl, Ballachulish

Miss MacColl was well known to some of the Fathers of the church. Rev. D. Beaton, Oban, was very mindful of her. At a comparatively young age, her experience was like that of David, and of Job before him, for both were conscious of the Lord’s afflicting hand being heavily laid upon them. They could say, and she could join with them in it:

“For upon me both day and night
thine hand did heavy lie.” Ps. 32: 4

But obviously all this protracted illness worked together for her eternal good, in accordance with the Divine promise: “For all things work together for good to them that love God.” Romans 8: 28. Owing to all this she was unable to attend any place of worship or to commemorate Christ’s death until He comes. This was true of many of whom we knew in our beloved Church, who gave ample evidence, by their life and conversation, also by their love to Him, to His cause, and to His people, that

they had "the root of the matter in them," but were denied "that little strength" which enables one to obey His dying counsel: "This do in remembrance of me."

As far as we can ascertain it was through reading our monthly magazine that the Holy Spirit began a good work in her, with the noble hand of Zerubbabel thus laying the foundation stone. For years, she was under soul concern. Various Scriptures manifested to her her need of Christ as a lost and Hell deserving sinner. She prayed, and longed for the blessed experience of the prodigal son, when clothed with the robe of the unspotted righteousness of Christ, and embraced with the sweet kiss of reconciliation in his father's arms. God heard and answered her prayer in His own time.

There was a Godly man from Ballachulish, a Mr Fraser, who was Missionary in Harris for years, and who, when he retired, went back to his native village. One day he visited Miss MacColl, who suggested to him to hold a Service in her house. To this he readily agreed. "It was during that service that my poor soul was betrothed to Christ for eternity, and I could say then, 'My beloved is mine, and I am His'," she quietly whispered to me.

The writer first met her shortly after coming to Fort William. My elder, Mr Matheson, took me to visit her in her cosy little cottage in Ballachulish, where she was conscious of the eternal God being her refuge and underneath her His everlasting arms.

After worship, she suggested our holding a service with her as soon as possible. "There are 20 years since I listened to the joyful sound of the blessed Gospel," she said. In reply, Mr Matheson said: "Yes, the Minister I am sure will gladly hold a service here, in a month or so, on our return from a Presbytery meeting." Bending her head and with a deep sigh she said: "O, that is somewhat too far away." We therefore agreed to have the service the following week. That service, neither of us have ever forgotten. It was the portion of God's Word she was longing to hear from which we spoke: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me."

A week later, and after breakfast, the heavenly summons sounded in her ears: "The bridegroom cometh and he calleth for thee." She believed that. She then told the one who so tenderly attended to her of the solemn message, adding: "When all is over, please telephone the Fort William minister, and tell him to take the worship at my funeral, and that no one else shall take part in it, but himself. Moreover tell him to remain by my graveside until all is finished. Her wish was accomplished.

"The secret of the Lord is with
such as do fear his name;
and he his holy covenant
will manifest to them." Ps. 25: 14

The matter remained an unsolved problem to my mind, until I noticed a Jesuit priest standing on the verge of her grave. Immediately we proceeded with the usual word of exhortation at the graveside, pointing out that the Confession of Faith prohibits prayers at the grave, and all such heathenish and Romish practices.

Yes, the memory of the just is blessed. The resurrection morning shall assuredly be a glorious one, without a cloud or ripple on the sea of glass. The last trumpet will give an audible solemn sound, thus causing every grave under the canopy of heaven to give up their dead. It is quite obvious from God's word that the righteous shall rise first. "For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel" I Thes. 4: 16. The people who had then come through great tribulation, and bearing His name upon them — "and I will write upon them my new name," Rev. 3: 12 — shall listen to his final message to them while on the outside of the Celestial City: "Come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world." Whereas, the wicked shall rise; as the prophet Daniel affirms: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Oh, how very sweet to read in God's Word: "and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage; and the door was shut."

(Rev.) J. A. MacD.

Notes and Comments

Archbishop of York and Church Unity

At a service in York Minster to mark the death of a Roman Catholic "saint", Margaret Clitherow, executed for treason at the time of the Reformation, Dr. John Hapgood, Archbishop of York stated: "The religious fortress mentality which keeps us (the Churches) separated from one another . . . has got to be broken down." He also claimed that many people had been frightened off religion by extremists. Along with the Archbishop was Cardinal Basil Hume, the first Roman Catholic Cardinal to enter the Minster in almost 500 years, and most of the Roman

Catholic bishops attended also. Dr Hapgood and Cardinal Hume led a procession to the shrine of Margaret Clitherow. From all this it is evident that the Archbishop of York is a good second to the Archbishop of Canterbury in promoting unity with the Church of Rome.

Relaxation of Sabbath Laws Rejected

As noted in the May issue, the Government was defeated in its attempt to do away with the laws in England and Wales for safe-guarding the Sabbath. One Scottish MP has since called for safeguards for the Sabbath to be introduced in Scotland as well to prevent Sabbath trading.

In view of the prevailing trend in the nation for the relaxation of all moral restraints it is a matter for much thankfulness to the Lord that this piece of legislation to allow unlimited trading on the Sabbath was defeated. Surely the hand of God is to be seen in it and we have no doubt that lovers of the Sabbath will acknowledge this, and render thanks for it to Him to whom it is due. It should also hearten the Lord's people that the enemies of the Sabbath have not been permitted to get their way, and should encourage them to look to the Lord to do great things for our nation in the midst of all the declension that prevails.

Scottish Church Unity Discussions

At a meeting of the Inverness Church of Scotland Presbytery, Rev. Robert Logan, the presbytery clerk called for an end to the Church Unity talks with the Episcopalians. He suggested that the Church's Board of World Mission and Unity should be told that the talks should be dropped for 25 years. He stated that he was opposed to organic unity with the Episcopalian Church and that he saw no signs of willingness to unite by either denomination. His proposal was defeated by 28 votes to 10 but it is good that there are some in that Presbytery who see the futility of the present discussions on unity.

Armed Forces Bill and Sodomy

An attempt by the Campaign for Homosexual Equality and the National Council for Civil Liberties to obtain a removal of the penalties relating to sodomy within the Armed Forces, in order to bring them into line with the notorious Sexual Offences Act, has been rejected by the Select Committee looking into the provisions of the Armed Forces Bill. The Committee warned that such relationships could generate tension which could only be harmful to morale and military efficiency. The committee also rejected any moves to scrap the death penalty for certain

military offences, that is, those which involve a positive act of treachery and of deliberate and active assistance to the enemy. It is reason for thankfulness that the legislators in this instance show more wisdom than in connection with civil offences.

Church Notes

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Zimbabwe: At Bulawayo on 10th June at 2 p.m.

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

Outer Isles: At Stornoway on 17th June at 12 noon.

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

Southern: At Edinburgh on 27th June at 7 p.m. for the Induction of Rev. Angus Morrison M.A.

Skye: At Portree on 1st July at 11 a.m.

Portnalong Communion: The Kirk Session has decided that the date of the Spring Communion be changed from the third Sabbath of April to the first Sabbath of April, as it was before.

Zimbabwe Mission — Staff Vacancies

GENERAL — Post of Administrator/Treasurer.

JOHN TALLACH SECONDARY SCHOOL — Graduate Teachers (Four Posts) with qualifications in English, History, Geography and Mathematics.

MBUMA HOSPITAL — A doctor is still urgently required, also a further Nurse/Midwife and preferably with teaching experience.

With the new situation that exists in Zimbabwe consequent upon independence it is desirable that all of the seven above posts be filled as soon as possible. The work provides a real challenge to all who may have these necessary qualifications, and all our Church people should make the needs of our Mission a matter of constant prayer.

Enquiries to Rev. A. Murray, F.P. Manse, Lairg, Sutherland, IV27 4EH. Telephone 0549-2176.

Mass Media — TV, Radio and newspapers

It is gratifying to read that the violence and immorality portrayed on television is being recognised as having a detrimental effect on our nation. Several MPs have spoken on the subject and Winston Churchill, MP, has a Bill before Parliament called the Obscene Publications (Protection of Children, etc) Amendment Bill which seeks to bring television and radio within the 1959 Obscene Publications Act. Another MP

has drawn attention to the obscene "page 3" feature of some national newspapers. She hopes that these can be banned, under similar legislation by which obscenity is banned from public hoardings.

The Synod has repeatedly drawn attention to the dangers of novels and the mass media upon individual and national morality. In almost all the Synod discussions and statements on this subject since 1960, the television has featured prominently, the radio, newspapers and novels less so.

We would remind our people of the Synod statements on television, etc.

1965 Synod Proceedings p29

"The Synod of the Free Presbyterian met at Inverness on Thursday, 20th May, 1965, would like to draw the attention of its people to the grave danger to the life and morals of the nation which is constituted by the present character of many television programmes particularly owing to the fact that television exerts a much more powerful influence upon the viewer than any other entertainment medium; and that this power is especially dangerous when television is used in the home because it is extremely difficult to control its use completely. The Synod accordingly strongly urges its people to take notice of this serious risk and to do their utmost not to expose themselves nor their children to this evil influence."

1967 Synod Proceedings p26 (& reaffirmed 1977 Synod Proceedings p9)

"The Synod renews its warning against the danger of television and reminds the people of the Church that looking at many of the programmes on television is equivalent to going to the theatre, a concert hall or a cinema, and that such conduct, in addition to the demoralising effect it has on the viewer, exposes the person guilty of it to the righteous displeasure of God, as well as to the censures of the Church."

We would also advise our people against patronising, by the regular purchase of, newspapers which portray naked or semi-naked people as a regular feature.

"Turn thou away my sight and eyes from viewing vanity;
And in thy good and holy way be pleas'd to quicken me."

Ps119:37

(Rev) D. Boyd, Clerk,
Religion and Morals Committee

Acknowledgment of Donations

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

Foreign Mission Fund: Anon., Skye, per Rev. N. R., £5 for Mission School, blind children; Anon., Leics., £100; Friend, Lochinver, per Rev. A. MacP., £5.

Chesley Building Fund: P. I., Inverness, £100.

Dunoon Congregational Fund: P. I., Inverness, £20.

OVERSEAS ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Ingwenya: Vancouver Congregation, \$2028.00; Winnipeg Friend, \$300.00.

John Tallach Secondary School: Rev. R. R. S., £100; Mr Sellars, Inverness, £20; Mr and Mrs A., Skye, \$688; Per Dr J. Tallach, \$588; Toronto Ladies, \$150; Chesley Congregation, \$170; Friends, Dingwall, £20; Mr and Mrs MacLeod, Madiera Park B.C., \$500; Miss C. M., Dingwall, £50; Mrs T. and Friend, £200; Mr Wm. Sim, £200; Miss J. G., £100; Miss M. G., £100; Wick Sabbath School, £10, all in 1985. Mrs MacKenzie, Kishorn, £400; Mrs Weir, Wick, £2000; Dingwall Ladies Group, £20; Toronto Ladies, \$135; Lakenhead Strict Baptist Sabbath School, £96; Inverness Sabbath School, £250; Glasgow Sabbath School, £250; Per Rev. A. F. M., I Chron. 29: 14, £100; A Friend, £25; A Friend, £10, all in 1986. **Ballifeary Home of Rest:** Miss I. Campbell acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:— Visitors, Sheildaig, £5, £1; Visitor, Lewis, £10; Visitor, Ullapool, £5.

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

Achmore: Friend, Stornoway, £100 for Congr. Purposes (envelope in plate at Communion).

Applecross: Anon., £10 (envelope in plate); Ardersier Friends, £10; Friend, Kirkhill, £20, all for Sust. Fund; Mr R. M., £10.80; Mr K. G., Glasgow, £30, both for Congr. Fund and both per Mr R. MacLean; J. and A. MacR., £10 (envelope in plate) for Church Door Collection; Friend, Kirkhill, £10.83, "where most needed"; "Seann Chairdean", £50 for Sust. Fund, £20 for Comm. Expenses, £30 "where most needed".

Dumbarton: A Friend, St. Jude's, £5 (in plate); Anon., St. Jude's, £20 (in plate); Mr A. G., Helensburgh, £20; Anon., Cardross, £5, all for Congr. Fund.

Dundee: R. and D. F. for local advertising, £20.

Edinburgh: Anon. Friends of the Cause, Edinburgh, £300 for Jewish and Foreign Mission (envelope in plate).

Fort William: Mrs S., £30; Hebrews 4: 9, £20 per D. M.; D. I. and Mrs J. C., £50; MacL., Tyndrum, £10; Harris Friend, £10; Friend, Caol, £10, last three for Sust. Fund, last four per Rev. J. A. MacDonald; In memory of 1893, £10 (envelope in plate); Envelope in plate, £10 for Trinitarian Bible Society.

Glendale: Anon., £20 for Church Door Collection; Anon., £10 "where most needed", both per Rev. Donald Nicolson.

Laide: Church Building Fund — Friend, Gairloch, £10; Friend, Gairloch, £10; Friend, Applecross, £5; Anon., £15; Mrs Morrison, £10, all per Rev. D. A. Ross; Anon., £100; Anon., £50; Friend, Ullapool, £20; "Friends", Gairloch, £300, per A. MacRae.

Raasay: Envelope in plate, £20; Envelope in plate, £10; Friend, Raasay, £20; Envelope in plate (where most needed) £10, all for Sust. Fund; Friend, Raasay, £20 for Home Mission; A Friend, Raasay, for sending Bibles abroad, £15 for Trinitarian Bible Society, per Rev. J. R. Tallach.

Staffin: Anon., £100 (envelope in plate), In appreciation of Church discipline, Prov. 17: 15.

Stornoway: Anon. Friend, £40 (£20 for Sust. Fund, £20 for Organisation Fund); Anon., £69 for telephone installation, £31 for car expenses.