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Pray Without Ceasing

At the beginning of another year we are called to take stock and consider how things stand between our souls and God. If we find ourselves to be still in the darkness of sin and unbelief then we have reason to lay to heart how short our time is in this world and of our need to make our calling and election sure. If, on the other hand, we have reason to conclude that our hope is in the Saviour, then we ought to give heed to the many exhortations in God's Word addressed to His believing people. One of these is — Pray Without Ceasing — which is a call to the true Church of God to engage in this most needful of duties — and a call to engage in it ceaselessly.

Prayer is the breath of the soul, so that where there is no prayer — no breathings after God — there is no life. This was true of Paul until it was recorded of him: "Behold he prayeth." His prayers as a Pharisee, though no doubt numerous and long, were of no account. In his days as a Pharisee there was no spiritual life in his prayer, no breathings after God. But when he was born again, born of the Spirit, and had spiritual life imparted to his soul, immediately he began to pray.

We are not to conclude that that only is prayer which consists of well-ordered petitions, whether spoken in public or private. Sighs and groans also may be eloquent petitions which ascend up to the Throne of God. Perhaps it is such petitions that are heard in heaven oftener, and receive an answer in peace more than the well-ordered petitions and prayers of men. That was true in connection with the children of Israel in the bondage of Egypt. We are told that God heard their groaning. And many a groan and sigh and tear has the Lord heard and seen since then. We are told that "the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what

we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”

Prayer, the Shorter Catechism tells us, is the offering up of desires unto God for things agreeable to His will. Where true prayer is offered up, it is offered up in the Name of Christ and for things agreeable to His will. No temporal or spiritual blessing may be expected apart from the plea being made in Christ’s Name. It is for the sake of His beloved Son that the Father is well pleased to bestow the blessings of His grace. Christ also is the Intercessor within the veil and presents before the Throne of God the infinite merits of His atoning sacrifice. As the Risen and Exalted One He has obtained gifts for men, even for the rebellious, that God the Lord may dwell in the midst of them. What the Father bestows are blessings consistent with His own mind and will, and such as will in their bestowal upon poor needy sinners, or upon His people, redound to the glory of His great Name.

Prayer is to be a ceaseless activity. Just as the body cannot live apart from its breathing, so the believer cannot live apart from the breath of the soul, that is, prayer. The people of God are ever to be lifting up their hearts in prayer to God and in this way ever keeping in living contact with their glorified Head. They need to be ever dependant upon the Lord that He will sustain and bless them out of His holy hill of Sion.

His people are to watch unto prayer. They are not to grow weary. Satan ever looks for their halting. Then he will have his opportunity to assault them and to overcome them. Even at the footstool of the Lord he will harass them, seeking to deflect them from their duty. Yet the Lord can sustain and defend them from Satan’s attacks and enable them to continue instant in prayer.

At the beginning of another year we have reason to remember our many failings and falterings during a year that is passed, with regard to this duty of calling on God’s Name. May the year that has opened prove in the experience of the children of God a time in which they will be enabled to give heed to this pressing call of God in His Word to them when He is saying: Pray without ceasing.

What is your Life?

If we are to have our questions answered it is to the Word of God that we are to come. The Bible has the answer to all the most important questions that can arise in men’s minds, questions relating both to this life and to that which is to come. But the Bible not only answers the ques-

tions of men in the world but also poses questions so that men may be brought to consider them. The question, What is your life?, is one of these. James in his epistle not only asks this question as the inspired writer of this epistle but also answers it so that men may not be left ignorant of this solemn matter.

But why did he pose such a question as this — What is your life? The answer we find in the preceding verse. There were those who were saying, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell and get gain. That is, there were those who were planning what to do with their life for a year ahead. They were planning for the future like the rich man in the parable who said: This will I do: I will pull down my barns and build greater; and there will I bestow my fruits. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry. So do worldlings plan for the days and weeks and years that lie ahead of them. The men of this world appear to take everything into account in making their future plans. It is not without deliberation and forethought that they lay them, so that it can be said that "the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." How sensible and reasonable does it appear to the natural mind to plan for the future and he would be reckoned a fool who would act otherwise. Where then is it that men go astray in connection with this matter which makes the Apostle James say: What is your life?

What the apostle is bringing before us here, and what God is seeking to place before us here is this — that in all our planning there is need to have ever before us the brevity of time; and that very shortly, we know not when, we must give in our account to God. Forgetfulness of God makes us forgetful of eternity and of the shortness of time. We are ready to presume on the long-suffering of Jehovah — that He will spare us yet a season in the world — if we think of Him at all. So far as the wicked are concerned, "God is not in all their thoughts," and the consideration of eternity is far from them. They therefore resolve that as they have done in the past so shall they do in the future — and much more besides. The rich man had to learn to his bitter sorrow the awful result of such a philosophy. How awful to hear these words: "This night thy soul shall be required of thee." These words were to seal his eternal doom. He who had thought up such great plans for time had no plans made up for eternity and he was found unprepared. Of how many planners in this world is this true. Ask them of their plans for time and they can expatiate on their plans and ideas which they have thought up for a long time to

come, but ask them about preparation for death, judgment and eternity and it will soon become apparent that they have made no preparation for these. Is this true of us?

The Word of God is not telling men to make no plans for the future but tells us that when we are making such plans to say: "If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that." We are ever to keep in mind that our plans may be interrupted at any time by the call of the messenger of death and that that messenger allows no delay. We are ever to have before us the uncertainty of time. "Ye know not what shall be on the morrow," James says to those to whom he is writing. We do not know what a day or an hour may bring forth. Time is on the wing, eternity is nigh. Our "days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle," the Word of God tells us, or are as an hand breadth. And here in the Epistle of James we learn in answer to this question, What is your life?, that our life "is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." How unsubstantial, how unreal, how swiftly passing is a vapour! So is our life.

As another year then opens, and as we lay our plans for the future, let us not leave out of our calculations this question and the answer given to it. Let us be very much aware that though we may have been spared in the Lord's good providence to see the beginning of it, we have no assurance of seeing the end of it. Yea, every day of it must be regarded as a gift from God in His mercy and long-suffering. Each day ought to be used by us to make our calling and election sure lest at last we are found unprepared for the great eternity and go out to everlasting darkness. How sad it would be to do so from the midst of Gospel privileges. Let us therefore give heed to the call of God in His Word: "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." And let His people take encouragement from this, that "none perish that Him trust."

Sermon

by the Rev. Donald Campbell, M.A., Edinburgh.

"He is not here: for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay." Matthew 28: 6.

Recently we were endeavouring to draw your attention to some matters concerning the burial of our Lord; that is the burial of His Body. In

doing so we endeavoured to emphasise the importance of this part of Messiah's history. It was absolutely necessary that He should die. It was as necessary that the Church of God should have the most conclusive proof of that fact. The reason why such a proof was necessary, and continues to be necessary, was the endeavour, and the endeavours still being made by the enemy and by the enemies of Christianity, to prove that He was only in a trance or deep coma by reason of the excruciating pain which crucifixion could inflict upon those who were its victims. The burial of Christ was arranged by men who had authority — one in the Church: the other in the state — Joseph of Arimathaea who was a member of the Council and Pilate who was the Governor and Supreme Judge over Judaea. Both were satisfied that the Body was a dead body. Then Joseph proceeded to carry out the duty of burying that Holy Body.

Tonight we are confronted with His resurrection. It was necessary that He should die in order that He be the propitiation for the sins of the world. It is just as necessary that we should have the most conclusive proof of the Resurrection. The apostle, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, in dealing with the resurrection of the dead, the resurrection of the bodies of the human race, writes that, if Christ be not risen, then our faith in him is vain. Those who died in Christ are lost. Now it is inconceivable that such a thing would happen. We ourselves have been privileged to know men and women who professed the Christian religion and whose godliness no one would doubt. We saw such and we would find it very difficult, impossible to accept from anyone, that now, their souls being in eternity, they are lost. God forbid. Nevertheless that would be the case if it could be proved that Jesus of Nazereth, that is His Body, never rose from the dead — that it remained in that sepulchre until it was reduced to dust. The enemies of the Cross, of course, have tried and continue to try to prove that the Body of our Lord never rose from the dead. It is, therefore, a very important duty and a very binding obligation on all Christians to acquaint themselves with this subject; to so arm themselves with the whole armour, which God has provided, in order that they be able to resist the enemy and discomfit him and refute all those alleged proofs and arguments which would suggest that the Christian religion is a fraud and imposition from which those who profess it, and submit to its rules, must be delivered. So, we have the testimony of all the gospel writers who wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and who themselves were eyewitnesses of much that happened although none of them saw, because no man or woman saw, the actual Resurrection of Christ. Nevertheless, they were left with proofs which were, and

are, as conclusive as though some of them had seen it. So, all do testify to the fact of it. None of the gospel writers omitted to give us a very convincing account of this fact, that the Lord rose from the dead. This chapter is Matthew's record of the event.

In considering Matthew's record with reference to the text — "He is not here: for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay." — we would consider the three propositions contained in the text. The FIRST one is the announcement, "He is not here." That to some at the time was a very perplexing announcement indeed, but, as one can see from the context, that concern and worry vanished away. We find them enjoying the blessings and joy of this great and most important event. SECONDLY, we have an explanation for His absence from the grave in these words, "For He is risen, as He said." He is risen and risen just as He said Himself, first through His prophets and secondly by Himself. THIRDLY, we have the invitation, "Come, see the place where the Lord lay." A wonderful invitation! The Word of God is full of, is replete with invitations. Many of those begin with this very word, inviting sinners to "Come". Some invitations invite us to come and taste; others to come and hear; others to come and drink; others to come and eat. This one invited those gracious women to come and see and the invitation is to us tonight just as it was to them. To come, see the place where He was laid on that shelf in the grave. For this was a sepulchre — not an ordinary grave — but a sepulchre as was common in Israel itself and among other eastern nations. The kings, the princes of the nation and other wealthy people had sepulchres made for them. David's sepulchre was, it is thought, about 30 feet long. Such were divided into apartments — niches cut out of the rock and in the side of the sepulchre. In these the body, some — as was true of the body of our Lord — annointed and wrapped in linen, was laid. There the Lord's Body was placed in a particular space that was specially made for it. It was there — but not now.

Firstly, the ANNOUNCEMENT, "He is not here." As we mentioned, this was a perplexing announcement, for those to whom it was made had come to that place for a purpose, namely, to anoint the Body. Now the Body was not there. Mary Magdalene came to the conclusion that it was stolen. "They have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid Him." Now, after they had looked for Him in vain they found themselves being ministered to by an angel so that the sepulchre has become a place in which we find a congregation and a preacher with a theme to preach on. That place in which the Body of the Lord was laid, a place which caused such sorrow to the women and to others also, has

become the Church of God; it has indeed become a synagogue; it has become a tabernacle and, although the Body of the Lord is not there, nevertheless there is much left to give food for thought and meditation.

The first point we would notice in this connection is the preacher. The preacher was an angel. He is described here as having a face, a glorious face and wearing bright garments. His whole aspect was awe-inspiring. He was obviously one from another world. He was of course an angel. We are left in no doubt about that. If we believe the Scriptures at all, we believe that this particular preacher or announcer was an angel and that he was there for the purpose of giving comfort to these women who had come to the Sepulchre. The next point, with regard to the preacher or announcer is that he knew these women. He knew what was in their hearts. He knew their errand. He knew why they were there. "I know," he said, "It is not necessary to tell me, I know that ye seek Jesus." Notice how he describes Jesus. "Jesus of Nazareth which was crucified." He refers the women to this Person's low estate while yet alive in this world and when He died. He does not refer to Him as the Son of God, as the Prince of the Kings of the Earth, but he refers to Him as Jesus of Nazareth — the place where poverty prevailed; where there were so many indications of the fruit of sin as these adversely affected the children of men. This was also, and perhaps this is the significant part of it and the real reason why reference is made to this place, the scene of Christ's Ministry. There He performed miracles; there He spent much of His time during His public Ministry among men; and there He declared the gospel and made Himself known in different ways. Also, the reference is to the Cross. The one was the place of poverty, the other the place of the curse where Jesus was made a curse for us and where He was crucified for our sins. They are then reminded both of His active and of His passive Ministry; of His life and of His death. Sin brought poverty, misery, hopelessness and the curse of God on man. The reference to the Cross was equivalent to a reference to the Victory which He had over death for it was in this way that he spoiled principalities and powers. It was in this way that He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. This was to be and would be the theme of the preacher and preachers from henceforth — "Christ and Him crucified."

The angel began his sermon, as it were, by preaching Christ in His humiliation. Now Christ was at the beginning of His exaltation, as the angel was about to tell them, when he said, "He is not here." "He was here, this dead Body carried from the Cross on Calvary, laid in this grave, in this particular place, is no longer here." This suggests to us

something else. It is this — that the absence of the Lord can be, and has often been, a confirmation of the Truth of Truths, which cannot otherwise be proved, that He was indeed risen. The Church of God has often found itself in the situation that she has had to resort to the absence of the Lord in order that she might have proof of the truth, unchangeableness and veracity of His Word and Power. When she said, "The Lord hath forsaken me: the Lord hath forgotten me." — she said that out of a sense of His absence. But the Lord said that He had not forgotten her; that He had not forsaken her. His absence, here as nowhere else, became necessary as a proof of His Resurrection. There is no greater proof. We could not find a greater proof than this, that He was not there, proof that He was indeed risen. "He is not here" the angel said. He was preaching His absence in regard to this place in which He was and in which it was necessary for Him to be, but, which if He were now found in would forever vitiate the Covenant and all that the Covenant represented. If the Lord had not risen, as He said Himself — if His Body were still found there the first day of the week, the second day of the week, and so on, where was the Covenant? Where were the words of the Lord Himself? What proof had the Church that He would ever rise if He were still lying there? So the angel directed their attention to this. He preached to them the absence of the Lord, taking this as the proof, the most conclusive proof, of His Resurrection.

The women thought that they would find Him there. They heard often from His lips that He would rise on the third day, nevertheless, when the third day came, they came to the Sepulchre not to meet with the absence of the Lord, but with His presence in the Body. But now they must be corrected. They must be delivered from this delusion. They are deceived and being deceived by themselves when they behave in this way. It has been the privilege and the duty of the angel to enlighten them by assuring them that the Lord was not there. We referred already to the thought that someone had stolen the Body. That was of course possible although improbable having regard to the precautions taken to protect the Body while it was in the Sepulchre. Nevertheless, we could not be absolutely certain that such a thing might not have happened. But now, the angel, having assured them of His absence, knowing their hearts, knowing the purpose of their visit there and knowing their history also is about to give them the explanation. But perhaps first it would be only right and proper that we should make a reference to the history of those gracious women who were the congregation of the angel. These were among those who were saved from their sins by this same One, by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Mary Magdalene was one and the other women also. They had tasted that the Lord was gracious and discovered in their own souls the power of that grace. They ministered unto Him. Some of them anointed His Body; others washed His feet with their tears; others ministered to Him of their substance. They were all the time engaged in serving Him. Now they find themselves deprived of all this and left without even a body. There is nothing at all — empty hands, an empty grave, an empty life, but, although this was true of them, they found themselves in the right place. Though they had arrived and having arrived found themselves filled with apprehension and consternation — confounded, confused and not knowing what to say or do — the angel knows them and that because he was sent as a ministering angel to tell the women of the Resurrection. He had an authority which even the apostles did not possess at the time, for they were not there to see the Lord rising from the dead, but the angel was. He knew what had happened and he was there to tell the women. So, the women, having found themselves in this situation, had first to listen to the subject of the Lord's absence. They are now being led by him to hear the explanation.

Secondly then, the EXPLANATION, "He is risen as he said". He is not stolen but He is risen — a reference to the Resurrection. And He is risen, not out of a sleep or out of a coma or out of a trance, but He is risen in terms of the Resurrection and what a resurrection means. That is, the coming back of the soul into the body. From the Cross there were two ways. We were singing in the 16th Psalm about the Way of Life which God would show and did show His Son. Of the two ways from the Cross on Calvary, one was the way to Paradise and the other was the way to the Sepulchre. The Soul took the way to Paradise. We do not know whether that Soul was accompanied or was carried by the angels to Paradise as the soul of Lazarus was. Such could have been the case and we say this because the other way required the ministry and service of men. Joseph of Arimathaea, Nicodemus, neither any of the saints in Heaven could bring the Soul of the Redeemer from Calvary. It was committed to the Hands of the Father. Whether the Father used the ministry of angels or not we do not know. But we know that the Soul made its way from the Body crucified on Calvary to Paradise, as He said to the thief, "Today thou shalt be with Me in Paradise." We also know that the Body was carried to the Sepulchre. The separation had taken place. It was dead. Now the Way of Life was shown. The Lord, in the spirit of prophecy, said, "Therefore My Flesh rests in hope." In hope of what? In hope of the Resurrection. Thou wilt not leave My Soul in hell. What

hell? The hell of His sufferings. Thou wilt not suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption. What Holy One? What corruption? His Body in the grave. Then the Way of Life is first shown to the Soul from the Cross. The Soul is in Paradise. The Way of Life is not closed yet. The work is not finished. Christ's work is but the Father's is not. He has, and we say this with all reverence, His commitments still and He must consider them. The Soul of the Redeemer of men; the Soul that was poured out unto death; the Soul that became the redemption price of His people is in Good Hands, in the care and keeping of the Father. But the Body is in the grave. Is the Way of Life from Paradise to the grave closed? No. The Way of Life from the Paradise to the grave is wide open. Because that was so and is so the Soul of the Redeemer came back from Paradise to that Sepulchre. No stone, no obstacle could prevent It from entering into that Tabernacle; entering into that Temple which men had destroyed but which now is built again. The Soul was back in that place where the faculties of the adorable Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, were wont to dwell. It was a glorious occasion which men and women were not permitted to see. It was something which was fit for angels to behold and even they would have found it awesome and overcoming. He is risen. The great event has taken place, the reunion has taken place. The Way of Life is opened. He shews Him the Way of Life. If the Soul is wanting to Heaven, let It go to Heaven. If the Soul is wanting back to that Body, let It go back to that Body. That is what happened. He is risen and risen as He said. Exactly just as He said Himself, first by prophesy, to His servants the prophets who prophesied of this. Job prophesied of it. Abraham knew it, in a very special way, that day when he offered up his son Isaac. Daniel saw it in his day. It was part of the oracles of God. It was a very special and important part of those oracles that the Messiah, when He would come, would not only die for the sins of His people, but that He would also rise again, having obtained eternal redemption for them. It was not to be a case of His Body being carried unknown to men into Heaven but rather that it should happen in this way. He is risen. Risen as He said. That being so, is it not the duty of the Church of God to hold fast this doctrine? It is not a doctrine which the Church can afford to lose. It is a doctrine which forms the very basis of her hope and destiny. If this doctrine be conceded then the hope of man is lost. But it will not be lost. The fact that the enemies of the Cross would persuade us that there is no proof of this Resurrection, is no proof in itself that it did not happen. If we approach and examine this subject with unprejudiced minds then we are bound to accept that this record is not a fraudulent

one but rather the truth. There is nothing in the record to raise suspicions that anyone is trying to impose upon us when we are asked to believe that Jesus is risen. He is risen. He is not here. He is absent from this place because He is risen. The rising means and meant His Resurrection, and His Resurrection meant and means that His Soul came back from Paradise to enter into His Body, there to remain for ever and ever. "He liveth after the power of an endless life." There is no change now. This will never change and even the fact that he ascended to the Right hand of God the Father, where He is now, has not altered the fact that His Soul is in His Body. The Body went to Heaven the place where the Soul had been when the Body was in the grave. He said it. They had His own words, His own warrant for expecting it, but alas, they were just not expecting it at the time.

This leads us to the third part of the subject — The INVITATION, "Come, see the place where the Lord lay." That is the Sepulchre. The angel's message to them was one of gladness. It was one which not only allayed and dispelled their fears but also filled them with hope being assured that in His absence from the grave they had the proof of His being somewhere alive and alive for evermore. That was calculated to so occupy their minds that they could not give thought or consideration to anything else — to any other subject. It is only natural when we have something very pleasant to think of that we should forget sorrows and sadness. That is what will happen in Heaven — "Sorrow and sighing shall flee away" and, in a sense, the Sepulchre on the First Day of the week was, to those women, like Heaven itself for they had the resurrection of The Resurrection Himself. Death had been swallowed up in victory. The grave was, until that day, the victor over the Body, but now even that has been conquered — "O grave, where is thy victory?" The women were celebrating the victory over the grave. They found themselves in that physical situation in which they could rejoice in the fact that the grave had no power over the One who promised to resurrect their bodies and conform it unto His Glorious Body. He said to them that if he would die He would go to prepare a place for them and would come back to receive them unto Himself that where He is they would be also. Now here He was back from the dead. The proofs were there for, although they could not see or feel His Body, they had sufficient evidence that he was alive in His absence from the grave and the testimony of the angel — a testimony based upon the testimony of the Lord Himself as this testimony was stated through the prophets and by Himself. Notwithstanding this they could not forget the past and this, we

think, was what was implied in the invitation, "See the place where the Lord lay." Remember that the angel was speaking to people who saw the Lord's Body laid there. He was not addressing people who had no knowledge of this, who never saw this grave before, but to people who were at that grave if not in it. People could walk about those graves or sepulchres. This the women did as did the disciples afterwards. They saw the place where He was laid and this would surely remind them of the state of their own minds at that time. When His Body was laid there they were sad. They had then the evidence, the proof of His death. Now they have the proof of His Resurrection. Are they going to forget all about the proof of His death in the glow of the knowledge of having proof of His Resurrection? There was the danger, there still is the danger, that this may happen. One could be in danger of forgetting about the sufferings of our Lord in the light of the glory of His Resurrection and triumph over death, sin, the grave and the powers of darkness. This must not be. Therefore the angel said to the women, "See where He was laid." Call to remembrance the days that are past. Call to remembrance His love when He poured out His Soul unto death; when He was numbered with the transgressors; when He did bear the sins of many and when He made intercession for transgressors. All this must be remembered and considered in the context of the evidence and proof of His Resurrection. This, we think, was further confirmed by the Lord Himself when He appeared to John on the Isle of Patmos and the Lord, appearing in His glory, said to John, "I am He that was dead." Notwithstanding the glory that I have now, notwithstanding the fact that I am now exalted and have a name which is above every name, nevertheless, I begin by introducing Myself to My servant John on this occasion by reminding him of My death. So the women also were reminded of His death. They were to keep this in remembrance and to seek grace to keep, to retain, to cherish and to make the best use of the experience of seeing His Body laid in the grave even at the time of great and no ordinary joy.

Now, in considering this "place" questions arise. The place was the Sepulchre. Originally it was a cave which was prepared as a sepulchre. Skilful hands worked in it to make of the cave a sepulchre and it became the sepulchre of a rich man. So that Sepulchre, apart from the fact that the Saviour was in it, was in itself a subject which commanded attention and stimulated interest. It reflected the skills of those who had transformed this cave into a wonderful sepulchre which was considered suitable for the bodies of a rich man and his family. You might ask what is the connection? Is there any connection at all? Is there here not

something for us to consider? May this not remind us of the change — the skill reflected — in the transformation that takes place in the experience, in the state, in the nature of those who become the sepulchre or the tabernacle of Christ? “Know ye not that ye are the temple of the Spirit?” Is it not true that man, before Christ is brought into his life; before Christ is resurrected within him as the hope of eternal life, is like a cave? A darksome cave, a place not fit for habitation. Is it not true that when a soul is changed by the renewing of the Holy Ghost that there is a change comparable to what we have represented here?

The Sepulchre was a place fit for Christ. But it was intended for someone else. Never was man laid here before. The first body laid here was the Lord’s Body. It was prepared by Joseph of Arimathaea for himself and for his family according to the practice common at the time — a wealthy man preparing a place of burial for himself and for his posterity. The place was empty. This fact would suggest to us that hitherto there had been no bereavement in that family but now the Great Bereavement had overtaken the world. The Church of God was bereaved. The necessary bereavement had become part of her history. The Elder Brother had died. The Elder Brother’s Body was laid in this Sepulchre, so that the Church might mourn, but not mourn as those who had no hope. Instead of weeping and mourning for always the weeping and mourning was to be for a night — “at morn doth joy arise.” The morning of the First Day of the week — the third day — came when the Elder Brother arose and with Him, in a sense, His people rose too. The evidence of His rising is the best proof they can entertain that they themselves, their bodies, will rise.

“He is not here. He is risen as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.” In considering this you will have a subject to occupy your attention, to expand your vision and which will extend your dimension and which is intended to convey to partakers the love and grace of God our Saviour. It will fill the soul with joy in believing.

They came on the First Day of the week. This physical visit, as far as we can ascertain, was the last one — the first and the last one. It was not necessary for them to go there any more. He said to them that if they wanted to meet Him they could go into Galilee. There they would see Him but not in the cave. Mary Magdalene, it is true, saw Him but it was after the angel had departed. She saw Him in the garden, not in the grave, and she knew Him there but continued fellowship was not permitted. She was commanded not to touch Him but to go and tell His disciples that He was going before them into Galilee. There they would

see Him. But although the physical visit to the Sepulchre was made only once by these women, the First Day of the week is to be observed. We are to pay our regular visits to the grave. That ought to be our practice as Christians. We should come to this grave the First Day of the week, in this sense and in this form, that we observe it according to the commendment; that we keep the First Day of the week Holy unto the Lord according to the Fourth Commandment. If we were to do that we might indeed discover something of what those women discovered to their joy, comfort and confirmation in the faith which they had in the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

May He bless unto us this meditation on His Word.

“Are You Holy?”

by J. C. Ryle

“Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.” Hebrews 12: 14.

Beloved Friends and Brethren,

I offer you this text as a subject for self-inquiry; and I invite you this day to think over the question before your eyes, “Are you holy?”

It is a question that can never be out of season. The wise man tells us, “There is a time to weep, and a time to laugh, — a time to keep silence, and a time to speak” (Eccles. 3: 4,7); but there is no time, no, not a day, in which a man ought not to be holy. Brethren, are you?

It is a question that concerns all ranks and conditions of men. Some are rich, and some are poor, — some learned and some unlearned, — some masters, and some servants; but there is no rank or condition in life in which a man ought not to be holy. Brethren, are you?

I ask to be heard today about this question. How stands the account between your souls and God? Stay a little, I beseech you, while I reason with you about holiness. I believe I might have chosen a subject more popular and pleasant. I am sure I might have found one more easy to handle.

But I feel deeply I could not have chosen one more important and more profitable to your souls. It is a solemn thing to hear God saying, “Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” (Heb. 12: 14).

I shall endeavour, by God’s help, to set before you what true holiness is, the reasons why it is so needful, and the way in which alone it can be attained. The Lord grant you may all see and feel the importance of the

subject, and lay down this paper, when you have read it, wiser and better men.

I. First, then, let me try to show you *what true holiness is, — what sort of persons are those whom God calls holy?*

A man may go great lengths, and yet never reach true holiness. It is not knowledge, — Balaam had that; nor great profession, — Judas Iscariot had that; nor doing many things, — Herod had that; nor zeal for certain matters in religion, — Jehu had that; nor morality and outward respectability of conduct, — the young ruler had that; nor taking pleasure in hearing preachers, — the Jews in Ezekiel's time had that; nor keeping company with godly people, — Joab and Gehazi and Demas had that. Yet none of these were holy. These things alone are not holiness. A man may have any one of them, and yet never see the Lord.

What then is true holiness? It is a hard question to answer. I do not mean that I find a want of matter on the subject. But I fear lest I should give a defective view of holiness, and not say all that ought to be said; or lest I should speak things about it that ought not to be spoken, and so do harm. Suffer me, however, to say a few words that may help to clear your minds. Remember only, when I have said all, that my account is but a poor imperfect outline at the best.

Holiness is *the habit of being of one mind with God*, according as we find His mind described in Scripture. It is the habit of agreeing in God's judgment, — hating what He hates, — loving what He loves, — and measuring everything in this world by the standard of His Word. He who most entirely agrees with God, he is the most holy man.

A holy man will *endeavour to shun every known sin, and to keep every known commandment*. He will have a decided bent of mind towards God, — a hearty desire to do His will, — a greater fear of displeasing Him than of displeasing the world, and a love to all His ways. He will feel what Paul felt when he said, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man" (Rom. 7: 22), and what David felt when he said, "I esteem *all* Thy precepts concerning all things to be right, and I hate every false way." (Psalm 119: 128).

A holy man will *strive to be like our Lord Jesus Christ*; to have the mind that was in Him, and to be conformed to His image. It will be his aim to bear with and forgive others, even as Christ forgave us, — to be unselfish, even as Christ pleased not Himself, — to walk in love, even as Christ loved us, — to be lowly-minded and humble, even as Christ made Himself of no reputation and humbled Himself. He will remember that Christ was a faithful witness for the truth, — that He came not to do His

own will, — that it was His meat and drink to do His Father's will, — that He would stoop to any work in order to minister to others, — that He was meek and patient under undeserved insults, — that He thought more of godly poor men than of kings, — that He was full of love and compassion to sinners, — that He was bold and uncompromising in denouncing sin, — that He sought not the praise of men, when He might have had it, — that He went about doing good, that He was separate from worldly people, — that He continued instant in prayer, — that He would not let even his nearest relations stand in His way when God's work was to be done. These things a holy man will try to remember. By them he will endeavour to shape his course in life. He will lay to heart the saying of John, "He that saith he abideth in Christ ought himself also to walk, even as He walked." (1 John 2: 6.) And the saying of Peter, that "Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow His steps." (1 Peter 2: 21.) Much time would be saved, and much sin prevented, if men would oftener ask themselves the question, "What would Christ have said and done, if He were in my place?"

But time would fail me, if I were to mention all the things which go to make up holiness of character. Still I must ask you to bear with me while I name a few things which come uppermost in my thoughts. The days we live in make me anxious that there should be no mistake upon this subject. How can we know whether we are holy, unless we have a clear view of what holiness takes in?

A holy man will follow after *meekness*, long-suffering, gentleness, kind temper, government of his tongue. He will bear much, forbear much, overlook much, and be slow to talk of standing on his rights. You see a bright example of this in the behaviour of David when Shimei cursed him, — and of Moses when Aaron and Miriam spake against him.

A holy man will follow after *temperance and self-denial*. He will labour to mortify the desires of his body; to crucify his flesh with its affections and lusts; to curb his passions; to restrain his carnal inclinations, lest at any time they break loose. Oh, what a word is that of the Lord Jesus to the Apostles, "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life." (Luke 11: 34.) And that of the Apostle Paul, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away." (1 Cor. 9: 27.)

A holy man will follow after *charity and brotherly-kindness*. He will endeavour to observe the golden rule, of doing as he would have men do to him, and sepaking as he would have men speak to him. He will be full

of affection towards his brethren, — their bodies, their property, their characters, their feelings, their souls. "He that loveth another," says Paul, "hath fulfilled the law." (Rom. 13: 8). He will abhor all lying, slandering, backbiting, cheating, dishonesty, and unfair dealing, even in the least things. The shekel and cubit of the sanctuary were larger than those in common use. Alas, what condemning words are the 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians, and the Sermon on the Mount, when laid alongside the conduct of many professing Christians!

A holy man will follow after a spirit of *mercy and benevolence towards others*. He will not stand all the day idle. He will not be content with doing no harm, — he will try to do good. He will strive to be useful in his day and generation, and to lessen the spiritual wants and misery around him, as far as he can. Such was Dorcas, full of good works and almsdeeds, which she did, — not merely purposed and talked about, *but did*. Such an one was Paul, "I will gladly spend and be spent for you," he says, "though the more abundantly I love you the less I be loved." (2 Cor. 10: 15.)

A holy man will follow after *purity of heart*. He will dread all filthiness and uncleanness of spirit, and seek to avoid all things that might draw him into it. He knows his own heart is like tinder, and will diligently keep clear of the sparks of temptation. Who shall dare to talk of strength when David can fall? There is many a hint to be gleaned from the ceremonial law. Under it the man who only touched a bone, or a dead body, or a grave, or a diseased person, became at once unclean in the sight of God. And these things were emblems and figures. Few Christians are ever too watchful and too particular about this point.

A holy man will follow after *the fear of God*. I do not mean the fear of a slave, who only works because he is afraid of punishment, and would be idle if he did not dread discovery. I mean rather the fear of a child, who wishes to live and move as if he was always before his father's face because he loves him. What a noble example Nehemiah gives us of this! When he became Governor at Jerusalem he might have been chargeable to the Jews, and required of them money for his support. The former Governors had done so. There was none to blame him if he did. But he says, "So did not I, because of the fear of God." (Nehem. 5: 15).

A holy man will follow after *humility*. He will desire in lowliness of mind to esteem all others better than himself. He will see more evil in his own heart than in any other in the world. He will understand something of Abraham's feeling, when he says, "I am dust and ashes," and Jacob's, when he says, "I am less than the least of all Thy mercies," and Job's,

when he says, "I am vile," and Paul's, when he says, "I am chief of sinners." Holy Bradford, that faithful martyr of Christ, would sometimes finish his letters with these words, "A most miserable sinner, John Bradford." Good old Mr Grimshawe's last words, when he lay on his death-bed, were these, "Here goes an unprofitable servant."

A holy man will follow after *faithfulness in all the duties and relations in life*. He will try, not merely to fill his place as well as others, but even better, because he has higher motives, and more help than they. Those words of Paul should never be forgotten, "Whatever ye do, do it heartily as unto the Lord," — "Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." Holy persons should aim at doing everything well, and should be ashamed of allowing themselves to do anything ill, if they can help it. Like Daniel, they should seek to give no occasion against themselves, except as concerning the law of their God. They should strive to be good husbands and good wives, good parents and good children; good masters and good servants, good neighbours, good friends, and good subjects. Holiness is worth little indeed, if it does not bear this kind of fruit. The Lord Jesus puts a searching question to His people, when He says, "What do ye more than others?"

Last, but not least, a holy man will follow after *spiritual mindedness*. He will endeavour to set his affections entirely on things above, and to hold things on earth with a very loose hand. He will not neglect the business of the life that now is, but the first place in his mind and thoughts will be given to the life to come. He will aim to live like one whose treasure is in heaven, and to pass through this world like a stranger and pilgrim travelling to his home. To commune with God in prayer, in the Bible, and in the assembly of His people, — these things will be the holy man's chiefest enjoyments. He will value everything, and place, and company, just in proportion as it draws him nearer to God. He will enter into something of David's feeling, when he says, "My soul followeth hard after Thee." "Thou art my portion." (Psalm 63: 8; 119: 57.)

Such is the outline of holiness which I set before you; such is the character which those who are called holy follow after.

But here let me say, I trust no man will misunderstand me. I am not without fear that my meaning will be mistaken, and the description I have given of holiness will discourage some tender conscience. I would not willingly make one righteous heart sad, or throw a stumbling-block in any believer's way.

I do not tell you for a moment that holiness shuts out the presence of

indwelling sin. No! far from it. It is the greatest misery of a holy man that he carries about with him a body of death, — that often when he would do good, evil is present with him; that the old man is clogging all his movements, and, as it were, trying to draw him back at every step he takes. But it is the excellence of a holy man that he is not at peace with *indwelling* sin, as others are. He hates it, mourns over it, and longs to be free from its company. The work of sanctification within him is like the wall of Jerusalem, the building goes forward, "even in troublous times" (Dan. 9: 25.)

Neither do I tell you that holiness comes to ripeness and perfection all at once, or that these graces I have touched on must be found in full bloom and vigour before you can call a man holy. No! far from it. Sanctification is always a *progressive work*. Some men's graces are in the blade, some in the ear, and some are like full corn in the ear. All must have a beginning. We must never despise the day of small things. And sanctification in the very best is an *imperfect work*. The history of the brightest saints that ever lived will contain many a "but", and "howbeit", and "notwithstanding", before you reach the end. The gold will never be without some dross, — the light will never shine without some clouds, until we reach the heavenly Jerusalem. The sun himself hath spots upon his face. The holiest men have many a blemish and defect when weighed in the balance of the sanctuary. Their life is a continual warfare with sin, the world, and the devil; and sometimes you will see them not overcoming, but overcome. The flesh is ever lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and in many things they offend all.

But still, for all this, I am sure that to have such a character as I have faintly drawn, is the heart's desire and prayer of all true Christians. They press towards it, if they do not reach it. They may not attain to it, but they always aim at it. It is what they fain would be, if it is not what they are.

And this I do mean to say, that true holiness is a great reality. It is something in a man that can be seen, and known, and marked, and felt by all around him. It is light: if it exists it will show itself. It is salt: if it exists its savour will be perceived. It is a precious ointment: if it exists, its presence cannot be hid.

I am sure the little I know of my own heart makes me ready to make allowance for much backsliding, for much occasional deadness. I know a road may lead from one point to another, and yet have many a winding and turn; and a man may be truly holy, and yet be drawn aside by many

an infirmity. Gold is not the less gold because mingled with alloy, nor light the less light because faint and dim, nor grace the less grace because young and weak. But after every allowance, I cannot see how any man deserves to be called holy, who wilfully allows himself in sins, and is not humbled and ashamed because of them. I dare not call any one holy who makes a habit of wilfully neglecting known duties, and wilfully doing what he knows God has commanded him not to do. Well says Owen, "I do not understand how a man can be a true believer unto whom sin is not the greatest burden, sorrow and trouble."

Brethren, such is holiness. Examine yourselves whether you are acquainted with it. Prove your own selves.

Spiritual Counsel

Letter from the late Rev. W. Stewart, Lochee,
to a Friend in Soul Distress.

I desire to sympathise with you in your present distress, and would be happy to be in any measure instrumental in establishing and comforting your soul in the truth as it is in Christ. I am happy to learn that you have seen such a beauty in the 88th Psalm; none but exercised souls can understand or relish it, and the most of Christian professors are entire strangers to what it contains.

There is only one way to heaven, and we may see from the Word of God how Old and New Testament saints were led. If our exercises and experiences coincide with these, we may conclude that we are on the road to heaven; but if otherwise, we are on the way to hell. There are many in the present day who grasp at the privileges of God's children, though they do not possess the character of such; but a sincere soul will not take the privilege without the character. They who are taught by the Holy Spirit, are made sensible that they are by nature children of wrath, like to the devil, and meet for hell, and that they can do nothing to recover themselves; although Christ is freely offered to them in the preaching of the gospel, yet they cannot embrace Him till the Spirit enables them. They know experimentally the redemption which Christ purchased will be but a sealed fountain to them in time and eternity, unless the Spirit apply it. The faith which unites the soul to Christ, is the fruit of the Spirit of God — the result of His regenerating grace — (See John 1: 12, 13). Christ by His Spirit takes the first hold of the soul, and when the Spirit enters into the dead soul, He imparts life to it by enlightening the understanding, and renewing the will, and the first act in the quickened soul, is to

apprehend the Lord Jesus Christ for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Christ apprehends the sinner, and then the sinner apprehends Him — (Phil. 3: 12). He keeps hold of the soul by His Spirit, and then the result is that the soul keeps hold of Him. It is not the carnal mind that closes with Christ, but the heaven-born principle implanted in the moment of regeneration. That principle turns to God, Christ, and holiness, as the needle to the north pole. Its language is, I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, and regard everything but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in Him so as to obtain pardon through His blood, acceptance through His Word and Spirit, grace here, and glory hereafter.

There is and must be something like a progressive effectual calling going on in the *true* believer from the day of conversion till the moment of death. The Holy Spirit convinces him more and more of his sin and misery so as to make him feel himself getting worse and worse every day; thus He gives him new discoveries of the person, offices, and fulness of Christ, and enables him to take a new hold of Him for life and salvation, as if he had never come to Christ before. This is what I understand by living a life of faith on the Son of God, and entering into the spirit of these words, "As ye have, therefore, received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him, rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith." The first act of saving faith is to receive and rest upon Christ, then by a repetition of the act faith grows (for faith grows by exercise), and the believer becomes more firmly rooted in Christ and the things of God. This is the secret of inward, real, and experimental religion. The Holy Spirit keeps the saint ever alive to his guilt and depravity, then he glorifies Christ in taking of his blood, righteousness, and grace, and shows them to the soul; and in this way the real Christian is kept travelling between his own emptiness and Christ's fulness, until he is prepared as a vessel of mercy for glory. They are either hypocrites or formalists, or backsliding Christians, who have not a daily and growing sense of their need of the Lord Jesus Christ in all His offices, and of the Holy Spirit in His illuminating, quickening, and sanctifying influences — (See Phil. 3: 8, 14). Paul, when 30 years in Christ, felt as much, and perhaps more, his need of Christ than the first time he closed with Him. They who are really in Christ come daily to Him in the exercise of humble and believing prayer. They come for *a present salvation, for a new heart, for new intimations of pardon, for true faith, true love to God, true repentance unto life, true zeal for the divine glory, true indignation against sin, and victory over it, and for a true meetness for the heavenly world.* The true

people of God are desirous that the devil and hell may be cast out of their souls in this life, and that the kingdom of glory, which consists in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, may be established within them.

They who are exercised about these things, and cannot be content without them, have a true and lively faith, and they who say or think that they rest upon Christ, and are not exercised about these things, whatever appearance of holiness, comfort, joy, and assurance they possess, *they*, in their present state, are but the devil's lambs, and going quietly and comfortably to hell. They who can live quietly with the hell of indwelling sin in their souls in this world, shall be shut up in the hell of sin and misery in the next; for sin must and will go to its own place, if not destroyed. Let professors say what they please, if they are not seeking above all things the glorious work of regeneration and sanctification of their souls, they are growing like devils, and ripening for hell; and on the other hand, they who are tortured and tormented with sin, and are desirous above all things to be made new creatures in Christ, and perfectly holy, are preparing as vessels of mercy for heaven and glory. We have many professors of religion, but few new creatures. Indeed, it is a rare thing to meet with a person really seeking after a change of nature; the most of professors are in very good terms with themselves, and this is a sure evidence that the Holy Spirit is not dealing savingly with their souls.

When the Spirit commences to destroy the works of the devil, there is an uproar in the soul; then the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, because they are contrary to each other. The warfare gets hotter and hotter as the work of grace advances. Satan and sin say — If we are forced out of this soul at last, we will do all that we can against the Holy Spirit and the new creature while we remain. If we are not able to destroy the new creature, we will at least make it groan, and weep, and cry. The Holy Spirit put it here to disturb our rest and repose. Now, the devil and sin outwit themselves here, for the new creature runs and tells God what sin and Satan are doing against Him. "Lord, thou seest how vile I am, like and worse than a devil, and a picture of hell; O Lord, I am sore oppressed, undertake for me, O destroy the devil's work within me; if thou wilt not destroy sin in me, it will destroy me in time and eternity. Lord give me a holy nature to hate *sin*, and to strive successfully against it. Write thy lovely law upon my heart, that I may delight in it after the inward man; O Lord, save me, or I must perish, for I know that I can do nothing but destroy myself; convert, humble,

quicken and sanctify me in spite of myself (the carnal mind). Take hold of my soul by the Spirit and grace, as the angel took hold of Lot and pulled him out of Sodom. Lord, pull me out of myself, and every refuge of lies, for I feel Sodom within me, pull me into Christ, and pull me on in a progressive sanctification, and never let me go, but make me like thy blessed self, and meet for glory." Now, if you are really exercised about these things, your soul is in health, and prospering before God.

Moderate Calvinism

Many call themselves *moderate Calvinists*, a denomination to which it is not easy to affix a precise idea. To the system called Calvinism, there may be nearer or more distant approaches, but those who deny any of the peculiar doctrines of that system cannot in any sense be called Calvinists. To affix the term Calvinism to any system, from which the doctrine of predestination is excluded, or in which it is even modified, is entirely a misnomer.

Some profess Calvinism, but affect to hold it in a more unexceptionable manner than it is held in the system in general. They seem to think that in the defence of that system, Calvin was extravagant, and that he gave unnecessary offence by exaggerated statements, and by language not warranted by the Scriptures. Such persons, it is presumed, are strangers to the writings of Calvin. Calvin himself is remarkable for keeping on Scripture ground, and avoiding anything that may justly be termed extravagant. No writer has ever indulged less in metaphysical speculation on the deep things of God than this writer. To support his system, it was necessary only to exhibit Scripture testimony; and he seems quite contented to rest the matter on this foundation.

What is called moderate Calvinism is in reality refined Arminianism. It is impossible to modify the former without sliding into the latter. If the doctrine of God's sovereignty and of unconditional election be denied, regeneration and redemption must undergo a corresponding modification, and all the doctrines of grace will be more or less affected. While it is admitted that many of the people of God, through imperfect views of Divine truth, falter on the subject of election, it is a truth essential to the plan of salvation, and a truth most explicitly revealed. No truth in the Scriptures is more easily defended. The reason why many find it difficult to defend this doctrine is, that they suppose it necessary to account for it by human wisdom, and to justify the conduct of God. We have nothing

to do with the grounds of the Divine procedure, we have to do only with the Divine testimony. There are many who in words fully admit the doctrine of predestination, and at the same time neutralise it by dwelling exclusively upon God's being love, and laying the blame of the whole world not being saved on the sloth of Christians.

Jehovah's Witnesses

1. The founder of this sect was Charles T. Russell born in 1852 a Haberdasher in Pittsburg, U.S.A., but known by his self styled title Pastor Russell. He was sued by his wife for divorce because of his immoral relations with one Rose Ball. He denied this until cornered, then admitted his guilt.
2. Pastor Russell claimed special ability in interpreting the Bible, but when under oath in the court at Hamilton, Ontario in 1913 he was asked, "Do you know Greek?" He replied "Oh yes!" When handed a Greek New Testament he proved unable to read the letters of the Greek Alphabet. He then had to admit that he neither knew Greek, Latin nor Hebrew, nor had any course in Theology.
3. The Jehovah's Witnesses deny and scoff the doctrine of the Trinity. They define the Trinity as "Three Gods in one, all equal in power, substance and eternity." This definition is a diabolical perversion of the truth. The Word of God does not teach that there are three Gods, but that there are **Three Persons** in the Godhead, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. For proofs of this sacred and sublime mystery precious to all who are believers in truth, see Matt. 3: 16, 17; 28: 19; 2 Cor. 13: 14; 1 John 5: 7.
4. The Jehovah's Witnesses deny eternal deity of Christ. In his book "Creation" Judge Rutherford who succeeded Pastor Russell states that "Jesus was merely a created being, the highest of all Jehovah's creation, that he was a god, a mighty one but not God." What a damnable lie!
5. One of the greatest lies of the Russellites is in connection with the Atonement made by Christ. They hold that "Christ's work on the cross simply guarantees a second chance." One unforfeited life could redeem one forfeited life, but no more. The man Christ Jesus redeems Adam." (Studies in the Scriptures by Russell vol. 1, p. 153). Could this be anything more diabolically contrary to the Word of God which explicitly declares that Christ "gave His life a ransom for many."

6. The bodily resurrection of Christ is denied by Pastor Russell. "We know nothing of what became of it (Christ's body), except it did not decay nor corrupt . . . whether it was dissolved into gases or whether it is still preserved somewhere as the grand memorial of God's love . . . no man knows." *Studies in the Scriptures* (vol. 2, p. 129) "He was put to death as a man, but was raised from the dead a spirit being of the highest order of the divine nature. The man Jesus is dead, dead for ever." (vol. 5, p.p. 153, 154).

After His resurrection we read in Luke 24 that Jesus Himself appeared to His disciples and said to them, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have." (v. 39).

7. The personality of the Holy Ghost is denied by the Jehovah's Witnesses. Judge Rutherford says, "The Holy Ghost is not a person at all, but simply the influence or energy of Jehovah." The denial of the personality of the Holy Ghost is common to all sects of Satanic origin.

Max Stilton in his book on the Jehovah's Witnesses states that the Holy Spirit is identified with the other two Persons of the Godhead, in such a way to indicate personality — (1) In the Baptismal formula, Matt. 28: 19; (2) — In the apostolic benediction, 2 Cor. 13: 14; (3) Personal characteristics are ascribed to Him — (1) He speaks, Rev. 11: 7; Matt. 17: 5; (2) He makes intercession, Rom. 8: 26; (3) He may be grieved, Eph. 4: 30; (4) He calls overseas and commands, Acts 13: 2; (5) He may be lied to, Acts 5: 3; (6) He may be blasphemed and sinned against, Matt 12: 31, 32.

8. The Jehovah's Witnesses hold that all that shall be saved of the 144,000 mentioned in Revelation Chapter 7 "The final number of the heavenly church will be only 144,000 according to God's decree." (The truth shall make you free, p. 172). These of course are Jehovah's Witnesses, whom they call the "faithful remnant". Those of the Jehovah's Witnesses not belonging to the "faithful remnant" but who are admirers of the work accomplished by them are called "men of god-will" or the "Jonadabs". This latter class will not get a place in heaven but they are to be given everlasting life on the earth. (The truth shall made you free, p. 205; Riches, p. 173).

In Revelation 7 two separate groups of people are mentioned. Verses 1 to 8 mentions the 144,000 who are Jewish believers, "sealed of all the tribes of the children of Israel". "After this I beheld" the apostle John says, "and lo a great multitude which no man could number of

all nations, and kindreds, and people and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands and cried with a loud voice saying Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb (verses 9, 10). Let us listen to what the Lord says in His Word and not to the balderdash of the Russellites.

9. In his book "Do you Know?" Russell said "In 1914 all the dead shall be raised again."

After Russell's death in 1916 he was succeeded by Judge Rutherford rightly described by an Australian newspaper as "Bishop of Burk". This "Bishop of Burk" predicted the appearance on this earth of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in 1925. He built a mansion in San Diego, California for them, and put a high priced car in the garage. He himself lived in the house and used the car until these patriarchs would appear. Rutherford died in 1942. This mansion was sold, and thus ended another false prophesy.

How applicable to Russell and Rutherford in what the Lord in His Word says, "The prophets prophesy lies in my name; I sent them not, neither have I commended them, neither spoke unto them; they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart. (Jeremiah 14: 14)!"

10. The Jehovah's Witnesses deny the solemn reality of hell. "The grave and physical death are the only hell." All Russellites who go to eternity with a lie in their right hand and all impenitent Christless sinners shall infallably know that "hell is a reality."

The Bible teaches that sinners as well as saints will continue to exist for ever. In Matthew 25: 46 the words "everlasting and eternal" are the same in the Greek. "And these (the wicked) shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal". These are the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, the faithful and True Witness. We live in a day when false sects abound. Most of them are of American origin and appeared in the course of the last century — the Russellites, the Mormons, the Seventh Day Adventists, Pentecostals, etc, etc. That these should arise in the latter days the Word of God clearly teaches. "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets and shall show great signs and wonders; in-somuch that if it was possible they shall deceive the very elect." Matt 24: 25. "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." (1 Timothy 4: 1).

W. M.

Book Review

The Utility and Importance of Creeds and Confessions: addressed particularly to candidates for the ministry. Samuel Miller, D.D. 1839 edition. (A Press, Greenville, South Carolina, 1987). 119pp, pbk, £3.95 plus p&p. Available from Free Presbyterian Bookroom, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow.

This lecture to his students given by Samuel Miller, the eminent Princeton professor, demonstrates the importance of Creeds and Confessions for maintaining the unity and purity of the visible church. It was an introductory lecture at the beginning of one of the sessions and therefore is written in a popular rather than scholarly style. However, it deals timeously and effectively with the then current discontentment with the concept of confessions and credal subscription. It is therefore of relevance in our day also.

The lecture is divided into four main sections:

1. The utility and importance of written Creeds.
2. Common and plausible objections which have been urged against them.
3. Whether the contents of Creeds should only contain fundamentals of the Christian religion.
4. Practical inferences therefrom.

The importance of this lecture is that Miller demonstrates the importance of creeds for the *unity* as well as the purity of the church. He deals very well with the common objections and draws attention to the movement in his day to remove creeds and confessions. In the light of the present debate on the fundamentals of the faith and the attempt to remove all but the fundamentals from our Confession, the section dealing with this subject brings sobriety and balance to what is practically possible in this present age.

The last section contains useful information. A solemnising thought is introduced under his second practical inference which may be quoted at length:

“We may see from what has been said, that subscribing a Church Creed is not a mere formality; but a very solemn transaction, which means much, and infers the most serious obligations. It is certainly a transaction which ought to be entered upon with much deep deliberation and humble prayer; and in which, if a man be bound to be sincere in any thing, he is bound to be honest to his God, honest to himself, and honest to the Church which he joins. For myself, I know of no transaction, in

which insincerity is more justly chargeable with the dreadful sin of “lying to the Holy Ghost” than in this. It is truly humiliating and distressing to know, that in some churches it has gradually become customary, to consider Articles of Faith as merely articles of peace; in other words, as articles which he who subscribes, is not considered as professing to believe; but as merely engaging not to oppose — at least in any public or offensive manner. Whether we bring this principle to the test of reason, of Scripture, of the original design of Creeds, or of the ordinary import of language among honourable men; — it seems equally liable to the severest reprobation, as disreputable and criminal in a very high degree.”

This little booklet will be of value to all office-bearers who are obliged to subscribe creeds and ought to be digested by them.

D.M.B.

Notes and Comments

Sabbath Drinking Laws

It would appear that the Government has had second thoughts on bringing in legislation to relax the Sabbath Drinking laws in England and Wales. While this news is very gratifying yet the question still arises as to whether it is advisable to relax the drinking laws on other days of the week. We would think it more timely if the Government was prepared to bring in more stringent laws. In this connection the following questions need to be answered by those who support such relaxation: Have we not sufficient drunkenness and alcoholism already in the country? Do we not have already too many homes whose peace is shattered by drunkards in the family? Do we not have already too many battered wives and children as a result of fathers indulging in too much strong liquor? Do we not have already too many deaths through drunken drivers? Is the profit to be made from the increased sale of liquor so important that these other considerations can be set aside? Must the licence given to some be allowed to mar the freedom to which others are entitled — including the freedom of molestation from drunken louts?

Church of England and Sodomy

The debate on homosexuality, referred to in the December Magazine, took place in the Synod of the Church of England. The motion that was adopted by a massive majority was one moved by the Bishop of Chester. It was very moderate in tone and lacked the clarity and force of Mr Higton's original motion which had called on the Synod to reaffirm the Biblical standard. An amendment by Rev. David Holloway calling for

appropriate discipline to be exercised against offending clergy was defeated. Consequently no discipline is to be exercised on such persons. This leaves the Church of England in a sad and lamentable condition.

The Massacre at Enniskillen

The exploding of a bomb at a Remembrance Day service at Enniskillen in Northern Ireland which killed many and maimed others shocked people all over the world. This action by the I.R.A. has been condemned almost universally. Even the Roman Catholic Bishops condemned the outrage and issued a statement saying that it is sinful to support such organisations or to call on others to support them. The Romanist bishops, however, ought to give thought to the undeniable fact that it is Romanism that has proved a fertile breeding ground for such organisations. The objectives of the Roman Church and those of these murderers are too closely aligned to keep them from giving at least tacit support, and in other cases active support to these men of violence. The subjugation of Northern Ireland has been the Romanist Church's aim for many generations but so far has been thwarted by the firm stand taken by the Protestants of Northern Ireland. The Anglo-Irish Accord has helped to foster the idea that the aim of the Romish Church is almost within its grasp. Were the Protestants in the North to rely on the British government to maintain their just cause that would be a weak reed to lean upon. They look rather to the arm of the Almighty who has been their Protector hitherto and it is to the Lord they look for their protection from their subtle and dangerous foes in time to come.

Inferno of Death

This is how the *Daily Express* described the fire which broke out in Kings Cross Underground Station in which many died, notwithstanding the valiant efforts that were made to extinguish the fire and rescue them from the blaze. Such an instance is a solemn reminder of how near death may be to any of us at any time. Those caught in the blaze little thought, we are sure, that this was the last journey they were to make. How needful is preparation for eternity when death can come so suddenly and so unexpectedly.

Church Notes

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Australia and New Zealand: At Auckland on 29th January at 2.30 p.m.

Outer Isles: At Stornoway on 9th February at 12 noon.

Skye: At Portree on 16th February at 11 a.m.

Southern: At Glasgow on 23rd February at 6 p.m.

Zimbabwe: At Bulawayo on 8th March.

Northern: At Dingwall on 8th March at 2 p.m.

Opening of Leverburgh Church

The new Church at Leverburgh will be opened, the Lord willing, on Friday, 12th February, 1988, at 7 p.m. The Rev. Donald MacLean, Glasgow, is expected to preach on the occasion. All are welcome.

The new residential Home will be opened earlier that day but due to space restriction that ceremony will have to be in private. An opportunity to viewing the Home will, however, be given to all attending the church opening service and tea, etc., will be served on the premises.

Church Deputies

Rev. L. MacLeod returned to this country from Canada on 25th November. Rev. F. Tallach was due in London from Hong Kong on 23rd December after four months as Church Deputy to Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Rev. Donald Boyd is due to leave Gatwick Airport, London on 6th January (D.V.) en route to Auckland, New Zealand via Los Angeles, U.S.A. Dr. Boyd will also visit Australia during his four months overseas. He is due to return on 27th April (D.V.).

We have reason to acknowledge the Lord's goodness in His safe-keeping of the Church Deputies on their long journeys and trust that the Lord will continue to preserve them from all harm as they travel to distant lands. Above all we desire that the Lord will abundantly bless their labours to the good of many souls.

Recent Missionary Deaths near Bulawayo

It was sad to hear of the deaths of missionaries and their families at a Pentecostal Mission a short distance south of Bulawayo. It brings to our notice once more the dangers to which our own Mission staff in Zimbabwe are exposed, Ingwenya being only thirty miles on the other side of Bulawayo. We trust that the Lord will graciously uphold and protect the

Mission staff in all the stations and preserve them from the attacks of the men of violence. We have no doubt that this event will make the praying people of the Church more instant at a Throne of grace on their behalf.

The "Sunday" Sports Bill

There are strong moves at present to legalise horse racing and on/off course betting on the Lord's Day. The "*Sunday*" *Sports (No. 2) Bill*, introduced for this purpose by Nicholas Soames MP, is now before the House of Commons and is to have its second reading on 29th January, 1987. We therefore urge you to write **now** to your Member of Parliament, requesting him or her to be present at the reading of this Bill and to speak and vote against it. In writing to your M.P. there are various points which may be raised: for example, the difficulties facing staff who do not wish to work on the Lord's Day; the disturbance and nuisance caused on the Lord's Day to some of those living near racing courses, and their being deprived of the one day of rest which they value; and the disturbance caused to church-goers in the vicinity of courses. But the most serious matter is the moral one of the transgressions of the Fourth Commandment, and the evils which flow from this transgression.

It is most important that your concern about this further threat to the Sabbath be expressed in writing. Even a brief note (and it is best to be brief), in which you simply say that you object to the Bill, will carry its own weight. We remind you of the defeat of the "The 'Sunday' Trading Bill". There is no doubt that letters of protest helped, in God's providence, to bring about that defeat.

Above all, we are to plead with the Lord that He would use the weak efforts of ourselves and others to thwart these purposes of godless men.

When you have written to your M.P. please encourage others to do likewise. Should you wish to write also to the person responsible for introducing this wicked Bill, then write to: Mr Nicholas Soames M.P., House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.

For your information we mention that another and similar Bill has been presented to the House of Lords and received its second reading on 15th July 1986. We refer, of course, to the "*Sunday*" *Sports (No. 1) Bill*, for the legalising of horse racing and on/off course betting on the Lord's Day. It was introduced by Lord Wyatt and is yet before the House of Lords. It was amended on 5th November and therefore now requires that betting shops remain closed on the Lord's Day and that staff be not required to work on the Lord's Day against their wishes. Lord Wyatt evidently hopes to yet find a way of bringing a clause for the opening of

betting shops back into the Bill. Lord Wyatt's address is: Lord Woodrow Wyatt, House of Lords, London SW1A 0AA.

Having said that, our chief concern is that you would write to your M.P. protesting against the "*Sunday*" *Sport* (No. 2) Bill.

Rev. D. A. Ross
Clerk, Sabbath Observance Committee

Acknowledgment of Donations

The General Treasurer, Mr Wm. D. Fraser, Room 7, Seafield House, Seafield Road, Inverness, IV1 1SJ, acknowledges the following donations with sincere thanks:-

Foreign Mission Fund: South Harris Friend, £25 for blind pupils; Friend, Leicestershire, £100.

African Relief Appeal: Greenock Congr., £75; South Harris Friend, £100; Anon., Canada, \$100.00; Anon., £50.

Magazine Free Distribution: Anon., North Tolsta, £5.

Trinitarian Bible Society: Mrs R. MacKay, Rockview, Tarbert, £100 "in memory of a beloved husband".

Sydney, N.S.W., Australia, The Treasurer acknowledges with sincere thanks: "A Friend", Halkirk, £20; R. W. & C., New Zealand, \$841.00.

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Greenock: A Friend, St. Jude's Congr., £10 for Greenock Congr.

Inverness: Harris Friend, £20 for Blind Children at Zimbabwe Mission per Rev. A. F. M. Kames; Mr D. MacL., Glasgow, £20; Perth Congr., £20; Stirling Congr., £20; London Congr., £30, for Archibald Crawford Memorial Refurbishing Fund.

Raasay: R. & S., Inverarish, £16; Friend, Raasay, £10; Friend, Inverarish, £5, all for Communion Expenses; Friend, Raasay, £10 for Car Fund.

Rogart: Anon., £50 for Church Repairs.

South Harris: Mrs S. MacK., Geocrab, £20 per D. MacDonald; Mrs K. MacD., Northton, £15 per A. MacCuish, both for Congr. Fund.

Stoer: Mrs J. M., Inverness, £1000 for Church Repairs.

Stornoway: Envelope in plate, £80 Freewill Offering; In Plate, £100 for Sust. Fund; In Plate, £10 for Home Mission.

Uig: Friend, Glasgow, £5 for Manse Telephone; Anon., £10 (twice); Miss M. M., £10, all for Manse Fund; D. W., £20; Anon., £20; Anon., £10 (twice); L. M., £10; J. M. L., £10, all for Communion Expenses; J. M. L., £5 for Sust. Fund; J. M. L., £2 for Church Door Collection, all by envelopes in plate.