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Kept by the Power of God

This is how Peter describes the Christian pilgrim on his or her way to heaven. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." (1 Peter 1: 3-5). He recalls when the disciples' hopes had been dashed by the crucifixion, summed up in the opinion of the two on the way to Emmaus, "But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel." But Jesus had reproached them, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." They were begotten again to a lively hope by Christ's resurrection reinvigorating them. B. B. Warfield described the resurrection as "the fundamental apologetical fact of Christianity".

The Risen Christ keeps His people throughout their pilgrimage. It is useful to recall this at the end of another year. Yet, how does He keep them? "By the power of God," Peter answers. But how does the power of God operate to keep them? "Through faith," he goes on to explain. Christ keeps their faith alive by the power of His Spirit, and so keeps them on their pilgrimage to heaven. Well did Peter know this from his own experience. Peter's faith had been severely tried by the events around the crucifixion. Tried, but not extinguished, due to the keeping of Christ. He had followed Jesus afar off and had fallen into the sieve of Satan. Christ foretold it, "Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have

you, that he may sift you as wheat: but *I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.*" The intercession of Christ is what kept Peter. He was kept by the power of Christ's Spirit, responding to that prayer, operating in his heart to keep faith alive, so that notwithstanding his grievous backsliding, he recovered and was restored. The present intercession of the exalted Lord is represented to us by His praying alone on the mountain for His disciples, while watching them toiling in the storm on the Sea of Galilee. This is followed with His coming to them, manifesting Himself to them, their reception of Him into their boat and the calming of the storm. "They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one." "Thy foot he'll not let slide, nor will he slumber that thee keeps. Behold, he that keeps Israel, he slumbers not, nor sleeps."

Asaph's feet well nigh slipped. He had been envious at the prosperity of the wicked and he had doubts that his attempts to live a virtuous life were in vain. "Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain." (Psalm 73: 13). In his doubts, he resolved not to offend the godly but to make it a matter of prayer before the Lord. He went into the sanctuary of God and all his misunderstandings were cleared up to him. The Lord preserved him, and how afraid he became of himself! "So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee. *Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand.* Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory."

Asaph made use of the means of grace, those channels through which God imparts His grace. The Spirit of Christ keeps faith alive by blessing these means. It is to the throne of grace we are to come that we may find grace to help in time of need. Asaph prayed, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel". It is the Word of God that the Spirit uses to guide and revive heavenly pilgrims. "This word of thine my comfort is in mine affliction: for in my straits I am revived by this thy word alone."

They are kept for a purpose, for a place. They have an incorruptible inheritance awaiting them in heaven. Only they can claim it. They are not only a prepared people for a prepared place, they are a preserved people for a reserved place. "Reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith."

At the end of another year we think of those who have gone to their heavenly inheritance. They were kept to the end. The close of another year reminds us we are but pilgrims. Are we declaring plainly that we are seeking a heavenly country? or, as our days close in this life, have we still

to be weaned from the sinful pleasures of this world? May you so learn of Christ in your own soul's experience that you can join with the Psalmist in saying:

“Lord, keep me; for I trust in thee . . .

God is of mine inheritance and cup the portion;
the lot that fallen is to me thou dost maintain alone.

Unto me happily the lines in pleasant places fell;

Yea, the inheritance I got in beauty doth excel.”

Sermon

by Rev. Robert Murray McCheyne, on Sabbath 15th July, 1842.

“Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” (Mark 9: 44)

It is very interesting to notice who they are in the Bible that speak about hell. Now, some think that speaking about hell is not preaching the gospel; and others think that simple men have no right to speak of it. Now, to them who think it is not gospel preaching, I say, it is the truth — the word of God; and to them who say it is not right to speak about it, I would have them to notice who it is that speaks most about it. Let us consider.

I. The persons in the Bible that speak most about hell.

II. Why these persons speak so plainly of hell.

III. The names given to hell.

IV. The hell spoken of in the Bible is not annihilation.

V. This eternal hell is closed in and surrounded by the attributes of God.

I. Let us consider the persons in the Bible that speak about hell. And the first I would mention is David. He was a man after God's own heart, yet he speaks of hell. He who wrote the Psalms, the sweet Psalmist of Israel; he who was filled with love to men, and love to God; yet hear what he says about hell: “The sorrows of hell compassed me about,” Psalm 18: 5. Again, “the sorrows of death compassed me about, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me,” Psalm 116: 3. And hear of his deliverance: “And thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell,” Psalm 86: 13. And he tells us also of the fate of the ungodly that will not accept Christ “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God,” Psalm 9: 17. “Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup,” Psalm 11: 6. “Let death seize upon them, and let them go down

quick into hell," Psalm 55: 15. Now, whatever you think of the propriety of speaking about hell, David did not think it wrong, for he sang about it.

The next person I would mention is Paul. He was filled with the love of Christ, and he had great love to sinners. Surely that love wherewith God loved Jesus was in Paul. He loved his enemies; notice, when he stood before Agrippa, what his feelings were, "I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds," Acts 26: 29. He wished them to have the same love — the same joy — the same peace — the same hope of glory. Now Paul never mentions the word hell. It seemed as if it were too awful a word for him to mention; yet hear what he says. "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction," Rom. 9: 22. "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction," Phil. 3: 18. "For when they shall say, peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them." 1 Thess. 5: 3. "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power," 2 Thess. 1: 7-9. Do not these show you, brethren, that they that have most love in their hearts speak most of hell.

The next person I would speak of is John, the beloved disciple. He had leaned on Jesus' bosom at the last supper, and drawn love out of his bosom. His character was love. You will notice how affectionately his Epistles are written. He addresses them, "beloved", "little children". Yet he speaks of hell; he calls it, seven times over "the bottomless pit" — the pit where sinners shall sink through all eternity. He calls it "the great winepress of the wrath of God," Rev. 14: 19. But John has got another name for hell, "the lake of fire", Rev. 20: 14. It had often been called "hell"; but it was left for John, the beloved disciple, to call it "the lake of fire".

The next person I shall mention is the Lord Jesus himself. Although he came from God, and "God is love", though he came to pluck brands from the burning, yet he speaks of hell. Though his mouth was most sweet, and his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh — though "the lord God had given him the tongue of the learned, that he should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary"; though he spake as

never man spake — yet he spoke of hell. Hear what he says, “Whosoever shall say, thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire,” Matt. 5: 22. But I think the most awful words that ever came from his lips were, “Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell,” Matt. 23: 33. Again, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire,” Matt. 25: 41. And he speaks of it in some of his parables, too: “The angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth,” Matt. 13: 49, 50. And he repeats the words of our text three times over. And could anything be plainer than the words in Mark: “He that believeth not shall be damned.”

II. Let us consider, dear brethren, why these persons speak so plainly of hell.

1. *Because it is all true.* Christ is the faithful and true witness. Once he said, “If it were not so, I would have told you.” Once he said to Pilate, “Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.” He himself is “the truth”. “It is impossible for God to lie.” When Jesus appeared on earth, he came with love; he came to tell sinners of hell, and of a Saviour to save from hell; and how could he keep it back? He saw into hell, and how could he not speak of it? He was the faithful witness; so it was with David, Paul and John. Paul said, he had kept nothing back — he had not shunned to declare all the counsel of God. Now, how could he have said that, if he had not spoken of hell as he did? So must ministers. Suppose I never were to mention hell again, would that make it less tolerable? Oh, it is true! it is true; it is all true; and we cannot but mention it.

2. A second reason why they spoke so much of hell was, *because they were full of love to sinners.* They are the best friends that do not flatter us. You know, beloved, Christ’s bosom flowed with love. Out of love he had not where to lay his head; out of love he came to die; out of love, with tears he said, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!” Matt. 23: 37. And with the same breath he said, “How can ye escape the damnation of hell?” So it was with Paul: “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men,” 2 Cor. 5: 11. Paul could weep over sinners; he says, “For many walk of whom I have told you often, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ,” Phil. 3: 18. His tears fell on the parchment as he wrote. O! if we had more love to you, we

would tell you more about hell. They do not love you that do not warn you, poor hell-deserving sinners. O! remember that love warns.

3. A third reason why they spoke so plainly of hell, was, *that they might be free from blood-guiltiness*. Jesus did not want your blood laid at his door, therefore he spoke of the "furnace of fire", and of "the worm that dieth not". Ah! he says, "How often would I have gathered you, but you would not!" God would not have blood-guiltiness laid to his charge. He says, "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil way for why will ye die?" So it was with David; "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God!" Psalm 51: 14. It was fear of blood-guiltiness that made David speak so plainly. So it was with Paul; he says, "I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men," Acts 20: 26. So it is with ministers — we must acquit our conscience; and if you go to the judgment-seat unpardoned, unsaved, your blood will be on your own heads. As I was walking in the fields yesterday, that thought came with overwhelming power into my mind, that every one I preached to would soon stand before the judgment-seat, and be sent either to heaven or hell. Therefore, brethren, I must warn you, I must tell you about hell.

III. Let us consider the names given to hell in the word of God. And the first is fire; it is taken from an earthly element suited to our capacity, as Christ takes to himself a name to suit us, as a shepherd, a door, a way, a rock, an apple tree, the Rose of Sharon, etc. So when God speaks of heaven, he calls it Paradise, a city which hath foundations, golden streets, pearly gates. Now, one of these names will not describe it, nor any of them; for eye hath not seen, nor ear heard; neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things God hath prepared for them that love him. So when God speaks of hell, he calls it "a furnace of fire", "a bottomless pit", "perdition". Now, one of these names will not do; but take them altogether, and you may conceive something of what hell is.

The first name given to hell is "fire". On the southern side of Mount Zion there is a valley covered over with vines; it is the valley of Hinnom where Manasseh made his children pass through the fire to Moloch. Now this is the name by which Christ calls it, "a valley of fire". And, again, he calls it "a furnace of fire", the walls will be fire, it will be fire above and below, and fire all round about. Again it is called a lake of fire. The idea is something like a furnace of fire; it will be enclosed with burning mountains of brass. There will be no breath of wind to pass over their

faces; it will be flames of fire for ever and ever. It is called devouring fire. "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire?" Isa. 33: 14. Compare this with Hebrews 12: 29 — "For our God is a consuming fire." It is the nature of fire to consume, so it is with the fire of hell; but it will never annihilate the damned. O! it is a fire that will never be quenched; even the burning volcanoes will cease to burn, and that sun now shining sweetly upon us will cease to burn, and that very fire that is to burn up the elements will be quenched; but this fire is never quenched.

Another name given to hell in the Word of God is "the prison". So we learn that the multitudes that perished at the flood are shut up in this prison. Ah! sinner, if you are shut up in it you will never come out till you have paid the uttermost farthing; and that you will never do — the bars are the justice and holiness of God.

Another name given to hell is, "the pit". Ah! it is the bottomless pit, where you will sink for ever and ever; it will be a continual sinking deeper and deeper every day. Ah! sinner, is it not time to begin and cry, "Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink?" — "Let not the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me?"

Another name given to hell in the word of God is, "a falling into the hands of God." "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," Heb. 10: 31. "Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong in the days that I shall deal with thee?" Ezek. 22: 14. God will be your irreconcilable enemy, sinner. God, who takes no pleasure in the death of the sinner, but rather that he should live — that God, I say, will be your eternal enemy if you die Christless — if you will not believe — if you will not be saved. O! what will you do, poor sinner, when his wrath is kindled?

Another name given to hell is, "the second death". "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death," Rev. 20: 14. This is the meaning of God's threatening to Adam: "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Perhaps you may have stood by the bed of a dying sinner, and you may have seen how he gasps for breath — his teeth clenched — his hands clasp the bed-clothes — his breath turns fainter and fainter, till it dies away. Ah! this is the first death: and it is like the second death. Ah! the man would try to resist but he finds it is in vain; he finds eternal hell begun, and God dealing with him, and he sinks into gloom and dark despair. This is the death sinners are to die, and yet never die.

Another name given to hell is, "outer darkness". Christ calls it outer darkness. "But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer

darkness," Matt. 8: 12. "Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness," Matt. 22: 13. You will see it also in 2 Peter 2: 4 — "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness." Again, Jude 13th verse — "Wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." O! my dear friends, this is hell — "the blackness of darkness," — "outer darkness" — "chains of darkness".

IV. I come now to show you that the hell spoken of in the Bible is not annihilation.¹ Some people think, that though they are not saved, they will be annihilated. O! it is a lie; I will show you that:

1. First of all, *by the cries of the damned*. "And he cried, and said father Abraham, have mercy upon me — for I am tormented in this flame," Luke 16: 24. And again, look at the words in Matt. 22: 12, "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." O! these plainly show us that it is no annihilation. In hell the multitudes will be bundled up together in the great harvest day. "Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them," Matt. 13: 30. There will be bundles of swearers — bundles of Sabbath-breakers — bundles of drunkards — bundles of hypocrites — bundles of parents and children; they will be witnesses of each other's damnation.

2. Hell will be no annihilation, when we consider that *there will be different degrees of suffering*. "It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you," Matt. 11: 22. And it is said, the Pharisees would receive "greater damnation". Every man is to be judged according to his works.

3. It will be no annihilation, if we consider *the fate of Judas*. "Woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born," Matt. 26: 24. Judas is wishing he had never been born. I have no doubt he wishes to die, but will never be able to die. So it will be with all here who shall go to hell — all unworthy communicants. Ah! I tell you, if you die Christless, you will wish you had never been born — you will wish you had never seen the green earth or the blue sky. Ah! you will wish you had never been. O! dear brethren, better never to have a being than to be in hell. Ah! there are many in hell today who are cursing the day they were born.

4. It will be no annihilation, for *it is an eternal hell*. Some weak and foolish men think and please their fancy with the thought that hell will burn out, and they will come to some place where they may bathe their weary souls. Ah! you try to make an agreement with hell; but if there ever come a time when the flame that torments your soul and body shall

burn out, then Jesus would be a liar, for three times he repeats the words of our text, and says, it shall never be quenched. It is eternal, for it is spoken of in words never used but to denote eternity. "And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever," Rev. 14: 11. Ah! you see it is for ever and ever. Again, "And the devil that deceiveth them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever," Rev. 20: 16. Compare this with Rev. 4: 9,10, "And when those beasts gave glory and honour, and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever," &c. So you see the torments of the damned are spoken of with the eternity of God. Ah! if ever there come a time when God ceases to live, then they may cease to suffer. Again the eternity of hell and the eternity of heaven are spoken of in the very same language. "And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever," Rev. 22: 5. The same words that are used for the eternity of the saints, are used for the eternity of the damned. "They shall be tormented for ever and ever." O! sinner, if ever there come a time when the saints shall fall from their thrones, or the immortal crowns fall from their heads, then you may think to leave hell; but that will never, never be — it is an eternal hell, "for ever, and ever"; eternity will be never ending wrath, always wrath to come. O! that you were wise, that ye understood this, that ye would consider your latter end.

V. I intended to consider that this eternal hell is surrounded and closed in by the attributes of God, but I shall leave it, God willing, to another occasion.² I shall now apply this:

First of all, *to you that are believers*. Dear brothers and sisters, all this hell that I have described is what you and I deserved. We were over the lake of fire, but it was from this that Jesus saved us; he was in the prison for you and me — he drank every drop out of the cup of God's wrath for you and me — he died the just for the unjust. O! beloved, how should we prize, love and adore Jesus for what he hath done for us. O! we will never, never know, till safe across Jordan, how our hell has been suffered for us — how our iniquity has been pardoned. But, O! beloved, think of hell. Have you no unconverted friends, who are treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath? O! have you no prayerless parent, no sister, nor brother? O! have you no compassion for them — no mercy's voice to warn them?

2. *To you that are seeking Christ anxiously*. I know some of you are. Dear soul, what a mercy in God to awaken you to flee from this fiery fur-

nace! O! what a mercy to be awakened to flee — to be in earnest. Ah! your unconverted friends will tell you there is no need of being so anxious. O! is there no need to flee from the wrath to come? O! learn, dear soul, how precious Christ is; he is a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest. All the things in the world are like a speck of dust, all is loss for Jesus — he is all in all — he is free to you, beloved — take no rest till you can say, He is mine.

3. *To you that are unconverted.* Ah! you are fools, and you think you are wise; but O! I beseech you, search the Scriptures. Do not take my word about an eternal hell; it is the testimony of God, when he spoke about it. O! if it be true — if there be a furnace of fire — if there be a second death — if it is not an annihilation, but an eternal hell — O! is it reasonable to go on living in sin? You think you are wise — that you are no fanatic — that you are no hypocrite; but you will soon gnash your teeth in pain; it will come; and the bitterest thought will be, that you heard about hell, and yet rejected Christ. O! then, turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?

¹ See Notes and Comments, November issue of *Free Presbyterian Magazine*, p355.

² He preached on this subject six months later, 4th December, 1842, from Psalm 11: 6, 7. He died on 25th March, 1843.

Sketch of Life and Times of George Gillespie

by Rev. John Colquhoun

(Continued from Page 349)

5. FROM THE TIME OF GILLESPIE'S RETURN TO SCOTLAND TILL THE ASSEMBLY OF 1648.

At the Commission of Assembly held in Edinburgh on 14th October, 1647 we find Gillespie's name along with that of others on a Committee appointed "to consider what course is to be taken for making a history of these late times, of the persons fit for that purpose, of the manner of collecting materials, the method of the work and everything conducive thereunto, and to report." Later on, on 26th November, we find the same matter taken up and a Committee, with the personnel somewhat different but with Gillespie's name on it, appointed "to collect any papers they have by them; as also appoints the said ministers and elders to be a committee to order the business and to do everything necessary

therein; and that the Clerk have the care and charge of printing thereof. And it is also thought fitting and necessary that, beside these collections, there be a perfect story made out of these papers and any other intelligences, and that the persons before named think upon a man fit for that purpose and of all helps conducive thereunto; and to report." At the Assembly of 1649 Mr John Livingstone, Minister of Ancrum, was appointed to write this History but, by then, the subject of this sketch had entered into that Presence where there is a fulness of eternal joy. In the Records of the Commission of the General Assembly for 25th February, 1648 we read, "The Commission appoints Mr George Gillespie to preach before the Parliament the day of their first meeting." We have no record of this sermon, nor does it appear among his collected works, and the probability is that it was never printed.

The Civil War ended disastrously for King Charles and he threw himself on the mercy of the Scots Army. He, however, proved himself as obstinate as ever and gave every evidence that he was the sworn foe of Presbytery and all that was dear to the best men in Scotland. On 3rd February, 1647 he was delivered to the Parliamentary Army on condition that they would not injure his person. Charles, however, escaped to Carisbrook Castle, Isle of Wight, where he proved that he was as determined as ever to exercise despotic sway, and to gain his ends by any means that would present themselves to him.

The Engagement.

Early in 1648 the whole kingdom was agitated over what is known in history as the Engagement. The Royalist party in Scotland entered into a secret treaty with King Charles I to raise an army in Scotland for the purpose of assisting him to regain possession of the English Throne, he being at the time in Carisbrook Castle. The King promised to confirm Presbyterian Church government for three years till an Assembly of Divines, aided by twenty commissioners of his nomination, should frame a form of church government agreeable to the Word of God. On 1st March, 1648 a Declaration was emitted by the Commission of Assembly pointing out the sinfulness of the Engagement, for it went contrary to solemn vows taken in swearing to the Solemn League and Covenant, bringing God's displeasure on Church and State. Scotland, which for a number of years was most united, was now divided into three bands. There were the Covenanters in the Parliament and in the Church, who remained faithful to their solemn vows; there were those who were responsible for the Engagement, and who were joined by a large number of the

ministers; and those who were out and out Royalists who had no real regard for Church or State as long as they got their own way.

6. THE ASSEMBLY OF 1648.

When the General Assembly met on 12th July, 1648 it was, indeed, under very difficult circumstances. The Cause of Christ had been very much weakened, division was to be found on every hand, the attainments of the Second Reformation had been well-nigh lost, and the Church had been deserted by many who had sworn to be faithful unto death. Instead of that uniformity in religion between the three kingdoms, which the Church of Scotland was so anxious to obtain, and the progress made in that direction so pleasant to contemplate, there were the distant rumblings of the thunders of war. Under such conditions it was necessary for the Assembly to look for one who could be trusted to fill the Moderator's chair with courage, dignity and wisdom. The choice fell on George Gillespie, and no better choice could have been made.

That the members of this Assembly knew their business and had the courage of their convictions is demonstrated by the work which they carried through. As the Rev. W. M. Hetherington, LL. D., states, "They not only approved of the Declaration and other similar writings of the Commission but passed an Act condemnatory of that Act and Declaration of the Parliament which enjoined all subjects to subscribe a bond, equivalent to an oath, in support of the Engagement. They further published a declaration and exhortation to all members of the Church of Scotland, pointing out the unlawfulness of the Engagement and warning against the dangers in which it would certainly involve the Church and nation. An able answer was also written to the Committee of Estates, proving by Scriptural arguments that the Engagement was inconsistent with the safety and security of religion. And, as the Hamiltonian faction was well aware of the power which the Church had recently put forth, when it raised the kingdom like one man for the defence of religious liberty, they employed every artifice to bring as many ministers as possible to their side, by that means either to procure support or to neutralise opposition. To meet this dangerous divisive policy, the Assembly passed an Act, censuring those ministers who either favoured the Engagement openly, or abstained from pointing out its sinfulness, and warning their people against entering into its bond. A respectful but firm supplication was also written to His Majesty, showing the insufficiency of the concessions promised by him in the Engagement, and its positive sinfulness, as tending to involve the kingdom in perjury; and imploring him to comply with the Covenant, and thereby to enable them, with a safe conscience,

to give him that support which their sincere loyalty and affection prompted them to bestow, so far as their duty to God would permit." *History of the Church of Scotland*, p. 114-115.

At this Assembly the Larger and Shorter Catechisms were ratified. The Act of Assembly approving the Larger Catechism was passed on 2nd July, 1648 and contains the following declaration:- "That the said Catechism is agreeable to the Word of God, and in nothing contrary to the received doctrine, worship, discipline and government of this Kirk; a necessary part of the intended uniformity in religion, and a rich treasure for increasing knowledge among the people of God; and therefore the Assembly, as they bless the Lord that so excellent a Catechism is prepared, so they approve the same, as a part of uniformity; agreeing, for their part, that it be a common Catechism for the three kingdoms, and a Directory for catechising such as have made some proficiency in the knowledge of the grounds of religion." The Shorter Catechism was approved on 28th July, 1648 and is stated "to be a Directory for catechising such as are of weaker capacity."

The 1648 Assembly did not come to an end till 12th August, and before it ended it directed a paper to be framed "in answer to a document issued by the State, respecting the Engagement that had been formed for the support of the King." On 15th August, 1648 this paper was submitted to the Commission of Assembly and "after some alterations and corrections, the Commission unanimously approved the same." The Editors of the published Records of the Commission say in a foot-note; "Internal evidence points decidedly to George Gillespie, the Moderator, as the main author of this paper, and it is one of the most terse and pithy he ever wrote." After giving the five arguments of the previous General Assembly to prove the sinfulness and unlawfulness of the Engagement, and showing their Scripturalness by precept and example from the Word of God, it goes on to say, "That we are obliged by solemn Covenant to endeavour the extirpation of heresy and schism is manifest and uncontroverted among us. The point complained of is that upon pretence of doing against Sectaries there is an associating and joining with Malignants, a strengthening of the enemies who formerly fought against the Covenant, a casting down of what hath been built, so that the remedy is worse than the disease, and the latter end worse than the beginning. What their Lordships assert of duties to the King have been abundantly answered before. We plead against no duty to the King, but for preferring the glory of God and security of religion to all human interests. We wish their Lordships may here apply to themselves what they have blam-

ed in others, and so we shall conclude with their Lordships' own words in their later Declaration to the Parliament and Kingdom of England:- 'We are sorry to see other interests still so carefully provided for, and so little security to religion, which indeed was the main and principal cause of our Engagements in the late wars.'" *Commission of Assembly Records*, 1648-49, p.26.

This was the last Commission of the General Assembly which George Gillespie attended. After the meeting held on the following day he left Edinburgh for Kirkcaldy hoping that a change to his native air might prove beneficial to his health, but the Lord, in His Sovereignty ordered it otherwise. The disease from which he was suffering was, evidently, consumption, and he rapidly became weaker. Though weak in his body we find him on 7th September, from his death-bed, penning the following letter to the Commission of Assembly, which shows the activity of his mind and his great concern for the glory of God and the good of His Cause in the land:-

"My Very Reverend and Dear Brethren, — Although the Lord's hand detaineth me from attending your meeting, yet as long as I can write or speak I dare not be silent, nor conceal my thoughts of any sinful and dangerous course in the public proceedings. Having therefore heard of some motions and beginnings of compliance with those who have been so deeply engaged in a war destructive to religion and the liberties of the kingdoms, I can not but discharge my conscience in giving a testimony against all such compliance. I know and am persuaded that all the faithful witnesses that gave testimony to the thesis, that the late Engagement was contrary and destructive to the Covenant, will also give testimony to the appendix, that compliance with any who have been active in that Engagement is most sinful and unlawful. I am not able to express all the evils of that compliance, they are so many. Sure I am it were a hardening of the Malignant party, a wounding of the hearts of the godly, an infinite wronging of those who from their affection to the Covenant and Cause of God have taken their life in their hand, a great scandal to our Brethren in England, who as they have been strengthened and encouraged by hearing of the zeal and integrity of the well-affected in this kingdom, and how they opposed the late Engagement, so they would be as much scandalised to hear of a compliance with Malignants now; yea, all that hear of it might justly stand amazed at us, and look on us as a people infatuated, that can take in our bosom the fiery serpents that have stung us so sore. But above all, that which would heighten this sin even to the heavens is this, that it were not only a horrible

backsliding, but a sliding into that very sin which was especially pointed at and punished by the prevalency of the Malignant party, God justly making them thorns and scourges who were taken in as friends without any real evidence or fruits of repentance. Alas! shall we split twice upon the same rock, yea run upon it, that God hath set a beacon on it? Shall we be so demented as to fall back into the same sin which was engraven with great letters in our late judgment? Yea, I may say, shall we thus out-face and outdare the Almighty by protecting His and our enemies when He is persecuting them, when the anger of the Lord is burning against them, by setting them on their feet when God is casting them down? Oh, shall neither judgment nor deliverances make us wise? I must here apply to our present condition the words of Ezra: 'And after that is come upon us for our evil deeds and for (our) great trespass, seeing that thou, our God, has punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such deliverance as this, Should we again break thy commandments and join in affinity with the people of these abominations, wouldst thou not be angry with us till thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no remnant nor escaping?' O happy Scotland, if thou canst now improve aright and not abuse this golden opportunity! But if thou wilt help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord, wrath upon wrath, and woe upon woe, shall be upon thee from the Lord.

"This testimony of a dying man (who expects to stand shortly before the tribunal of Christ) I leave with you, my Reverend Brethren, being confident of you through the Lord that you will be none otherwise minded, but that as men of God, moved with the zeal of God, you will freely discharge your consciences against everything which ye see lifting up itself against the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus. This shall be your peace and comfort in your latter end. Now the God of all grace establish you, direct you, and preserve you all blameless to the end, and bring others out of the snare that hanker after that compliance. So Prayeth

Your most affectionate brother to serve you in what I can to my last,

Subscribitur, George Gillespie."

(To be continued)

Scotland's "Magna Charta"

This year marks among other anniversaries the 350th Anniversary of the signing of Scotland's National Covenant. It is one of the great events of Scottish history making, as it does, the beginning of that noble struggle against Prelacy and Stuart Absolutism which was to continue for fifty

years and which ultimately led to the overthrowing of the House of Stuart and the Glorious Revolution of 1688. It was Scotland's answer to Canterbury and Whitehall; Archbishop Laud and Charles I were to learn that her dearly bought religious and civil liberties were not going to be surrendered whatever the cost. "To this much vilified bond", it has been well said, "every true Scotsman ought to look back with as much reverence as Englishmen do to their Magna Charta. It was what saved the country from absolute despotism, and to it we may trace back the origin of all the efforts made by the inhabitants of Britain in defence of their freedom during the succeeding years of the Stuarts."

"It will not be denied", wrote Wylie, "that nations are bound to defend their religion and liberties; and surely, if they see cause, they may add to the force of this duty the higher sanctions of vows and oaths. In doing so they invest the cause of patriotism with the sacredness of religion. This is what the Scots did on this occasion . . . the nation assembled in the metropolis, one sentiment animating the whole almighty multitude, and moving them all towards one object, and that object was the highest and holiest conceivable. For, great and sacred as liberty is, liberty in this case was but the means to an end still loftier and more sacred, namely the pure service of the Eternal King. This added unspeakable solemnity to the transaction. God was not merely a witness, as in other oaths. He was a party. On the one side was the Scottish nation; on the other was the Sovereign of heaven and earth: the mortal entered into a covenant with the Eternal; the finite allied itself with the Infinite. So did the Scots regard it. They stood on the steps of the Divine throne as they lifted up their hands to swear to 'the Lord, the everlasting God'."

Andrew Melville's plain speaking to James VI does not seem to have had much effect. He was told in no uncertain terms that there were two kings and two kingdoms in Scotland and that, whatever aspirations he had to the contrary, in Christ's kingdom he was "nocht a king nor a lord nor a heid, bot a member". In 1625 James was summoned to give account of himself to God. One historian wrote, "It is certain no king could die less lamented or less esteemed than he was." Instructed and taught by such a father it was to be expected that son and successor Charles I would pursue the same despotic, erastian policies and prove to be every bit as hostile to the free exercise of religious freedom. Anticipations to the contrary were soon dispelled. In 1610, James VI had, by kingcraft and with the aid of a 'packed' Assembly, succeeded in confirming the Sovereign's jurisdiction over the Church while his creatures — the

bishops — were reinstated to be in authority over the subjects. "In this ingenious manner", King Hewison tells us, "the Presbyterian System, established in 1592, was put under the taboo, and Prelacy ruled in its stead." Charles was not disposed to alter this state of affairs so favourable to his own interests. The Five Articles of Perth, ratified by Parliament in July, 1621, and so obnoxious to Presbyterians were to remain on the statute book leaving ministers and people "with no alternative between surrendering their Christian liberty, or incurring the consequences of disobeying the law of the land." More than that, Laud's Liturgy was to arrive in Scotland with orders from king and council that it should be read in all the churches. Jenny Geddes's action in throwing her famous stool at the head of the Dean of Edinburgh sums up the indignation stirred up within the hearts of the Scottish people by this latest piece of gross imposition from south of the border. "Villain", she is reputed to have said, "dost thou say mass at my lug". The date was 23rd July, 1637. Within seven months Scotland's noble and heroic stand in defence of her religious and civil liberties was to be made in Greyfriar's Church — the National covenant was to be renewed. What was aimed at can be no better expressed than in the words of the document itself. What they do "ariseth from an unfeigned desire to maintain the true worship of God, the majesty of the King, and the peace of the Kingdom, for the common happiness of ourselves and our posterity."

King Hewison tells us that it is Archibald Johnston, later Lord Wariston, who is credited with the suggestion that the King's Confession of 1581 should be renewed "as an antidote to the royal policy and chicanery, which were subversive of civil and religious liberties." An advocate by profession, his great talents, already laid at his Master's feet, were now to be employed in framing the momentous charter of 1638. Alexander Henderson, the "foremost and most statesmanlike of the Presbyterian clergy of the day", was to be his partner in it. Before the year was out both were to be honoured by the Master Whom they had honoured, the one was to be the Moderator and the other the Clerk of the famous Glasgow General Assembly when the walls of Jericho were to be cast down to the satisfaction of the Israel of the Covenant. Both were to serve with distinction, as commissioners to the Westminster Assembly. They have long since received their Lord's commendation and have entered into His joy. Henderson, the older man, died in 1646 enjoying great peace of mind hasting home, as he told those around his death bed, "and as glad of it as a schoolboy when sent home from the school to his father's house." Wariston was to die a martyr's death on the scaffold in

1663, his last words being, "Pray! Pray! Praise! Praise!"

The Covenant is divided into three parts; the first is a repetition of that older Covenant, the King's Confession of 1581, wherein "all kinds of Papistrie" are execrated; the second, drawn up by Wariston, specified the various Acts of the Scottish Parliament which condemned Roman Catholicism and confirmed the privileges of the Reformed, Protestant Church; the third, Henderson's work, brought the Covenant up to date and constituted "a grave and emphatic protest against those alien modes of worship which had provoked the present troubles." The impartial reader of the document will see therein the Covenanters love for that Gospel which they had received as "God's eternal truth and only ground of our salvation" and also their sincere abhorrence and detestation of "all contrary religion and doctrine" but especially Popery and all it stood for. "We detest and refuse," they said, "the usurped authority of that Roman Antichrist upon the Scriptures of God, upon the Kirk, the civil magistrates, and consciences of men . . . his erroneous doctrine against the sufficiency of the written Word, the perfection of the law, the office of Christ . . . his corrupt doctrine concerning original sin . . . our justification by faith only . . . his five bastard sacraments, with all his rites, ceremonies and false doctrine, added to the ministration of the true sacraments without the Word of God . . . his blasphemous opinion of transubstantiation, or real presence of Christ's body in the elements . . . his devilish Mass; his blasphemous priesthood; his profane sacrifice for the sins of the dead and quick; his canonisation of men; calling upon angels or saints departed, worshipping of imagery, relics and crosses . . . his purgatory, prayers for the dead . . . his multitude of mediators . . . his desperate and uncertain repentance; his general and doubtful faith . . . his holy water . . . his worldly monarchy and wicked hierarchy . . . his erroneous and bloody decrees made at Trent, with all the subscribers of that cruel and bloody band conjured against the Kirk of God . . ." The trumpet blown to be heard throughout the Scottish nation, if not all Christendom, gave a no uncertain sound. "And therefore from the knowledge and conscience of our duty to God, and to our king, and country, without any worldly respect or inducement, as far as human infirmity will suffer, wishing a further measure of the grace of God for this effect, we promise and swear by the great name of the Lord our God to continue in the profession and obedience of the said religion, and that we shall defend the same and resist all those contrary errors and corruptions, according to our vocation, and to the utmost of that power which God has put in our hands all the days of our life." The document, as

King Hewison points out, disclaims any intention on the part of its subscribers to minimise the royal supremacy, and parties were bound by it to defend the king and their co-subscribers even with their lives. Their sole aim has already been stated.

The first subscribers appear to have met in Greyfriars Church, on the twenty-eighth day of February, 1638, where, according to King Hewison, "Henderson opened the proceedings with prayer, urgent and decisive; Loudoun eloquently stated the righteous cause of the Covenanters; Johnston read the document." The nobleman and barons then began to subscribe continuing till eight at night. Four more copies were prepared by the indefatigable Johnston that night to be signed by the ministers at nine in the morning and by the commissioners of burghs at two in the afternoon. Subsequently an opportunity was given to the people of Edinburgh to subscribe their names which they did in the midst of scenes of extraordinary enthusiasm. Some, it is said, were so moved that they signed it with their own blood. Copies were quickly multiplied and carried into every corner of the land so that in less than three weeks the greater part of the kingdom had subscribed. There were to be found "little islands of nonconformity, small oases in the great expanse of uniformity" but in general the people were enthusiastic and in certain areas exhibited great religious fervour. John Livingston, whose name will always be associated with the Kirk O' Shotts revival left on record his experience in Lanarkshire. "I was present," he states, "at Lanark and at several other parishes, when on a Sabbath, after the forenoon service, the Covenant was read and sworn, and may truly say that in all my lifetime, except one day in the Kirk O' Shotts, I never saw such motions from the Spirit of God, all the people generally and most willingly concurring. I have even seen more than a thousand persons all at once lifting up their hands, and the tears falling down from their eyes, so that through the whole land, except the professed Papists, and some few who forbore and adhered to the Prelates, the people universally entered into the Covenant of God." The same John Livingstone, according to King Hewison, rode in disguise in post haste to London with copies of the Covenant for assenters there. Needless to say news of what was taking place in his northern kingdom was anything but pleasing to Charles. It was now "to be settled whether king or kingdom was the source of power; whether ruler and ruled had not mutual responsibilities; whether or not Charles was, as his father taught, 'as God' over the masses. The Covenanters demanded that the civil laws should be made to harmonise with the laws of God set forth in Scripture; King Charles, on the other

hand, conscientiously acted upon the opinion that King is the law." it took fifty years to settle the issue. Faithfulness to the Covenant was to entail much suffering and bloodshed but it was not to be in vain. The Revolution Settlement was far from perfect but notwithstanding shortcomings it did usher in, in the words of Smellie, "the gladder age which still runs its course, when conscience is freed from the hateful dictation of palaces and consistories and unjust Courts of Justice, when national and religious despotisms were clothed with merited dishonour, and when men and women dwell in a wide room." Our apathetic generation has largely lost sight of how much the civil and religious liberties which we take so much for granted cost our Covenanting forefathers who so willingly endured "tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, and sword."

But have we, their descendants, been released from the Covenant obligations under which they placed our nation or was the Covenant disannulled when all its subscribers departed this earthly scene? We think not; and neither, it would seem, did James Guthrie who in 1661 was one of the first to seal his testimony with his blood. "I do bear witness," he said on the scaffold, "to the National Covenant of Scotland, and Solemn League and covenant betwixt the three kingdoms. These sacred public oaths of God I believe can be loosed or dispensed with by no person, or party, or power upon earth but are still binding upon these kingdoms, and will be so forever hereafter, and are ratified and sealed by the conversion of many thousand souls, since our entering thereinto." Just before the hangman turned the ladder Guthrie, it is recorded, lifted the napkin off his face and gave utterance to the prophetic cry, "The Covenants, the Covenants shall yet be Scotland's reviving," When the Spirit of God shall be poured out from on high to revive His work yet again in this land, we believe the church of Christ in Scotland will fully understand the import of these words. Then shall "the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God" live and reign "with Christ a thousand years". That is, as David Brown points out, "shall live again in a race of men who for a thousand years are to triumph in their Lord's name over all the power of the enemy." The Lord hasten it, in His time!

J. McL.

Christmas Originally A Heathen Festival

Christmas was originally a heathen festival celebrated on the 25th December in honour of the birth of Tammuz (Ezekiel 8: 14), also called Baal the Sun-god, the son of Semiramis, the Babylonian queen of heaven. The celebrations included hymn-singing in the street, riotous merry-making, feasting, drunkenness and the giving of gifts. Among the Romans these pagan ceremonies known as the Saturnalia, were held in honour of the victor of Sol Invictus (the unconquerable Sun-god), over the darkness at the winter solstice. The Sun-god in the Saturnalia ceremonies was likened to a small child. Yule-day is another name for Christmas. "Yule" is the Chaldee or Babylonian name for "an infant" or "little child." The 25th December was called by our Pagan ancestors (the Anglo-Saxons) "Yule-day", "The child's day", long before they came in contact with Christianity (A. Hislop).

The Christmas Tree

The decorating of an evergreen tree was part of the worship of Tammuz or Baal, the Sun-god of ancient Babylon. Through the Church of Rome — the Babylon of the Apocalypse — this act of Baal-worship has been handed down through the centuries, and deluded Protestants, by setting up **Christmas Trees** in their homes, in their schools and churches are guilty before God of upholding and perpetuating a practice peculiar to the worship of Baal. How can anything connected with the worship of Baal be pleasing to the Lord? Was it not for countenancing such worship that the judgments of the Lord repeatedly fell upon the people of Israel of old? (See 1 Samuel 12: 9, 10).

Christmas Cards

How sad in this degenerate age of widespread apostacy to see professing Christians bowing at the pagan and popish shrine of Christmas! How guilty parents are who under solemn obligations to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord to be leading them into these heathenish customs! "For thus saith the Lord, Learn not the way of the heathen . . . for the customs of the people are vain." (Jer. 10: 1-3). Seek to honour Christ according to His Word as our godly forefathers did. Have nothing to do with Christmas parties, Christmas trees, Christmas gifts, the selling or sending of Christmas cards or Christmas stamps. Avoid as you would the plague the Christmas Eve Midnight Ser-

vice and the Christmas Crib. They all point to Rome. The observance of Christmas is largely responsible for the subtle infiltrations and advancement of Popery with its blasphemous worship and veneration of the Virgin Mary. Anew we are confronted with the question, "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him." (1 Kings 18: 21). May it be ours to say in truth, "I have refrained my feet from every evil way that I might keep Thy Word." (Psalm 119 : 101).

ERGATEES

Book Review

The Works of David Clarkson. Banner of Truth Trust. 3 Vols. Price £26.95 set.

David Clarkson (1622-1686) was born in Bradford, Yorkshire, and after education in Cambridge entered the ministry and held a living in Surrey until he was ejected by the Act of Uniformity in 1662. There is no evidence that he availed himself of the first Declaration of Indulgence as did some of his brethren. He remained in obscurity for some years, during which time he prepared his treatise on "The Practical Divinity of the Papists". This was published in 1676. In 1682 he was elected co-pastor with Dr John Owen, and after Dr Owen's death in 1683, Mr Clarkson continued to occupy the pulpit until his own death in 1686. His funeral sermon was preached by Dr William Bates who described him as a "man of true holiness and sincere godliness", "a conscientious improver of his time for acquiring useful knowledge", "in prayer his solemnity and reverence were becoming one that saw Him who is invisible."

He wrote out his discourses at length and these have now been republished (1988) in three volumes by The Banner of Truth Trust. It would appear the sermons were originally published under the auspices of Dr John Howe and Matthew Mead. Mr Clarkson is one of the lesser known Puritans, but it is very evident that these are the sermons of a Spirit-taught man. Did we not know who the author was we could well say they are the work of a Puritan preacher.

They cover a variety of subjects. Vol 1 begins appropriately with one of the shorter addresses — on Original Sin, followed by others of varying length on Repentance, Faith (4), The Excellent Knowledge of Christ, Justification by the Righteousness of Christ, etc. In Vol 2 there are sermons on Christ's Gracious Invitation to Sinners, Pray for Everything, The Lord Rules over All, and other subjects. In Vol 3, of the eight

sermons five are taken up with the work of Christ in the salvation of sinners.

The reader of these sermons can be assured of spiritual pleasure and profit from their perusal. They are edifying and searching, and all are of a high standard, some especially so. As is the case with so many Puritan writers they abound in Scripture references for the subject in hand. They need not be read through systematically. There may be repetition from time to time — but it is repetition worth repeating. That he knew the workings of the human mind is evident from the following quote from his sermon on Matthew 16: 16 — “There may be tears, and that in abundance, and possibly in some consideration of sin too, where the heart is extremely hard.”

Would that there were such preaching from more of the pulpits of our land today. Over half of Vol 3 is taken up with his work on Romish worship and practices. The author has researched his subject carefully, and in these ten chapters he clearly demonstrates the corruption and duplicity of the Romish system. Some of the chapter headings are as follows — Real worship of God not necessary in the Church of Rome, Their Doctrine makes it needless to love God, There is no necessity of true repentance for Romanists by their doctrine, Many enormous crimes are no sins at all in the Roman account.

This part of Vol 3 deserves careful study in the present theological climate. Rome has not changed — what was true of Romanism in Clarkson's time is true today. This part of Clarkson's work should convince anyone — if he needs convincing — that Romanism is a delusion of Satan, and that there should be no fraternisation with it or with those who practice it.

There is a resume of each chapter at the end of this section of Vol 3. Vol 3 also has a comprehensive subject and Scripture Text index.

We can recommend these works. The volumes are easy to handle, and come up to the usual high standard of Banner of Truth productions. They will take their place alongside the works of Thos Brooks, John Flavel, and Richard Sibbes.

R. K. M.

Notes and Comments

1992, the Internal Market and the Sabbath

The trade barriers between the member countries of the European Community are to be removed by the end of 1992 in a provision called the Internal Market. “The internal market shall comprise an area without

internal frontiers in which the free movement of goods, persons, services and capital is ensured in accordance with the provisions of (the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community).” Our Government is aiming to deregulate the Sabbath trading laws before that date, not only as part of their philosophy of the free market, but in order to allow British businesses to make use of the Continental market on the Lord’s Day. It also means that Continental businesses will be able to make use of our market on the Lord’s Day. This is a new dimension that must be added to the Sabbath trading debate that is expected to resurface this winter.

It also puts the Outer Isles ferries dispute in another light. It is not merely the wishes of Caledonian MacBrayne to have “free movement of goods and persons” on the Sabbath day between the Western Isles and the mainland, but it is also the desire of the framers and supporters of the Single European Act, from which the above quotation is taken. The United Kingdom government have already given their approval to this Act.

“Member States shall conduct their economic policies, and shall co-ordinate them, in such a way as, in addition, to aim at reducing disparities between the various regions.” The implementation of this Internal Market shall take into account the objective of “reducing disparities between various regions” and it “shall contribute to (its) achievement.” The potential of the internal market is to be exploited “to the full” by European industry, and the Community shall encourage even “small and medium-sized undertakings.”

The weak link in the Internal Market legislation is that there is no safeguard of the Christian Sabbath.

On another note, a possible consequence of the 1992 regulations will be the pressure brought to bear on this country to have elections held on the Sabbath as do some of the Continental countries.

Single European Act and UK Sovereignty

The Single European Act seeks to establish Europe as a single political as well as an economic community. This is why the name of the Community has dropped the word Economic. It is no longer the EEC, but the EC — the European Community. This Act had to be passed by each member state’s parliament, and the UK Parliament passed it in 1987 with very little public debate. What debate there was revolved around the preamble of the Act which says,

“(The Heads of State or of Government) Moved by the will to

continue the work undertaken on the basis of the Treaties establishing the European Communities and to transform relations as a whole among their States into a European Union . . . Resolved to implement this European Union . . . Convinced that the European idea, the results achieved in the fields of economic integration and political co-operation, and the need for new developments correspond to the wishes of the democratic peoples of Europe, for whom the European Parliament, elected by universal suffrage, is an indispensable means of expression . . . Have decided to adopt this Act . . .”

Title I, Article I says, “The European Communities and European Political Co-operation shall have as their objective to contribute together to making concrete progress towards European unity.”

Mrs Thatcher has recently spoken strongly against political or monetary union after 1992 and against anything that undermines the sovereignty of member states, much to the annoyance of some other heads of state. We are not so hopeful that she will get her way. However, the Sabbath legislation in England should be retained, strengthened and extended to Scotland. This would be a good bulwark to *test* our sovereignty in the context of EC law. A case is pending before EC courts to test whether restricted Sabbath trading in England and Wales is contrary to EC law. If the divine sanction will not be allowed by EC law, we would rather know before 1992.

Evangelical is Not Enough

This is the name of a book by Thomas Howard, ex-Protestant Evangelical, turned Roman Catholic sacramentalist. It has recently been re-issued by Ignatius Press, USA. The sub-title is “Worship of God in Liturgy and Sacrament” and the promotional literature states, “In this deeply moving narrative, Howard describes his pilgrimage from Evangelicalism to liturgical Christianity to Catholicism. He examines all aspects of liturgical worship with freshness and vigor, portraying the great beauty and depth of liturgical worship and prayer. He shows why liturgical worship is an invaluable aid to the spiritual life.” Howard justified his step to Rome partly in terms of the poverty and superficiality of much evangelical worship. We note, in passing, that liturgical reform was a precursor of the worldwide decline of nineteenth century Presbyterianism.

When Howard apostatised to Romanism, he had just co-authored a book with J. I. Packer. Among other comments on Howard’s apostacy,

Packer said, "I don't think becoming a Catholic is anything like the tragedy of a person becoming a (theological) liberal and losing touch with objective authority altogether . . . Catholics are among the most loyal and (spiritually) virile brothers evangelicals can find these days." He suggested that Howard had turned to Rome because authority was to be found there. Howard has said that the sole authority of Scripture is a principle unique to Protestantism and that he, as a Catholic, could not subscribe it. We hope a fuller account will be published in the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* in due course, D.V.

In God's Name

The Roman Catholic church has at last got round to trying to limit the damage done by *In God's Name* by David Yallop, 1984. This book purported to prove that Pope John Paul I had been murdered after only 33 days in office. But now John Cornwall is to publish shortly a book provisionally called *A Thief in the Night* after receiving Vatican permission for access to registers, documents and witnesses to which Yallop did not have access. He went to Rome with a letter of commendation from the Archbishop of London, Cardinal Basil Hume. The latter is in a good position to know how damaging Yallop's book has been. Cornwall studied to be a priest for seven years, then became an agnostic for 20 years before re-entering the Roman fold. He was chief foreign editor of *The Observer* for 12 years.

If the Romanists were alarmed at the suggestion that Pope John Paul I was murdered, they were probably just as alarmed at the printing of *Vicars of Christ — the dark side of the papacy* by Peter de Rosa (Bantam Press, 1988). This book reminds us at length of the murky side of the popes, of which there is an abundance of material. These self-styled Vicars of Christ, (blasphemously so named only since Hildebrand changed it from Vicars of St Peter) are exposed for what they were. "It is time to cease treating the papacy in terms of hagiography. The studied silence about the sins of the papacy is a scandal and a form of bad faith," (p30). "Not long after Charlemagne, for well over a century and a half the whole batch was rotten. They were less disciples of Christ than of Belial, the Prince of Darkness. Very many were libertines, murderers, adulterers, warmongers, tyrants, simoniacs who were prepared to sell everything holy. They were nearly all more wrapped up in money and intrigue than in religion . . . There is a mystery in all this: how, in spite of the popes, the Western church held together for so long," (p47). The present Pope is the 263rd, so one can calculate for oneself the average

'reign' of a Pope. At this rate, the election to the papacy appears to have been a suspended death sentence! In this book the author reveals what has been well known to Protestants for centuries, but which is presented now by an ex-priest to Roman Catholics — his intended audience. However, with the softening of modern Protestants, it may be worth their perusal also. Sadly, it is evident that the author is a theological liberal and that his purpose in opening the eyes of Roman Catholics to the dark side of the Papacy is not simply to make them a little less gullible but is to draw them along the benighted path of liberalism. It is not this that will destroy the papacy.

Church Notes

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Western: At Laide on 20th December at 12 midday.

Skye: At Portree on 7th February at 11 a.m.

Day of Humiliation and Prayer

Wednesday, 14th December, 1988 has been appointed by the Synod as a Day of Prayer.

Theological Conference

This year's Theological Conference has been cancelled. The Committee regret any inconvenience caused by this decision.

Rev. D. J. MacDonald

Convener of Training of Ministry Committee

Church Deputies

Rev. A. F. MacKay left for Canada on 20th October, where he is supplying Chesley for two months. Rev. Neil Ross returned from supplying the Chesley congregation on Friday, 21st October, 1988. Rev. D. B. Macleod is expected to return to this country at the end of December. We pray that the labours of the Deputies may be blessed and that the Lord's protecting care may be over them in all their journeys.

Caledonian MacBrayne and Sabbath Ferries

The Outer Isles Presbytery and the Sabbath Observance Committee are continuing to protest and do what they can to reverse Caledonian MacBrayne's recent decision to start a Sabbath ferry service from Harris next summer. The Clerk of the Sabbath Observance Committee asks for concerted prayer that the Lord would thwart this, to preserve what remains of Sabbath observance and to avert God's judgments on individuals and communities.

Ingwenya Mission

The Foreign Mission Committee wish it to be known that there is still a shortage of staff at the John Tallach Secondary School at Ingwenya. Any person with a University Degree although not necessarily possessing Teacher Training, would be welcome there and would be acceptable to the Department of Education in Zimbabwe.

Readers should continue to bear the needs of the mission-field to the Throne of Grace continually. Anyone who is interested in giving a period of service to the Mission as outlined above should contact the Clerk of the Foreign Missions Committee, F.P. Manse, Raasay, IV40 8PB.

List of Communions

The Editor would be glad to know of any corrections to the list of Communions for 1989.

Acknowledgement of Donations

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

Foreign Mission Fund: Mr and Mrs Mackenzie, Drumbeg, £100; Mr and Mrs Macaskill, Lochinver, £20; Mr and Mrs Macleod, Lochinver, £5; Halkirk Congregation, £36; Friends, Lairg, £20; Friends, Wales, £100; Friends, Berneray, £63; Fort William Congregation, £70; Oban Congregation, £65, all for Mbuma Hospital per Neil Murray. Anon., Canada, \$100.00 for famine relief.

Home of Rest Fund: Anon., Dingwall postmark, £60; K.G., Glasgow, £10.

Free Distribution of Magazine Fund: £10 per A. MacP; Anon., Chesley, \$200.00.

Trinitarian Bible Society: Anon., Greenock, £20.

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

Aberdeen: £20 from Skye friends per Miss L. Miller for new Church; £50 from Glasgow friends in collection plate prayer meeting 21/9/88 towards Church funds.

Breasclete: £50 Anon., for Sus. Fund; £50 Anon., for Door Collection; £10 Anon., for Sus. Fund; £10 Anon., for Door Collection.

Glendale: £40 from Glendale friend — where most needed per Rev. D. Nicolson.

London: £10 J. MacL., Collam, Harris, for Congregational purposes, per Capt. D. W. Maclean.

Perth: Friend, Stornoway £5; Friend, Stornoway £5; both per Rev. D. J. MacDonald for Sustentation Fund.

Stornoway: £60 Anon., for Sus. Fund; £20 Anon., for Home Mission Fund; £20 Anon., for Foreign Mission Fund; £25 Anon., (in Sandwick Plate) all per Treasurer.

Sydney, Australia: "A Friend from Auckland" \$1152.00.

Chesley, Canada: Mr D. MacDonald, Dumbarton, \$120.00.