

THE GOSPEL MAGAZINE

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Editorial

Of the myriads of promises given to believers in the Bible, many are concerned with guidance. 'I will guide thee,' God says in Ps. 32:8; and 'The Lord shall guide thee continually' He says in Is. 58:11. The promises are plentiful, and their meaning is very plain. How is it then that so many Christians have problems with this matter of guidance?

One type who gets into difficulties is the man who uses his Bible like a street directory. He demands chapter and verse for every minor decision that he makes. Every insignificant turn in his life is marked by verses which have 'spoken' to him; verses very often dragged out of context and invested with a meaning which is alien to them. What is the difficulty with such a man? He will not accept that the Bible gives principles regarding guidance; he will not submit to the discipline of applying these principles to the details of his life. The problem with this man is that he will not face his problem. He uses his Bible to evade the responsibility of taking decisions in a rational, scriptural way.

On the other hand there is the Christian who never sees anything but problems. He has misgivings about the past, he is worried about the present, and he fears what the future might bring. He does not abuse and trivialise Bible verses. But neither does he take comfort from the promises which assure him that, as a believer, he is being guided by his God.

Where is the meeting point between these two extremes? *The just shall live by faith.* If a Christian demands that decisions like "which kind of car will I buy?" be eased by signs and wonders, he is not living by faith. Neither is that man living by faith who is continually overwhelmed because he feels his problems are too great. What will it mean, in facing this matter of guidance, to live by faith?

We will realize that, in a sense, our personal relationship with God is the most important thing of all. 'Delight thyself in the Lord; and he will give thee the desires of thine heart.' If we daily consecrate ourselves to Him, living in obedience to His word, many a problem which we would otherwise meet will never arise.

But when problems do arise, we must remember that the God who orders our difficulties is the same God as has given us His word. We should then ask ourselves, 'Is God placing me in this trial so that I will seek that way of escape which he has already pointed out in His word?' When Christ was pressed with questions about duty to God (say, in regard to the Sabbath), or about duty to man (say, in regard to

taxes), He did not give superficial answers. He faced the conflicting factors in these situations, applied the principles of God's word to establish priorities, and in that way showed us how to arrive at a solution.

But where are we to find the wisdom to apply these principles to our situation? Perhaps it is here that the duty to live by faith makes most demands. 'If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God... but let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.' We are not to worry on our knees, we are not to cry to heaven in such despair that our very cry is really a denial of our heavenly Father's care.

If we walk in obedience to Him, if we ask for wisdom in faith, if we apply the principles of His word to our providence; we may find our problems to be complex, but we will also find God's promise to be simply true, *I will guide thee...The Lord will guide thee continually.*

The Pilgrim's Staff

R. M. McCHEYNE

I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. Heb. 13:5

This sermon was preached on Thursday evening, 24th November, 1842—the sixth year of McCheyne's ministry. *The Pilgrim's Staff* was an appropriate subject for a man who was then only months away from the end of the way appointed for him.

1. The history of this promise

My beloved friends let us notice, in the first place, the history of this remarkable promise: 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' These words have been a staff in the hand of believers throughout all ages; and they will be so to you, if you lean upon them.

You will notice that it is not put into this epistle for the first time—it is a borrowed promise. First of all, I think, it is borrowed from what God said to Jacob, Gen. 28.15: 'Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for *I will not leave thee* until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.' There is another place from which I think it is borrowed, 1 Chron. 28.20: 'And David said to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do it; Fear not, nor be dismayed: for the Lord God, even my God, will be with thee: *He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee,*' etc. Now, you see, here is the promise again—'He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.' There is still another place where

the same staff is put into a believer's hand, Josh. 1:5: 'There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: As I was with Moses, so will I be with thee: *I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.*' Now, turn back again to Hebrews, and observe how Paul brings it in—'Be content with such things as ye have; *for* he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.'

Now, a believer may ask this question—'When did he say that to me?' Ah! but he said it to Jacob, and Solomon, and Joshua, and therefore it is said to you. Observe, brethren, what a blessed principle this brings out: What God speaks to one believer, he says to me. You will observe that this promise in the Old Testament is special—that is, it is addressed to one individual, but in the New Testament it is general. Some, when they read the Old Testament, say, 'This is addressed to Abraham,' or 'This is addressed to Jacob; but it is not said to me.' But what was said to Abraham, or Jacob, or Joshua, is spoken to you. The special promise to Joshua is to all believing Joshuas to the end of the world—'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.'

I do not know if you understand what I mean; but from this little verse we know that the special promises in the Old Testament are to all believers. God said to Abraham—'I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing.' So he says to all that are children of Abraham. And there is a sweet promise in the forty-third of Isaiah—'Fear not, for I have redeemed thee: I have called thee by my name; thou art mine,' etc. That promise was special to Israel, and yet it belongs to me. And there is another sweet promise in the fifty-fourth chapter—'For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee,' etc. Now, if you were reading this promise, you might say, 'Ah! that does not belong to me.' But by turning to the thirteenth of Hebrews, we know that it belongs to all believers.

There are two reasons I would give why this is true, because to some it may appear wonderful. The first is, God is the same yesterday, today and for ever—'I am the Lord; I change not.' Ah! the unchangeableness of God explains it—'I am the Lord; I change not.' Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and for ever. And there is another reason why this promise of Scripture belongs to believers now; it is that all believers are one body, and therefore whatever belongs to one, belongs to all. All believers are branches of one vine; and therefore if God say to one branch, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,' he says so to all. And therefore, for these two reasons, all the promises made to Jacob or Solomon or Joshua are made to me. And this makes the Bible not a book written for one, but a book

written to me— a letter by the Lord, and directed to me: and therefore every word of divine love and tenderness that he has written in this book belongs to me.

II The Giver of this promise

'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' It is quite evident that it is not the language of a creature. Our parents will leave us, and our friends will leave us. These are not the words of a creature, then—'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' Observe, then, dear brethren, I entreat you, whose word it is—'*He* hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' It is the word of three-one God. You may take each of the persons of the Godhead, and apply this word to him—'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.'

You may take it as the word of Immanuel. You remember what Christ said to his disciples—'Lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world.' This is the same promise. Brethren, when the Lord Jesus comes to you, and covers you with his garment, and says, 'Fear not,' he will never forsake that soul. A mother may forsake—'Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, she may forget; yet will I not forget thee.' Observe, brethren, that when once the Lord Jesus comes to a sinner to be his righteousness, he will never leave him—'I am with you always.' Oh! it is this that makes him a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. Why will he never leave us? The first reason is, his love is everlasting love. It is not like the love of a creature—it is unchangeable. Another reason is, he has died for that soul: he has borne all for that soul. Will he ever leave a soul that he has died for?

Again, you may take these words as those of the Spirit, and then they are like those words in the fourteenth of John—'I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever'—to abide with you *for ever*. It is the same as these words—'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' When God the Holy Spirit comes to a soul, he will never leave it. Some may often be made to say 'I think the Spirit will go away from me.' But, observe, he says, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' David cried out in the bitterness of his soul. 'Take not thy Holy Spirit away from me.' Here is the answer—'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' God will never forsake the temple in which he dwells. He forsook the tabernacle in the wilderness, and he forsook the temple at Jerusalem; but he will never forsake the living temple.

Or, you may take these words, and apply them to God the Father. And here they come to be very much the words God gave to Abraham:

he said, 'Fear not, Abram; I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward.' He had returned from the slaughter of Chederlaomer, and of the kings that were with him. The king of Sodom came out to meet him, and said unto him. 'Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself.' But Abraham said, 'I have lifted up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and of earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoe latchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich.' And, immediately after, God appeared to him, and said: 'Fear not, Abram; I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.'

This is what Asaph felt. He says, in the seventy-third Psalm, 'My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.' Ah, brethren, this is a sweet word to a poor soul who is mourning over the broken pots at his feet. This is a sweet word to those of you who are bereft—who have left houses and lands—'I will never leave thee, not forsake thee.' This may be a sweet word to those of you who are mourning over the dead. O brethren! is this your portion? Can you look up to a three-one God, Father, Son, and Spirit, standing on these broken sherds at your feet, and say, 'Thou wilt never leave me, nor forsake me'? This is happiness. Well, well did the Lord say, 'Mary hath chosen that good part which shall never be taken away from her.' Ah, poor souls! that have chosen the world as your portion—that have chosen the portion that will be taken from you. Ah, brethren! be you wiser.

III When to remember this promise

1. *A time of guilt.* O the dark hour, when guilt is on the conscience, and when a frown looks down from heaven upon us. O in such an hour remember these words—'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' 'Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return unto me.' Thy redeeming God calls out, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to day and for ever.' Thy redeeming God calls out, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' 'Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you.' O there is a deceitfulness in sin! When Satan has got you down, he tries to make you think God has forsaken you.

2. *A time of danger.* There is no time when you may be more inclined to think God has forsaken you, than when sin and Satan are raging. There is a difference from sin raging and sin reigning, though the soul may not see it. In such a time, remember these words—'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' In a time of temptation, the believer should remember this promise. Jacob rested on it; Solomon

rested on it: yea, it is a staff which has been learned on by many believers, and you may lean on it too.

3. *When creatures leave you.* Some of you may be bereft of your substance, but remember, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' Some of you may be called upon—some have been called upon—to part with those who are dear to you. Some of you may be called upon to part with your teachers; but remember—and, Oh! it is hard to remember—that he that makes the creatures pleasant, still lives. Brethren, I do not know a lesson in the world that is harder to learn than this. It was God that gave me the creatures; and, now that he has taken them away, in himself I can find all that I had in them. O then! remember this—'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' Bereavements come suddenly, they come like the whirlwind; but O remember that he comes and says, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.'

And, O brethren! remember that the word 'never' reaches to death—it reaches to the judgement seat. You may lay hold of that word there—'I will *never* leave thee, nor forsake thee.' And when the judgement is past, these words will be the eternal solace of all those here who have believed—'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' Eternity alone will unfold the riches of this promise. He who died for us will be our eternal friend; and he who sanctifies us will for ever dwell in us; and then God, who loved us, will be ever with us. Then will we get into the meaning of his promise—'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.'

Roman Catholicism

EDWARD W. HADWEN

The Sacrifice of the Mass

Article V of the creed of Pope Pius IV reads as follows. "I profess likewise, that in the Mass there is offered to God a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead; and that in the most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist there are truly, really, and substantially, the body and blood, together with soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that there is made a conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the blood; which conversion the Catholic Church calls Transubstantiation. I also confess, that under either kind alone, Christ is received whole and entire, and a true Sacrament."

This confession is demanded in spite of the profession of purpose put forth by the Council of Trent that "the Eucharist...all errors and heresies being repelled, be preserved in its own purity."

The Church of Rome claims that our Lord "commanded" the Apostles and their successors in the priesthood to offer the sacrifice of the Mass, "that Himself should be immolated under visible signs." Besides this the sacrifice must always be accompanied with "mystic benedictions, lights, fumigations of incense, vestments"; water must be mixed with the wine "because it is believed that Christ our Lord did so, as also because from His side there came out blood and water which sacramental mystery is renewed by this mixture." Moreover "the Mass shall *not* be celebrated everywhere in the Vulgar Tongue." The sacrifice of the Mass is declared to be "this tremendous mystery....wherein that life-giving victim by which we were reconciled unto God the Father is daily immolated on the altar by the priests."

These and other doctrines concerning the Mass are enforced by nine canons, each of which ends with an anathema for all who deny them. Well does Professor Lindsay describe them: "The decrees and canons on the Eucharist are a dexterous dovetailing of sentences making a mosaic of different scholastic theories."

Transubstantiation

Sacerdotal associations with the Lord's Supper appeared as early as the time of Cyprian (died A.D. 258). These became more and more definite until there appeared the belief in transubstantiation—that Christ, with His body, blood and full Divinity, was present in the bread and wine; and at the Lateran Council of 1215 this belief was set forth as the official doctrine of the Church; being later promulgated by the Council of Trent and enforced by the Creed of Pius IV.

The priesthood and the Mass are, of course, inextricably joined together, for transubstantiation issues beneath the consecrating hands of the officiating priest. When, therefore, the priest is ordained, the bishop says to him, "Receive thou power to offer sacrifice to God, and to celebrate masses, both for the living and for the dead." The common people therefore, crudely held that the priest *made* the Lord on the altar.

An elaborate, histrionic performance

Having thus brought this "host" or victim into existence by virtue of his office and the words of consecration, the Roman priest claims authority and power to do two things:

First, to offer the "host"—the changed substances of bread and wine—to God, to procure forgiveness of sins; and secondly, to offer it to the worshippers—who usually receive only the body (the bread) in

Communion. The Roman church, of course, holds the theory of "concomitance" which means that the whole Host is in each species and on this view there would be no separation; but according to our belief there is a separation. We must recognise, therefore, that Rome really makes a division in the Celebration. This was done in the Mediaeval Church. There was the Mass—the sacrifice to God, and there was the Eucharist, the thankful receiving in Communion. Moreover this Communion takes a place completely subordinate to the Mass, so that the leading idea and purpose of the Lord's Supper, viz. a feast of thankful commemoration of His atoning death for us held in spiritual fellowship of the family of God, is obscured, if not lost, and what was provided as a sacrament for the Church, keeping its members in mind of the finished work of Christ for our redemption, is turned into a sacrifice to God, offered repeatedly and therefore implying that the Atonement is never complete.

To illustrate this false emphasis we may recall that even when the Pope celebrates Mass on high festivals at the high altar of St. Peter's, he does not communicate the cardinals assembled there in a semi-circle, but only himself and the two cardinals who are assisting him. Instead of a service of fellowship—a common meal shared by Minister and people alike and a means of grace to all—the Mass is an elaborate histrionic performance, something exterior and established in the midst of "crass materialistic associations" that bewilder the rank and file, and encourage ignorance and fear, and lead to misunderstanding and superstition, whilst the priesthood is exalted and the creature on the altar is worshipped rather than the Creator.

This is very serious as it affects the whole Roman Catholic system, and the Mass is the leading characteristic in worship, for it is true to say that as the Pope is the Head of the Roman Church the Mass is the Heart.

We recognise that Rome declares her faith in the atoning death of Christ and also that all she does or offers is professedly on the ground of His meritorious Cross; but this is shrouded by the many attendant ceremonies and we wonder how many of the ordinary worshippers really ever "get through" to the spiritual realities of the saving grace of Christ and enjoy "all the benefits of His passion."

Based on a crude mediaeval philosophy

The whole conception of the Mass is unscriptural, for its central error is based on a crude mediaeval philosophy and is contrary to reason, I mean, that conception that a substance may exist apart from all accidents of smell, shape, colour, etc. On such a conception it was convenient and easy to teach that the substance of the bread and wine

was changed into the actual flesh and blood of Christ whilst the accidents or *qualities* remained the same. The whole idea must be held in contradiction of all our physical senses and is "plainly repugnant to the Word of God." And if the whole thing is unreasonable, so are its parts and its applications. For example, we are asked to believe that the whole Christ is contained in the bread and also in the wine separately, yea that He exists in each crumb of bread and in each drop of wine when divided.

Again, Mass is said on various occasions, and for different purposes, and so the plural *masses* is used. There are Votive Masses, Requiem Masses, Adventia or Chance Masses. Masses are said for sick cattle and sick people, for success in fishing, for crops, and even for butter which the fairies prevent from forming in the churn. "Masses were bought," says Karl Von Hase, "in order to obtain the fulfilment of all sorts of very earthly desires."

We have merely touched upon this octopus of error, the tentacles of which are so far spread. Valiant men stood up against it, as Ratramnus, or Bertram, a monk of Corbie in the ninth century, whose book was prohibited by the Council of Trent; and Berengarius, who put up a good fight, but finally was beaten into recantation, and our own John Wyclif; but not until the mighty reaction which brought in the Reformation were men of God able to display clearly the truth of the Lord's Supper and very ably and very bravely indeed did they expose and condemn this root error which had wrought such havoc in the Church.

Some of the consequences

Our space allows us only to glance at some of the consequences of the Doctrine of the Mass, to some of which we have already referred.

1. It plainly implies that there is something incomplete and insufficient in our Saviour's redeeming work and personal merit. For we cannot countenance the Roman view that the Eucharist and the Calvary sacrifice are one and the same.

2. It exalts the priest—a mere man—to an unwarranted position and claims for him authority, and power over the Lord Himself in respect to His local presence in the sacrament.

3. It practically displaces the all-sufficient and unrepeatable sacrifice of Christ on the Cross for sins by regarding the sacrifice of the Mass as "propitiatory." The work of reconciliation was completely finished by Jesus on Calvary and "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins."

4. It encourages false hopes and presumption in relation to the dead and is made a chief pillar in support of the erroneous doctrine of Purgatory. Of the Mass for the dead, Karl Von Hase writes: "Here in

fact the *opus operatum* meets us again in its naked and undeniable form. As far as the mind of the Church is concerned it takes place as a work done by the priest. The layman has nothing to do with it, except that he orders it and pays. It shortens the punishment due, and helps forward the salvation of a soul which knows, and can know, nothing about it. It exercises magical powers without any interposition of moral character."

5. It degrades our Blessed Saviour, the infinite Lord, by claiming to confine or imprison Him "complete and entire" within the finite elements of bread and wine and by placing Him at the beck and call of a mediating priest.

6. It is not a Divine ordinance and has no warrant of Holy Scripture, but rather is, like other Roman uses, "a fond thing vainly invented."

7. It flatly contradicts our Lord's teaching and purpose by changing a grateful commemoration and simple means of grace into an elaborate performance peculiar and proper to a caste of priests and makes it, not a "eucharistic" celebration in acknowledgment of what Jesus Christ wrought for us by His sacrifice, but rather a means of displaying what the Church can offer and do towards God for man's salvation.

8. It inculcates a subtle form of idolatry, for "the host"—the consecrated bread and wine—is to be worshipped with *latria*, i.e., Divine honour. The Roman Church allows three degrees of worship, *doulia* in reference to saints; *hyperdoulia* in reference to the Virgin Mary; and *latria*, which is the highest form of worship, and this is to be paid to the Eucharistic Presence of Christ! Canon 6 on the subject says, "If any one shall say that Christ, the only begotten Son of God is not to be adored in the holy sacrament of the Eucharist, even with the open worship of *latria*,...let him be anathema."

9. It reduces the sacrament to a dishonouring and materialistic level. This prayer appears in the Missal—the Mass-book for the laity, "May thy body, O Lord, which I have received, and Thy blood which I have drank, cleave to my bowels, and grant that no stain of sin may remain in me...."

In view of all these things, how clear it is that "Nothing could reconcile the Evangelical thought of a spiritual priesthood of all believers with the belief in a mediating priesthood who could give or withhold God." Cranmer wrote: "The greatest blasphemy and injury that can be done against Christ, and yet universally used through the Popish Kingdom, is this, that the priests make their Mass a propitiatory sacrifice, to remit the sins as well of themselves as of others, both quick and dead, to whom they list to apply the same.

Thus, under pretence of holiness, the Papistical priests have taken upon them to be Christ's successors, and to make such an oblation and sacrifice as never creature made but Christ alone, neither He made the same any more times than once, and that was by His death upon the cross."

For Younger Readers

DUNCAN MATHESON I

You may remember that, in the Jan/Feb issue, we wrote about the Duchess of Gordon. Duncan Matheson was born in the same parish as the Duchess, in the town of Huntly. Duncan was a poor boy; the Duchess Elizabeth was rich. But because they both came to know Jesus Christ they came to know one another, and eventually to work together in His service. That was later on; what follows describes the first part of Duncan Matheson's life.

Duncan Matheson's father had the job of carrying mails from Huntly to Banff. His mother's job was to feed and clothe five children with the small amount of money that his father earned.

Duncan was sorry for his mother. One day he was given some money by a neighbour because he had gone on an errand for him. Duncan went down the street and stood outside a shop window with the money in his pocket. He saw clasp knives, ginger-bread men, and other interesting things. But he went in and bought some tea, ran back home with it, and hid it in the kitchen cupboard. Imagine how delighted his mother was when she opened the cupboard door!

Most ministers in the Huntly area about the beginning of the last century preached in a way that did not help their hearers. They spoke very little about sin, or about Jesus who died to save all who believe in Him. But there was one minister, George Cowie, who did preach the gospel. He was put out of his church because he allowed into it the same travelling preacher as David Steven had heard as a boy. But although he lost his church, George Cowie used to go around the countryside preaching in barns and in the open air. George Cowie was Duncan Matheson's grand-uncle.

- When Duncan was a young boy there was an old man called James Maitland in Huntly who had come to know Jesus years before through the preaching of George Cowie. Duncan used to keep out of this old man's way, because he used to speak to boys about the Bible.

But one day Duncan was sent with a message to James Maitland, and the old man took his chance. He closed the door, and told Duncan the story of how George Cowie had come to know Jesus. Then the old man spoke to the young boy about how he, too, needed Jesus Christ.

As Duncan grew up, he thought a lot about Heaven and Hell. He came to see that he needed God to change his heart. In *The Last Duchess* you read about the coming of godly ministers in answer to the Duchess's prayers. One of these was called Robert McCheyne. This young minister preached one evening of the Lord's Day and Duncan heard him. The congregation was so big that they met in the open air. As McCheyne preached, Duncan felt the truth of the word of God. He began to pray. Then the darkness came on, and the preacher stopped; but before he did he asked those who wanted to talk about Jesus to go into the church. Duncan looked around for a special friend of his. If his friend would go into the church, Duncan thought, then he would go in too. But as he made his way towards the church he could not see his friend. He looked in the window of the church and saw many inside. He went round to the door, feeling he should go in, but in the end he turned away.

Soon afterwards Duncan left Huntly and went to Edinburgh. Here he worked for a builder, and he tried to forget about God. But one day there was an argument among the other builders about God and the Bible. Duncan could not keep quiet; he had to speak in support of the word of God. Afterwards he felt very strange. He had defended the word of God in argument with others; but he knew that he himself was not heeding it in his heart. Soon after that, Duncan was at work again when church bells began to ring. At the sound of those bells, two of Duncan's work mates began to say terrible things against God. Duncan felt very upset by this; but then he thought to himself. 'These men do not believe in God, but neither have you received Christ, for all you have heard about him. You will be worse off at last than they will.'

The next evening, the Lord's Day, Duncan stood on Calton Hill in Edinburgh. The city with its thousand lights spread out below him, and he felt he ought to go to church. At last he went to one, climbed up to the gallery and sat down. The preacher had almost finished his sermon. He had been speaking of mercy, and God's forgiveness. Now Duncan heard him speak about the holiness of God; that he cannot approve of sin. Duncan saw that he was in danger of being separated from God for ever. The service finished, the people in the church rose up to make their way to the door. But Duncan just sat there, and as the people in the gallery passed, some looked with pity on him. At

last he rose up and walked home to his lodgings. All he could pray was, 'God be merciful to me a sinner'.

In the days that followed, Duncan tried very hard to please God. He wept for his sins, he read his Bible and he prayed. There were seventy steps up to his room where he lodged; he used to offer a prayer at every step. He did not see that he was hoping to climb to heaven by what he did himself, instead of trusting in Jesus.

At that point he went home to Huntly. His mother, who had often prayed that he would come to Christ, was now dead. But at home he found peace to seek God.

One day he was standing at the end of his father's house when the words from the Gospel of John came into his mind: 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.'

That text led him away from himself to think of God. He thought of the love of God to a sinful world, and he thought of the word *whosoever*. Suddenly he realised that *whosoever* means everybody and anybody, *and therefore me, even me*. He took God at His word. Instead of looking to his own prayers and tears he believed in Jesus Christ, and he was saved.

Five Words of Counsel

MAURICE HANDFORD

The Bible contains much of a practical nature to help us in our Christian life and work. It does not underestimate the difficulties and problems which confront the believer in a world where the devil is unremittingly active. Let us consider five practical words of counsel which have been written for our encouragement.

1. FRET NOT Psalm 37:1

"Fret not thyself..." Three times over in the psalm this advice is urged upon us, and how relevant it is! David was beset with many foes, and in his distress and fear he appealed to the Lord. He had much to contend with, for his enemies were vicious and seeking to overthrow him.

The remedy for fretfulness is to trust in the Lord, to delight in Him, to commit our way to Him, and to wait patiently for Him—see verses 3-8. If we will heed such counsel the tendency to fretfulness will be effectively counteracted.

David urges us to be God-conscious—fifteen times in this psalm we read of Who the Lord is, and what He does for those who love Him. All too frequently we are absorbed with ourselves and we become obsessed with the difficulties which confront us. We are to take our eyes from our circumstances and fix them on the Lord. We should remember that His grace is ours, even on the darkest and most trying day.

2. FORGET NOT Psalm 103:2

“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.” What a wonderful psalm this is! David here got alone and reviewed the wonderful benefits which God had bestowed upon Him. We, too, shall do well from time to time to review God’s dealings with us.

David’s review resulted in an outburst of praise—“bless the Lord, O my soul”, and in resolution—“forget not all His benefits”. He calls on all his faculties and powers to praise so gracious a God. He is conscious of their source and suitability and blesses the Giver. What a bundle of benefits David had received!

We should certainly remind ourselves of God’s gracious dealings with us—such an exercise will encourage us for the future. This was how John Newton reasoned:

*His love in time past forbids me to think
He'll leave me at last in trouble to sink;
Each sweet Ebenezer I have in review
Confirms His good pleasure to help me quite through.*

God has dealt with us beyond all our deserving; we have a thousand reasons to be thankful.

3. FEAR NOT Isaiah 41:10

What a fear-ridden age we live in! Fears of one kind or another haunt many people. In a very real sense, men’s hearts are failing them for fear. The Bible repeatedly urges the believer to “fear not”. Here in this verse a clear reason is supplied why fear should be absent—the assurance of God’s presence—“for I am with thee”. His presence is always real even if sometimes we do not realise it. “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” is the gracious assurance of the One Who never fails.

Notice the three-fold “I will” in our text. “I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.”

How easy it is to be disturbed by what is taking place in the world around us. We need to remind ourselves that “the Lord reigneth”—Psalm 93:1. If He reigns we need not fear, for all things are under His rule and governance.

4. FAINT NOT Galatians 6:9

No service rendered to, or for, the Lord is ever lost. We are told to cast our bread upon the waters, with the assurance that we shall find it after many days (Ecclesiastes 11:1). Who are we to judge whether our work is a success or not? Our task is to be faithful in the discharge of our commission and then to leave the results with God.

Our safeguard against weariness is to remember Christ. He looked at life in the context of eternity—"Who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame".

Whatever form our Christian service may take, we have the assurance that our labour is not in vain in the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:58). Therefore—faint not and, as the hymn puts it, "in thy toil rejoice".

5. FORSAKE NOT Hebrews 10:25

"Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is." Worship is both an obligation and a delight. Meeting together in the Saviour's Name means much to Christian people. The Lord Jesus gave a very beautiful promise in this connection—"where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). Here is comfort for all believers. At every assembly for public worship, at every gathering for prayer and praise, Christ is present.

Perhaps we may be discouraged when we think how few meet for worship compared with worldly meetings, but when we realise Who it is that meets with us we ought to be thrilled. How much they miss who wilfully neglect public worship—they miss the opportunity of meeting with Christ Himself.

If we were to heed these five simple words of counsel, would they not transform our lives?

To no party we confine the communion of prayers, to whom God has not confined his grace. All the members of the mystical body must share particularly in our prayers, because they are the members of Christ, whatever difference be betwixt us and them in lesser things. The sympathy betwixt the members of the same body of our Lord requires this. And it is a sad sign not to be so affected. Amos 6:6, 'They are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph'.

Thomas Boston

Points from First Peter

HERBERT M. CARSON

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.

Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied' (1 Pet. 1. 1 and 2).

In our earlier studies we have seen that in the opening verses of this epistle Peter is saying this: If you are a Christian, God has worked in you through His Spirit. He has enlightened you to see your sin; He has led you in faith in Christ. Now, he says, this is the purpose that God had in mind when He chose you—to lead you to *obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ*. This was the object of God's design. It is the explanation, Peter would say, of what has been going on during that time of spiritual turmoil while God has been awakening you. In this phrase, Peter is saying, Here is how you come, and this is what you receive when you do come. You come by the obedience of faith, and you receive all the blessings that are associated with the sprinkling of the blood of Christ.

The Way to Christ—Through Obedience

How then do we come to Christ? Peter says, it is *through obedience*. Now at first sight, we may feel that this does not somehow tally with the usual New Testament pattern as it describes how a man comes to Christ. Surely the emphasis normally is, repentance and faith. The man turns from his sin, and he turns to Christ as his Saviour. But of course in actual fact, when Peter uses the word 'obedience', he is embracing both repentance and faith. This is, if you like, the obedience of faith, because after all, what is repentance ultimately? Is not repentance a man's submission to the verdict of God's law? God's law pronounces us, every one without exception, guilty before Him; and obedience to the law is surely submission to the law's verdict. It means that I no longer try to struggle, no longer try to assert my own virtues and my own goodness; I humbly bow before God and acknowledge that I am just a sinner, guilty, lost, helpless. Faith in Christ begins in that obedience to the verdict of the law of God.

But it is also the obedience of faith. When I believe in Christ, what am I doing? I am *obeying* the gospel. The gospel is the good news of One who saves from sin, and in coming to Him, I come in obedient faith. It is Christ who is the object of our faith. God has manifested Himself, He has revealed Himself in the Person of His Son; to *obey*

God means that we obey His revelation, namely Jesus Christ. To *believe* in God means that we must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. God has shown Himself to men in the Person of His Son, and the obedience of faith is an obedience that finds Christ as its object.

Faith in Christ—A Demanding Thing.

Is that why Peter speaks of it here in terms of obedience? Faith, you see, is not simply a nod of assent to certain statements about the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not merely that I accept what the New Testament says about Him, that He is the Son of God, that He is the only and all-sufficient Saviour. Faith, of course, accepts that, but it is more than a mere acceptance of certain statements and certain facts. Faith certainly is not simply in terms of an outward profession; it is not simply in terms of lip service. True faith is in terms of obedience; in other words, to believe in Jesus Christ means to submit to Him utterly and completely.

Sometimes people talk as if it is possible to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as your *Saviour* but not as your *Lord*, as if that were something that is reserved for a subsequent development, as if indeed it were something only for those who were prepared to go on the second mile of Christian experience. But you cannot divide up the Lord Jesus Christ. When He comes to us, He comes with all His absolute claims. He is the Saviour; He is the Lord; He is the King; He is God; and when we come to Him, we do not dictate the terms upon which we come. If we come, we must come in complete submission. Faith which is divorced from obedience is not faith at all; it is only a make believe. It is an utter delusion to imagine that we can believe in Jesus Christ for salvation and continue to live just as we please. Such faith, the New Testament would say, is no faith at all. We may profess a great deal with our lips that we believe in Christ, but the acid test as to whether that faith is real or not, is whether we are living lives of obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. True faith is a faith which submits completely to His absolute and unconditional claims upon us.

Our First Loyalty—to Jesus Christ

These Christians to whom Peter was writing were living in a difficult situation. They were living in a hostile world and, as a result, there were all the temptations to compromise, to conform with the existing pattern of conduct all around. What they were called to realise was that their allegiance was not to the world around, but was primarily and above all else to Christ. This is what we have constantly got to emphasise in our thinking and in our living, that our primary loyalty, our supreme loyalty is to Jesus Christ. There is a constant pressure to conform to the world. So often the world's standards are

presented in such an attractive fashion, and the suggestion is that if we stand apart from the way the world goes, we are extraordinary, we are out of date and out of touch.

We have got to come back again and again to this point, that faith in Christ means obedience, and obedience means submission to His Lordship. Christ my Saviour is Christ my Lord and my King. Christian living is not in terms of a passing nod to Christ as we go on our own way. Christian living is in terms of a life of obedience to His perfect will. This, says Peter, is what God had in mind when He chose you. This was God's purpose when He worked in you by His Holy Spirit, that He might bring you in humble faith to complete obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. Clearly this is not something which is simply in terms of one decision made at the outset of the Christian life; this is to be the whole pattern of our living. *The Christian life is a life of obedience.*

The Sprinkling of the Blood of Christ—Its Meaning.

Turn now to the other side, which is tremendously important. How do you come? You come with the obedience of faith. What do you receive? You receive all the benefits and blessings associated with the sprinkling of the blood of Christ. As we think together about this important phrase in the New Testament, the *sprinkling of the blood of Christ*, we have to say that we must know our Old Testament if we are going to understand the New. A great deal of unmitigated nonsense is talked at times in religious periodicals about the Old Testament. Unless you know your Old Testament you will be groping around, failing to understand the full significance of the New. The Old is the key which unlocks the secrets of the New. If we are going to understand the significance of this phrase, 'the sprinkling of the blood of Christ', we have got to go back to the Old Testament.

Back to the Book of Leviticus.

We have got to take the book of Leviticus and start to read it. We have got to inform our minds of some of the requirements of the ceremonial law. Yes, that book of Leviticus which we did not see had any application to the Christian life; that book which perhaps to some of us seems rather remote and detached, dealing with priests and animals being brought for sacrifice and all the minute regulations. But we begin to find, as we really study the principles that are involved in the laws of Leviticus, how much they have to teach us about the Gospel. The laws of Leviticus are part of the unfolding of God's truth. All those regulations about the ceremonial and ritual of the temple and the altar were designed to prepare God's people for the coming of the Saviour.

Blood Sprinkled Upon the Altar.

In the ceremonial system, the sprinkling of the blood is referred to on quite a number of occasions. In the first place, the blood of the sacrifice was *sprinkled upon the altar*. The altar spoke to the worshipper of the *presence of God*. The worshipper came to meet God, but the whole emphasis was—how dare he come? The God to whom he comes is a holy God, a God of utter righteousness; he comes as a sinner; as a guilty one. If then he is to approach God, says the Lord, there must be sacrifice. The sacrifice was in a sense, crude and brutal; but the very brutality of it emphasised that sin is such an ugly foul thing, that sin cries out to heaven for God's vengeance and God's judgement. The Old Testament writers were not the sentimentalists that we so often find nowadays; they really spoke about the *wrath of God and the judgement of God*.

When a man came to the altar, he was made to realise that sin is of such a character that it requires nothing less than *death* as its judgement. The bringing of the sacrificial victim, the lamb from the flock, its slaying and the sprinkling of the blood upon the altar, was the most vivid declaration possible that death must be visited upon sin.

When the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, goes to the altar of Calvary; when the Lamb is slain there; when the blood of Christ is sprinkled there, this same declaration is given in all its fulness: 'My sins deserve eternal death, but Jesus died for me.'

This is the very heart of the Gospel. This is what we mean when we say there must be atonement. The judgement of God must fall. When the blood is sprinkled upon the altar, it is a vivid declaration of the fact that the judgement *has* fallen. Because the sacrifice has been offered the worshipper may now approach his God and truly worship.

Blood Sprinkled Before the Lord.

In the ritual of the Old Testament, not only did the priest sprinkle the blood on the altar but he sprinkled the blood openly *before the Lord*. Again you can see it almost in picture language. What is he doing in that gesture? Is he not declaring that what has happened upon the altar is being presented before God? The judgement has fallen upon the sacrificial victim. This fact is declared before God as the priest sprinkles the blood before the Lord.

When you go to the epistle to the Hebrews, you find that the great high Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, having sprinkled His blood on the altar of Calvary, went into the Holy of Holies and presented that sacrifice before the Father, and sat down at the right hand of God. There is no further need to sprinkle the blood before the Lord. There

is no further need to present any offering. *The so called sacrifice of the Mass has no place in our worship.* We come in the name of the Christ who once and for all presented His offering, and is now seated at the right hand of God. It has been *presented* and God has *accepted* it.

Blood Sprinkled Upon the People.

This is surely what Peter has primarily in mind in this passage. He says that God has worked in us to bring us to the sprinkling of the blood of Christ. He is obviously thinking in terms of the blood of Christ being sprinkled upon us. In order to understand that, we must go back again to the Old Testament.

In the ritual, the priest, having sprinkled the blood upon the altar, then sprinkled the blood upon the people. You may remember that when the covenant was established on Mount Sinai (Exodus 24), blood was sprinkled upon the people. What was the meaning of that? It was this; what had happened there upon the altar was now being applied to them. What had happened there? God's judgement had fallen upon the sacrifice. It had been accepted; the way had been opened for the worshippers to come, and all that was being symbolically applied to the worshipper. The blood is sprinkled upon him. He comes now, no longer guilty, no longer defiled, no longer unclean. He comes now as one who has been forgiven; one who has been made pure; one who has been made fit to approach his God.

Is not that what the apostle John has in mind when he writes that great statement: 'The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin'? (1 Jno. 1. 7). That is why we have such confidence as we come near to God. If we come just as we are, in our own goodness, we come with a tainted righteousness which God will reject out of hand. But when we come through Christ, all that He did for us on Calvary when He bore our sins in His own body on the tree, is applied to us. When the blood of Christ is sprinkled upon us, we come as those who are cleansed and made fit through Christ, to approach our God. This is what Paul means when he talks about being *justified* by faith; being *accepted* for Christ's sake. It is the sprinkling of the blood of Christ; the *application* to us of the fruits of Christ's redemption. It is that which opens the way for us to come.

The Covenant Relationship.

Turn back to Exodus 24 and the covenant established then. What is a covenant? A covenant is an intimate relationship in which God pledges Himself to His people. He is their God; they are His people. But the sprinkling of the blood played a significant part in the establishment of this covenant. It was linked with this fact of the

people's cleansing. How can God enter into a covenant with sinners? How can the Most High stoop to such as we are? The idea at first sight is intolerable. God says, The sprinkling of the blood which cleanses you is also that which knits you into covenant with Myself. It is because you have been made clean, because I have made you clean, that I now bring you and knit you to Myself. So being a Christian is not being linked in some remote way with God. *It is being brought into the most intimate fellowship possible.* We are in covenant with our God, and the basis of the covenant is the sprinkling of the blood.

The New Covenant in His Blood.

Go back to that very solemn occasion just before the Lord suffered, and He says as He takes the cup of wine, 'This is my blood of the new covenant' (Matt. 26. 28). The covenant is reaching its fulfilment now, and through Christ we are brought into the most perfect fellowship with God, and what is the basis of it?—His blood. It is because He 'died that we might be forgiven', because He 'died to make us good', that we are brought into this covenant with God.

Because what He has done is *perfect* because there is a *permanence* about His sacrifice, this covenant is not some temporary liaison that may be dissolved. This is an abiding, an everlasting covenant because the basis of the covenant is perfection. Christ has shed His blood. There is no further offering needed. That which Christ has done has been accepted by God. Because of this, the covenant between God and His people is a covenant that has been *cemented, sealed, and settled* by the blood of Christ.

The Blood of Consecration.

Back once more to the Old Testament. The sprinkling of the blood implied the *consecration* of the one who came. It spoke basically about their cleansing and in a sense everything else flowed from that. It was as cleansed sinners that they could come to God. It was as cleansed sinners that they were brought into covenant with God. It was as cleansed sinners that they were committed to a life of consecration, of holiness; they were consecrated unto the Lord.

Indeed there was one particular group or class in the Old Testament who were thus consecrated. When the priest was set aside for his holy task, blood was sprinkled upon him. He was cleansed that he might be consecrated wholly to the Lord, that he might be able to offer acceptably in the name of the people.

In the New Testament, however, there is no such priestly caste which acts on our behalf. Peter here in this epistle says, '*Ye are...a royal priesthood*' (2. 9); every Christian is a priest unto our God. It is true that some are set apart for the ministry of the Word within the

Church, but basically every Christian is a priest; every Christian has a right to approach God; every Christian has immediate access to the Father. So every Christian is called to be consecrated that he may offer acceptably.

But you say, What can we offer? Surely Christ has offered all that is needed? Yes, as far as sin is concerned, Christ has offered the only possible offering and He has offered a perfect offering; but we are called to bring another sacrifice—the sacrifice of *praise* and *thanksgiving*, the fruit of our lips. We are called to *do good* and to *distribute*. With such sacrifices, the sacrifice of our money, our alms, God is well pleased. We are called supremely to bring the sacrifice of *ourselves*. ‘I beseech you,’ says Paul, ‘I beseech you therefore brethren..that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God’ (Rom. 12. 1). But we can only offer ourselves, we can only consecrate ourselves to the Lord, in so far as we have been sprinkled by the blood of Christ; only in so far as what He did for us has been applied to us; only on that basis may we come.

Have We Experienced the Sprinkling of the Blood of Christ?

Peter surely is just saying this: all that God has done, all that God has purposed, focuses on this great fact of the death of Christ. All that God has been doing in your life has been leading you to this point, that you might trust in Christ crucified. We never, in a sense, move away from that point. This is not simply the starting point of our Christian life, that we recall from time to time, much as we recall a memory of the past. Christ crucified is always at the very heart. The whole of our Christian thinking and living is in terms of this great thing—Christ crucified.

I ask this very searching question; have we all come to this experience of the sprinkling of the blood of Christ? Or to put it another way—how do we approach God? What is the ground of our confidence that we may come to Him? Yes, let us face it, in terms of the situation of these days, were this our last week in this life how would we face God, were we to stand before Him in judgement, ‘for we shall all stand before the judgement seat of Christ’ (Rom. 14. 10)? Where would our confidence be?

Oh, in that day, it will be utterly futile to quote our good works, our church going and all the rest of it. There will only be one basis on which we will stand confident in that awful day; it will be on the basis of the blood of Christ shed for our sins at Calvary. I ask you is your confidence there? Have you put your trust in Jesus Christ as your Saviour? Has that blood been sprinkled? Do you know that cleansing?

*Just as I am—without one plea,
But that Thy Blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come.*

I ask you, have you come like that, just as a sinner in simple and obedient trust in Jesus Christ?

Is the Cross of Christ Truly Our Delight?

You may reply, yes, by the grace of God, I have come like that; by the grace of God, I have submitted; I am trusting only in what Christ has done. I ask you, and as I ask you I put that same question to myself; Is the Cross of Christ truly that in which we delight? Paul says, 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world' (Gal. 6. 14). Do we exult in Christ crucified?

Just after the First World War, the Christian Union in Cambridge University was being beset with suggestions that they might merge their identity in a wider organisation, and in a student's room in Trinity College the discussion took place. What was the crux of the debate? One of the Christian Union men of the day asked this question. 'Is the blood of Christ *central* in your teaching?' The other side replied, 'Well, we give it a place but it is *not* central'. The Christian Union men said, 'Well, for us, it is central'. This, you know, was the final issue.

I wonder is it still true of all of us that the blood of Christ is central in our thinking and in our witnessing? If we are to point men to Christ, it is Christ crucified. If we are to bring them to the Saviour, it is to the One whose blood was shed. This must be the ground of our hope; this must be at the very heart of our witness. This, after all, will be our theme in heaven; 'Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood' (Rev. 1. 5). In that day we shall join with the great company of the redeemed and we shall sing, 'Worthy is the Lamb'.

Let us see to it that even now, be our time here long or be it very short, we are preparing for that day when to all eternity we will adore and praise the One who for us shed His blood; whose sprinkled blood has made us clean and brought us into an everlasting covenant with our God.

Formerly I had set up repentance as a toll between me and the cross; now it came freely as the tear that faith wept.

Duncan Matheson

From the Front Line

CHINA

Readers may remember that, in our issue for Nov/Dec 1978, we published an article by Cameron Tallach. At the time, along with his wife and family, he was living at Taipei.

At present Dr Tallach is living at Hong Kong. Among other activities, he is engaged there in medical work in the refugee camps where the 'boat people' are accommodated. From Hong Kong, he is able to keep an eye on the developing situation in China, where he would like to go as and when the way opens in providence. In March of this year, an opportunity arose for him to pay a brief visit to China. The following article combines an account of that visit with an assessment of the situation in China now.

BACKGROUND

When China fell under communist rule in 1949, foreign missionaries were no longer permitted to enter the country, and those already working there were gradually forced to leave. Such radical changes had occurred in China's official attitude to the Christian Gospel, and all in a short space of time, that the Western Church seemed to be pressed into a spirit of reluctant resignation to the apparent impossibility of foreign mission work being opened up there again within this generation—or perhaps even in this century. In certain sectors such as attitude seems to persist to this day. However, since the death of the Chinese communist leader Mao Tse Tung in 1976, surprising changes have occurred which include changes in China's attitude to Christianity. Whereas previously the criterion for acceptance was the degree of an individual's or a nation's sympathy with China's communist ideology, it has now become the degree to which they can aid that nation in her great drive towards modernisation and concern to draw level with developed countries, especially in the fields of Agriculture, Science and Technology, Industry and Defence. Under the new "United Front" policy, all who are able and willing to contribute to China's development are welcome there, almost irrespective of their ideology or religion. There have thus opened up to teachers in many fields (including English language) skilled technicians and tourists in particular, opportunities for visiting China which were not open to them 2-3 years ago.

China has not officially begun to open her doors to foreign mission work. She is opening to foreign help, and has simply accepted that, for the present at any rate, such help cannot be obtained without some

intrusion of "foreign" religion. There appears to be no immediate prospect of the Chinese government granting permission for missionaries in the traditionally-accepted sense of the term to live there.

However, there is no doubt that changes have taken place. Groups within China who were previously discriminated against because they could not bow to the communist god, now enjoy greater freedom to act according to their conscience. Of particular interest to Christians in the west, persecution of Chinese Christians which characterised the Cultural Revolution years (1966-76) has been much reduced and in some cases even reversed. Thus one report tells of a Christian who was recently brought to trial for preaching the Gospel in Canton province, south China. The judge's reaction was, "Set this man free; we are not putting people in prison for this now."

MISSIONARY WORK CONDUCTED FROM OUTSIDE

1. *Radio Work:* Especially in recent years, radio work has been seen by several Christian groups as an effective means of overcoming China's self-imposed barrier to the Gospel. At first, government restrictions denied such groups any means of assessing what response their broadcasts met in China. But recently, with relaxation of restrictions on mail to and from China, they have been encouraged and delighted to receive an almost overwhelming correspondence from all over the land. Up to 4000 letters have been received in a month by one group, seeking further information on the content of programmes, applying for correspondence courses, or enlisting in English education classes. Both through broadcast and related correspondence, therefore, Christians in countries surrounding China have opportunity of exerting a christian influence in China, and there is evidence that this work has been used for the spiritual good of many. Broadcasting time can be bought by independent or private groups, and the content of their programmes would be up to them.

2. *Correspondence Courses:* As noted, these may form part of radio work, but in some cases are operated separately. Being, of course, under the supervision of whatever group is operating them, it is for that group to determine their content. Again, there has been extensive demand for them from many parts of China—again an indication of the potential for good that lies in this kind of work. Here is opportunity both to present the claims of Christ to unbelievers with the assurance that they will study them for whatever motive prompted them first to enquire, as well as to build up believers in their faith.

3. *Supply of Bibles and Christian Literature:* During the Cultural Revolution years (1966-76) there was indiscriminate destruction of all

kinds of literature throughout China. As a result, many sectors of the population now find themselves sadly bereft of books for instruction and reference, and the christian church is no exception. At present the government policy, by encouraging tourism, provides opportunity for a limited amount of Bibles and other christian literature to be carried into China — an opportunity that some are seeking to use to the full while it lasts.

Translation of christian books into Chinese is another rather specialised activity that comes under this general heading. The Reformation Translation Fellowship are at present engaged in this work, though their target up till now has tended to be divinity students, requiring translation of fairly "heavy" works. In China today there are large numbers of young Christians who, because of restrictions, are denied the privilege of regular instruction and fellowship. For them, suitably selected books would be an invaluable aid to their christian life.

4. *Personal Visits:* Although the situation varies from one part to another, it is generally true that Chinese people throughout China are considerably freer now than before to associate openly with foreign visitors. Thus, although China cannot be expected to grant permission for permanent residence to foreign missionaries *as such*, yet there is opportunity for them to visit there frequently, and thereby develop close personal relationships with Christians there. In this way a very effective ministry could be carried on, supporting, directing, encouraging the Christian Church in China, and at the same time keeping Christians in the West informed of their situation and progress.

MY VISIT

Entering China

The Kowloon (Hong Kong)—Canton express train leaves daily at 2.0 p.m. We sped through familiar scenes in the New Territories, where my family and I had stayed for two months last year. Then at Lo Wu came the Chinese border. What strange emotions arose as, for the first time in my life, I entered this country that had come to mean so much to me! Here, I was coming within the same borders with Christians who in my own life time had suffered much for Christ's sake, and I began to sense a new identification with them. We are taught in Heb. 13:3 to identify with our brethren in Christ when they are suffering for His sake, and I am thankful for this aid to that exercise. For a further two hours we were carried through scenery not altogether unfamiliar—mostly farmland, largely consisting of terraced rice fields, vegetable

plots and frequent small villages. In Canton, after customs formalities, several foreign visitors, including myself, were taken to the Tung Fang hotel, very spacious and comfortable, where I was to share a room with a friend who had travelled there two days before. Through him I was able to meet several of the local Chinese Christians which made the visit much more interesting than it would otherwise have been.

Objectives

In travelling to China on this occasion, I had three main objectives. First; to enquire further regarding the possibility of gaining permission to work in China, and some interesting contacts were made in this connection. I am still awaiting the outcome of these enquiries. Second; to carry in as many Bibles and as much other christian literature as possible for the help of Christians in China. And third; to try to learn something at first hand regarding their way of life.

Before leaving Hong Kong, I made contact with the China Graduate School of Theology. Within that school is a Chinese Church Research Centre, under the leadership of Rev Jonathan Chao, son of Dr. Charles Chao, Overseas Secretary of the Reformation Translation Fellowship. There, I was supplied with some devotional literature and 200 small New Testaments. The appreciation expressed by those who received those books made me heartily glad that I had taken them. Several groups in Hong Kong, including the above-mentioned under Jonathan Chao, are concerned to take fullest possible advantage of the present opportunity to get christian literature into China. We must pray that the opportunity will continue and that these books when distributed will prove a rich and everlasting blessing to many. Despite opposition by the Chinese communists, especially during the Cultural Revolution, the christian church has continued to grow. This means that new Christians are being added to it, and there is not always opportunity for these new believers, often with very little christian background, to have the regular fellowship with other Christians that we tend to take so much for granted. It seems to be here that there is a particular need for good christian literature that can be understood by those who are as yet unlearned, and that will build them up in the faith.

House Groups

With regard to the way of life of Christians in China, it will be understood that in such a vast land there are bound to be great regional differences. Reports come of some where 100-200 Christians can meet together for worship without harassment; whereas in other places, such as Shanghai and Peking, restrictions are so tight that they

still have to take the precautions of keeping meetings small and rotating the place of meeting, so as to avoid the attention of the authorities. In Canton I was told by one of the Christians that no time is set for meetings for worship. He would simply invite several Christian friends to his house, and during their visit they would sing and pray together, and possibly discuss some part of Scripture. There seemed to be an absence of leadership amongst them, which was not entirely to their advantage; a leader could be expected to take more responsibility for those in his group, to encourage them to use all opportunities to grow in their faith. Such a lack clearly does not apply in other parts of China, where meetings are well organised, and members of groups are even sent out to evangelise nearby areas!

Official Churches

An alternative to the less formal house groups, which, in the providence of God, have been the life of the Church in China through her recent troubles, is the official church. Closed down during the cultural revolution, some church buildings, especially in places frequently visited by foreign tourists, have been reopened and are now being used for christian services at least once a week. Ministers working in these churches are members of the "Three Self Movement", a government-operated body representing protestant churches in China ("Three Self" stands for self-supporting, self-governing, self-propagating.) I was able to attend one such service on the Lord's Day, in company with a Chinese Christian. It was impressive to join in worship with over 1000 professing Christians in mainland China. The sermon being in Cantonese, I understood little of it, but my friend who could also speak Mandarin Chinese informed me afterwards that it was largely political propaganda. Sermons to be preached in these official churches have to be submitted beforehand for scrutiny, and it is reported that references to the miracles of Christ, to His resurrection, and to His second coming are prohibited. It is little wonder, therefore, that true Christians throughout China prefer their house meetings to these officially approved services.

A degree of liberty

One of the Christians I met was a young man who had been "sent to the countryside" to work in the fields. Finding the work hard and the food insufficient, so that his health deteriorated, he voluntarily returned to Canton, and thereby gave up his right to employment. He had to live, with an unemployed sister, on the earnings of his father and another sister. He kindly conducted me round a considerable part of the city during one day, ending with a meal at his home, along with

the rest of his family. Four of them are Christians, and it was a moving experience to join with them in prayer before we ate our meal. This young man explained that he could not have so openly associated with a foreigner three or four years ago, since he would thereby have attracted suspicion.

It was to this house that I and several American visitors took the Scriptures we had carried in with us. Much to the amazement of passers-by, five foreigners alighted from two taxis in the middle of their busy street, laden with heavy bags, and proceeded with our Chinese friend along a narrow lane to his house! There, 1400 New Testaments were quite openly taken from the bags and stacked in the living room, later to be moved upstairs, and later still to be distributed to different parts of China. There was no attempt at secrecy, because it was felt unnecessary.

We must thank God for the degree of liberty granted to His people in China, and for their boldness in taking much advantage of new opportunities to serve Him. We should seek to be inspired by their love and zeal, but at the same time seek for them wisdom that they may not unnecessarily antagonise the authorities, thereby again increasing restrictions against themselves.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

What are the future prospects for missionary work in China? The changes which have provided present opportunities could be reversed as quickly as they have been introduced. They could equally well be increased. Such is China.

But should present openings prove only temporary, it is all the more imperative that they be used to the full while they exist. Again, the time to begin preparation for work in China is not when the door fully opens, should it do so. The time for preparation is now.

We believe in an almighty God who has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ, to whom He has committed the governorship of the nations. It is inconceivable that He should have no interest in a nation of one thousand million people, and indeed He has proved that interest in maintaining His church in China through most bitter persecution. The future of China is in His hands before it is even considered by the Chinese government. Our question therefore, with regard to future work in China, is not so much *Will China open?* as *Is God directing us to serve Him and His church there now?*

ISRAEL

In our issue of July/August, 1977, we published an article by the Rev M. A. Macleod, director of Christian Witness to Israel. That article included references to the work of the Rev Baruch Maoz in Israel, and in our issue of March/April, 1979, there appeared another article which was largely written by Baruch Maoz himself. Recently we sent a list of questions to Baruch Maoz; the following is based on his brief answers.

Any reader wishing to receive the Prayer Letter sent out by Baruch Maoz should write to Christian Witness to Israel, 44 Lubbock Road, Chislehurst, Kent, BR7 5JX.

Personal details

I am 36 years old. I was born in the U.S.A., and emigrated with my family in 1953. After that I studied in Scotland, and was ordained in England. It was during my period in Scotland that I came to see that the Reformed understanding of the Christian faith is the Biblical one. *Knowing God* played a significant role in this change, although I was also influenced by the writings of Owen, Hodge and Kevan.

My wife Bracha is 30 years old. She was born in Israel, where she was converted as a teenager. We have two daughters, aged 8 and 5 years.

Publishing Christian literature in Hebrew

We have already translated and published a number of titles. These are as follows: *Search the Scriptures—Luke; Search the Scriptures—Genesis to Ruth; Towards Christian Marriage; Leading Little Ones to God—1st Part; The Still Hour; Glory in the Cross; Signs of the Apostles.*

Those which we are planning to produce are: *Knowing God; Suzie's Babies; Rye on the Gospels; The Westminster Shorter Catechism; Christian Living in the Home; A Book of Basic Christian Doctrine.*

The cost of printing is very high, and the demand for literature of this kind is low, so that the circulation of these books is not large. We print 500 copies of each title, of which about 100 are distributed almost at once, the remainder going gradually.

One great difficulty in pursuing this publishing programme is, shortage of help with translation. It is also difficult to find books which are suitable and relevant and which are of an appropriate length (we try to limit ourselves to 100-page booklets).

Apart from the books, we also publish a quarterly magazine for adults, a periodical Theological Bulletin, and a quarterly magazine for

children. But we find it difficult to get the average professing Christian in Israel to *think* about his faith. Human authority is so much substituted for divine authority. Many emphasise their belonging to the Jewish people at the expense of Christian faithfulness. The greatest need is for Biblical teaching.

General review

We now have a small, newly-established church here where I preach. I also participate in a Theological Study Group, visit people in their homes, and loan many books from my personal library.

The situation is not unlike that which Nehemiah found in Jerusalem—a shambles, but not beyond hope. Harassment continues, but the recent anti-missionary law has not been applied, largely through international Christian pressure.

The Christian & Student Life

NEIL C. RICHARDS

We are grateful for permission to publish the following article, which was issued as a pamphlet by the Evangelical Movement of Wales. The pamphlet is to be re-issued soon in revised form, and will be available from: Bryntirion, Bridgend, Mid-Glamorgan, CF31 4DX.

College life holds many pitfalls for the Christian, and not a few who enter upon it lose their way. The shelter of family life and the intimate friendliness of the home church are removed, and the believer is suddenly exposed to a world of unbelief and scepticism. For some, conviction is strengthened and faith matured, but for others life becomes full of uncertainties and mental turmoil.

Many Christian students find university life a battlefield on which they must engage in an intellectual and spiritual struggle. They enter college with certain basic religious convictions: belief in God as the Creator and Sustainer of the world; in Jesus Christ as God's eternal Son and the only Saviour; in man as created in the image and likeness of God, but now fallen and sinful and guilty; in miracles, and in the world to come. Suddenly they are confronted by an intellectual atmosphere that is alien to Christian belief, and in which those fundamental convictions are regarded as belonging to an earlier pre-scientific age and as deserving of no more serious consideration than the idea that the world is flat, or that there are fairies at the bottom of the garden. Scepticism, or at best agnosticism, is the order of the day.

We do not suggest that there is anything essentially new about this: unbelief, opposition to God, atheism and materialism are simply a part of human depravity and have been in the world since the Fall. The Apostle Paul felt the full force of such a spirit when he preached on Mars Hill in Athens and was made a laughing-stock to many because he believed in the resurrection. Nevertheless, if the situation is not new, it is very real and dangerous.

Some Pitfalls

It may help to enumerate some at least of the pitfalls facing the Christian:

1. The first is that his faith is severely damaged. He continues to bear the name of a Christian but manifests very little of the character. He is unhappy and confused—in all, a sad bundle of contradictions. He is at home neither in the world nor in the church. Only time will tell whether this is a temporary set-back to his faith in the Saviour or the beginnings of spiritual apostasy.
2. The second danger is that the Christian preserves his faith by separating it from the intellectual problems which arise from his studies and from student life in general. His faith and all his religious convictions he places in one compartment, whilst confining his learning to a separate compartment, and so the two never meet. It appears to be an easy way out of the difficulty, but, like certain modern drugs, it has some very bad side-effects. An unbiblical dichotomy is created between the head and the heart. He fails to give practical recognition to the Lordship of Christ over a crucial area of his life. No part of our lives can ever be placed outside the boundaries of faith. Modern education lacks a unifying principle, and so is confused and disorientated. Christianity alone can provide a view of life which embraces all knowledge and every experience to which the human personality is subject.
3. There is the moral danger arising from an atmosphere of spiritual bankruptcy. Ungodliness always leads to unrighteousness. Our colleges and universities are now feeling the full effects of the liberalism and modernism that swept the churches at the end of the last century. Men thought they could reject the great doctrines of the gospel but still hold on to the moral teaching of the Sermon on the Mount. We have reaped the bitter fruit of that folly. The morality of our colleges is the inevitable consequence of Darwin's theory of evolution: what he thought would raise and ennoble man has served only to debase him and stifle still further the fear of God. The Christian student is not immune to the temptation to immodesty, uncleanness, promiscuous behaviour, and all breaches of the seventh

commandment. He is tempted in this realm and in others to adopt the standards of the world.

The Christian and the pursuit of learning

Our sub-title is really far too ambitious. At least it serves to remind us that these two may walk together in perfect harmony. Christianity is no friend of ignorance or obscurantism. There is found hidden in Christianity an impulse, an incentive, to scientific investigation and all true artistic expression. It would be easy enough to prove this historically from the era of the Reformation. Scripture, a higher authority than history, represents man as being created by God in His own image, placed in God's world and commanded to subdue the earth. The world, even in its sinful state, is governed by the decrees of God and so is full of God's purposes. So, as the Christian looks at the world, he sees it not as 'a heap of stones loosely thrown together, but on the contrary a monumental building erected in a severely consistent style' (Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism*). Such a world calls for study and research, not only that we might enlarge the horizons of our minds, but that we should glorify God.

Therefore the Christian can in this sense rightly feel at home in a college. The pursuit of learning is a valid calling. The Christian student is to apply himself to his studies with all his might, not simply to please men but to please God. However indolent and half-hearted other students may be, and whatever failures may be present in the academic staff, the Christian is to work with diligence and perseverance, knowing that he must one day give an account of his stewardship.

For the Christian, learning can never mean the blind, indiscriminate acquisition of the contents of lectures and books. He is a student in a modern ungodly university. 'It is sheer folly for the student to think that he can learn knowledge and science at the university and not be affected by it in the depths of his being. For better or worse, the university will change him greatly' (Paul Schrotenboer, 'The Christian Student in the Modern University', *International Reformed Bulletin*, October 1965). The lecturers may claim to be unbiased and concerned only with facts, but behind all that they say lie hidden presuppositions—basic assumptions which rarely come to the surface, but which control the way in which the facts are handled. The Christian student must be aware of this, and so be all the time on his guard. All his studies are to be undertaken in the fear of God. 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.' This fear is the fear of faith and love and reverence. The world we study is God's world, and

every fresh discovery we make of its treasures of wisdom and of beauty should draw forth from our hearts praises to our God.

Some practical directions

1. You must remember that you are a **Christian** first of all, and only in the second place a student. Faith in God and in His Son Jesus Christ must take priority over everything else. Pleasing your Lord and Master is more important than pleasing either your fellow students or your lecturers. Remember that you are 'not your own', but you have been 'redeemed with the precious blood of Christ'. All that you have and are is Christ's; therefore glorify Him and serve Him with your whole heart.
2. You must realize that you are a **Christian student** first of all, and not a missionary or a CU president. These are years in which you must apply yourself to study and to mastery of the disciplines of academic life. Time must be given to reading; assignments must be completed, and all for Christ's sake. Christians who do the minimum of work during the term, and who scrape through examinations because of time and energy given to witnessing and organized Christian activities, dishonour God and cheat the local Education Authority, whose financial grant is given to enable them to study.
3. You have, nevertheless, a testimony to bear. God has placed you in college to be the 'light of the world' and the 'salt of the earth'. Opportunities must be prayerfully sought to bear witness of the Saviour to those who are perishing. Your life is an 'epistle...known and read of all men'. If your spoken testimony is not accompanied by a holy life, it will carry little weight and bring shame upon the Saviour's name.
4. Opportunities for fellowship with other Christians are not to be neglected. To meet for prayer and Bible study with others of like mind will be a means of mutual encouragement and edification. Such student fellowship should always be subordinate to the fellowship of the local church. Often the crying need among Christian students is for true pastoral care. It is a temptation to officers of Christian Unions to attempt to fulfil a role for which they have neither the calling nor the gifts. Far more use should be made of local evangelical ministers in the realm of pastoral counselling.
5. Finally, because what you are as a Christian matters most, you must seek to cultivate daily communion with Christ. No amount of outward zeal, or knowledge, or attendance at meetings, will compensate for failure in the realm of private prayer and fellowship with God. If your life is to make an impact upon other students, then you must learn to

obtain the needed spiritual grace and power from secret communion with God. We serve an unchanging God, and cannot therefore expect to obtain spiritual power on terms any different from our forefathers in the faith—that is, by prayer and trials and humble obedience to the Lord.

The Source of Sanctification

JOHN BERRIDGE

The following is taken from the letter, written by John Berridge in 1773.

What a fund of corruption is lodged in the human heart! Every stripe I receive, my Master's word tells me, I have procured for myself. Lord, I own it; sanctify the rod, and make the furnace purge away the dross. I trust the Lord has taught me to hate sin, and to hunger after righteousness; yet I am often seeking after holiness in such a manner as stiffens my heart, brings a dry and lean soul, and makes my eyes lose sight of Christ's salvation. This convinces me that there is a mystery in the manner of obtaining sanctification, that we are not soon acquainted with. We are apt to consider sanctification as a separate work from justification, following after it and wholly independent of it; whereas they seem to be connected works, and inseparable from each other, one resulting from the other.

The clearer the sight we get of Christ, and the sweeter the views we have of our adoption, the more our hearts are filled with love, joy, peace, and all the fruit of the Spirit, which is sanctification. When Jesus gives a clearer view of His dying love, He always accompanies that view with the graces of the Spirit. The heart is filled at the same time with pardon and holiness, with justification and sanctification. So that if we desire to be holy, we must seek to be happy in the Saviour's love, must seek clear evidence of our adoption, and labour to keep it clear. As our views of Christ are more cloudy and discouraging, our bosoms will be more barren of heavenly tempers. A man may be constitutionally meek as the lamb, constitutionally kind as the spaniel, constitutionally cheerful as the lark, and constitutionally modest as the owl, but these are not sanctification. No sweet, humble, heavenly tempers, no sanctifying graces are found but from the cross. Jesus says: "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath (or possesseth) eternal life." Here He sheweth how eternal life, which must comprise the whole of spiritual life, is

obtained; viz.: by eating His flesh and drinking His blood; that is, by feeding on His atonement. Thus all divine life, and all the precious fruits of it, pardon, peace, and holiness, spring from the cross.

blood and water

Is this not intimated by John when he says: "One of the soldiers pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water"? They did not follow one another, but came out together; the blood betokening pardon, the water sanctification. Carnal men make water come out first and blood follow: they seek a little obedience first, and then hope to have the benefit of the blood. Professors often make the blood come out first, and the water follow; i.e. seek first to be justified, and then to be sanctified. But I believe experienced Christians make the blood and water flow together; get holiness by clear views of the cross, and find eternal life by feeding on the Saviour's flesh and blood. Was not a lamb sacrificed every morning and evening in the Jewish temple? And was not this intended to show us that we must feed on Christ's atonement every day, and derive all our life, the life of peace and holiness, from His death?

Upright people are often coming to me with complaints, and telling me, that since they received pardon, and have been seeking after sanctification, as a separate work, their hearts are become exceeding dry and barren. I ask them how they find their heart when Jesus shows His dying love. They tell me, full of peace and love and every heavenly temper. Then I answer, Jesus hereby shows you, that holiness as well as pardon is to be had from the blood of the cross. Labour therefore to get your conscience sprinkled every day with the atoning blood, and sanctification will ensue of course; the blood and water flow together. When Jesus only gives a smile, and seals some promise on the heart, though it be not the seal of pardon, it occasions a sweet transforming change in the soul. And all the fancied sanctification, which does not arise wholly from the blood of the cross, is nothing better than pharisaism; and if persisted in, will end in pharisaism. For when sanctification is considered as a separate work from justification, and wholly independent of it, by and by it is considered as a justifying work itself; and men profess and preach they are first to be justified by the blood of Christ, and then by their own obedience.

Oh, dear sir, if we would be holy, we must get to the cross, and dwell there; else notwithstanding all our labour and diligence, and fasting and praying, and good works, we shall yet be void of real sanctification, destitute of those humble, sweet, and gracious tempers, which accompany a clear view of the cross. But mere doctrinal notion

will not give us this view; it only proceeds from a lively faith wrought in us by the Prince of life. A legal spirit helpeth forward our mistake in the matter of sanctification. We would fain divide the water from the blood, fain would separate sanctification from justification, that we may make merit of it. Whereas they are inseparably connected, and both pardon and holiness spring from the blood of the cross, the root of (creature) merit is dug up thereby, and Christ is all in all.... Though all gracious tempers are the Spirit's fruits, yet all that fruit is bestowed at the foot of the cross; eternal life is found at Calvary by eating the Saviour's flesh and drinking His blood...

May the Lord bring and keep you and yours at the cross, to see and sing the wonders of redeeming love, till you are called up higher to sing eternal praises with all the saints. Grace, mercy, and peace be with you.

BOOK REVIEWS

A Basket of Fragments Robert Murray McCheyne. Christian Focus Publications, pp 194 price £2.45.

This book of sermons by McCheyne was first published five years after his death, in 1848. The present publishers first issued it in 1975; this is a re-issue of that edition.

There are 37 sermons here, covering a wide variety of subjects. Examples are: *The Word made flesh*, *Ministers ambassadors for Christ*, *The marks and blessings of Christ's sheep*, *The Saviour's tears over Jerusalem*, *Future punishment eternal*.

As the title of this volume indicates, these sermons are not presented as complete, polished examples of McCheyne's preaching. They represent notes taken down by hearers, without a view to publication. But this defect probably has the benefit of giving us a heightened sense of the directness of the preacher's approach. As to the quality of the material in these sermons, the Publishers say in their *Foreword*, 'we have in these sermons the very dust of gold'.

Some of that gold dust is to be seen elsewhere in these pages. We believe that readers will there discover for themselves the value of this book.

J.T.

The Work of the Holy Spirit Thomas Goodwin. Banner of Truth, pp 522, price £4.50.

(This is vol 6 of the James Nichol edition of Goodwin's works.)

Thomas Goodwin (1600-1679) combined that greatness of intellect and graciousness of spirit which so characterised the Puritan leaders. In his writings he also manifested that Puritan characteristic of fascination with detail. That is an aspect of this book which might tempt the reader to think that the author could have moved more briskly, that he would thereby have produced something giving a greater impression of a unified treatment of the subject. But if we are going to read books from the 17th century we must be prepared to leave the hurry-scurry atmosphere of the 20th century behind.

A journey into the world which this book will open up to the reader is essentially a journey into Scripture. Here the teaching of Scripture regarding the Holy Spirit's working is set out with great depth and minute precision. Goodwin deals with the Holy Spirit's work in believers, particularly in regeneration, though other aspects are covered too, and there are passages dealing with the Spirit's relationship to the Person and work of Christ.

There is often a great freshness about Goodwin's writing; as when he describes the Spirit's witnessing with our spirits in the following terms: 'He writes first all graces in us, and then teacheth our consciences to read his handwriting, which we could never do without his light' (p.27).

One of the last things Goodwin said was, 'I am swallowed up in God'. If that was the spirit in which he died, it was also the spirit in which he wrote. May this remarkable book be blessed towards begetting something of that spirit in each one of us who reads it.

J.T.

Redemption Accomplished and Applied, John Murray, Banner of Truth Trust, Paperback, 192pp., £1.50.

This may well be the best known of the works by the late Professor John Murray of Westminster Theological Seminary. It has now gone through several editions, having first been issued in the U.S.A.; and, as the present publishers have said, it has already been spoken of as a classic.

The title indicates the two main sections of the book and in Part I, under the title *Redemption Accomplished*, the author deals with the necessity, nature, perfection and extent of the Atonement.

In Part II, under the heading *Redemption Applied*, the order of the

application of redemption is systematically treated. Effectual Calling, Regeneration, Faith and Repentance, Justification, Adoption, Sanctification, Perseverance, Union with Christ and Glorification are the themes. The whole is completed with indices to Scripture texts and subjects.

Everything written by Professor Murray was characterised by profound loyalty to Scripture and a precision of language to which one would wish that all other theologians were able to attain.

This is an intensely serious book which amply rewards the concentration in reading that is required. It may well prove to be the first work to which many people will turn when the subject of redemption is to be studied. The really good thing about this volume is that the more often it is read the better it gets!

R.R.

The Days of the Fathers in Ross-shire, John Kennedy, Christian Focus Publications, 215pp., £3.75.

Described by C.H. Spurgeon as "true as steel and as firm as a rock", Dr. John Kennedy was a renowned Scottish preacher, staunch reformed theologian and minister of Dingwall Free Church congregation. He revelled in the preaching of the Gospel and constantly emphasised "the sovereignty and power of God in the dispensation of His grace". In his book *Scottish Theology* Dr. John Macleod said of him that "no man in his generation made conscience more than he did of proclaiming as the Gospel a message that was as full as it was free and as free as it was full".

Dr. Kennedy wrote this book to preserve the memory of the godly ministers and men of Ross-shire at a time when a lifeless formality was in the ascendency. Thus the reader is introduced to men, some of whom are probably unknown outside the pages of this book, who were nevertheless greatly used by God in their day and generation.

The latter half of the volume is devoted to a memoir of the author's father who was also a minister of the Gospel, and this section alone is worth the price of the book.

Four very fine illustrations enhance this publication, as does an extremely able sermon by Kennedy of Dingwall on *The Secret of the Lord* based upon Psalm 25:14. The sermon was preached to reinforce the anecdotes in the book which gave instances of how God's will had been secretly impressed upon the minds of certain godly persons.

R.R.

Revival Comes to Wales, Eifion Evans, Evangelical Press of Wales, 124pp., £1:45.

This story of the 1859 Revival in Wales was first published in 1959 under the title *When He is Come*. That centenary volume proved to be remarkably popular and was reissued in 1967. That it continues to be in demand is a healthy sign indeed.

Among the features which combine to make this book attractive, mention may be made of the following:

1. There is a happy blend of history and biography. The reader does not get bogged down in minute historical detail since the history is set out in terms of the men whom God so signally used at that time.

2. There is no attempt to emphasise one denomination or group at the expense of others. In other words, there is "no respect of persons" so that the reader identifies not with one party or the other but with the revival itself.

3. The third feature is perhaps the most important. The book awakened in the heart of one reader at least intense desires for God's gift of revival today even as He gave it to His people in 1859. One can readily imagine that the author would desire nothing more than that the book would stir up the hearts of God's people to seek His face for a fresh outpouring of His Spirit. John Foster once wrote: 'If there were a most vigorous spirit of prayer, it would be a sign that remarkable outpourings of the Spirit were at hand'. R.R.

WHAT THE SCRIPTURES TEACH and SALVATION, both by Dr. E. F. Kevan (Evangelical Press, 79pp, £1.10, and 128pp, £1.40 respectively, paperbacks).

These two books by a beloved Bible teacher are commended as valuable for a clear understanding of the truth. The former, in simple language, sets forth Christian doctrine; "not", as the author says, "to study God's Word for you, but to assist you to study it for yourself". The sections deal with the subjects of "God", "Sin", "The Lord Jesus Christ", "The Atonement", "Redemption", "Salvation", "The Holy Spirit", and "Christian Behaviour". The provision at the back of the volume, of Thirty Questions on Each Chapter can be a great help in cementing the understanding of these great subjects, especially for those who are young in the faith.

In SALVATION, Dr. Kevan goes more thoroughly into this vital subject and interrelated matters such as "Original sin", "Law and Grace" ("It is sometimes mistakenly asserted that the Old Testament contains law and the New Testament contains grace: but this is only a

half-truth. It is correct that the New Testament is more largely an exposition of saving grace than the Old Testament appears at first sight to be, but it is nevertheless true that the foundations of the doctrine of grace are laid in the Old Testament"), "Predestination", "Election", "Regeneration and Conversion" ("Regeneration is the origin of life: conversion is the manifestation of it"), "Assurance", "Final Preservation", and "Divine Sovereignty" ("Christ is on no account to be dishonoured and reduced to the role of a weak suppliant seeking the patronage of sinful men. His appeal is compassionate, never plaintive"). A most useful work declaring profound doctrine in simple terms.

H.J.W.L.

HOLINESS by *Bishop J. C. Ryle* (*Evangelical Press, 324pp, £2.95. paperback*).

EP has rendered excellent service in republishing this valuable classic. In his Preface, Dr. J. I. Packer tells how the reading of this volume and two volumes of John Owen's works brought him as a student from being "an immature and churned-up young man, painfully aware of himself....enabling him to see the thing he had been seeking as the will-o'-the-wisp that it is. Reality came into his life...". "The thing" which troubled him he describes as "the cruel and tormenting unrealities of over-heated holiness teaching". This work of J. C. Ryle's has been a means of spiritual comfort and help to thousands more. He says, in his own Preface, "I hope they (these chapters) will help to bring forward the grand truth that union with Christ is the root of holiness, and will show young believers what immense encouragement Jesus Christ holds out to all who strive to be holy". The book does that and more. It commences with a clear statement of the nature of sin. Then a thoroughly Scriptural consideration of the subject of Sanctification, Holiness, together with the Fight, the Cost, Assurance, and on ultimately to "Christ is all". He offers, as a definition of Holiness: "the habit of being of one mind with God, according as we find His mind described in Scripture". Ryle deals faithfully with the errors of his day—Romanism, ritualism, arminianism, the so-called "holiness" movements, etc., all of which are with us today. Ryle's many quotations from the Reformers and the Puritans not only reveal the author's intimate knowledge of these works but his identification of his own theological conviction with their's. The present reprint is known as the "Centenary Edition": one hundred years since this good man penned those pages in his clear simple language and still up-to-date and unsurpassed in spiritual helpfulness.

H.J.W.L.