

THE PRESBYTERIAN BANNER

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Devotion: "The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes. The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever." Psalm 19:7-9

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**DON'T FORGET
THE
FORTHCOMING
MEETING
OF
SYNOD**

THE CITY: ITS SINS AND SORROWS

Rev. Thomas Guthrie, DD.

[A series of sermons preached in 1859 on Luke 19:41]

VICIOUSNESS IN THE MIDST OF VIRTUES

I know, and I bless God for it, that there is much good, that there is a more than ordinary proportion of godly people within our walls. No sojourner has to tremble here, as Abraham did in Gerar- saying, "Surely the fear of God is not in this place." I will venture to assert, that no city of its population and extent contains more, few, indeed, so many of those who are the light of the world and the salt of the earth. In no large town, perhaps, is the Sabbath so well observed, and will there be found such a proportion of the people in the regular habit of attending a house of God.

If the number of our churches may be taken as a test of piety, if the number of our hospitals and asylums may be taken as a gauge of benevolence, if the number of our schools and colleges may be taken as a standard of intelligence, then, more than for its romantic beauty and picturesque position, it bears away the palm from all rival capitals, and sits enthroned and unchallenged as "Queen of Cities."

Now I know all that. Yet as there are scenes in nature where sylvan beauty is associated with features of a stern and savage character, as I have seen a lovely lake, with its crystal waters and gems of islands, lie sleeping under the shadow, while the woodbine, - and holly, and evergreen ivy clothed the feet of a mountain, which, higher up, was rent into gloomy gorges, and reared its thunder-riven, naked peaks into the sky, there is much that is vicious amid all the virtue, and much that is impious amid all the piety of our city. If that is true of this city, let the public be assured that it is no less true of every large city in the kingdom, Which of them shall say to us, "Stand aside, I am holier than thou?"

I once heard a venerable minister, when he came in the course of his public prayers to ask the blessing of Heaven upon our town, pray that God would have mercy upon this great and wicked city. Now I can fancy that the stranger whom we have conducted through its streets on the Sabbath, and who has only mingled in its serious and most select society, would listen with astonishment to such an account of us, either from the pulpit or anywhere else. It hurt our national vanity, and gave deep offence to some who were proud of their native place. Yet whether the charge excite surprise or offence, this is a wicked as well as a great city. And he heals "the hurt of the daughter of God's people slightly," he is a dumb dog that cannot bark," who conceals that fact either from himself or others.

Under a fair and beautiful exterior, there is an extent of corruption, vile corruption, loathsome corruption, which has only to be laid bare to astonish all, and I believe to sicken many. Propriety forbids details. Ordinary modesty, not to say sensitive delicacy, would shrink from them. Otherwise I could raise a curtain, I could reveal that which might make your hair stand on end. Well may parents tremble for the virtue of their children, and every holy mother, taking alarm, gather them beneath her wings, as the moor bird does

her helpless brood when hawks are screaming in the sky.

I tell you who are parents, you who are the guardians of youth, that you have more need to keep an eye on the associates and hours of your children, than look to the bolts and bars you trust to for protection against house-breakers and midnight robbers. We have heard much of these. Alive to what affects the security of property, the public have been seized with alarm; and houses, if not streets, are barricaded. But there is more in peril than gold, and jewels, and silver-plate. There is something both better worth guarding, and more needing to be guarded, than anything which iron-barred shutters can secure, or watchman protect. There are more dangerous characters than robbers prowling about our town, and walking unchallenged on our streets- permitted by our laws to do what they dare not in Paris or Berlin, to pursue their infamous occupation with barefaced, and shameless, and bold effrontery. The sword, which should be a terror to evil-doers, rusts in its sheath. And when vice is allowed to parade our streets so openly as to interfere with the freedom of virtuous families, and so to establish herself among us, as by creating the worst of all nuisances, to destroy the property of a neighbourhood, surely the substance of liberty is sacrificed to its shadow, and the evil doer protected at the expense of the good.

Some of us are about to make a new effort for the reclamation of fallen woman, and the protection of such as are willing, Magdalene-like, to bathe Christ's feet with tears, and wash away their deep sins in his blood. As a preliminary step to this Christian enterprise, we have procured accurate statistics of the extent of this great sin and sorrow of our large cities. Of them I will say nothing more than this, that, while they were read, men held down their heads with shame, or held up their hands in horror, or burst out into expressions of deep indignation. By that ravaging wolf that wastes our folds, I had seen one, and another, and another, and another lamb plucked out of this very flock. I had seen fair and promising flowers that I had cultivated in this very garden plucked by the hand of the spoiler, and cast forth as vilest weeds- trodden in the mire of the public streets. I had seen the fall of a daughter,- that bitterest of household sorrows,- blanch a mother's head, and, still more terrible to look on, turn a father's heart into stone. I had known how a mother, when we all were sleeping in peace, with weary foot and weeping eyes, had wandered, Christ-like, up and down these streets, searching many a foul den of sin to seek and save her lost one. I had seen enough to make a man exclaim, with Jeremiah, "O that mine eyes were tears, and mine head a fountain of waters, that I might weep day and night for the daughter of my people."

But never, never had we so much as fancied the extent and horrors of this evil, the number of short-lived victims it devours, the bold daring with which the accursed trade is pursued, the invisible nets that are spread across the path of unsuspecting innocence, the fiendishly ingenious methods which are plied to snare virtue - what masks of friendship are worn, what cunning arts of apparent kindness

resorted to that vice may get the victims within her grasp, and drag them down into perdition.

I do believe that were the villany and iniquity that are working and festering here and elsewhere, in every such large city, laid bare before the eyes of public virtue, nothing would restrain its indignation. Men would take the law into their own hands. Men would be a law unto themselves; and by what many might condemn as an illegal, but others would applaud as a virtuous outbreak, they would sweep our cities clean of these panders of vice and dens of iniquity.

It is not of property, but of virtue that families are plundered. It is not life, but souls that are murdered among us. Crimes are done, that to my eye cast into the shade the guilt of him who, having through a trade of murder, supplied subjects for the dissecting room, was received on the scaffold by the roar of a maddened crowd, and launched into eternity amid shouts of public indignation. That old legend of a monster, to satisfy whose voracious appetite a city had year by year to sacrifice a number of its virgins, who, amid the lamentations of their mothers

and the grief of their kindred, were led away trembling to his bloody den, is no fable here. That monster is amongst us. And if there is no other way of calling forth some champions to do him battle, of rousing the public from their supineness, of stirring up the minister in the pulpit to draw the sword of the Spirit, and the magistrate on the bench to draw the sword of the state, it may be necessary to throw this report out of its present secrecy, and leave it to burst upon the city like a shell.

I am guilty of no exaggeration. I ask you, meanwhile, to believe that, with all our apparent goodness, there lies beneath the surface much which no Christian man could behold, without - like our pure and pitiful Saviour- weeping over it. I know enough to call upon the young to shun the associate, who is infected with vice, more than the one infected with spotted plague or deadly fever. Keep away from them that

are going down to hell, more than from the grasp of a drowning man. "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother." "If sinners entice thee, consent thou not." "Keep thy heart with all diligence." "Ponder the path of thy feet," that they may never follow one of whom it is written -" Her feet go down to death, her steps take hold on hell."

I also know enough to implore parents most prayerfully to commit their children to the keeping of an all-present God. Guard them sedulously. Fold them early. Before the shades of night bring out the ravenous wolf, and the wily fox, and the roaring lion, have all your lambs at home. Make it a bright, cheerful home. Mingle firmness with kindness. And from late hours, from dangerous companions, from nightly scenes of pleasure and amusement, more carefully keep your children, than you bolt door or window against the intrusion of those who can but plunder you of property infinitely less valuable than your domestic purity, of jewels infinitely less precious than your children's souls. [To be Continued]

"Alive to what affects the security of property, the public have been seized with alarm; and houses, if not streets, are barricaded. But there is more in peril than gold, and jewels, and silver-plate. There is something both better worth guarding, and more needing to be guarded, than anything which iron-barred shutters can secure, or watchman protect."

BLOGGING ABOUT...

CHURCH AND NATION

As usual, Synod will be looking at the state of our Church and nation. Here is part of the Report that the Church and Nation Committee will be presenting to the Synod.

"While the world places its hope in politicians and scientists we place our hope in the Lord our God. There was great rejoicing in the USA and much of the world with the election of a new president in the USA. Millions hope for a new beginning. Most presidents and political leaders come to power with the promise of a new order. But all world leaders are just men or women who have little power to change poverty, morals or the climate. We remind our leaders that God is the one who raises them up and puts them down. Only in God's strength can they govern effectively. With this understanding we pray for them.

Not so long ago it was the church that was accused of proclaiming a message of doom and gloom. Today it is the economists who proclaim gloom and doom. Today it is the scientists who are proclaiming the end of the world as we know it, if we do not act now to do something. The secular world, the 'experts' in all their worldly wisdom, give us little to be thankful for, and offer us little to hope. Some years ago many feared a nuclear bomb would bring the end of the world. Today it is climate change they fear. What will it be next? Those who believe the word of God are the ones offering hope. We always have, but this message is one we hold out afresh to the world today. God is the creator and sustainer of this world. Jesus Christ all things hold together. The world and everything in it is his, and he has set a day when this world will come to an end. Moreover, he said that it will come when we least expect it, like a thief in the night. What God tells man to do is be humble before him, to repent and worship God not the creation.

We are to be just, love mercy, and walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8), fearing neither man nor nature, but obeying God's commands. The new governments in Australia and the USA have lifted the bans on funding abortion in their overseas aid work. There is a weakening of the stand against homosexual marriage. Proponents of euthanasia are more vocal. We must stand firm for the sanctity of human life and against immorality, considering such matters when we vote and letting the law makers know what God requires.

Christians must be alert to laws that deny them freedom to worship and proclaim the gospel. We have enjoyed freedom of religion in Australia since first settlement, freedom to worship and freedom to preach. Many nations do not enjoy such freedom. How much longer will we? Freedom of religion laws are often a smoke screen for freedom to practice some religions and freedom to silence preaching of the Bible. Some are calling for a Bill of Rights in Australia. Why we might ask? Will such a Bill impact upon our freedom to live and worship according to God's commands?

We were all shocked at the destruction and loss of life in the Victorian bushfires. They were a powerful reminder of the forces of nature, forces over which the Lord has control. Jesus said 'be still' to the howling wind on the lake. As a church we prayed and were kept informed of the

need by those nearest to the fires. With this information many gave appropriate help to the victims.

SYNOD FINANCES

When reading the Committee Reports that will be presented to the Synod I was surprised to read a suggestion for consideration from the Finance Committee - that ministers be paid lower stipends 'say 10% lower or more if a minister's wife is in paid employment for more than 15 hours a week.'

Of course all office bearers and church members will do the same - maybe contribute a set amount of their working wives income to congregational funds!

The suggestion is without merit. Ministers make great sacrifices to serve the Lord as full-time teaching elders and are deserving of better stipends than the salary of any member of the Congregation.

Surely the time has come to close all congregations that, after a set time, fail to meet the running costs of the Congregation.

Maybe the Finance Committee could give a statement of the total cost of our Fiji project. This would be interesting to note.

May the blessing of God be upon all members of Synod and may decisions display Christian wisdom.

- **Jim Cromarty.**

SIR MARCUS LOANE

With the passing of retired Archbishop Loane on the fourteenth of April, our Church has lost a good friend. In his youth Sir Marcus attended St. George's for a year when the Rev. George Mackay from Scotland a noted preacher was a visiting minister. He retained a life long friendship with Mr & Mrs Mackay visiting them whenever he was in the United Kingdom. He was greatly influenced also by reading the Memoir and Remains of Robert Murray McCheyne by Andrew Bonar.

When Sir Marcus was a Chaplain during World War II he was stationed for six weeks on the outskirts of Taree and a warm friendship sprang up with Rev M.C. and Mrs Ramsay. And while in Taree he preached in the PCEA and spoke at the youth Fellowship. His sermons, at that time 1942. are still remembered by some of his hearers. Thereafter he preached in many of our churches and spoke at conferences and missionary meetings and became well known to many of our ministers and people.

Supremely missionary minded he took every opportunity to visit mission areas in many countries. His literary output was huge - nearly fifty books. Most of his historical books concerned the Reformation. Latterly the Banner of Truth and Christian Focus have published or re-published a number of his books.

Sir Marcus was a fine preacher and a well-known, well-loved and influential member of the evangelical world. As successively Principal of Moore Theological College, Bishop, Archbishop and Primate of the Anglican Church in Australia he made an outstanding contribution not only to his own denomination but also to the wider Christian Church throughout Australia and the world.

"Truly a prince and a great man has fallen in Israel"

- **Dr. Helen Ramsay and John Ramsay.** ■

LETTERS ...

The Editor,
The Presbyterian Banner.

I have spent a lifetime attached to the PCEA in one way or the other and during that time have witnessed the sad decline in the spiritual well being of our Church. The total membership of our Church is what would be found in a couple of congregations of other Christian churches. Our numbers have declined and in most congregations of the PCEA members are ageing.

Some congregations have reached a stage of being unable to support their teaching elder from Congregational giving and must rely upon money advanced from the Church Extension Fund. Some congregations are financially independent but again cannot meet running expenses from ordinary Congregational giving - they must make use of capital resources to survive.

Our Church attracts men of strong will and this in some situations has resulted in lengthy disputes over matters that have divided Congregations and ruined our witness in the world.

While serving as minister of the Hunter I became aware of a secret group that met to support only those congregations where the AV was read and the old version of the Psalms sung. This group - 'The Constitutional Society' played its part in the heartbreaking dispute over versions of Scripture.

I wonder how many office bearers have faithfully carried out their God given duties? I wonder how Ministers can justify the shrinking numbers in their Congregations? I wonder if Presbyteries have all faced the difficulties within their bounds or backed away, unwilling to deal with difficult issues.

It appears that soon the PCEA will die out. Have we so offended the Holy Spirit that He has withdrawn from some of our Congregations? Why are we in a situation of having so many empty pulpits and no students for the ministry? It will be interesting to again read the activities of Synod and see if this body of men have faced the real issue confronting our church - faithfulness to the Lord Jesus Christ. And now I hear that some of our retired ministers have had their marriage licences cancelled in recent weeks without the prior courtesy of being informed by the person or church court that issued the instruction to the appropriate government department. On the surface it appears to be an unnecessary decision lacking in Christian charity and wisdom, though of course some may argue that it was in accord with the strict letter of the law.

Since writing the last paragraph I quote from a letter by Rev Dr W. Hanna concerning a difficulty he has experienced with our Church courts: 'I found it difficult to believe that anyone would have nominated me for this position without the common courtesy of asking me first whether I was willing to undertake the task.'

May God forgive us our sins and be pleased to pour blessings upon our Congregations.
In the Lord's name, Jim Cromarty.

THE BIG PICTURE FOR SMALL CHURCHES - 2

Rev. Sjirk Bajema, Narrewarren

When the world's stepped right in – Satan's 3rd Tactic

There's a song that goes, *Walk right up, step right in, Daddy let your hair hung down*. But it's not only the words of a song. It's also what's shown in many churches when worldliness impacts. Because then it seems anything goes, including obeying God's Word about what the Church is supposed to be. In those congregations there is no faithful church discipline. What church discipline there is, is only used against those who try to keep faithful to God's Word – those disturbing the peace with their reactionary and conservative views.

Several of the seven churches written to in Revelation chapters 2 and 3 are examples of this. Pergamum and Thyatira did not keep out immorality, and Laodicea had reached the point where they were "wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked (Rev.4:17)." It is also quite evident throughout church history. Our *Confession of Faith* speaks of churches which *have so degenerated that they have ceased to be churches of Christ and have become synagogues of Satan*.

Looking at what happened in those churches show a degradation which has not happened overnight. Rather, through steady encroachment the devil comes in and sets up his throne (Rev.3:13). And how does that happen? Well, like the apostle Peter walking across the lake, it occurs when we take our eyes off Christ. Then so quickly we begin to drown in sin.

At first it might not seem like much. The elders of the church think they are showing mercy rather than judgment when they don't address a sinful situation. They might hope that by giving it time it will come right. Very often that will be influenced by family or friendship ties between those sinning and the leadership.

One example was when a Christian was speaking about her daughter living with a man outside of marriage. It was not the first time she had been in such a relationship and she had had children with different men. But the way her mother spoke of her she had come a long way. Their relationship was a lot better, she said. Later an elder who had heard her speaking said to me, "It seems that the longer you are able to sin the more it becomes excused." Because that daughter had not changed her lifestyle. And while at that point in time she appeared to be getting on better with her Mum that soon changed too. For she had not changed on the inside. The real problem, though, was in her mother accepting her situation because that way she felt they could get on better.

Likewise, if the Church tolerates sin in her midst she is soon excusing that sin. She lives a lie. And well might the leaders of those churches say they are relevant and contemporary and getting on together like apple pie. But they are completely irrelevant and totally out of it with the Lord. He is about spit them out of His mouth – if He has not already done so (Rev.4:16.)

Church discipline is a painful process. It will hurt. But as good parents know, the damage will be far worse if it is not done. And if it is done in true love it brings blessing. Because there the Lord is. Indeed, the famous passage about the Lord being wherever two or three gather together in His Name (Matt. 18:20) is said in the context of the process of church discipline being carried out.

Not a good ad! – Satan’s 4th Tactic

Someone once said that if you want to find out what a church is really like you shouldn’t ask someone who has just left it. And by ‘left it’ that person meant anyone who had been unhappy in their leaving that church. It stands to reason, anyone who has left a church upset with it won’t have a good word to say about it.

I once had a situation when a family were hesitant to come to the congregation I was then ministering at because they had heard so many negative things about us. And those comments were all from people who had until quite recently been members with us! That family were very thankful that what those departing members had said was quite wrong. In fact, they enjoyed richly the fellowship in our congregation for a number of years until they left to go to another State. Mind you, that family also said the negative comments made them curious to find out what we were like – how could a church be so bad?

Yet it is true isn’t it? This is not a good ad for the local church. And it’s all most discouraging. Which is why the Lord goes to great lengths to encourage churches. Right throughout the letters to the seven churches in Revelation chapters 2 – 3 He is rousing them on. That’s why if the Lord is encouraging us this way we should urge each other on. Look at the positives, not the negatives. Don’t look at who is not there but who actually is there – and the fact that you can be there! Friend, if the church is the love of your life others will be drawn to it too.

Hebrews 10:24-25 is clear about this. We have to spur each other on toward love and good deeds. And which better thing could there be to help us do this than meeting together? If that’s what we’ll spend eternity doing shouldn’t we be practicing now?

The No.1 Priority Satan’s 5th tactic – Distraction from our purpose

John Clarke very cleverly recently portrayed the Prime Minister in the latter’s performance in regards to the environment (ABC 7:30 Report). In being questioned about the Emission Trading Scheme (ETS) Clarke cleverly brought everything back to the government’s economic initiative package. It was a humorous lesson in political distraction. Of course, our Prime Minister has got nothing on the ruler of this world when it comes to keeping people looking away from what really matters. The devil is a dab hand at that, as church history testifies. How quickly have congregations turned away from their first-love – the proclamation of the gospel in word and deed – to become divided over the most inconsequential and totally irrelevant details.

Imagine, a church splitting over whether or not to have a flower roster!

John Benton argues that the church must keep in balance the inward (loving and building each other up in Christ), the upward (glorifying God through praise and obedience), and the outward (declaring the gospel to a lost world). Being more evangelical than confessional, Benton particularly homes in on the vital importance of the outward. He bemoans the neglect of evangelism amongst so many churches today. He adds an anecdote that supports this. But there are better anecdotes and, most importantly, there is more relevant scripture that press for the priority of the right worship of God’s people on the Lord’s Day above all else. From that base, convicted by God’s Word and Spirit, His people go forth growing and witnessing together.

Do you want to keep the right focus? Then look at the right Person! Don’t let man-centred details distract you. Interestingly, until the 19th century and the rise of American revivalism under such men as Charles G. Finney, the Church had viewed evangelism as the by-product of worship. Now it seems churches cannot go far enough away to make unbelievers “feel at home.” But this has led directly into the increased focus on individual felt-needs. And so we come to the situation we have today where many churches are so closely connected with the society around them they cannot be distinguished from it. Then they have been well and truly distracted!

No use pretending

John Benton wraps up his look at Satan’s tactics by saying that these five ways are only the main ways. There are others also. And, in particular, Benton tackles church leaders here. Have they been watering down the gospel to make it pleasing to the unsaved? Could they be drifting from confessional Christian faith? Are they reconciling those who have fallen out with each other? Have they given in to those with the financial or family power? And what about their passion for Christ? If they are lukewarm there should be no surprise if the congregation is the same. And how do they actively encourage the saints? Are they models in witnessing for that faith?

It is through self-humbling and surrender to Christ that God’s power comes through. The example of Gideon is clear about this. In the face of those vast Midian hordes, God cuts Gideon’s army back to 300! God did this so that it would be clear it was His victory. To those Israelites who so quickly ran off after other gods – and so got themselves into this mess in the first place – God showed He is the Only One.

Be encouraged small church. For in God’s eyes you are the perfect vehicle to use in overthrowing the mighty oppressor. Armed with nothing more than trumpets, clay pots and flaming torches, Gideon’s 300 men defeated a huge army. That was God’s doing. And looking alone to Him, through Jesus Christ, we will do the same today also.

So what or who are you looking to? ■

ORIGINAL CHRISTIAN VOICES AGAINST EUTHANASIA

David W. T. Brattston, [Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, Canada]

The Problem

Advocates of euthanasia are experiencing great success with Australia's lawmakers. When a particular type of activity is permitted or authorised by secular law, many people tend to assume that it is morally neutral or even a positive good within the framework of ethics, including Christian ethics. But is euthanasia moral in itself? It certainly is not when inflicted by Christians.

Euthanasia Described

Euthanasia is the deliberate hastening of death to spare the patient a period of suffering or incapacity. The usual cases for which euthanasia is advocated are persons with an incurable disease or permanent coma, but secondary uses include sparing the deformed, the mentally-impaired, or the handicapped - usually newborns - from languishing the rest of their lives under irreversible barriers that prevent them from living a self-sufficient or "full" life. Far from ill-will, the motives of the killers are thus laudable or at least understandable, for they are rooted in compassion toward the patient; hence the alterative terms "mercy killing" and "put them out of their misery".

Thou Shalt Not Kill

The Sixth Commandment clearly provides "Thou shalt not kill", which is repeated in summaries of God's law in Matthew 19:18f, Mark 10:19, Luke 18:20, and Romans 13:9. But does "kill" refer only to violent murder, such as in the course of armed robbery? In considering the word in the New Testament, the church father Tertullian believed "kill" there had a wider meaning. Referring to the Creator, Tertullian wrote: "He puts His interdict on every sort of man-killing by that one summary precept 'Thou shalt not kill.'" [1] So that Christians will give scriptural terms their widest sense and go the second mile for God, Tertullian wrote the following guidance for interpreting Christian teachings, where I have substituted the word "kill" for "shows" (meaning "unwholesome amusements"), which would accord with his own thought:

the faith of some, either too simple or too scrupulous, demands direct authority from Scripture for giving up euthanasia, and holds out that the matter is a doubtful one, because such abstinence is not clearly and in the words imposed upon God's servants. divine Scripture has ever far-reaching applications: and after the immediate sense has been exhausted, in all directions it fortifies the practice of the religious life, so that here also you have an utterance which is not far from a plain interdicting of euthanasia. We may understand a thing as spoken generally, even when it requires a certain special interpretation to be given to it. For some things spoken with special reference contain in them general truth. [2]

Why Consult the Early Sources

Tertullian was a prominent Roman lawyer who became a Christian, a presbyter and the founder of Latin Christian literature. His works cited in the present article date from AD 197 to 220. The value of consulting him and other post-biblical Christian writers before the mass apostasy of AD 249-251 is that the Bible interpretations and oral teachings of Jesus, the apostles, and other New Testament writers were still fresh in their memories and they

preserve the exact sense and parameters of "kill" in which it was understood by Christians - or Christians not many generations earlier - who knew Bible sources personally, and hence the way in which Jesus had meant it to be understood.

All Killing Forbidden, especially of The Innocent

The earliest Christians considered any form or type of bloodshed to be forbidden. Saint Paul the Apostle does so in Romans 3:15. Tertullian wrote:

"But how far wider an extent the Lord assigns to those crimes we are sure: ... when He judges murder to consist even in a word of curse or of reproach, and in every impulse of anger, and in the neglect of charity toward a brother: just as John teaches, that he who hates his brother is a murderer." [3]

In the same vein are the *Epistle of the Apostles* 35, which dates from between AD 140 and 160, and twice in Origen, the most outstanding Bible scholar, teacher and preacher of the first half of the third century. [4] Origen exhorted his hearers who had been converted to Christ to no longer run to shed blood but to run to save it. [5] In fact, the *Ascetics of James* 1.17.1 in the second half of the second century says that Christians should prefer being killed themselves to killing other people.

The early sources particularly discountenance killing the innocent. Remember that the people for whom euthanasia is advocated have not committed any crime nor is it on account of their sins that they are to be put to death. They would be killed merely because they have a disease or infirmity they did not bring upon themselves. The *First Epistle of Clement*, a letter from one congregation to another written while some apostles were still alive, points out that in the Old Testament the righteous "were slain, but only by the accursed, and such had conceived an unrighteous envy against them." [6] Sometime between AD 175 and 200 Theophilus, pastor-bishop of Antioch, in summarising God's law (such as most of the Ten Commandments) mandated "The innocent and the righteous thou shalt not slay". [7] The *Acts of Paul*, a compilation around AD 160 to 170 of deeds of the apostle not found in the Bible, similarly condemns shedding the blood of the righteous or innocent unjustly. [8]

Among the innocent, parents are the people for whom mercy killing is commonly sought. Killing adult family members - especially parents - was the worst crime imaginable among the pagan Greeks and Romans, and is condemned in 1 Timothy 1.9 and by such post-biblical authors as Tertullian, [9] the mid-second-century Acts of John 48, the Christian philosopher Aristides of Athens around AD 125, [10] and by Bardesanes, a Christian in Syria who wrote a description of Christian practices and customs in the early AD 200s. [11]

Mercy killing is also commonly sought for infants, particularly newborns - the most innocent of all - to save them from a lifetime of deformity, mental deficiency, sickness, dependence, handicap, or other impediment to a "full" life due to congenital or genetic causes they did not ask for. In an explanation and defence of Christianity to pagan

readers, around AD 177 another Christian philosopher in Athens stated as well-known Christian principles the fact that the church forbids abortion and killing children at any stage of life.[12]

Motive for Killing Irrelevant

Even the best intentions—and euthanasia is usually proposed out of compassion and not ill-will for the patient—do not justify killing anyone. Shortly after his conversion Tertullian wrote: “in regard to child murder, as it does not matter whether it is committed for a sacred object, or merely at one’s own self-impulse” and “the sin of putting their offspring to death”.[13] He also indirectly suggests that parents who kill their own children are less likely to spare those of others.[14] The *Acts of Thomas* 51f in eastern Syria in the early third century relate an incident not recorded in the Bible that a young man killed a particular woman to spare her entering a life of fornication but God punished him for his thought by disabling his hands, and the Apostle Thomas is alleged to have considered the young man’s intention as a serious sin.

Even with the consent or at the request of the victim, euthanasia is still a sin, for then it is suicide—which is also a sin according to Christian authors before AD 200.[15]

An Ancient Equivalent

The nearest approximation to euthanasia in Christian literature before the mass apostasy of the mid-third century is the ancient practice of “exposing” infants. A baby would be abandoned in a remote deserted place to be devoured by wild animals or die from neglect if s/he was weak, sickly, deformed, or handicapped. The “lucky” victims were rescued by strangers who raised them to be slaves. All this was a perfectly acceptable practice under secular law and provided the social advantages of improving the gene pool and reducing the proportion of the population that takes but does not contribute to the economy, as well as sparing the children themselves from a lifetime of bodily disadvantages.

But early Christians believed we are not wiser than God. Justin, who was martyred for the Faith around AD 165, wrote in describing Christian teachings and practices: “we have been taught that to expose newly-born children is the part of wicked men” because some are rescued and brought up to become prostitutes, [16] and “[we fear to expose children], lest some of them be not picked up, but die, and we become murderers.” [17] Here the parents’ compassion does not alter the sinful nature of the deed.

Origen’s predecessor as dean of the world’s foremost Christian educational institution pointed out in the AD 190s: “But what cause is there for the closure of a child? For the man who did not desire to beget children had no right to marry at first; certainly not to have become, through licentious indulgence, the murderer of his children.” [18] In writing against people treating their pets better than human beings:

“they do not receive the orphan child; but they expose children that are born at home, and they take up the young of birds, and prefer irrational to rational creatures; although they ought to undertake the maintenance of old people with a character for sobriety, who are fairer in mind than apes, and capable of uttering something better than nightingales; and to set before them that saying, ... “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.” [19]

Nor do the infirmities of old age or bodily defects render a potential euthanasia victim totally useless to church or society. After writing of wrongdoing, particularly stealing, lying, acts of profligacy, hatred, and deception, Bardesanes pointed out: “*For even if a man be poor, and sick, and old, and disabled in his limbs, he is able to avoid doing all these things. And, as he is able to avoid doing these things, so is he able to love, and to bless, and to speak the truth, and to pray for what is good for everyone with whom he is acquainted.*” [20]

Advances in Medical Technology

But might these ancient Christians be outdated in the twenty-first century, now that we possess more painless and efficient means of causing death? Actually, mercy killing is *less* justifiable now than in ancient times because we also possess better and a wider variety of painkillers for the physically suffering. The only analgesic in early times was alcohol, [21] at most mixed with myrrh.[22] Of course, this contributed to the sin of drunkenness—which is even a crime under Australian secular law in certain circumstances.

Moreover, modern medical science makes great strides almost every day, with cures for painful or disabling conditions suddenly becoming available. This should extend hope for intended victims of euthanasia, and 1 Corinthians 13:13 enjoins Christians to have hope. Nothing is more contrary to the virtue of hope than suicide or putting people to death because they are thought incurable.

Jesus Himself

Lastly, we have the teaching and example of Christ Himself. First, whoever inflicts euthanasia on the least of His brothers inflicts it on Jesus (Matthew 25:35-45). Secondly, when Jesus encountered people who were diseased, handicapped or suffering, He cured them or otherwise relieved them of their afflictions for the rest of their natural lives; He never “put them out of their misery” by killing them.

All direct quotations from the church fathers are as in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325* ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. American Reprint ed. by A. Cleveland Coxe (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885-96; continuously reprinted Edinburgh: T & T Clark; Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson), cited as “ANF”.

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2. Tertullian *De Spectaculis* 3 ANF 3.80f.
3. Tertullian *On Idolatry* 2 ANF 3.62.
4. Origen *Homilies on Genesis* 3.6; Origen *Commentary on Romans* 6.4.2.
5. Origen *Commentary on Romans* 6.4.2.
6. *1 Clement* 45.4 ANF 1.17.
7. Theophilus *To Autolytus* 3.9 ANF 2.114.
8. *Martyrdom of Paul* 6.
9. Tertullian *On Modesty* 14.
10. Aristides *Apology* 9.
11. Bardesanes *On Fate*.
12. Athenagoras *Presbeia* 35.
13. Tertullian *Apologeticum* 9 ANF 3.25.
14. Tertullian *Apologeticum* 9.
15. Justin Martyr *2 Apology* 4; *Acts of John* 49; *Sentences of Sextus* 321; *Three Books to Abercius Marcellus* in Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 5.16.13.
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17. Justin Martyr *1 Apology* 29 ANF 1.172.
18. Clement of Alexandria *Stromata* 2.18 ANF 2.368.
19. Clement of Alexandria *Paedagogus* 3.4 ANF 2.279.
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21. Proverbs 31:6.
22. Matthew 27:34; Mark 15:23.

Run For Glory

HAVING THE LORD AS OUR GOD

"I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt; out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

"The second thing we want our God. to be able to do is - ALWAYS TO SAVE US.

Our bodies are often in danger, as well as our souls and we want a God who can save them both. When Daniel was thrown into the den of lions, he needed a God who could preserve him from their devouring jaws; and he found such a one in the Lord.

When the three Jews were thrown into the blazing furnace, because they wouldn't worship Nebuchadnezzar's image, they needed a God who could save them from being burnt up by the flames; and they found such a one in the Lord our God.

After Jonah was cast into the stormy sea, he needed a God who could take care of him and bring him safe to land again. He found such a one in our God, who sent the great fish, like a living ship to take him on board and carry him ashore.

When the disciples were in their little vessel, tossed by the storm on the sea of Galilee, they needed a God who could control the violence of the storm, and make it obey Him.

They found such a one in Jesus their Saviour; for when they awoke Him, "He arose, and rebuked the winds, and the sea, saying, Peace, be still! and immediately there was a great calm."

And so we are all exposed to sickness, danger, and death, continually. We can't preserve ourselves; and our best friends can't preserve us. We need someone who can keep us alive, and protect us in all danger. Jesus can do this. He is called "the Saviour of the body." He counts the hairs of our heads. He is about our path, and about our bed. continually. He is able to save our bodies. The birds of the air; the beasts of the field, the people in the world, are in His hands. He can take care of them all. He can save the body.

But the soul is more precious than the body. We want a God that can save the soul. We all have many sins that must be pardoned. We have a conscience, a something in our bosoms which troubles us, and makes us feel uneasy, on account of sin; and we want to have this conscience quieted, and made at peace. We have wicked hearts that must be made new and good, or we never can be happy; and we want a God who can do this for us.

Suppose I break the mainspring of my watch; it runs down; it won't go. I try to mend it but I can't: I ask one of you to do it. You shake your head and say, "I can't do it." I take it to a shoemaker he can't do it. I take it to a carpenter



A Secluded spot within Uluru (Ayer's Rock) - Courtesy Amy

**"Find rest, O my soul,
in God alone;
my hope comes from
him. He alone is my
rock and my salvation;
he is my fortress, I will
not be shaken.**

**My salvation
and my honor depend
on God; he is my
mighty rock,
my refuge.**

**Trust in him at all times,
O people; pour out your
hearts to him, for God
is our refuge."**

Psalms 62:5-8

ter, a wheelwright, a blacksmith, a lawyer, a doctor, but none of them can mend it. After a while I take it to a watchmaker; he understands all about it. He puts a new spring in it; and it goes as well as ever.

Now the soul is like a watch; sin has broken the mainspring; it won't go; we want someone to mend it. We want a new heart, or a new mainspring for the watch; but the Soul-maker is the only one who can do this. To try to get this done in any other way, is like carrying your broken watch for repairs to a shoemaker or a blacksmith.

There was once a man in India, a heathen, who felt that he was a sinner. His conscience troubled him dreadfully about his sins; but he knew not how to get rid of them. He had spent several years in consulting the priests, and visiting the different temples, in the hope of getting relief. He did all that he was told to do; but it did him no good. At one temple, he was told to take a long journey on his hands and knees. He did it; but was no better. He had washed himself in different fountains; he had fasted till he was almost worn to a skeleton: he had done many painful things, but without any relief. At last he was told to put sharp spikes inside of his shoes, and travel to a distant temple, and make an offering to the idol, and he would be relieved. He had been there, and offered his sacrifice, and prayers, but in vain.

Sad and sorrowful, he was returning home with the spikes still in his shoes. Wearing with his journey, he halted one day in the shade of a grove by the wayside, where a company was gathered around a stranger, who was addressing them. It was a missionary preaching the gospel. The poor heathen listened with great interest. The missionary was preaching from these words- "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." He showed how Jesus was able and willing to save all who came unto Him. The heart of the heathen was drawn to Jesus. He took off his torturing sandals, and threw them away, exclaiming, "This is the Saviour I have sought in vain. Thank God, I have found salvation."

This poor man had been carrying his broken watch to tinkers and blacksmiths. They could do nothing with it. At last he found the watchmaker, and all was right. Jesus says, "Look unto me, all ye ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else. Besides me there is no Saviour." We need a God who can *always* save.

- Richard Newton- The King's Highway.

SEARCH WORK - May- 2009

SENIOR 12+ yrs; INTERMEDIATE 10-11 yrs; JUNIOR 9 and under.
SENIOR and INTERMEDIATE

[Intermediate omit questions 7 and 8]

SENIOR and INTERMEDIATE

Intermediate omit questions 7 and 8

2 KINGS 4

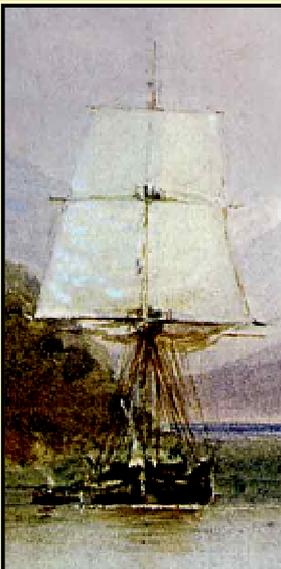
1. What did Elisha tell the widow to do with the pot [jar] of oil? (2 verses)
2. What did the woman of Shunem suggest to her husband that they do for Elisha?
3. What did Elisha tell the Shunammite would be done for her 'about this time next year'?
4. What were her words when she came to Elisha after her son died? (2 separate verses)
5. What happened when Gehazi laid the staff on the child's face?
6. What did Elisha do when he came into the house? (3 verses)
7. (x) How did Elisha remove the poison from the pot?
8. (x) What was the answer of the man of God when his servant doubted his ability to feed 100 men with 20 loaves?

JUNIOR

EXODUS 7

1. When would the Egyptians know that God was the Lord?
2. What happened when the Egyptian wise men cast their rods on the ground? What did Aaron's rod do to theirs?
3. What happened when Moses and Aaron lifted the rod and struck the river? (2 verses)
4. Was Pharaoh's heart moved after this?

SEARCH WORK TO: MRS I. STEEL, PO Box 942, EPPING 1710.
E-mail: iesteel@gmail.com



THE VOYAGE THAT SHOOK THE WORLD

The Voyage that Shook the World, is a Documentary that retraces Darwin's historical journey to the Galápagos Islands and South America. It will be playing at selected cinemas around Australia during May 2009. The DVD version will be released later in the year. The film is produced by Fathom Media, a subsidiary of Creation Ministries International (CMI),

Costing over \$1 million USD to produce, this made-for-TV one-hour HD documentary interviews scientists and scholars in Europe and America, including some of the world's leading Darwin historians, on both sides of the controversial debate about evolution. While showing fairness and respect to all, including Darwin, the man, the film reveals that even Darwin's admirers have many surprising things to say. The documentary also has period drama reenactments that help the viewer understand some of the influences that shaped Darwin's thinking before he ever departed on his now-famous voyage on HMS Beagle [above]

Renowned US film critic Dr. Ted Baehr (Movieguide.org) called it "one of the best-produced documentaries ever made".

ACTIVITY PAGE.....

*From: Search and Solve: Bible Activity Sheets by
Betty De Vries [Illustrated by Donna Greenlee]
Baker Books, 1998.*

73. Counting Stars

There are lots of stars on this page.
If you circle the correct number of stars to
answer each question, there should be just
one star left uncircled.

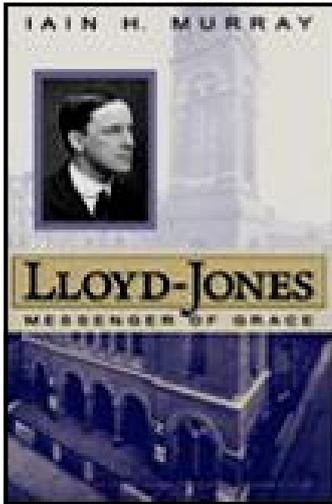


1. How old was Jesus when he went to the temple? (Luke 2:42) _____
2. How many stones did David pick up from the stream to use in his slingshot? (1 Samuel 17:40) _____
3. How many spies did Rahab hide? (Joshua 2:4) _____
4. How many of Daniel's friends were thrown into the fiery furnace? (Daniel 3:19-20) _____
5. How many sons did the priest Eli have? (1 Samuel 2:34) _____
6. How many time did Peter deny Jesus? (John 18:17-27) _____
7. How many books of the Bible have only one chapter? _____
8. How many brothers did King David have? (1 Samuel 17:12) _____

BOOK REVIEW

Lloyd-Jones – Messenger of Grace

- Iain Murray [Banner of Truth Trust, Paperback, 288pp, Koorong Price, \$19.95] Reviewed by Dr. W.J.W. Hanna, Brisbane.



I found this book to be a very interesting survey of various aspects of the life and teachings of Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones. It is not intended to be a biography of the man, though it does provide a number of biographical details. It starts off with a very brief (about one page) outline of his life. He studied medicine and appeared destined for a very successful career in it. When still in his early twenties he became

assistant to Sir James Horder, physician to the King, and continued in this post for about five years, until 1926. In that year he astonished everyone by giving up medicine and accepting an invitation to be the preacher at a small mission hall in South Wales.

Murray speaks of the contrast between his preaching and that of the majority of ministers of his time. He says, "He spoke with certainty and authority. When he told his hearers that the soul was more important than the body, they knew he believed it." On my bookshelves there is a book published in 1931, some five years after Lloyd-Jones started his ministry, written by the Christian novelist, Joseph Hocking. Its title is "The Man Who Was Sure." It is a story about a young man who gave up the promise of a brilliant career at a great university to become the minister of a Congregational chapel in a provincial town. At his first sermon, we are told, "...everyone felt that here was a man who had not come to preach a sermon in the ordinary way, but to tell something that he actually knew; to proclaim the greatest fact in the world." In view of the parallels between this fictional character and Lloyd-Jones, I am left wondering whether Joseph Hocking had heard the young Martin Lloyd-Jones preach, or whether, in those few years since he had accepted the call to Aberavon, his reputation had already spread far enough to reach him.

Murray's book is divided into two unequal parts. The first and much longer part contains eight chapters, each dealing with a particular aspect of the teaching of Lloyd-Jones, such as the legacies that his life and work have left for the benefit of future generations, his views on the importance

of the Holy Spirit in effective preaching, his use of the Old Testament in evangelical preaching (a very rare thing in the early part of the twentieth century) and so on. One chapter with the intriguing title "Skeletons in the Cupboard", I found to consist, not of revelations of scandals or disreputable events from Lloyd-Jones' life, but of how he developed his sermon outlines (skeletons).

Another chapter consists of notes of a talk which he gave to the Westminster Fellowship on raising the standard of preaching. One of the points that he made compared sermon outlines to "skeletons." He said that, for a good sermon, the outline, i.e., the planning, should not be too obvious. He said, "When a farmer is going to buy cattle in a market, the ones that attract him are the ones where the skeleton is not showing."

A further chapter discusses Lloyd-Jones beliefs concerning "the baptism of the Holy Spirit", which he considered to be something apart from, and subsequent to, the work of the Holy Spirit in conversion. He believed that it was this later baptism of the Spirit which brought assurance of salvation. I remember this doctrine being preached at a convention which I attended in the late 1950s. Calls were being made for Christians to come forward to receive the Holy Spirit and receive, with Him, full assurance of salvation. I don't think that Lloyd-Jones ever did this, but the idea must be similar to his. I had a problem with it then and I still have that same problem today! Lloyd-Jones did not support or encourage the charismatic movement, we are told. In fact, he came to oppose it strongly. However, his views on this subject must have made it easier for others to accept that movement. It is a sad fact that Lloyd-Jones successor at Westminster Chapel, Dr. R.T. Kendall, was able to build on statements that he (Lloyd-Jones) had made about the baptism of the Holy Spirit and to turn that entire Church away from its heritage and into a full-blown charismatic Church, "Toronto blessing" and all!

Lloyd-Jones later years were marked by differences of opinion with some with whom he had, at one time, been very close. He was unable to follow J.I. Packer, for example, along the road of an ecumenism which included Anglo-Catholics or even Roman Catholics. Murray goes into some detail about this period and about the various views which have been expressed concerning it. The second and shorter part of Murray's book is a collection of different documents or articles. It contains the text of a letter written to J.I. Packer ending their association in the Puritan Conference, a compilation of quotations from Lloyd Jones on various subjects, some observations on Lloyd-Jones sermons and an analysis of his sermons on Ephesians.

All in all, I found "Lloyd-Jones: Messenger of Grace" interesting to read and I would not hesitate to recommend it to anyone wishing to learn more about the man and the various issues which dominated his life and thought.

THOUGHTS FROM ANDREW BONAR

Friday 21st July, 1843: "I see plainly that fellowship with God is not means to an end, but is to be the end itself. I am not to use it as a preparation for study or for Sabbath labour; but as my chiefest end, the likest thing to heaven." [Diary and Life, p. 106.]

Friday 28th July, 1843: "More and more led into the feeling of the need of divine fellowship. Our strength lies there. Also, more holy, solemn work, and the daily taking up of the Cross." [Diary and Life, p 106.]

LAKHNADON - REV. SHYAM BABU

*Greetings from Lakhnadon congregation
and Presbyterian Free churches!*

Thank you for remembering us in prayers and the work we do here. Ministry of all the four churches are going on well, as well as the outreach work here and surrounding Lakhnadon. At three places a worship group has started gathering on Sundays and whenever they have time to meet together. The worship group at Dhuma has a place to build a hall or some kind of structure where they can regularly meet for the worship. There are two more villages identified at Purva and Chulgaon both places within 10 k.m. distances. They are also trying to build a thatched type hut as a worship place in their own village because they do not have any conveyance to come to Lakhnadon for the Sunday morning worship but they are attending twice in a month.

We have a definite plan to start regular worship service in all these three places for this we have appointed a new evangelist Mr. Fakir Chand from 1st April 2009. Regarding Raipur- four of us from Lakhnadon went there to assess the work and we found that it is a big step and expenses great also so we decided to wait and pray, but certainly there is an opportunity to start a new church. Due to our financial constraints at the moment we are unable to immediately start the work. Samit is doing fine and within two months he may be shifted to join a new congregation because two of our senior pastors who are on extension will be retiring now. Rev. D. John and Rev. S.K. Lall both from Jabalpur will be retiring soon.

DR. BENN WRITES

We all appreciate your concern for us and prayer support. We all are well by the grace of almighty God and busy with the increasing workload. Yesterday only I am back from Dehradun after attending a HR workshop and Lata



DUMISANI

"Although the main qualification that many students are working towards in Dumisani is a degree, we continue to respond to calls for lay teaching. Alistair teaches a general interest class in biblical studies in the evening which is well attended by many who are not part of the regular student body. Along with training the Free Church of Southern Africa Bible Women, we are now looking to start some training with the Methodist Bible Women.

The demand for training for Sunday School teachers and Youth Workers has increased dramatically and we have also been asked to provide training for ministers' wives. The correspondence courses are also becoming increasingly popular and from time to time, there are training days held for church elders as well as open day conferences for church leaders in the area and other interested people... Our only constraints are workers and money!"

[April 09 Newsletter from Jenny Wilson]

(wife) left yesterday for another workshop on patient care at Mussoorie. Our children have finished their exams and scored well also. Some of the staff kids are busy writing exams and need prayer.

Last few months every hospital/ Project of EHA is doing a Strategic Plan for next 5 years (2009-2013). By God's grace only we could sustain thus far in various difficult situations. We often hear of persecution in various cities of our state and other states also and pray also for the Christian people affected in various violent incidents. It can happen in Lakhnadon also any time.

Overall financially this year was not very good for us and we are ending up with deficit. Most of the year only Lata and I were here as doctors. Sometimes it becomes very difficult to manage work and family. Lata will be going to Assam (Alipur) to learn laparoscopic surgeries in May.

Financial year has come to an end (31st March) and we have lots of work while closing. Pray for God's wisdom to do things in a proper way and go through a smooth annual audit.

Pray also for the new project manager Mr Rajendra and his wife Roshni who is providing leadership to the CH team. Pray for the needed wisdom and guidance from the God. Our annual RGB (Regional Governing Board) meeting will be in June first week where all the unit leaders gather to discuss various issues related to hospital and projects.

This year is 40th anniversary of EHA and it will be celebrated on 20th and 21st of November at Delhi. Sending you [Dr. Dennis Muldoon] a couple of pictures of hospital leaders: **Left to Right Mrs Malche, Mr Malche, Mr Rajendra, Dr Adarsh. Inset: My children—left to right - Abel, Joel, Jessica.]**

BIBLICAL BAPTISM

Matthew 28:19 *“Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.”*

[A Sermon preached in the Wauchope Church by the Rev S.N.Ramsay on the 14th May, 1996. It is reprinted on the seventh anniversary of his death]

We have in these verses [1] the church’s Warrant to dispense the sacrament of Baptism and [2] the prescribed Formula for its administration, while in Acts 2:38-41 we find [3] the ‘rationale’ of the Entitlement to it. Matthew, again, puts us in touch with [4] the Ritual embodied in it – a ritual sublime in its simplicity.

In Exodus Chapter 12, we read of how Moses called Israel together and related to the people the instructions God had given concerning the keeping up of the Passover; and on that occasion, he foreshadowed a question – “When your children shall say unto you”, ‘what mean ye by this service?’ (And he did not qualify it and say this worship service,) “That ye shall say, ‘it is the sacrifice of the LORD’S Passover....’” We do not propose to follow that theme, but to put forward the same question with relation to Baptism... What Mean Ye By This Service, and to place alongside it – Who in fact are to be baptised?

Too often, the questions seem to be asked in reverse order and this, regrettably enough, has led to great confusion. For if we take the questions in that order, and go to the Scriptures to discover who, in fact, were baptised in the early church, we will find that it was those who had their conscience awakened – were pricked in their hearts, and “gladly received the Word”.

Thus, it seems, we may have believer’s baptism, and that is all! So, now, if we come to see such persons as the only ones who do have any right and title to the sacrament, then we will accordingly be limited in our appreciation of its meaning and significance, for then we will be led, or rather, should I say, misled into seeking only such meaning in the sacrament as may seem relevant to “Believer’s baptism” (so called) for, this being the *only* baptism we know, it will be the only baptism for which we will seek a meaning.

But if, on the other hand, we go in the first place to examine the ORIGIN, the INSTITUTION and the SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE of the sacrament, then, when we have come to an understanding of the full meaning of it, we will be able to see, in the light of Scripture, who these persons are to whom its meaning applies; we will come to see who those people are for whom baptism has its spiritual significance, and this will guide us then in our assessment of who the rightful receivers are. As Calvin says: - “it is a well known doctrine that the right consideration of signs does not lie merely in the outward ceremonies, but depends chiefly on the promise, and the spiritual mysteries, to typify which the ceremonies are appointed. He therefore who would thoroughly understand the effect of baptism must look forward to the divine promises which are therein offered and rise to the internal secrets which are therein represented....”

And if we are to “rise to these secrets which are therein represented”, we must understand first of all **what the sacrament is**.

Augustine defined it as “a visible form of an invisible grace”. Arthur Gunn puts it this way – “a sort of a picture or drama, presenting the same message of God’s grace in Christ, as does the preaching of the Gospel; but presenting it in a visible form”, (and I remember, in the same kind of way, I myself, have described the sacrament of the Lord’s supper as “a tableau, telling the story of the cross in symbols, just as the Gospel tells it in words”).

And we will only come to understand the ordinance of Baptism aright, when we come to recognise that there is only **one** Bible; there is only **one** Church; there is only **one** Saviour, Mediator and Redeemer. The symbolism of the olive tree – presented to us in Romans 11 – shows us only one good olive tree – having the branches of the wild olive grafted in upon its root; and that olive tree then stands for the entire church of Jesus Christ – both Jews and Gentiles both Old Testament saints and New Testament believers.

And the symbolism of this identity, then is presented (among other places, but) primarily perhaps in Romans, while the plain, down to earth theology, we may find in Galatians 3 where one grand **end and purpose** of the finished work of Christ is set forth - “.... *Abraham believed God, and it was accounted unto him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham...the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham saying ‘in thee shall all nations be blessed.’ So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham*”.

“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us”; Why? “That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” “There is neither Jew nor Greek...for ye are all one in Christ Jesus and if ye be Christ’s then are ye Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise.”

Arthur Gunn puts it this way – “It is because the redeemed of God are one people, that the covenant made with Abraham is applicable to Christians.” Yes, and oh, the power of that passage beginning in Hebrews 6:13, relating God’s covenant with Abraham, confirmed with immutable counsel, affording a strong consolation – to all who are Christ’s, and therefore, heirs according to the promise!

Genesis 17 related how The LORD appeared to Abraham, and established His covenant with him, to be a God unto him and to his seed after him; and the sign of this covenant was the rite of circumcision; a sign of the “putting off of the sins of the flesh.” As one writer puts it, “it was the sacrament of admission into the covenant of grace...” and “according to the New Testament, all this applies equally to baptism.” Gunn p.15.

Colossians 2 reads – *“In Him (i.e., in Christ) – you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by the putting off of the body of the flesh in the circumcision*

of Christ: Buried with Him in baptism..." Commenting on this, Calvin asserts – "The Colossians were buried together with Christ by baptism, therefore intimating that baptism is now to Christians what circumcision was to those of ancient times. It is incontrovertible that baptism has been substituted for circumcision and performs the same office." (Institutes, Bk 4:14:24 and Bk 4:16:4.)

And now comes the "curly question" – Who is right – those who baptize infants, or those who baptize adults? The simple answer is **both!**

When God made a covenant with Abraham, He opened a new chapter in man's spiritual history; Abraham believed God, and Abraham was ninety and nine years old when he was circumcised.... Thus, this new chapter opened with the practice of adult circumcision; the children received the sign by virtue of the faith of the fathers.

In like manner, when the Old Testament dispensation had run its course and had given place to the New, and when on the day of Pentecost, Peter preached among the people for the first time, the Gospel of Christ, it marked the beginning of another chapter in man's spiritual history, and God gave to His believing people another token of His covenant in lieu of the old; "*Repent, and be baptized*", cried the Apostle – "*for the promise is to you and to your children...*" The title to the promise was the entitlement to the token of that promise; and that sign was baptism; And just as it was with circumcision in the Old Testament, so it was with baptism in the New: Adults, in the first instance with.... the children following!

You see, it follows as the night follows day, that if the children share with their parents the blessing of the promise they must share with the sign as well.

So now, let John Calvin sum up this aspect of our discourse – "If they (the children) are partakers of the thing signified, how can they be denied the sign? If they obtain the reality how can they be denied the figure?" Our Saviour said, 'Of such is the kingdom of heaven....' If the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs, why should they be denied the sign by which access, as it were, is opened to the Church, that being admitted to it they may be enrolled among the heirs of the heavenly Kingdom."

And perhaps we should not let the occasion pass without a

word concerning the **mode of baptism**. Many good folk would argue that, as baptism is a symbol of cleansing from sin, then the application of a few drops of water is hardly an appropriate symbol of thorough cleansing from all sin; surely nothing short of total immersion can suffice! But this is to lose sight of the primary feature of the sacrament; it is a token washing; it is not a cleansing in and of itself.

My friends, please let us be consistent! For if we may question the validity of baptism by sprinkling, on the ground of the amount of water employed, then how can we possibly recognise the communion as a valid sacrament – when it is observed with the merest taste of wine and a tiny pinch of bread? Broken bread?

Finally, then, if baptism is the formal admission of the child into the fellowship of the church, what are the duties resting on the parents who present that child for Baptism?

We could scarcely find in all the Bible a more pertinent passage than the first 7 verses of Psalm 78.... where we are reminded, first of all, how those great truths of God which make up the very fabric of our religion are not to be confused with human philosophies, because they flow from the lips of God Himself. **His** law and testimony **He** placed: in Israel" – i.e., God gave the truth into the keeping of His own covenant people.

And as He did so, God gave them a commandment, and that commandment was, that the knowledge of these vital doctrines should never be allowed to die.

God solemnly charged His people to make them known, and to keep on making them known – from generation to generation!

Yes, so that "generations yet unborn" might be instructed in the ways of life and of godliness. "So that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments."

Asked why he wished his child to be baptised, a father once answered, "Because I want the very best for my family; and for the Christian parent, there can be no higher aim for the children than that they too might be brought to know the Lord Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour, and that they, along with their parents might be brought into that great family of God in Jesus Christ – the family that remains unbroken through all the ages of eternity!

Filling our needs.....

As at 31st March the balances of the main *Working Funds* of the church Synod were:

31/03/09 31/12/08

\$ 9,088	\$ Nil	Missions (General Funds)
\$ 49,780	\$ 49,117	Missions (DA Anderson Bequest)
\$353,012	\$348,838	Missions (Relief Fund – M McSwan Bequest)

(\$12,517)	\$ Nil	Missions (TI Leggott Stipend Support)
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(\$14,704)	\$ Nil	Stipend Relief
\$108,701	\$104,424	Training of Ministry
\$ 10,023	\$ 12,394	Youth & Fellowship

\$ 86,535 \$ 86,226 Synod General Funds

There was a shortfall of \$12,517 in *Missions - TI Leggott Stipend Support* as at 31/3/09. The only funds received since 31/12/08 was \$50 from one congregation.

There was also a shortfall \$14,704 in *Stipend Relief* funds as at 31/3/09. Since 31/12/08, \$4,296 has been received (\$1,296 from investments and a \$3,000 donation from one Deacons' Court) whilst calls for assistance from three congregations totalled \$19,000.

As was reported in the April issue of *The Presbyterian Banner* needs continue to exist in these two Synod Accounts.

"Let your works of charity to men be accompanied with prayer. Render thanks unto God, that he has put you among the givers and not among the receivers, it being a more blessed thing to give than to receive." (Thomas Gouge)

THE ESTABLISHMENT PRINCIPLE

[This Principle [or the National recognition of Christ and the Christian Faith] has been part of our witness down through the years. In this excerpt from his book on "Free Church Principles", Dr. Begg [1808-1883] explains why.]

"THE attitude of nations and their rulers towards true religion and the Church of Christ is a matter of paramount importance. *"Be wise now therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth; serve the Lord with fear."* Concerning the Church of Christ it is said, *"The nation and kingdom that will not serve Thee shall perish; those nations shall be utterly wasted."* The importance of this was clearly acknowledged by John Knox in the first Confession of Faith of the Scottish Church, as follows :-

Moreover, to kings, princes, rulers, and magistrates, we affirm that chiefly and most principally the conservation and purgation of the religion appertains, so that not only they are appointed for civil policy, but also for maintenance of the true religion, and for suppressing of idolatry and superstition whatsoever, as in David, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah, and others highly commended for their zeal, in that case may be espied."

The same vital principle has been strongly maintained during all our subsequent ecclesiastical history. Although

for a national recognition and national Support of religion and we are not Voluntaries." The principle of national religion is therefore embedded in the Constitution of the Free Church of Scotland. This is as certain as any fact can be. Of this, all who took part in the Disruption struggle, or who know anything of its history, cannot fail to be aware.

Apart from the strong declarations of Dr Chalmers to this effect from the chair of the first Assembly of the Free Church, there is other evidence of the most conclusive kind. The Protest laid on the table of the General Assembly by Dr Welsh in 1843, previous to the Disruption, contains the following passage: "While firmly asserting the RIGHT and DUTY of the civil magistrate to maintain and support an establishment of religion in accordance with God's Word, and reserving to ourselves and our successors to strive, by all lawful means as opportunity shall in God's good providence be offered, to secure the performance of this duty agreeably to the Scriptures, and in implementation of the statutes of the kingdom of Scotland, and the obligations of the Treaty of Union as understood by us and our ancestors." This is sufficiently explicit, but the same document also affirms that "the Claim, Declaration, and Protest of the General Assembly, which convened at Edinburgh in May 1842, as the act of a free and lawful Assembly of the said Church, shall be holden as setting forth the true constitution of the said church."

"We hold that every part and every function of a commonwealth should be leavened with Christianity, and every functionary, from the highest to the lowest, should in their respective spheres do all that in them lies to countenance and uphold it. That is to say, thought we quit the Establishment, we go out on the Establishment principle - we quit a vitiated Establishment, but would rejoice in returning to a pure one. To express it otherwise - we are the advocates for a national recognition and national Support of religion - and we are not voluntaries." - Thomas Chalmers, 1843

in the covenanting struggle the essential right of the people to serve Christ as the only King in Zion, and to defend their religious liberties even unto blood, necessarily became prominent, the truth of the universal supremacy of Christ and His Word underlay the whole contest. The liberty of the Church Courts and people to serve Christ according to His word was, under the name of "spiritual independence," specially contended for also, and forced into prominence during the Ten Years' Conflict, in consequence of an attempt to overbear the Church Courts and people by means of the Patronage Law. But that conflict itself was connected with an anti-Voluntary struggle, and would have had no meaning in truth, would have been absurd - if the Church had seen it to be a duty to abandon the advantages of a Church Establishment and all union between Church and State.

From the Moderator's Chair of the first Free General Assembly on the day of the Disruption, Dr. Chalmers dispelled all doubt on this subject by exclaiming: "We hold that every part and every function of a commonwealth should be leavened with Christianity, and every functionary, from the highest to the lowest, should in their respective spheres do all that in them lies to countenance and uphold it. That is to say, thought we quit the Establishment, we go out on the Establishment principle - we quit a vitiated Establishment, but would rejoice in returning to a pure one. To express it otherwise - we are the advocates

Now, what does this "Claim, Declaration, and Protest" say on this subject? The conclusion of it is as follows, and nothing can be less ambiguous - "They especially invite all the office bearers and members of this Church, who are willing to suffer for their allegiance to their adorable King and Head, to stand by the Church and by each other in defence of the doctrine aforesaid, and of the liberties and privileges whether of officebearers or people which rest upon it; and to unite in supplication to Almighty God, that He would be pleased to turn the hearts of the rulers of this kingdom to keep unbroken the faith pledged to this Church in former days by statutes and solemn treaty, and the obligations come under to God himself to preserve and maintain the government and discipline of this Church in accordance with His Word; or otherwise, that He would give strength to this Church - officebearers and people - to endure resignedly the loss of the temporal benefits of an Establishment, and the personal sufferings and sacrifices to which they may be called, and would also inspire them with zeal and energy to promote the advancement of His Son's kingdom in whatever condition it may be His will to place them; and that in his own good time he would restore to them these benefits, the fruits of the struggles and sufferings of their fathers in times past in the same cause, and thereafter give them grace to employ them more effectually than hitherto they have done for the manifestation of His glory."

BETWEEN YOU AND ME

I trust that our readers are finding the series on "The City: Its Sins and Sorrows" interesting, if not absorbing. I enjoyed Dr. Guthrie's positive approach to the City. I now find his analysis of its sins equally absorbing. He wrote in the second half of the nineteenth century but his words and outlook are just as relevant today. Indeed, as we see what the Lord did in reviving his Church then, it gives us hope that he will yet revive his work among us today.

And lest we think, as we read through his description of conditions in the nineteenth century, that he's given to exaggeration, we ought to note that at the end of his book there are thirty two closely printed pages containing statistics and reports to back up all he says. To give an example of this corroborative detail and to give some idea of the conditions of the time, I've selected one Report that is included. It's as follows:

"In 1847 a committee of the Statistical Society of London inspected the dwellings, room by room, and condition of the inhabitants, of Church Lane, St. Giles, London. The population examined was 463, the number of families 100, and the number of bedsteads among them 90. There was an average, therefore, of above 5 persons to 1 bed; and many rooms were inhabited by as many as 22 souls. They report that "in these wretched dwellings all ages and both sexes, fathers and daughters, mothers and sons, grown-up brothers and sisters, stranger adult males and

females, and swarms of children, the sick, the dying, and the dead, are herded together with a proximity and mutual pressure which brutes would resist; where it is physically impossible to preserve the ordinary decencies of life; where all sense of propriety and self-respect must be lost, to be replaced only by a recklessness of demeanour which necessarily results from vitiated minds; and yet with many of the young, brought up in such hot-beds of mental pestilence, the hopeless, but benevolent attempt is making to implant, by means of general education, the seeds of religion, virtue, truth, order, industry, and cleanliness; but which seeds, to fructify advantageously, need, it is to be feared, a soil far less rank than can be found in these wretched abodes. Tender minds, once vitiated, present almost insuperable difficulties to reformation; bad habits and depraved feelings gather with the growth, and strengthen with the strength."

In what large town in the kingdom are not many of the poorer classes of the people living in circumstances which outrage all decency, destroy every moral feeling, and, of necessity, lead to debasement, dissipation, and crime?"

In the light of such conditions, can we really bewail our "dark days?" Instead, we must take note how Guthrie and others believed in the power of Gospel, in the Kingship of Christ over the nations, in the power of God, and addressed the situation, and went forward in faith. We must seek to do the same today.



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