

**REPORT OF THE RELIGION AND  
MORALS COMMITTEE**

**Convener: Mr. F. R. Daubney**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

IN preparing this Religion and Morals Committee's Report, members of the Committee have, as usual, contributed items which look into some of the subjects which have dominated the media and our thoughts during the past year.

With regard to the work of the Committee, we have completed the Statement of Differences, which we hope to have approved for publication by this meeting of Synod. The paper on homosexuality was amended as required by the last meeting of Synod and has been published in the Free Presbyterian Magazine. Further to this, it is now on the Free Presbyterian website, and it is intended that it be sent to all the members of the Scottish Parliament and the Christian press.

It is good to note that the Scottish Government is still in disarray with regard to the proposed Named Person legislation. They have great difficulty in squaring its intended requirements with the human rights of parents and children. Although intransigence appears to be a Scottish National Party characteristic, it is hoped that they will accept legal and professional advice and quietly drop the matter. Another initiative of concern is "Time for Inclusive Education" (TIE), which will continue to be monitored by the Committee.

There is no section on Islamic terrorism in this year's report. Although ISIS has suffered severe set-backs in areas where it intended to set up its caliphate, Islamic fundamentalism and its associated terrorism is still a concern in this country and elsewhere in the world. We should be thankful to the Most High for the skill and diligence of our security agencies, but there is much cause for prayer for the safe keeping of our nation.

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14).

**2. RELIGION**

***Popery (Roman Catholicism)***

Popery presently boasts about 1.28 billion deluded devotees globally, of which there are 841,000 in Scotland. Pope Francis, a Jesuit, appears to be bent on establishing his evil organisation as the pre-eminent part of a one-world religion. However, it is currently plagued internally with several factions, the main two being the "liberals" (endeavouring to "reform" or modernise that organisation), and the "conservatives" (resisting any change). The Pope is the

head of the “liberals”, and seems to be concentrating on changing three main areas of dogma and practice: qualifications required to participate in the mass, extension of sodomite involvement in the activities of that organisation, and making public worship more inclusive of other religions. Cardinal Ronald Burke has emerged as the leader of the opposing “conservative” faction. He is the Prefect of the Apostolic Signature, the President of the Vatican’s Supreme Court and the most senior American Cardinal in Rome. He has been described as the “enemy of the Pope”, and has publicly questioned his stewardship, condemning it as rudderless. He is also thought to have the latent support and advice of the Pope Emeritus, Benedict XVI, as well as that of Cardinal George Mueller, former Prefect of the Congregation of the Doctors of the Faith (the Pope’s own doctrinal chief), and other cardinals. The “conservatives” therefore constitute a most formidable opposition for their opponents.

Pope Francis, in his contending, has equated the “conservatives” with fundamentalism, and has stated that “fundamentalism is a sickness that is in all religions”, and that “they believe in absolute truth, and go ahead dirtying the other with calumny, with disinformation, and doing evil. . . . We have to combat it. . . . Religious fundamentalism is not religious, it lacks God. It is idolatry, like the idolatry of money.” The main area of contention between them is whether or not the remarried may partake of the mass. The Pope and his faction support their partaking of it, arguing that it would merely be a legitimate “development of tradition”. His opponents counter by saying that such a proposal, if implemented, would “undermine fundamental Church teaching that the bond of marriage cannot be broken”. They regard such remarriage as adulterous, and that which debars such from the mass (they are strangely blind to the scriptural teaching that the innocent divorced are free to remarry, Matthew 19:9; 1 Corinthians 7:15).

Also, Cardinal Mueller has declared, “We are called to help people little by little, to have a full relationship with God”, before adding, “but can’t give discounts”. This controversy concerning divorcees and the mass is not the only matter causing discord in the organisation. The Pope and his fellow “liberals” are also advocating other contentious changes to dogma and practice, such as an increase of involvement in the activities of papistry for sodomites, the admittance of married men into the so called priesthood, and the promotion of ever more inclusive inter-faith worship services. There are reports of a “great divide” in its midst, and many amongst its hierarchy saying “I am a Pope Francis Catholic” (“liberals”), or “I am a Pope Benedict XVI Catholic” (“conservatives”).

We pray that this internal schism will rapidly and greatly increase, and effect the fall of this soul-murdering institution; that any of God’s elect presently ensnared by it would be delivered from it, and that the Lord would pour out the Holy Ghost to the bringing in of the pure gospel of Jesus Christ, with much saving power, and cause the dawning of the glorious Millennium, very soon. “And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a

seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season” (Revelation 20:3); “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9).

#### *The role of the Jesuits in Britain today*

Those who imagine that Romanism is no longer an inveterate enemy to the true Church of Christ in our day are at best naïve. As has been observed, the cunning of the fox and the ferocity of the wolf are part of Rome’s unchanging nature, not least among the Jesuits. Much of Jesuitical influence is aimed at gaining the minds of the young, and even more subtly, in infiltrating important judicial, political and religious institutions.

A survey of their influence in Britain reveals that there are 11 Jesuit schools in Britain today, while worldwide there are 2,210 schools educating over 2 million students. They have 176 openly Jesuit members living in 19 communities in Britain, working as parish priests, chaplains, teachers, academics, writers, doctors and in other professions. In addition to the schools there are Jesuit colleges, refugee programmes, volunteer programmes and notably two university chaplaincies serving 15,000 Roman Catholic students at Oxford and Manchester University. In May 2007 they appointed a new head in Britain, a man trained in Chile who worked as a parish priest in South London, and who has a PhD in Islamic thought. All of this information is made public by the Jesuits themselves.

What is not so public is their secretive and undercover work. Through education and other means they seek to control the future leaders of society, particularly targeting the children of political leaders and other influential people in society. Information on their undercover operations is naturally hard to come by. It is not unlikely that their agents have infiltrated numerous Protestant churches. If this is true it may in part explain the Romeward movement in many mainstream Protestant churches. In many other areas of society thousands of Jesuit agents worldwide have gained influential posts in politics, armies, among magistrates, doctors and university professors, and Britain will not be immune to this influence.

With a Jesuit Pope in power, the influence of the order is on the increase. Affiliated societies such as Opus Dei appear to be growing in strength and number, promoting Rome’s own interests in a similar way to the Jesuits. Great is the need that the Lord’s praying people would plead for the promised downfall of Rome, that spiritual Babylon, which “the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming” (2 Thessalonians 2:8).

#### *False charity to Romanists*

True charity “rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth” (1 Corinthians 13:6). It seeks the true eternal spiritual good of souls by giving, not

withholding, the truth. In a generation where personal offence too often takes precedence over the voice of truth, temptations to compromise abound. True love to our neighbour will avoid causing them to stumble, that is, sin or harm their spiritual good. False charity on the other hand causes others to stumble by encouraging them in sin and error. This can also be done by not clearly and entirely pointing it out or by sinful silence. In 1989 one of the important points made by the Southern Presbytery of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland in relation to the Lord Mackay case was the impact of confirming Roman Catholics in their idolatry and leading weaker brethren to be ensnared by the same example.

The Reformation anniversary was something of a litmus test for Protestants in relation to the gospel and how they ought to respond to Romanism. For those plagued with the disease of ecumenism it had to be carefully stage-managed. A merely lukewarm note of thanksgiving was accompanied with hand-wringing tones of regret. It was the language of false charity. Essentially they were ashamed of the gospel. Declarations were signed to confirm Rome in their soul-destroying errors and sell the birthright of Reformation truth.

Those such as the Evangelical Alliance sought to mark the importance of the Reformation and its doctrines whilst narrating attempts at evangelical ecumenism with Rome with apparent approval. It sought to balance points of “continuing divergence” with “convergence and co-operation”. One area of co-operation highlighted was in relation to evangelistic efforts. It is quite contradictory to say that Reformation truth is significant but one can still co-operate with Romanists in evangelism as though the same gospel is believed.

Still others simply passed over the event in a silence that seemed to indicate an embarrassment with the Reformation. No doubt there are wrong ways of marking such events but we ought not to ignore the mighty works of God as though they were inconvenient.

When those who claim to be evangelical and reformed call Romanists brothers in Christ and those who serve Christ, it is at best false charity. It believes that they are in error but does not give a clear warning against this. At worst it reveals deep confusion about both the gospel and salvation, especially when it is said that the Roman Catholic view of salvation is not as “full” as the Protestant one.

It was reported last year that Roman Catholics were now close to becoming the largest religious grouping in Scotland. One can anticipate that evangelical attempts to placate them will only increase as they seek their influence in areas of common concern. It is a statistic, however, that presents an implicit challenge to evangelise them. False charity would avoid this but a faithful love for the souls of the followers of Rome should not.

### ***The Ancient Landmark***

“Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set” (Proverbs 22:28). The boundaries of a man’s property were not to be interfered with. That right to property ownership is still with us today. If that is so for things

that pertain to man, how much more ought that to be so concerning the Lord's cause! Yet many are today, with great zeal, removing or controverting the ancient landmark of the cause of Christ; and moreover are encouraged in that nefarious business by our rulers. Our godly forefathers, by a variety of means, including our constitution and other legislation, publications, teaching in church schools, and even by erecting physical statues and monuments, set public landmarks in the nation to try to safeguard the church from the encroachment of her enemies. These landmarks have been progressively attacked and removed, year after year, generation after generation.

One way in which this has been done is to allow them to be neglected – as it were overgrown – so that the populace knows not what they are. Authorities do not observe, schools do not teach, and the media do not report, that which would remind the nation of its glorious gospel heritage. The 500th anniversary of the Reformation passed last year with little in the way of public recognition; and yet, by any standards, it was one of the most significant events for the history of our nation. To only a small remnant is it perceived a matter of significance now. When children, and indeed many adults, know virtually nothing of the nation's true religious heritage, we cannot be surprised when they are so gullible, and easily led into the path of the wicked.

Our forefathers stressed the duty that rulers have to actively support the church and so help the gospel to flourish. This duty has now been cast off. The Scottish Government has recently removed a longstanding privilege from churches, by requiring those congregations which were not registered charities to pay full business water rates. So little water is used in most church buildings, that the practical effect was to impose a tax on church buildings. And by relegating churches to the same level as other charitable organisations, such as mosques, humanist organisations and sporting clubs, in its practical dealings the government today wholly disowns their duty in relation to the Establishment Principle. Their great zeal is for the modern, unbiblical, landmark of the “equality”, “diversity” and “inclusion” landscape. The “virtue-signallers” of the media, social or otherwise, can obtain the praise and approbation of their fellows by pointing out these landmarks, and particularly to identify and excoriate those who are nonconformists.

A mob of chanting students demanding conformity to the equality dogma brings fear to the governors of higher education institutions, and often swift accedence to their demands. For example, Yale University changed the name of the John C. Calhoun College because Calhoun, a 19th century Vice-President of the USA, although an outstanding senator in his day, was an advocate of slavery. However, Elihu Yale, who helped endow the university and whom it is called after, made his fortune as a slave trader! Alas it would be too expensive to change the name of the whole university, but sufficient “virtue-signalling” to appease the students had been accomplished. Britain is not immune to this craze, as the “Rhodes must fall” Oxford University statue campaign showed. The statue of John Knox has long since been moved out of

parliament square and the public gaze, for the supposed reason that it was a bronze statue and therefore should be out of the elements. Since then a bronze statue of the atheist philosopher David Hume has been installed outside the High Court building on the Royal Mile – sadly symbolic of the way the city and nation of Knox has fallen.

We have a duty not only to preserve the ancient landmark, but also to bring it to the attention of our fellow citizens as opportunity arises. In times past a Christian could make an effort to witness against ungodliness by writing a letter to a newspaper or magazine, even such publications as had a large readership. Today that particular opportunity of public witness has been blocked by an unwillingness to give a voice to biblical views. Nevertheless efforts are still being made to raise a voice. It is encouraging to hear of attempts to do so, however feeble they might seem. May the Lord bless that voice that is consistent with His Word.

#### ***The Scottish Church Census 2016***

The Scottish Church Census was conducted in summer 2016, but the results came out too late for comment at the previous Synod. Not surprisingly, the figures for church attendance show a continued decline from the previous census, with 390,000 people regularly attending church (7.2% of the Scottish population), down from 570,000 in 2002 (10.6%), and from 854,000 (17%) in 1984. Around 40% of those attending church are over the age of 65. There are 3,700 congregations in Scotland which claim to be Christian and Trinitarian, of which 57% describe themselves as either evangelical or reformed.

The census highlights the weak and fragmented state of Scottish Christianity. Pentecostalism has doubled in size since 2002 (18,860 in 2016), but every other form of Christianity has declined. Notwithstanding the influx of Poles, the Roman Catholic attendance has dropped from 202,110 in 2002 to 135,600 in 2016. This latter figure is marginally less than that for the Church of Scotland (136,910 in 2016). The Church of Scotland attendance is dropping the fastest of all. Contrary to the claims of the liberals, their religion seems pointless to the world.

The real religious state of Scotland is, of course, far worse than these figures show, and many of those who are attending church manifestly do not have “the root of the matter” (Job 19:28). On the other hand, the downward trend is equally misleading, as far as predicting the future is concerned, because conversion is not merely a human “attitude” to religion but a sovereign work of God. He may revive His work at any moment, and will do so at His appointed time, irrespective of trends and statistics to the contrary.

#### ***Homosexuality and the National Churches***

##### ***Church of England***

In 1998 the 13th Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops passed a resolution that “homosexual acts” are “incompatible with Scripture”. This resolution

was not, however, legally binding and Anglican national churches in Brazil, South Africa, South India, New Zealand and Canada have taken steps towards approving and “celebrating” same-sex relationships. The Episcopal Church in the USA has gone a step further and allowed homosexual marriages since 2015. Many Church of England (CofE) clergy have shown support for homosexual marriage by rejecting a 2017 House of Bishops’ report that marriage should be between a man and a woman. A future meeting of the CofE’s General Synod is to discuss a motion, to be proposed by the Bishop of Hereford, Richard Frith, “to create a set of formal services and prayers to bless those who have had a same sex marriage or civil partnership”.

The CofE has allowed clergy to enter into same-sex civil partnerships since 2005 and, in 2009, the BBC reported that many clergy in the CofE “already bless same-sex couples on an unofficial basis”. The CofE requests that clergy in civil partnerships vow to remain sexually chaste, but the Church of Wales has no such restriction. And in 2016 the CofE consecrated Bishop Nicholas Chamberlain to be Bishop of Grantham, knowing he was homosexual and in a long-term same-sex relationship.

In November 2016 the Secretary General of the Archbishops’ Council confirmed the following: Clergy are permitted to enter into civil partnerships; they may offer prayers for people in same-sex relationships; they should welcome LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) people as they would anyone else; and that clergy and laity are entitled to argue for changes in teaching and practice. In 2017 Bishop Rachel Treweek presided over an “LGBT Eucharist” sponsored by the Inclusive Church (an organisation which advocates the full inclusion of all people in the Christian churches, regardless of ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation).

A letter from the Archbishop of Canterbury was sent recently to all CofE schools saying: “A child may choose the tutu, princess’s tiara and heels and/or the fireman’s helmet, tool belt and superhero cloak without expectation or comment”; and “childhood has a sacred space for creative self imagining”. The Archbishop also advised schools that they must no longer separate uniforms into “boys” and “girls”, so as not to “create difficulty for trans pupils”. The Archbishop goes so far as to claim that to make children wear clothes that match their birth sex is “bullying”.

Reverend Kelvin Holdsworth of the Glasgow Episcopal Cathedral, who helped to secure same-sex marriage in the Scottish Episcopal Church in 2017, has said that prayers should be offered up that Prince George should be homosexual as this would be the “fastest way” for the CofE to allow homosexual people to marry.

The CofE has moved a very long way from its statement in 1998 that homosexual acts are incompatible with Scripture. The Anglican community is in turmoil and may yet suffer further break-up as a result of its disgraceful departure from the Word of God on this matter.

### *Church of Scotland*

In 2000 the Church of Scotland (CofS) was divided over the repeal of Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988. Section 28 was intended to stop local authorities from promoting homosexuality by the funding of books or any other materials that showed a homosexual relationship as normal. Despite strong opposition from the evangelical wing of the church, its Committee on Education supported the proposed repeal. This support was followed by the acceptance and normalisation of homosexuality in the CofS.

The General Assembly of 2013 agreed that people in same-sex partnerships should be allowed to serve as deacons and ministers. It was noted that the Church maintained the scriptural view of marriage as between a man and a woman, but would allow individual congregations to “opt out” if they wished to appoint a minister or deacon who was in a same-sex marriage or civil partnership.

In 2017 the Church’s Theological Forum Convener, the Very Reverend Iain Torrance, said when presenting his committee’s report, that he and his colleagues could see “no sufficient theological reason for the Church not to authorise specific ministers to officiate at same-sex weddings . . . if doing so does not prejudice the position of those who decline to do so for reason of conscience”. He went on to quote the work of theologian, Professor Robert Song, of Durham University, who said, “that rather than the old fraught polarisation of heterosexual versus homosexual, where the notion of homosexuality is demonised as disobedient to a creation expectation to procreate, it needs to be reframed”. Professor Torrance’s report was approved and accepted. To the credit of a number of the Assembly delegates the vote was strongly contested, but was carried by a large majority.

That same General Assembly approved an apology to homosexuals for the history of discrimination they had faced in the Church. Reverend John Nugent, St. Fergus Church in Wick, has claimed that the lack of LGBT inclusive education is a breach of children’s rights and that faith communities should be more accepting of LGBT people.

Following this theme of inclusivity, the CofS has actually produced a booklet called *Diverse Gender Identities and Pastoral Care*, which is a collection of stories by those who identify themselves as transgender people. It does not seek to give answers or to express any theological positions. Gender dysphoria is a condition where a person experiences discomfort or distress because there is a mismatch between their biological sex and gender identity. It is sometimes known as gender identity disorder, gender incongruence or transgenderism. While biological sex and gender identity are the same for most, it is not the case for an estimated 1% of people who claim to be transgender. It is lumped together with LBGT but is not the same as homosexuality.

The Church of Scotland is in as big a state of confusion as the Church of England with regard to homosexuality. Both of these churches are splitting themselves asunder by their determination to follow the current agenda and

fashion. In some cases whole congregations have left the denominations, and in others many individuals have left their congregations. The two main national churches of the United Kingdom have abandoned the Word of God and in supporting and promoting sodomy they run blindly to their own destruction. The blood of their parishioners will be required at their hands.

### 3. MORALS

#### *Child abuse*

Child abuse is not an edifying subject to think about or report on. However, it is a necessary subject to consider in light of the fact that society is becoming increasingly devoid of natural affection. Though the Bible does not specifically use the term child abuse, we are told that anyone who harms a child is inviting God's wrath upon themselves. The Word of God promotes child blessing and not child abuse: "And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them" (Mark 10:13-16).

Child abuse has been defined as "when a parent or caregiver, whether through action or failing to act, causes injury, death, emotional harm or risk of serious harm to a child". Child abuse takes several forms: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and child neglect, all of which are abhorrent to God.

Physical abuse is any action that injures a child, such as hitting, kicking, burning, biting, hair pulling, choking, throwing, shoving or whipping. It is abuse if the child is injured, even if the parent or caregiver did not intentionally mean to cause harm to the child.

The Word of God prohibits physical abuse in its warnings against improper anger. Physical abuse often takes the form of parents taking out their own anger and frustration on their children. "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil" (Ephesians 4:26-27) and "an angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression" (Proverbs 29:22) – this is different from biblical chastisement which is considered below. There is no place for unrighteous or uncontrolled anger in the life of any Christian.

Sexual abuse is when an adult or an older or more powerful child uses a child for immoral purposes or involves a child in immoral acts. This would include inappropriate physical, verbal, or visual behaviour with or in the presence of children. Another aspect of this is the sharing of indecent images and texts. Contrary to general opinion most sexual abuse is not carried out by

“strangers”, but by family members, family friends or those in places of authority who have regular access to the victim, such as teachers.

The Word of God prohibits child abuse in its condemnation of immorality. To abuse a child in this way is evil. It is a clear violation of the seventh commandment and a sin of uncleanness aggravated to the highest degree, as it is perpetrated against the most vulnerable in society. Sexual abuse violates a child physically, psychologically and emotionally. The victims of such abuse are adversely affected for life and may never recover.

In connection with this is the continued desire of some to lower the age of consent. Since the 1970s there has been agitation to lower the age of consent in Britain to either 15 as it is in Sweden, or to 14 as it is in Germany and Italy. Attempts have been renewed in recent years by John Ashton of the UK Faculty of Public Health, focussing on the health and wellness of sexually active minors. He has used the argument that it would “take enormous pressures off children and young people” who presently feel their need to hide their sexual activity and cannot seek help when needed. A lowering of the age of consent would empower teachers and other supervising adults to provide access to contraception and sexual health advice for 14- and 15-year-olds. However, there is no emphasis placed on whether or not children as young as 14 or 15 are ready for the emotional aspects of such early sexual activity, which they are not. The clear immorality of such activity is completely disregarded.

Liz Dux, a lawyer who represented victims abused by the entertainer Jimmy Savile, has objected, stating that “predatory adults would be given legitimacy to focus their attentions on even younger teenagers, and there is a real risk that society would be sending out the message that sex between 14- to 15-year-olds is also acceptable”. To provide the means to do it legally seems to be a move towards it becoming an acceptable practice.

Emotional abuse is when a parent, caregiver or any other adult harms a child’s mental or social development or causes severe emotional harm to them. This may include rejecting or ignoring the child, shaming or humiliating them, terrorising them, isolating them and corrupting them.

The Word of God prohibits such abuse when it warns fathers: “Provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4). Harsh, unloving verbal discipline and emotional manipulation alienate the child from their parents and make their instructions and corrections of little or no value. A child’s emotional frustration with a parent puts a wall between them which cuts off proper communication and respect. Exasperating the child keeps your child from obedience to you which is disobedience to God. “Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord” (Colossians 3:20). Parents can “provoke” their children by placing unreasonable requirements on them, belittling them, or constantly finding fault. This can cause deeper wounds than any physical blow. Both Matthew 18:1-6 and Mark 9:42 set before us the consequences of leading a child to disobedience: “and whosoever shall offend one of these little ones

that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea”.

Child neglect is when a parent or caregiver does not have an affection for or does not care for, supervise and support the child’s health, safety and well-being. This may involve physical neglect or inadequate supervision, emotional neglect, medical neglect and educational neglect. But what of the neglect of a child’s spiritual well-being?

The end of biblical parenting is, firstly, to raise children to love and follow God: “that thou mightest fear the Lord thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son’s son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged” (Deuteronomy 6:2); and secondly, to come to know the Lord savingly: to “train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6).

Spiritual abuse in leading the child away from God rather than to Him is the worst sort of possible abuse. Colossians 3:21, “Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged”, teaches us to encourage rather than discourage our children. This is confirmed by Ephesians 4:15-19: “But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.” We must speak the Word to them in truth, beseeching the Lord in prayer, and seek to build them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Christian parents should not say or do anything that would prejudice the tender hearts and minds of their children.

### ***Proposed Bill on Smacking***

At the end of 2017 the Scottish Government confirmed that smacking children is to be banned in Scotland. A bill lodged initially by John Finnie, MSP for the Greens, has received the support of the Government who promised that it would become law. Under the proposed Bill, children will receive the same legal protection as adults. The bill proposes to remove the defence of “justifiable assault” in Scots law, which allows parents to use physical punishment to admonish a child.

The proposal to ban smacking has been backed by the United Nations, academics and charities, the Association of Scottish Police Superintendents and at least one local authority. The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) has called it “a welcome step on the road towards fairness and equality for children”, claiming it would be a “common

sense move". The physical punishment of children is already illegal in 52 countries.

The Scottish Government believes that "physical punishment can have negative effects on children which can last long after the physical pain has died away. We support positive parenting through, for example, funding for family support services." There are no bans proposed in England and Northern Ireland, where parents are allowed to use "reasonable chastisement", but can face criminal charges if a child is smacked so hard that it leaves a mark or causes bruising.

### *Scriptural doctrine*

Some consider thoughtful, scripturally-based physical discipline to be a horribly violent act. But, while the Bible is protective of children, it is also realistic about what measures are necessary to develop their character and restrain them from following the natural inclination of a sinful nature.

Physical punishment is often the most effective way to lead a child to an understanding of right and wrong. God disciplines those He loves: "If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" (Hebrews 12:7); and "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent" (Revelation 3:19). Sometimes that discipline is physical. We are to love our children (Titus 2:4), to treat them affectionately and kindly, and biblical chastisement is an essential part of that.

The Bible is clear that such punishment is for the benefit of the receiver and not to be an emotional release for the punisher or cause serious or lasting (permanent) physical damage. Christian parents must always teach in love and discipline with justice and not abuse their position.

Children should be corrected when necessary: "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes" (Proverbs 13:24). This discipline should be administered in the right spirit and in the spirit of love without anger: "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil" (Ephesians 4:26-27) and "An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression" (Proverbs 29:22).

### *Immigration*

In a small country town in Scotland, some families have moved their children from the local school to a more rural school three miles away, because of the number of children belonging to foreign workers attending. These have little or no English, and the teachers had to spend an inordinate amount of time endeavouring to instruct them, so that the local children were largely ignored. Why are so many foreign workers needed? The authorities say it is because we have an ageing population and why is that? Is it because many are living longer? Many are, but the root of the matter is the 1967 Abortion Act. Tens of thousands of children have been murdered in the womb who would now have been in the workforce if they had been permitted to live.

Most of the immigrants have non-Christian religions, and there has been a great increase in the building of mosques and temples for their false gods. Many of these prove fertile ground for rearing up terrorists, with their bombing activities in our own country and abroad, fulfilling what the Rt. Hon. Enoch Powell MP forecast in his famous and controversial speech on “rivers of blood”. This has come about, with 4 suicide bombers causing the death of 64 people in a single day in London in 3 underground trains and a commuter bus. In the past year a suicide bomber struck at a concert in Manchester and many young people were killed. Also others have been murdered on London streets by running heavy vehicles into crowds of pedestrians. Quite a number of planned attacks have been thwarted by the vigilance of the security services. It is hoped that with Brexit, Britain will again be able to control its own borders and prevent thousands of illegal immigrants entering the country.

### ***Transgender Confusion***

Confusion might seem a mild word to describe the complete subversion that transgenderism creates. The word means not just mental bewilderment or lack of clarity, although this is certainly one aspect. It can also involve indiscriminate mixing of things so that it is difficult to distinguish the individual elements. Transgenderism involves obliterating the divinely created order. People using Facebook can choose from an array of 71 “genders” or none at all. The idea is that anyone may self-identify as whatever they like and then expect immediate recognition. Of course this creates potential safety risks and confusion in every area where the male-female distinction must be taken into consideration.

Over the past few years the number of children referred to gender clinics has exploded. There has been an almost 1,000% increase in children referred to the Tavistock clinic in London over the past 6 years. Nearly 70% of the figure are girls. This correlates with a steep rise in self-harm and other mental health issues among teenage girls. Adolescents frequently experience temporary difficulties as they adapt to their changing bodies. They are susceptible to brainwashing from online sources. Some parents report that they feel like their “trans” child has joined a cult. It is an escalating social experiment that will store up untold problems for the future of our society.

Gender dysphoria is a real problem that must be handled sensitively like other psychiatric illnesses. There is no reliable scientific basis for the diagnosis of transgender, nor long-term research on the outcome of treatments. James Caspian, a psychotherapist who has spent many years working with such people, says that “there is a groundswell of people de-transitioning . . . people who after five, seven, twelve, fifteen and even twenty years want to retransition back”. There is also a high suicide rate amongst those that change their bodies. As with other cases of self-harm, therapy should not be aimed at changing healthy bodies to match people’s feelings, but rather at helping people accept the body they were born with.

It is a movement that does not just contradict biological reality but almost every other dimension of reality as ordained by God. Transgenderism also subverts some of the key agendas of secularism, such as materialism, which would reduce everything to biological processes. It contradicts the feminist agenda, which is based on opposition between the sexes; therefore some feminists think that male transitioning to female is just another exercise of “male privilege”.

Within just a few years this movement is gaining the ground that the homosexual lobby obtained over decades. But no society can function with this type of entire breakdown of necessary and ordained order. We are destined for as much disorder as possible unless we will submit to God’s rule.

### ***Time for Inclusive Education (TIE)***

The campaign group, Time for Inclusive Education, say their research has found 90% of LGBT people experience homophobia, biphobia and transphobia at school, and that 97% of these people believe that it would have helped if their school had been LGBT inclusive. The group’s aim is to eradicate homophobic, biphobic and transphobic attitudes and behaviours among young people by adopting an educational approach, embedding LGBT topics and issues into school curricula and social teaching.

The “TIE Pledge”, which members of the public and MSPs are called on to sign online, proposes teacher training programmes for teachers who are currently serving and student trainee teachers; a requirement to embed LGBT materials into the curriculum; recording of bullying; new legislation to require an inclusive educational approach; and monitoring by local authorities and school inspectors of any steps taken.

The campaigners say, “We are aware of the vitally important role that teachers play in tackling these issues, and this is why the TIE campaign is focussed on giving teachers the confidence to address LGBT topics and issues directly, by guaranteeing that all teachers have access to the inclusive training programmes that are currently available. Furthermore, we are also campaigning for all trainee teachers to receive LGBT training as part of their required qualification.” This organisation already runs training events for teachers in the Primary, Secondary and Additional Support Needs sectors.

At their 2016 Spring conference the Scottish National Party moved a resolution to support the campaign. A majority of Members of the Scottish Parliament (70 out of 129) signed the pledge and committed to supporting their strategic proposals to advance LGBT inclusive education. The First Minister and some other leading Holyrood politicians give it their backing.

The stated aim is to prevent bullying through an inclusion of the LGBT agenda as a core subject in the education of our children. The argument is made that the sympathetic exposure, through teaching the “reality” and “normality” of these issues, should have the effect of reducing bullying and feelings of isolation. No one likes to hear of bullying in our schools, but programmes such as this create confusion in the minds of our children. They

are taught that a person can choose their own gender and expect that their choice be respected and accepted as normal, when it is clearly not. A tiny minority of the population do have issues which need to be addressed and, if they have genuine psychological difficulties with their identity, they should be treated with kindness as we would treat any other person. But to legislate to require us to conform, in our thoughts and our actions, with the sodomite and the humanist is wrong and unacceptable.

The irony and wickedness of such campaigns is that people speaking out against their beliefs are themselves being bullied and silenced, and children are being taught that that which is complete confusion is right and must not be questioned. To question the normalising of the LGBT agenda is becoming regarded as a hate crime. The hatred may well be in the hearts of the accusers. That which is sinful is hateful to God, whilst “speaking the truth in love” means we must question and oppose it, which is our resolved intention.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

This year’s Religion and Morals Committee’s Report gives us a picture of a land going further and further away from what is required of us in the Word of God. To a large degree Scripture is ignored and sins which are condemned in the Word of God are openly indulged and even protected by law. We frequently hear of the legislators themselves being required to resign their positions in government and parliament after behaving in scandalous ways. Children are exposed to all manner of filth and pornography on social media, the perpetrators and publishers of which appear to be able to flout any measures designed and implemented to control them. Substance abuse and violence in the home continue to be areas of deep concern.

What need there is for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit and a return to the faithful preaching of the Gospel of Christ. God in His Word encourages His believing people to pray for a time when He shall “declare the name of the Lord in Zion, and His praise in Jerusalem; when the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the Lord” (Psalm 102:21-22).

### **SABBATH OBSERVANCE COMMITTEE’S REPORT**

**Convener: Rev. J. B. Jardine**

THE work of the Committee continues as in previous years.

#### ***The decline of Sabbath observance in a community***

Not very long ago there was a marked difference between a Sabbath in Lewis and Harris and one in the rest of Britain. However, decline in Sabbath