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Meeting of Synod

As our readers will know, the Meeting of our annual Synod opens on Tuesday 21st May (D.V.). During the following days the members of Synod will be fully engaged in the matters which are to be brought before the Synod for debate and decision. The various Committees of the Church will be required to report to the Synod on their work during the past year and a wide variety of topics will be covered during the Synod, all relating in some way to the interests of the Lord's Cause amongst us and throughout the world.

We trust that we need hardly remind our readers of the great need of prayer for the ministers and elders of the Church as they meet in Synod that they may be directed of the Lord in all that they do, and that all will redound to His glory and to the advancement of His Cause and Kingdom amongst us.

For the members of Synod themselves there are many exhortations of God's Word which they would do well to ponder on in view of the coming Synod. Differences of opinion can prevail in many matters, even in those questions which are not matters of faith and practice, and lead to conflict. What need there is at such times, and at all times, of the exhortation "Let brotherly love continue." Heb. 13:1. Another Scripture which appears applicable is the exhortation in 1st Peter chapter 5, "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." How needful, too, is the exhortation in the previous chapter, "And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins." And again in Colossians chapter 3, "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; for-

bearing one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which ye are also called in one body; and be ye thankful."

May we indeed prove at the coming Synod by our words and actions that we are living followers of the living Saviour, and faithful servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. To the praying people of the Church we say, "Brethren, pray for us." 1 Thess. 5:25.

Sermon

by the late Rev. Jonathan Ranken Anderson

(Preached on 16th January 1853)

"Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but towards thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." Romans 11:22.

We are in the hands of one who is wise in heart and mighty in strength, against whom no one hath hardened himself and hath prospered. We are in His hands as clay in the hands of a potter — free to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour; and if anyone is disposed to murmur, he is met by the enquiry: "Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?" We lie thus at His disposal in consequence of the claims He has upon us. We are His creatures: for His pleasure we are: and for His pleasure we were created. We are sinners lying under a sentence of death, so that if justice were in our case to take its course, and to render us our due, we should be punished with everlasting destruction from His presence and the glory of His power. But we are inhabitants of the earth — the sphere marked out for the display of the glory of Divine Mercy, and therefore we are still within the reach of mercy: and if He sees fit no one can prevent Him from showing mercy and from granting His salvation; and if others are by Him passed by, they have no more reason to repine or complain of His procedure than had the labourers respecting the householder who having called some at the eleventh hour of the day gave to them what he gave those that bore the burden and heat of the day. We

have reference to these solemn things in the words of our text, which contain three things deserving of consideration:—

I. A twofold Divine dispensation.

II. The classes that are severally affected by this Divine dispensation.

III. The caution given to one of the two classes that are affected by this Divine dispensation.

1. We have a twofold Divine dispensation: “Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God.”

1. Notice the bright side of the Divine dispensation, and contemplate, in obedience to the invitation here given, the goodness of God.

(1). We remark that it is sovereign goodness. It is a very lovely thing in itself, and very precious, and no one is able to tell the precious things that flow from it. What is it you will compare with goodness? And where will you find goodness compared with the goodness of God? It is sovereign: that is, its manifestation is ruled by the will of Him whose goodness it is. And if it be the result of His will, and if His will is answerable to His absolutely perfect nature, the conclusion, I think, is inevitable, that it is ruled in the best possible way. It may not be difficult for us to subscribe to this truth, when proposed to us in the form of a doctrine; but any of you that are brought into contact with it under Divine dispensation in real life, will see that it is not so easy to subscribe to it as it there shines forth. But, however difficult it be to bring the human heart to concur with the sovereignty of Divine goodness, as it appears in real life, we cannot from this draw any argument against that goodness, or the sovereign exercise of it.

It were the height of presumption in us to plead, that this goodness must alter its course to please us; that it must be regulated in another way than by the will of Him whose goodness it is, that we may have no cause to complain. It is a vain imagination for men to think that, with hearts naturally full of enmity against God, any kind of manifestation of Divine goodness will please Him. It is not upon it that a change ought to take place, but upon the hearts of those that contemplate it. And it is worthy of remark, that when man's heart through grace is thus changed, the very things which they before stumbled at now establish them, what formerly displeased them now delights them, and the things in which they saw nothing but occasion for hard thoughts of God, now afford nothing but occasion for admiration and praise. We do not know any view of the Divine character that provokes the enmity of the carnal heart so much as the sovereignty of Divine goodness; and we know nothing that solaces and satisfies so much the heart that is renewed. “Make to yourselves a new

heart," and you will sweetly comply with the sovereignty of Divine goodness.

(2). The goodness of God is righteous. Why is it that it is sovereign? It is because it is the goodness of One who is what He is. He may not be ruled in the disposal of His goodness by a superior, for He has none. Where shall you find a reason for the display of His goodness but in Himself? For listen to Him, "I am and there is none besides me." If there is none besides Him, clearly you must admit that He will have mercy, upon whom He will have mercy. But whilst He is thus absolutely sovereign, He is also essentially righteous. He is righteous in His nature, righteous in all that He wills, and all that He does. It is a very pleasant thought to a holy creature — it is like heavenly manna to a gracious soul, in the exercise of grace, that Jehovah never will do anything but what is absolutely righteous. "The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works." "He is the rock, His work is perfect, for all His ways are judgment: a God of truth, and without iniquity; just and right is He." And oh! if your hearts have ever been pierced with the unrighteousness of your fellow creatures, if you have been struck dumb, astounded, thrown into a sea of perplexity by disappointed hopes, blasted professions, broken engagements, violated friendships, here let the sanctuary of Jehovah's nature open its golden gates to the reception of your torn, wounded and broken hearts. He binds up the broken heart and wounded spirit and He is infinitely able and disposed to bind up wounds of this kind, the sorest wounds men can ever suffer in this world. They are wounds that are too plentiful in our day, and they would be more plentiful were men more capable of receiving them, and they would be deeper yet if there were more sensibility in those that receive them. If His nature thus be perfectly righteous, then if He will manifest the goodness of His nature, if He will disperse its precious fruits and if He will manifest its unspeakable beauty, then the goodness He shows will be righteous goodness, the channel through which it flows will be a righteous channel, and those who receive it will sooner or later be made to know it is righteous goodness. We have the highest style of this goodness in the work of redemption. We have the most wonderful channel through which it flows in the death of Christ. Redeeming goodness is the goodness of goodness, the beauty of beauty, the sweetness of sweetness.

(3). It is saving goodness. We apprehend the Apostle is treating of the goodness of God in relation to the salvation of sinners of this world. Some may ask, Why not begin with this just at once? If we wished to be in the fashion, perhaps we would do this, but we are never in the fashion, and hope never will be. It is a reproach to us that we are out of date. Our

reproach is our honour; and we hope to get still more antiquated, unless this generation completely change: It is fashionable to plunge into mercy, salvation, redemption, all at once. I trust there are those amongst you who have not so learnt Christ, who have been taught in another school, and have had to proceed by another rule. Such will find that the order now laid down is the order by which the soul proceeds in becoming acquainted with the goodness of God. It is brought out of the depths of Atheism into an apprehension of the being of God; its self-will is broken, and it is brought to a reception of the sovereignty of the goodness of God; sin is rendered exceeding sinful, and the law is made to appear highly honourable in the channel through which this goodness flows. It is at this point, my friends that salvation is obtained. Salvation supposes there are sinners. It supposes that sinners are ill-deserving, hell-deserving, and ready to perish. It supposes that perish they ought. It supposes that perish they must, but for the sovereign, righteous goodness of God. "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thy help."

2. Let us look at the other side of the Divine dispensation: "The severity of God." Here we remark:

(1.) That this is pure. He whose it is is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. This will be readily allowed, at least in words, respecting what are called the amiable and attractive attributes of His nature; and it must be allowed not less respecting those that are spoken of as more stern and severe. It is part of the one-sided religion against which we protest, and against which we desire to continue to protest, as long as God allows us ground to stand upon, that it sinks the stern and severe attributes of the Divine Character, and does so under the pretext of honouring Him and rendering Him an object of greater attraction, and securing, as they think they will, the esteem, and the love of all they address. My fear is, and the ground for the apprehension is growing larger and stronger every day, that the painful fruits of this one-sided religion will be seen in downright infidelity, or in base unadorned Popery. Man, instead of being engaged in seeking after Him who is set forth, as it is said, in this attractive light, will turn away from Him. And I apprehend this country is fast ripening for the deplorable enjoyment of holding the prevailing religion in utter contempt. Men cannot long continue attached to that which is at the bottom despicable. Not a few of those who for their own ends adhere to it allow that it is despicable; and men have been known to come forth from places where it is sounded forth, amazed that men are not ashamed to utter things that violated even common sense. If it be that Scripture declares, "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all," then we find included in

this description the severity of God, pure as the light. His severity is as pure as His love; His vengeance is as lovely as His mercy; His wrath as well becomes Him as His love. Are you able to receive this saying? Have you in your souls anything that will harmonize with it? "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." What is it to be partakers of the Divine nature, but to have that in the soul which yields a pleasing harmony to that which is in God, and is such that it will never be satisfied till it is at home in His bosom, swimming in the vast, boundless, bottomless ocean of His being, excellence, grace, and love. His people are spoken of as being filled with all the fulness of God. What is that but to have in the soul those graces that are the fruit of God's death? God, in the person of the Son made flesh, dies that His people might live a Divine life. It is to have fellowship with Him in the opening of these graces, and to receive Him in the communication He is pleased to make, so that the soul is exceedingly solaced and satisfied, and gives out, in the sphere in which it moves, something Divine. Ah! my friends, where in Scotland will you find such a religion as this? Yet if we have not this religion we are baptized heathens, infidel believers, Christless Christians.

(2.) This severity is faithful. Why does He manifest severity? Because He is true to Himself, and that is the main thing. We have had plenty of treachery and unfaithfulness, and perhaps we are not done with it. Still the end of it will come. But there is no unfaithfulness with God. You have the largest security He will be faithful to you and faithful to all, because He is faithful to Himself. He that is faithful to the highest will be faithful to the lowest. He that is faithful in respect of the greatest will be faithful in respect to the least. He that is faithful as respects the Divine character, counsels, and ways, cannot possibly fail of being faithful with respect of those that put their trust in Him. Now, faithfulness to Himself requires Him to be severe. You will say, Why? If a fire is faithful to itself, it must destroy all that would put it out. The nature of sin is such that it would extinguish the light of lights, the Glory of Glories, God Himself. He must destroy sin because He is God. Poor sinners! if you are cast into the fire at last to be consumed your bodies and souls, so to speak will endure the skirt of the furnace, its heat will burn against the sin within you, and you will feel that. Hence God will feed His holiness by His severity feeding itself on you, and whilst God feeds His holiness by that fire, that fire will prey upon your sin, and it will be the hell of your hell to find you are in the hands of the Holy One of Israel, — an angry God. Oh! my friends, hate sin, avoid it,

pass by it, turn from it and flee away. This place should be prepared and opened from time to time, this pulpit and these pews should be waging war against sin; and the only way in which we can wage war against sin effectively and savingly is to be on the Lord's side against it, and not on its side against Him. "The Lord is with you so long as ye be with Him."

(3.) His severity is just. You will allow from the hints thrown out that it is very dreadful. You that get glimpses of its dreadfulness are ready to say, "My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgements." It is but a little you have seen, but a little you can bear. We may say that even in hell it is comparatively little of the dreadfulness of His severity that is seen or felt. There was more manifested and endured in Gethsemane and on Calvary, than will be endured through all eternity in hell. Oh! think of the infinite dignity of the Person! Think of the fire of God's wrath laying hold of God manifest in the flesh! Oh! what a height, depth, length, breadth! Measure the length of hell; the length of the glorious person of Christ surpasses it. Measure the breadth of hell; the breadth of the person of Christ surpasses it. Measure the height of hell; the height of the person of Christ surpasses it. Measure the depth of hell; the depth of all that is sweet and lovely in the person of Christ surpasses it. If these things were done in the green tree what will be done in the dry? No one knows the dreadfulness of this severity but Himself; His own infinite mind can only comprehend it. "Who knows the power of His wrath?" Ah! poor creatures, that are now exposed to it, who is this that is your enemy? What a bow is that that is in His hand! See these glittering arrows ready to fly from His quivers! What, if one pierce thine heart! It will bring you low. But he will bring you lower than that — lower, and lower yet, He will bring you, through all eternity. Oh! flee, flee from the wrath to come, and lay hold on eternal life! "This is the promise God promises, eternal life; and that life is in His Son."

But, however dreadful His severity, mind you it is just. It will never exact anything but what is due. "Wherefore should a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?" And those who suffer in the dreary regions of woe to which men are condemned at last, will never be able to say they suffer more than they deserve. No; He is not done with you yet. No, nor when the thousands of millions of years have rolled away will He be done with you. "Know, then, and consider that it is an evil thing and a bitter to sin against God."

II. We go on to consider the two classes affected in this twofold dispensation.

1. "On them which fell, severity." I suppose, I need not tell you, that the

Apostle is here speaking of the Jews in contrast with the believing Gentiles. These two had changed places; the one had fallen, the other had risen. Looking at their condition, the Apostle is led to speak to the Jews, "On them which fell." Here look:—

(1.) At their position. We cannot understand their fall, unless we understand something of the state in which they were, and from which they fell. As to the state in which they were we remark —

1st. That they were professedly called to be the people of God. There was thus an external separation between them and others. In some cases there was more than an outward call and external separation; it took effect on the souls of some in the way of real separation of them from others. But as a people, they were called to be the people of God, and as such had an apparent separation from others.

2nd. They were professedly devoted to and engaged in the worship of God. Why were they called to be a people in Him but that they might worship Him? They were called out from amongst others, and formally separated from them. For this very end they were to receive His word; to them were committed the oracles of God; but they were to observe His ordinances of worship, and to render to Him in that worship the glory due to His name. Here we are called to remark that some amongst that people were really what in truth they professed and appeared to be; they had circumcision of the heart as well as circumcision of the body; their souls were influenced by the fear of Jehovah, and their hearts were warmed by His love; they took up the nature of the worship it became them as sinners to offer, and which it pleased Him as the God of salvation to appoint; and they waited upon Him that they might render that worship to Him and seek to be accepted by Him therein. Hence they were called "a kingdom of priests," who were holy to the Lord that He might be sanctified in all them that draw nigh to Him, and before all people He might be glorified.

3rd. They professed to witness for Him in the midst of the earth. Why were they called out from others, and sent apart for His worship as a people professedly — some of them really and substantially? "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord." It was that they might testify to all around that He is, and that there is none else, and that, testifying for Him, they should withstand and protest against all that were opposed to Him. Their witness-bearing, I apprehend, consisted of two main branches, the one negative and the other positive. They behoved to put a negative on all in opposition to Him, contrary to His holy word, inconsistent with His pure worship, dishonouring to His holy name; and they behoved to hold forth, publish abroad, and stand by what is pleasing in His sight, in accordance with His

word, calculated to maintain and promote His pure worship, and fitted to bring glory to His great name.

4th. They professed to be in possession of great honour and happiness. It is the highest honour a people can have to be separated from others, and to be given to the service and employment unto which they were called, and to which they professed to devote themselves. And whilst no greater honour can be bestowed upon men, there is no other road to true happiness. He Himself is blessed for ever, and so He is the Fountain, the sole fountain of all real blessedness to His creatures. We are in our apostacy strangers to Him, to real happiness and honour; and we will never obtain these till our souls be brought back to Him. Now the soul is brought back to Him as the Jews were apparently and professedly. He calls; the soul answers. If He calls outwardly, the soul answers inwardly. He appoints the worship, they take the worship and observe it according to His word. He gives the testimony; they take up the testimony. He gives light to guide in holding forth the testimony; they in that light hold forth the testimony. He puts peculiar honour on those who thus stand for Him: "Them that honour me I will honour." And He prepares for them suitable and solemn happiness. "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they will be still praising thee. Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them."

These people, however, standing, in this position did not continue; they fell. How were they affected by the Divine dispensation? "Severity" was that which was measured out to them.

(2.) Consider their sin. It is true that sin is not named in our text, but it is implied. Where? Both in their fall, and the severity exercised towards them that did fall. How does that appear? There is nothing by which people can fall but by sin. The angels who kept not their first estate fell, and they fell by not keeping their first estate, which was one of obedience: they disobeyed. Our first parents, and we in them, did not keep our first estate, we fell, because our first estate was one of obedience: we disobeyed, apostatized, and therefore fell. When, therefore, we read of a people falling, we are led irresistibly to conclude that that people must have sinned. A similar line of argument must be employed as to the mode in which they are dealt with; where there is no severity there there is no sin. What, then, was the sin these people committed? The sin of unbelief, the rejection of Jesus Christ. He was promised by a long line of prophets. At length He appeared in the fulness of time, accomplished the work given Him to do, and ascended to the right hand of the Majesty on high. And He is preached to all nations for the obedience of faith — everywhere.

according to the commission the Apostles received, beginning at Jerusalem. But His people would not listen to the word preached; they would not have Him to reign over them; they rejected the Lord's anointed, the counsel of God against themselves, and counted themselves unworthy of eternal life; so that the Apostles were constrained to turn from them and preach to the Gentiles.

(3.) Their punishment. It is there you see the severity. Their punishment consists in their being cut off. "For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from Him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." The Jews acted as if they had no call, no worship of God, no testimony to bear, no honour, no happiness; and consequently all these were taken away from them. They fell through unbelief, fell into a state of being unchurched. There is severity — pure faithful, just.

2. "Toward thee, goodness." These are the Gentiles. The great bulk of the saints at Rome were Gentiles. The aspect of the Divine dispensation towards these people is that of goodness. In order to pave the way for understanding the goodness that is shown to them, let us notice —

(1) The state out of which they are raised. Their state was in all respects the opposite of that of the Jews. They had no call: the worship of God was not established amongst them: they were not His witnesses: they had none of the honour and happiness connected with these things: they were sinners of the Gentiles, far from God, in a state of guilt, lying under the curse, ready to perish: they were counted by the Jews as dogs, and supposed by them in their pride to be at once unworthy and unfit to share with them in the privileges of the house of God. See what a marvellous turn affairs took! See how mysteriously the cloud of Divine dispensations moved! The Jews were pulled down, the Gentiles were lifted up: the Jews were cast out the Gentiles were taken in: the Jews were degraded, the Gentiles were honoured: the Jews were laid under the curse, the Gentiles were called to inherit the blessing. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"

(2.) Consider how it was that these Gentiles were lifted from this state. It was by grace. It is by grace through faith. We are not from thence to conclude that grace presupposes the existence of faith in the soul. Perhaps we might have drawn a conclusion such as this, if the Apostle had not guarded this doctrine against this idea, that if we are to have grace we must have faith. He says, "And that not of ourselves; it is the gift of God." There is another passage which it is hardly possible to interpret except on

the supposition that it is grace which implants faith, whilst grace is given to faith. It is: "Out of His fulness have we all received, and grace for grace." Here is the grace of salvation. To what is it given? Holy scripture concurs in testifying it is given to the grace of faith. "He that believeth shall be saved." "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Nothing is plainer than that it is the doctrine of scripture that there is no salvation but by faith. But mark: the grace of salvation is given to the grace of faith. And when the work is completed, the copestone will be laid in its place with shoutings of "Grace, grace unto it," which would not be if the foundation, in whole or in part was either independent of grace, or without grace. "By grace are ye saved," through gracious faith. The Jews fell by their unbelief. This unbelief was their sin, and the severity of God was displayed in the punishment of these unbelievers in a manner answerable to their sin. The Gentiles rose when the Jews fell — by grace, through faith. Grace takes all the glory of the salvation that it thus wrought.

(3.) See the blessedness that comes upon the Gentiles. This is expressed in "goodness." "Toward thee, goodness." Goodness is the fountain, blessedness is the stream; goodness is the giver, blessedness is the gift; goodness bestows, they are blessed who receive what goodness bestows. "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; thou shalt make them drink of the rivers of thy pleasure." As the severity came in upon the Jews for their unbelief, the goodness that is manifested to the Gentiles comes in upon their faith. Whence their faith? From grace. This goodness lays hold of the Gentiles in its sovereign good pleasure, raises them from the state in which they were by nature; goodness places the Gentiles upon the elevation from which the Jews fell; goodness brings the Gentiles to the faith of Jesus Christ in whom salvation is; and goodness claims the whole, so that when He brings His people to Himself He rejoices over them to do them good.

III. We are to consider the caution given to those who are affected favourably with the Divine dispensation: "If thou continue in His goodness otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." We have here by implication three things.

1. An exhortation "Continue in His goodness." The Apostle does in effect exhort them to continue in that goodness by which they have been raised to the position in which they stood. Some may say, if the goodness be manifested upon the principle and in the way which you have laid down, where is the need for such an exhortation? But God's exhortation and man's duty are perfectly consistent with one another. They may run

into each other, and be so blended as to elude the search of the keenest observer, still let us hold fast the doctrine of scripture, of Divine dispensation, sovereign, righteous, and saving, and of the obligatory nature of the exhortations given to those towards whom the dispensations are carried forward. What will you say in place of what is here? Will you tell them to turn away from His goodness, to forget it, to neglect it, to abuse it. Surely you must revolt from one and all of these suggestions and come to the point at which you find the Apostle: "Continue in His goodness."

2. A promise. It is put conditionally: "If thou continue in His goodness." Why conditionally? Is it because it depends upon them whether they shall continue in His goodness or fall from it? I apprehend, if it depends upon them that they continue, surely you may as well argue that it depends upon them that they are in His goodness. If their own wisdom has power enough to continue them in His goodness, it will have power enough to bring them into it. But if their wisdom is insufficient to bring them into it, it is insufficient to keep them in it. No doubt you will say the new principle they receive will enable them to continue in His goodness. But we again say, the same power that creates them is required to uphold them. But for the power of God in Christ Jesus they would not remain there for an instant. "Kept by the mighty power of God through faith unto salvation." We may say in a sense the promise is continual. They will continue in His goodness, if they will continue in His goodness. Grace will keep them in the goodness, and therefore they will be able to continue in that goodness. God will continue to give out: God will continue to stay them, and they will be strengthened. God will continue to uphold them, and they will be upheld.

(3.) There is threatening: "Otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." That is, if thou dost not continue in His goodness, thou also shalt be cut off. Some will say, where is there any occasion for a threatening, if a promise was given to the effect that they would continue in His goodness? We reply as we did before. There is a perfect consistency between God's dealings and man's duties, between God's promise and man's observance of what He requires, between God's threatenings and the condition in which men hope to be. How can it be known by any man that He is the object of Divine goodness: how shall it be known that by that goodness He has been lifted up from the state in which the Gentiles were, and been made a partaker of the salvation that is in Christ? how shall that be known by any man? Only by His receiving the goodness of God manifested in the truth in His word, and continuing to receive that truth manifested in His word,

feeling its influence upon his soul, and manifesting that influence by his temper and walk? Take this away, and how is it possible a man can make it out that he has anything to do with the goodness of God? Now assume that an individual does not know certainly his condition: assume that he may have in himself and around him many favourable symptoms of being a man in the way of salvation, and yet not be in the way of salvation, it is well fitted to make him fear, lead him to be humble, and make him more cautious to hear such language: "Otherwise thou also shalt be cut off," if thou do not continue in His goodness. Unbelief prevails, and severity comes upon him. "Be not high-minded but fear."

Application

1. Learn the character of the Gospel dispensation: "Goodness and severity" — mercy and judgment. Some may demur to this, and be pleased to prefer the doctrine that the gospel is all mercy, all grace, all comfort. We appeal to our text; it is found in the very heart of an evangelical epistle: it came through the Spirit of inspiration, from a man that preached the gospel as it had never been preached before and perhaps has never been preached since, no one surely will charge the Apostle with not preaching the Gospel. Yet in this epistle, where gospel truth is set forth with such clearness, rarity, and fulness, you find mention made of the goodness and severity of God. Severity came upon the Jews under the gospel dispensation: goodness came upon the Gentiles under the Gospel dispensation. What, then, is the character of the Gospel dispensation? Under it there is goodness and severity. Under it the soul may sing of mercy and of judgment. You whose hearts are not tuned to the stern, severe note of judgment, and to the tender, sweet strain of mercy, are none of Christ's. Know the severity of God, and tremble at it: know the goodness of God, and rejoice in it. Know the severity of God, and rejoice with trembling, know the goodness of God, and fear with joy. Know the severity and goodness of God, and be sorrowful yet always rejoicing. Join trembling with your mirth.

2. Learn how men are affected by this gospel dispensation. In the way of salvation, or in the way of destruction. Wheresoever this gospel comes, "some believe, and some believe not." "He that believes, and is baptized shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned." "We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savour of death unto death, and to the other the savour of life unto life." And who is sufficient for these things? My friends, no one now within these walls can fail to be affected in one way or

other by the gospel that is preached to you. How are we to judge of you? By enquiring what you have seen in the state of your souls of the goodness or the severity of God. What is the character of your experience? Will the goodness or severity of God be seen in it, what do you behold in your condition? Do you see the goodness or the severity of God. My friends, did you rise only to fall, or did you fall and then rise again. How many in our day have risen to a height but are now fallen perhaps never to rise again: here again, there may be some buried out of sight who shall yet shine as precious gems, and whose path shall be that of the just which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

Christ is all

by Dean Henry Law

1. THE BURNT-OFFERING

"It is a burnt-sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord." Lev. i. 17.

Reader, you are invited here to take your stand within the tabernacle's court. A crowded and a busy scene appears. Many worshippers bring many offerings. All is activity. But all the active zeal has one great object — to honour God in God's appointed way.

Each offering in this court is a full page of Gospel-truth. Christ in His grace and work is the golden key to open every part. Leviticus is Calvary foreshown. Calvary is Leviticus unfolded. The one casts forward the morning ray. The other pours down the mid-day blaze. But the early and the brighter beams stream from one Sun — Christ Jesus. The brazen altar is the herald of the cross. The cross re-echoes to the brazen altar's voice.

In a long train of ceremonial teaching the Burnt-offering takes the lead. Let this, then, first be noticed.

An offerer comes. Mark what he brings. If his offering be from the herd, it must be an unblemished male. Lev. i. 3. It must be the choicest produce from his pastures — the primest flower from his fields. There must be strength in fullest vigour, and beauty without one alloy. Such are the properties required.

The purport is distinct. Jesus is here. The victim chosen before worlds were framed is thus portrayed. Strength and perfection are main colours

in His portrait. He is strong, as God can be. The buckler of omnipotence is on His arm. The girdle of His loins is might of might. Hence He is able to achieve the grandest of all victories — even to tread down Satan and his empire. Hence He is able to bear away the weightiest of all burdens — even the vast mass of all His people's sin.

Perfection finds embodiment in Him. His every aspect is beauty, without one flaw. All evil tried Him, but it left no stain. Sin could not touch Him, though He sojourned in its home. Earth saw in Him one sinless inmate. From the manger to the cross. He shone one ray of godlike purity.

O my soul, you need strong help. Repose on Jesus: His strength suffices, and it cannot fail. You need a perfect ransom and a perfect robe. Repose on Jesus; He gave to God a spotless life, a spotless soul, to be your price. He gives to you a spotless righteousness to be your raiment. Thus the unblemished male pictures the beautiful and the strong Redeemer.

We next approach the chambers of the offerer's heart. We read, "He shall offer it of his own voluntary will." Lev. i. 3. There is no compulsion. There is no reluctance. His step is willingness.

This is a picture of faith's happy actings. Its chariot-wheels move swiftly. It feels sin's miserable need. It knows the value of redeeming blood. So it flies, with rapid wing, to plead it at the mercy-seat. Formalists may frequent God's courts. Habit's cold chains may drag them. Self-righteousness may urge them to the heartless task. But faith is a willing grace.

The eager offerer puts his hand upon the victim's head. Lev. i. 4. Do any ask the meaning of this rite? It graphically shows a transfer. Some load oppresses, which is thus cast off. Some burden passes to another's person.

Here is again the happy work of faith. It brings all guilt, and heaps it on the Saviour's head. One sin retained is misery now and hell at last. All must be pardoned by being brought to Christ. And He is waiting to receive. His office is to be this burden-bearer. His love constrains, and He cannot draw back.

Do any read this, who never have thus dealt with Christ? Sirs, where are your sins? They adhere tighter than your very skin. They have a millstone weight. They press to misery's unfathomable depths. But flee to Jesus. He can remove them all, and He alone.

Believer, where are your sins? On Jesus they are placed, and you are free. I ask again, Where are your sins? You answer, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." Ps. ciii. 12. You may rejoice and sing aloud, Christ is accepted for me: I shall not be

condemned. Thus with one hand faith casts away all misery, and with the other grasps all joy.

The victim, to which sins thus typically pass, must die. "He shall kill the bullock before the Lord." Lev. i. 5. Can Jesus, who in reality receives our guilt, not lay down life? It cannot be. The holy Word stands sure: "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Gen. ii. 17. The sinner's surety, then, cannot be spared. He gives His life to pay the debt — to satisfy the wrath — to bear the curse — to expiate the guilt.

O my soul, "Christ died" is all your hope — your plea — your remedy — your life. "Christ died" opens your path to God. "Christ died" turns every frown into approving smiles. When the law thunders, and conscience quakes, and Satan accuses, interpose "Christ died," and fear no more. When the grave opens, whisper, "Christ died," and sleep in peace. When the white throne is set, shout "Christ died," and take the crown of righteousness.

The victim's blood is sprinkled "round about upon the altar." Lev. i. 5. The blood is evidence that life is paid. This token then is profusely scattered. The priestly hands bedewed the altar with it. Thus Jesus enters with His own blood into the holy place. Heb. ix. 12. He strews it round, and claims the purchased flock, the covenanted blessings, the full reward, the fruit of His completed work.

O my soul, you are bought and cleansed, and comforted by blood. Your every blessing is a blood-bought gift. Let every prayer, and praise, and work, and service, be a blood-sprinkled offering.

The victim is next flayed. Lev. i. 6. The skin is torn away. The sacrificing priest received this, as his portion. It gave supplies of raiment. Is there no Gospel here? — say ye, who joy in Jesus as "the Lord your righteousness." Yes, here is a picture of that heaven-pure robe, in which Christ decks each child of faith. His blood, indeed, removes all curse. But it is obedience, which merits all glory. Because He died, we live. Because He lived, we reign.

The piercing knife divides the limbs. Members are torn from members, and all the parts, without, within, to which defilement usually adheres, are diligently washed. Lev. i. 9. The type of Jesus must be clean. No shadow of impurity may darken it. Again and again the truth resounds, that God's eye can only rest on perfect purity. How then, shall the sinner stand, who ventures near apart from Christ? Reader, betimes consider this: Oh! never rest until you know, that you are cleansed without by cleansing blood, and cleansed within by sanctifying grace.

The parts thus severed, and thus washed, are placed upon the altar.

Consuming fire is brought. It preys on every limb. The raging flame devours, until this fuel is reduced to ashes. Lev. i. 9.

Let us now seek the truth, which echoes from this blazing pile. The garden and the cross unfold it. There Jesus presents Himself, laden with all the sins of all His chosen race. O my soul, have you an interest in Him? If it be so, He there appears, bearing the guilt of all your guilty life. The sinless is accounted sinful, that the sinful may be spared as sinless.

What then occurs? Sin merits wrath. This wrath must fall. Justice must claim its due. Truth must be true. Holiness must show how evil is abhorred. The majesty and honour of God's empire cannot descend from their high throne. Sinner, be sure that sin cannot be spared. You must take woe, except this Surety take it for you.

What then occurs? See Jesus crushed to the earth beneath the load of anguish. Each bleeding pore proclaims, that more cannot be borne.

But whence is the God-man's mighty agony? The fire of heaven's wrath has fallen on Him. Vengeance has seized its prey. He undergoes the every pang, which would have tortured His redeemed if they had tossed in hottest flames for ever. The fire burns — the anger rages — until each sin has infinitely suffered what it infinitely earned. No fuel then remains. All is consumed. The fire dies. The wrath expires. Hark! Jesus utters the wondrous word, "It is finished!"

O my soul, in calm and holy reverence, survey this awful scene. It is your ransom. It is your escape. It is your rescue from eternal ruin. It is another draining hell's cup for you. This one Burnt-offering receives all vengeance. The fire, that died in Christ, cannot revive to injure you.

The Spirit seals the record with this approving seal — "It is a Burnt-offering, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord." Lev. i. 9. Here is witness worth ten thousand worlds. Here is the sweetest cordial, which the lips of faith can drink. The dying Jesus is heaven's "sweet savour." When the God-man victim burns upon the altar of the cross, each attribute is satisfied; nay more, exults with ever-exulting joy; nay more, is magnified to the highest heights; nay more, is glorified till glory overflows.

Reader, the type blazes to win you to the saving cross. Whatever be your state or grade, be wise, and seek your richest pleasures here. The rite distinctly shows, that rich and poor alike need pardon, and alike must come. Sin has soiled all. All, then, must wash in expiating blood. The wealthy brought their victim from the herd. He, who had less of worldly wealth, offered his lamb or kid. The poorest inmate of the poorest hut gave the young pigeon or the turtle-dove. All placed upon the altar a burnt-

sacrifice. A Saviour is the one need of rich and poor. The richest is most poor, till Christ be found. The poorest is most rich, when once this pearl be clasped.

Such is the Gospel of the Burnt-offering. Reader, leave it not without three solemn thoughts deep written in your heart.

1. Fire there burns. It burns to tell us what is sin's due. It frightfully portrays what all must bear, on whom that plague abides. Look at the consuming blaze and meditate on the tossings on a fiery lake — the flames, which cannot die — the gnawings of the ever-gnawing worm — the raging of relentless wrath — the agony, which tortures mind, and soul, and body. See in this sight God's utmost power put forth to inflict utmost pains through endless ages. See sin's sure doom. May the sight drive you rapidly to Christ!

2. Mark here God's wondrous grace. To save lost souls He gives the Son of His love to the fury of His wrath. He heaps all woe on Him, that no woe may remain for the redeemed. His frown is pitiless towards Him, that He may smile unceasingly on them. How dear must they be to His heart! He, who is the preciousness of heaven, descends to bear the worst of their vile doom. The Burnt-offering sweetly cries, Abundant grace exceeds abundant sin.

3. What shall the ransomed render to salvation's Lord? The Burnt-offering demands from them self-offering. Let all heaven hear — let all earth take knowledge, that they give themselves, their souls, their bodies, their every faculty and gift, all influence, all means, their morning, midday, evening hours, to be a free-will sacrifice to free grace. Let the high altar of self-consecrating gratitude be raised. Let the whole life be one clear blaze of flaming love and ever-brightening service.

Letter

by the late Mr A. Docter, Holland

Delft, November 1950

My Dear Friend,

Nature and flesh cannot understand how trials and afflictions, pain and sorrows can be converted into a bed with roses. Oh, how sweet for a soul to be submissive to the will of God, and it cannot be expressed what fragrance it contains if the Lord condescends to speak to the soul, and "the Eternal God is its refuge and underneath are the Everlasting arms."

Oh, my dear friend, to have a tongue to praise Him who rideth upon the heaven, who fulfills His word and keeps His promise.

A dear old woman who died last year (very poor as far as earthly things were concerned) was lying on her bed in a dark room, when I called on her one Saturday evening. I entered her room and stumbled to a corner where she lay. The first thing she said to me was "Oh Docter, I am allowed to lie down here adorned with the attributes of God."

My father's deathbed was a pulpit, my mother's life was and now it comes to me. It is often within me "I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul" and my prayer is "Deliver me from the snare of the fowler." I firmly believe that it will be for His people: Surely, surely He shall deliver them from the snare of the fowler. I used to think there was much poison in the leaves and branches of my tree, but I now know that the poison is in the roots. Oh to be taught by Him the great Prophet through the discovering grace of His Spirit. To feel a drop of His love to soften our hard hearts it would be sweeter than honey.

My wife wishes to be remembered to you.

Kindest regards,

A. Docter.

The Establishment Principle

by Rev. M. MacSween, M.A.

(Continued from page 119)

The statement in Chapter 23 of the Westminster Confession, however, is even more guarded than Calvin's, for it begins by shutting out the possibility of Erastianism:— "The Civil Magistrate may not assume to himself the administration of the Word and Sacraments, or the power of the keys of the Kingdom of heaven." Section 3. Civil magistracy is not ecclesiastical authority, nor is the Civil Magistrate, as such, an office-bearer in the Church of Christ. But in the same section the Confession goes on to say with respect to this same Civil Magistrate:— "Yet he hath authority, and it is his duty to take order that unity and peace be preserved in the Church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed, and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered and observed." This implies that the Civil

Magistrate has authority, and that it is his duty to know, recognise and own the truth of God. Again we quote:— "That all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline be prevented or reformed." This implies that he has authority, and that it is his duty to know and recognise the true principles and practice of true and acceptable worship and true and scriptural discipline in the Church of Christ. But "he hath authority, and it is his duty to take order that all the ordinances of God be . . . administered." If this is not the Establishment Principle, then we ask "What is it?" The Civil Magistrate is not himself to administer the ordinances of God. That is Erastianism. But the Civil Magistrate is to take order that the ordinances of God be administered! By whom? By that Church which the Civil Magistrate is bound to know, recognise and own, and, if need be, to support from his resources, that so the Church may be in circumstances to administer these ordinances which it is her function to administer. This is the Establishment Principle.

If we admit this, then we are in agreement with the doctrine of Scripture and of the Confession of Faith. If we deny it then for all practical purposes we will have blotted out of the Confession the only form in which the Westminster Divines have confessed the doctrine of Christ's Headship over the Nations which is the Principle sanctioned by the Word of God. That civil government is an ordinance of God; that the Nations and their rulers are accountable directly to God, and are not put into subjection to the Church or to its office-bearers; and that the members and office-bearers of the Church are, in common with other men, subject in all civil things to the powers that be, — are doctrines which can easily be shown to be sanctioned by the Word of God. Also, that the Visible Church of Christ is independent and distinct from the Kingdoms of this world, having a constitution, laws, office-bearers, and functions of its own: and that civil rulers as such have no right to exercise any jurisdiction or authoritative control in the regulation of its affairs, can be established with equal clearness from the Holy Scriptures.

The truth of the Presbyterian doctrine is established upon the authority of God's Word — that is, that the relation of Church and State even when they are united should be regulated throughout by the principle of their distinctness from, and independence of, each other.

When the children of the Fathers of the Scottish Secession (1733), contrary to the views and principles held by their Fathers, began to oppose the Establishment Principle by imbibing the poisonous Voluntary doctrine of the French Revolution (1789-95), they certainly saw that the Establishment Principle was in the Confession of Faith, as we have indicated. They,

however, opposed this principle, maintaining, — as they still maintain — that it means “persecution”: that it is not within the Magistrate’s province: that it is not “consistent with the spirit and enactments of Christianity”: that because it is the duty of the Church to administer these ordinances, therefore it is not the magistrate’s duty to take order that they be administered.

When Calvin says, “Hence, in Scripture, holy Kings are especially praised for restoring the worship of God when corrupted or overthrown, or for taking care that religion flourished under them in purity and safety,” Christian Voluntaries reply that this is Old Testament example, and is not binding. Yet, it is Old Testament example “written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the world are come.” When such Voluntaries tell us to avoid the example they do not show us how to avoid the admonition!

The departure from the doctrines of the Word of God in the Scottish Free Church began about the year 1863 in moves for union with the rabidly Voluntary United Presbyterian Church. The Disestablishment of the Church was a great step in that downward course. Finally, in 1891 a Declaratory Act anent the (Westminster) Confession of Faith was hatched to expedite union with the United Presbyterian Voluntaries. In spite of strong protests, this nefarious Act was passed by the Free Church General Assembly in 1892. In a Protest in the Records of Kilmallie Free Church Kirk Session, with the Rev. D. MacFarlane as Moderator, against the Declaratory Act, it is pointed out among other matters, that in the Declaratory Act the general doctrine of the Confession of Faith respecting the exercise of civil authority about religion is invalidated, or set aside, contrary to the design and intention of the Free Church in the Act of 1846 anent the Questions and Formula. Also, in the Declaratory Act, instead of the Westminster Confession of Faith as the recognised standard of orthodoxy in the Church, in all its heads and articles, there is substituted what is called “the substance of the reformed faith as therein set forth” — the Church being the sole judge of the particular points that are to be included under this category of doctrines — a provision which overthrows the fixed doctrinal constitution of the Church and lays its creed at the feet of an irresponsible majority to determine the same at will.

Declaring that, “the said Act shall not be binding on us or on those who may now or hereafter adhere to us” this Protest was dated 26th January, 1893, and in the following May, the Rev. D. MacFarlane separated from the sadly backslidden and union-infatuated Free Church, by Protest, and later to set up the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, the true representative of the Scottish Reformed Church.

In order to show how we have carried with us the Establishment Principle — one of the pillar-doctrines stoutly maintained by the Reformers — I may quote this passage from our Deed of Separation, August 14, 1893, as one of the main reasons of our Separation:—

“And further, the consideration that the Establishment Principle — that is, the national recognition and encouragement of religion and the Church of Christ by the State as such — is part of the constitution of the Free Church of Scotland as settled in 1843, and since repeatedly affirmed in Acts and Proceedings of her General Assemblies, and that the maintenance of the said Principle is binding and obligatory on all ministers and office-bearers of the said Church; and now seeing — 1st — That the present subsisting Church now calling herself the Free Church of Scotland, through majorities of her Commissioners in General Assembly met, has, in violation of one of the fundamental principles embodied in the Constitution of the Free Church of Scotland, of late years repeatedly passed resolutions having for their object the separation of Church and State, and the abandonment of the distinctive testimony of the Free Church of Scotland in favour of a national recognition of religion, and that without any declaration in favour of any scheme for the Reconstruction of a National Church on the basis claimed by the Church of Scotland in 1842 . . . therefore we have separated from the present subsisting Church calling herself the Free Church of Scotland.”

As far as that went, the House of Lord's decision in the Free Church property case in 1904 showed that the Establishment Principle was regarded as an Article of Faith, doctrine and belief in the Reformed Church of Scotland, and had been carried into the Free Church from the undivided Church of Scotland at the Disruption as a fundamental element in her Constitution.

The Church of Scotland, though Established, had more independence, more spirituality, and far more authority for the exercise of discipline during the time of the Second Reformation (1638-1649) than any Scottish Church ever had. At no period from the days of the Apostles to the present time was the Establishment Principle better understood or more consistently and faithfully acted upon than it was by our Scottish General Assemblies and Parliaments during the Second Reformation Period. In all spiritual matters the Church took the lead, giving her decisions from the Word of God, and the State then followed, giving its civil sanction to what the Church had enacted. It were an easy matter to illustrate this by quoting the principal Acts, with dates, of both General Assemblies and Parliaments during this period, with respect to spiritual matters. During

this period the magistrate's power was exercised simply *circa sacra*, that is, about things sacred, without any intrusion into those spiritual functions which belong exclusively to the Church. We find many references to this period in Dr Begg's able addresses in defence of the Establishment Principle.

When, after the accession of William and Mary, the Revolution Settlement (1690) was drawn up establishing Presbyterianism in Scotland and guaranteeing the spiritual independence of the Church and the rights of the people, the Church's battle appeared to be fought and won after the Covenanted struggle of 28 years. The position was safeguarded by legislation when the Union of the Parliaments took place in 1707; but the re-imposition of Patronage by the iniquitous Patronage Act of 1712 which was passed by the Government, marked the start of another period of conflict between Church and State which resulted in the Erskine Secession of 1733, the Relief Secession in 1752 and the Disruption of 1843. The Church was increasingly made the vassal of the State. A completely Erastian view was taken of her powers of discipline. Sentences imposed by the Church in the exercise of her guaranteed rights were nullified by the Court of Session. Unacceptable presentees were forced upon unwilling and protesting congregations. Ministers acting upon the directions of Church Courts were threatened with dire penalties unless they took their directions instead from the Civil Court. When eventually the Church's Claim, Declaration and Protest anent the encroachments of the Court of Session was rejected by Parliament in 1842, the only action left to the Church if her charter of liberty was to be preserved was a separation from the Establishment, strangely enough on the very grounds of the Establishment Principle, which gave clear expression to the doctrine of the two realms of Church and State, each with its own Government and area of jurisdiction under the one King and Head, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The plan of Church and State relations which, in one form or another, was introduced into every country in which Protestantism and Calvinism in particular won popular recognition, is nowadays generally regarded as having little, if any, relevance to this modern age with its changed, and constantly changing pattern. Even in Churches professedly Calvinistic in theology, in many cases the Calvinistic and Scriptural State view has been abandoned, and a form of Voluntarism substituted for it. In the United States of America it is only recently (1965), after the Supreme Court has declared as illegal the teaching of religion and even the repetition of the Lord's Prayer in the State Schools that American Protestantism is awakening

to the dangers of the new situation. Because of the extreme Voluntaryism of the Constitution of the U.S.A., every element of Christian civilisation — such as Bible teaching in Schools, laws for Sabbath observance, laws against polygamy, etc.,—has been assailed and is being assailed on the ground of their inconsistency with the Constitution of the United States. In our own country also, agitators representative of various secularist groups are beginning to demand of the State the abolition of religious instruction in the schools — “this Christian monopoly” as it is described by one of those agitators. Jesuitry and Infidelity have long been at work in order to eliminate real Christianity and Christian morality from the national institutions of Britain and America. But the Reformed Church and State policy is as relevant to the present age as it was to the period in which it was defined, not because of its Calvinistic formulation, but because it is of divine authority. It is God’s plan for human society in the double Kingdoms of Church and State. The Church still owes the State her duty of instructing it in righteousness. The State likewise owes a duty to the Church — that of protecting and sustaining it.

Since the Reformation Settlement, Rome has not ceased to conspire to regain her lost power in Protestant Britain. Owing very largely to Protestant lethargy and indifference, and under the guise of false charity and tolerance, many of the barriers against Roman aggression which our forefathers had found so necessary have been removed. The National Church (Church of England) established to be a bulwark of Protestantism in England, in consequence of the alarmingly overwhelming introduction of Romish practices of the most flagrant character, has now been so rent assunder that it may be regarded very largely as a proselytising agency for the Papacy, although the Protestant Succession to our Throne is still protected by the Establishment Principle.

The Church of Scotland, which was formed in 1929 from the union of the United Free Church, with all its Voluntaryism, with the old State Church — itself by that time largely Disestablished — continues to display the unhealthy and dangerous effects of loosening the relation of the Church to the fixed Scriptural Standard of the Confession of Faith. Thus we find Church of Scotland ministers and Professors in friendly conclave with the emissaries of the Papacy and the majority of her ministers and people unaware of their danger.

This is no time for any Church of Christ to testify for the truth and against error any less clearly than before. It is time to testify afresh that Christ is King of Nations and also the Prince of Peace. O how the Nations of today need Christ and His Spirit! How great is their need of His blood

and power. How great is our own need of Him of whom the Church testifies: "My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand," Song of Solomon 5:8. Let us as a Church in possession of precious privileges testify that the Lord reigneth until "all Nations shall call Him blessed." Psalm 72:17.

The Johannine Comma

"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." 1 John 5:7.

This verse, often referred to as the *Johannine Comma* is regarded by the critics as a forged entry. "As to its being wanting" wrote the learned Dr Gill in his Commentary, "in some Greek manuscripts as the Alexandrine and others, it need only be said that it is to be found in many others; it is in an old British copy, and in the Complutensian edition, the compilers of which made use of various copies; and out of sixteen ancient copies of Robert Stephens, nine of them had it: and as to its not being cited by some of the ancient Fathers, this can be no sufficient proof of the spuriousness of it, since it might be in the original copy, though not in the copies used by them, through the carelessness or unfaithfulness of transcribers; or it might be in their copies, and yet not cited by them, they having Scripture enough without it to defend the doctrine of the Trinity, and the divinity of Christ: and yet after all, certain it is that it is cited by many of them; by Fulgentius in the beginning of the sixth century against the Arians, without any scruple or hesitation; and Jerome, as had been observed before has it in his translation made in the latter part of the fourth century. In his epistle to Eustochium prefixed to his translation of the canonical epistles, he complains of the omission of it by unfaithful interpreters. It is cited by Athanasius about the year 350; and before him by Cyprian, in the middle of the third century, about the year 250; and is referred to by Tertullian about the year 200; and which was within a hundred years, or little more, of the writing of the epistle; which may be enough to satisfy anyone of the genuineness of this passage; and besides there was never any dispute over it till Erasmus left it out of the first edition of his translation of the New Testament; and yet he himself upon the credit of the old British copy before mentioned, put it into another edition of his translation."

(*The Providential Preservation of the Greek Text of the New Testament*, page 25).

W.M.

Gathan Gloir na Diadhachd

Leis an Urr. Eideard Pearce

(Air a leantuinn bho t.d. 121)

Na h-uibhir a dh'aobharan air an cur sìos gu bhi bacadh cur an aghaidh na'n nithean sin, agus a freagairt neo-chaochlaidheachd Dhè bho gach cur na aghaidh.

'S e'n ath obair a tha againn ri dheanamh a bhi dearbhadh neo-chaochlaidheachd Dhè bho gach cur an aghaidh agus bacadh, agus a bhi dha dhearbhadh an aghaidh na nithean a shaoileadh neach a bhi seasamh na aghaidh, agus nì mi so leis na ceithir nithean a leanas.

1. 'S e cheud nì so, Nach eil aithreachas Dhè, mu thiomcholl am bi sinn aig amaibh a leughadh anns na Sgrìobturean, ann an rathad air bith an aghaidh fìrinn agus glòir a neo-chaochlaidheachd. Bitheanta, anns na Sgrìobturean, tha Dia air a ràdh a bhi gabhail aithreachais, an dà chuid a thaobh na nithean a tha E deanamh, agus mar an ceudna a thaobh na nithean a tha E'g ràdh a nì E. An toiseach, tha e air a ràdh a bhi gabhail aithreachais a thaobh na nithean a rinn E. Mar sin thà e air a ràdh gu'm bheil E gabhail aithreachais gu'n d'rinn E riamh an duine. Gen. vi. 6. Tha Dia a gabhail aithreachais gu'n do chruthaich E'n duine air an talamh; agus ghoirtich e aig a chridhe E. Mar sin tha e air a ràdh gu'n d'rinn E Saul na rìgh. I Sam. xv. 11. Is aithreach leam (tha Dia ag ràdh) gu'n do chuir mi Saul suas na rìgh. Anns an dara àite, tha e air a ràdh gu'm bheil Dia a gabhail aithreachas a thaobh na nithean a thubhairt E a dheanadh E. Mar sin ann an Salm cxxxv. 14. Gabhaidh an Tighearna Aithreachas a thaobh a sheirbhisich. Mar sin ann an Ier. xxvi. 19. "Agus ghabh an Tighearna aithreachas de'n olc a labhair E na'n aghaidh," maille ri iomadh àite eile a dh'fhaodadh a bhi air ainmeachadh. Mar sin tho'n Tighearna air a ràdh a bhi gabhail aithreachais anns an rathad sin. Nis, tha aithreachas a ciallachadh atharrachadh, agus cia mar, uime sin, a tha Dia neo-chaochlaidh-each? Tha mi freagairt; Gidheadh, tha E neo-chaochlaidheach do bhrìgh gu'm bheil E gabhail aithreachais; oir guidheam oirbh, thugaibh fa'n ear, 'n uair a tha Dia air a ràdh a bhi gabhail aithreachais anns na Sgrìobturean, thà e r'a thuigsinn cha'n ann an seadh ceart, ach ann an seadh mì-cheart, cha'n ann a reir a thoil shiorruidh, ach a reir oibribh bho'n leth a muigh: tha Dia air a ràdh a bhi gabhail aithreachais, do bhrìgh gu'm bheil E deanamh mar a nì daoine, 'n uair a ghabhas iad aithreachas, 's e sin, thà E'g atharrachadh a ghnìomharan, gu'n a bhi'g

atharrachadh a thoile; seadh, 's e'n t-atharrachadh na ghnìomharan a bhi giullain a thoile neo-chaochladheach. 'n uair a ghabhas daoine aithreachas tha iad a sgur a bhi deanamh a' nì a thoisich iad, agus tha iad ullamh a bhi milleadh a' nì a rinn iad; agus mar sin, 'n uair a tha Dia air a ràdh a bhi gabhail aithreachais, cha'n ann a chionn gu'm bheil Ìnntinn air atharrachadh, ach do bhrìgh gu'n do sguir E bhi deanamh a nì rinn E, na millidh E a nì a rinn E: mar sin tha e air a ràdh gu'm bheil aithreachas air gu'n d'rinn E Saul na rìgh, do bhrìgh gu'n robh E ciallachadh atharrachadh bho bhi na rìgh; agus gu'n robh aithreachas Air gu'n d'rinn E'n duine, do bhrìgh gu'n robh E ciallachadh an duine a sgrios air son a pheacaidh. Nis, cha'n eil a leithid sin de dh'aithreachas a ciallachadh an t-atharrachadh is lugha ann an Dia, agus, uime sin, anns an dearbh àite far am bheil e air a ràdh gu'm bheil E gabhail aithreachas, tha e mar an cuedna air a ràdh nach eil E gabhail aithreachas, mar ann an I Sam. xv. 11, etc. xxix 11. thà e air a ràdh gu'm bheil aithreachas Air Saul a dheanamh na rìgh, agus ann an rann 29, tha e air a ràdh, "Agus mar an ceudna cha dean Neart Israel breug, agus cha ghabh E aithreachas: oir cha duine E gu'n gabhadh E aithreachas." Cha'n urrain E aithreachas a ghabhail anns an t-seadh is àirde, mar a tha aithreachas a ciallachadh atharrachadh, nì's motha na's urrainn E breug a dheanamh, agus n' uair mar a tha sin air a ràdh mu thiomcholl, nach duine E gu'n gabhadh E aithreachas, tha'n uibhir so air a ghabhail a stigh, gu'm feumadh E sgur a bhi na Dhia agus tighean gu bi na dhuine, mu nì E aithreachas gu bhi gabhail a stigh atharrachadh. 'S e beachd maith agus gu dearbh beachd mòr a tha aig neach air an àite sin; cha'n urrainn aithreachas (tha e'g ràdh) a bhi maille ri Dia, do bhrìgh gu'm bheil E neo-chaochladheach, ro-ghlic, ro-bheannaichte, ach tha e air a ràdh gu'm bheil E gabhail aithreachas 'n uair a thairneagas E air ais agus a dhubhas E mach a bheannachdan bho neach na bho shluagh. Ann am focal tha e air a ràdh a bhi gabhail aithreachais a thaobh atharrachadh toraidhean, ach cha'n eil dha thaobh féin, an dà chuid a thaobh a nàduir na thabh a thoile. Ach nochdair so nì's soilleir anns an ath nì. Uime sin.

2. 'S e'n ath nì so, Nach eil a bhi fantuinn air ais, na gu'n a bhi cur an gnìomh cuid de mhuidhidhean agus geallaidhean Dhé, a gheibh slinn anns an fhocal, a ciallachadh gu'm bheil E caochladheach. Is fìor e, tha iomadh nì an dà chuid air a bhagradh agus air a gealltuinn le Dia 'n a fhocal nach gabh àite gu bràth; tha Dia air uairibh a bagradh a nì nach toir E mun cuairt, mar a thaobh Hesekiah II Rìgh xx. 1-5, air a choimeas, agus mu Ninebheh, Iona III, 4, air a choimeas ri rann 10. Air an laimh eile tha Dia a gealltuinn aig amaibh a nì nach toir E gu buil gu bràth, agus dh'fhaodadh iomadh nì eile a bhi air a thoirt air adhart. Nis, nach eil so a

cur an aghaidh a neo-chaochlaedheachd. Freagram, cha'n eil; cha'n eil an dara h-aon na'n aon eile dhiubh eile an aghaidh a neo-chaochlaidheachd, oir, guidheam oirbh cha'n eil na bagraidhean agus na geallaidhean sin nach eil air an coimhlionadh do-sheachainte, ach na'm bagraidhean a tha air chumha. Bagraidhean agus geallaidhean aig nach eil aon chuid cumha air ainmeachadh na air a ghabhail a stigh, tha iad gu mòr a dearbhadh neo-chaochlaidheachd Dhé, agus tha gu'n a bhi coimhlionadh na'm bagraidhean agus na geallaidhean sin, cho fad bho bhi neo-sheasmhach ri neo-chaochlaidheachd Dhé, agus gu'm bheil e dearbhadh a neo-chaochlaidheachd. Soilleirichidh mì so le beagan de nithean, "Cuin air bith a labhras mise mu thimchioll cinneach, agus mu thimchioll rioghachd, gu spionadh a nios, gu leagail sios, agus gu sgrios; ma philleas an cinneach sin an aghaidh an do labhair mì, o'n olc; gabhaidh mì aithreachas de'n olc a bha ann am aire thoirt orra. etc., Ier. xviii. 7,8,9,10. Gabh beachd ann an so tha olc air a bhagradh agus maith air a ghealltuinn, ach mar aon fodh chumha; nis ma tha'n cumha fodh'm bheil an aon air a bhagradh agus an aon eil air a ghealltuinn, a dhìth, no bithidh e air a chur as leth atharrachadh ann an Dia, mar a bith an dara h-aon na'n aon eile air an coimhlionadh.

(R'a leantuinn)

Church Notes

Resignation of Rev. John Colquhoun, Glendale

At a meeting of the Western Presbytery held in Kyle of Lochalsh on Tuesday 12th of March 1974, Rev. John Colquhoun intimated his resignation from the pastoral charge of Glendale, Vatten and Waternish. As Mr Colquhoun now felt unable to do the pastoral work of the congregation, the Presbytery regretfully accepted the resignation, which was to take effect from the end of April.

As Mr Colquhoun lays down the burden of his pastorate after 40 years of unbroken service, his many friends throughout the Church and beyond its bounds will wish him much blessing in his retirement and desire that the Lord may spare him, if that is His holy will, for many years of continued usefulness in His cause.

Ordination and Induction in Rhodesia

The Rhodesia Presbytery of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland met on Friday the 15th March, 1974, in the church at Ingwenya at 2 pm to ordain and induct the Rev. D. A. Ross to the Bulawayo charge.

Bulawayo was raised by Synod to a sanctioned charge at their meeting recently. Mr Ross after satisfying the Foreign Missions Committee as to his desire and suitability to labour among the Africans in the Townships of Bulawayo was accepted and sent to Rhodesia, himself, his wife and their two boys.

A big congregation made up of people from most of our Mission stations in Rhodesia gathered for the occasion. The Moderator of the Rhodesian Presbytery, the Rev. P. Mzamo conducted public worship. He preached an appropriate sermon from words in Matthew 28 v 19,20.

Mr Mzamo stressed the work of the gospel ministry as a duty to those who are:—

1. Commissioned by the Lord to do His work.
2. That the Lord does set aside such as are to do the work of the Gospel.
3. The place in which they are to labour is also determined and in the context it is the whole world including Bulawayo in Rhodesia.
4. The promise the Lord gives His servants: "Lo I am with you always even to the end of the world."

When public worship was ended the narrative of steps taken in preparing the call was read and Mr Ross answered the questions which were put to him by the Moderator satisfactorily, after which the formula was signed in the presence of the congregation.

Mr Ross was then solemnly ordained to the office of the Christian Ministry and in the Name and Authority of the Great Head of the Church and the Presbytery. He also inducted the new minister solemnly to the Bulawayo Charge. The rest of the Presbytery joined in giving Mr Ross the right hand of fellowship.

The Moderator addressed the new minister as to the work of the ministry. He pointed out the importance of faithfulness to the Lord, His Word, the congregation and the conscience. He advised Mr Ross of the danger of beginning well but gradually becoming more and more like the rest of the professing world.

Rev. A. Ndebele addressed the congregation as to their duty towards the ministry in general and to the newly ordained minister in particular.

He stressed the need of:—

- a) Thankfulness to the Lord for such a gift.
- b) The dangers of seeking to undermine the work of the ministry.
- c) The advantage of a moral and spiritual support to the ministry in the attendance on the means of grace and the attitude of the congregation to the worship of God.
- d) Prayerfulness for a blessing to follow the preaching of the Word.

The proceedings were brought to a close by singing Psalm 122, and after the benediction Mr Ross shook hands with the congregation at the church door as they retired.

Mr Ross enters this important sphere of his life's work with the prayers and good wishes of the friends of the church, who will follow his labours in the Gospel with interest and prayerful hopes that he may be long spared to serve his master in this foreign land.

Religion in Rhodesia is in a sad state and the gift of a Calvinistic minister to us is of far superior value to all the experts in politics, medicine, and advanced learning in technology and Science.

We earnestly pray that Mr Ross's labours in Bulawayo will be abundantly blessed by the Lord to the ingathering of lost souls and to the edification of believers throughout the Mission.

Aaron B. Ndebele,
(Clerk to Rhodesia Presbytery)

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Western: At Kyle of Lochalsh on 25th June 1974 at 11 a.m.

Northern: At Inverness on 25th June 1974 at 2.30 p.m.

Deputy to Canada

Rev. Alex. Murray left Prestwick Airport on 22nd March for Toronto, Canada. Mr Murray is expected to stay in Toronto for about 8 Sabbaths and also pay a brief visit to Vancouver before returning to this country on 21st May (D.V.). We know that he will desire the prayers of the people of the Church that he may be prospered of the Lord in the work to which he has been sent and also that he may be preserved during his journeys.

Funds Closed

The Deacons' Court of the Scourie and Kinlochbervie Congregation wish to intimate that the Scourie Church Building Fund and the Kinlochbervie Manse Fund are now closed. We would take this opportunity of renewing our thanks to all those throughout the Church who generously contributed to these Funds.

J. Tallach, *Moderator*.
D. Macleod, *Treasurer*.

Meeting of Synod

The annual meeting of Synod will begin on Tuesday 21st May 1974 at 6.30 p.m. (D.V.) in St. Jude's Church, Glasgow, when the retiring Moderator will conduct public worship.

Acknowledgment of Donations

From 1st May 1974 would all Treasurers of Congregations please send all acknowledgments of donations for the Magazine direct to the Editor at

F.P. Manse, Lairg, Sutherland, and **not** to the Printers. Acknowledgments must reach the Editor by the 1st of the month for insertion in the following month's Magazine.

Correction

In the article on "The Westcott and Hort Cult" which appeared in the March issue of the Magazine, the word "Pharisees" at the beginning of the last paragraph on page 84 should have read "Revisers."

Young People's Conference 1974

The Young People's Conference for 1974 is to be held, the Lord willing, at Kilravock Castle, which is situated twelve miles east of Inverness. It is expected that the Rev. A. MacPherson, Editor of the Young People's Magazine, will deliver most of the papers.

Dates of Conference: 23rd, 24th, 25th July 1974.

Age group: 16-30 years of age.

Conference Centre: Kilravock Castle.

Conference fees: The fee per person, full board, will be about £5.75, of which a deposit of £1 should be sent with application to attend, to: Rev. M. MacInnes, 5 Kempshott Rd., Streatham, London SW16.

Rev. M. MacInnes, *Conference Secretary*

Acknowledgment of Donations

The General Treasurer, Mr Wm. D. Fraser, F.C.M.A., 20 Daleview Avenue, Glasgow G12 0HE, acknowledges the following donations with sincere thanks:—

Sustentation Fund: "In memory of Mr & Mrs MacKenzie, late of Fearn and Harris," £200. Mrs A. Bonallo, Seattle, £6.90.

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Jewish and Foreign Mission Fund: "In memory of Mr & Mrs Mackenzie, late of Fearn and Harris," £82; W. Bruce, Bower, £5.

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Bookroom: E.M., St. Judes, Glasgow, £2.

Library Fund: Mr MacLean, Dundee, 50p.

The Publications Treasurer, Mr R.W.M. MacKenzie, C.A., Hilton of Cadboll, Fearn, acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations —

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30p; M.G. Campbell, Applecross, 90p; Rev. A. Mackay, Tarbert, £1; M. MacKenzie, Gairloch, 90p.

Publication Fund: Mrs MacKillop, Dieraclete, Harris, £2.20.

Welfare of Youth Fund: Broadford Congregation, £10.

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Oban: Portree Friends, £10 for Congregational Funds per Rev. M. MacSween, M.A.

Plockton/Kyle: Friend in Drumbuie, £5; Mrs Piper, Glasgow, £5, both for Manse Building Fund per Rev. D. Beattie.

Portree: Haggai, Chap. 2, verse 8, £30.20 per F.M.; Anon., Church Plate, £2; Anon., £2; Kenneth MacKenzie, Kingsburgh, £5; C.G.S., Stornoway Postmark, £10; A Friend, £3; Miss J. Matheson, Inverness, £10; Portree Friend, £5; Edinbane Friend, £10; Miss Margaret Matheson, Glasgow, £5, last 6 per F.M., all for Church Renovation; Anon., £5; A Friend — Mercy rejoiceth against Judgment, £5, both for Communion Expenses; A.M., £1 for Sustentation Fund per F.M.

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