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Why art thou cast down?

In the 42nd and 43rd Psalms, the Psalmist addresses his own soul and asks the questions, Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? He goes on to propose a remedy for his cast down state of soul — hope thou in God — and then encourages his soul with better prospects, saying, I shall yet praise Him who is the health of my countenance and my God.

There are many things which cause the souls of the people of God to be cast down. Indwelling corruption is one of these. The Apostle Paul was so conscious of the power of sin within his own soul that he had to cry out, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” His complaint was — “The good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.” He had to say as well — “I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.” He further describes the conflict which he found in his own bosom in these words: “For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.”

Another reason why the souls of the people of God are often cast down is the assaults of the wicked one. Satan, the arch-enemy of souls, is ever active in tempting and trying the people of God. Sometimes he comes as an angel of light, sometimes as a roaring lion. Whichever way he comes, it is to try and to harass the people of God. The powers of darkness are strong. The children of God come to learn by experience that they “wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” Conflicting with Satan and his hosts is not

easy, and, as a result, the Lord's people are often cast down, afraid that they will fall one day into Satan's hands.

Another reason for them to be cast down is that they are travelling through an enemy's country. As they are journeying onward to Zion, they have to travel through the wilderness of this world. In it they face many dangers. One of these dangers arises from the antagonistic attitude of those who dwell in the world. The world lies in the wicked one and its principles are quite contrary to those of the people of God. Its whole attitude to life is different. The world draws its sustenance and pleasure from what it finds in this world. The people of God, on the other hand, must have daily manna, bread from heaven to satisfy the needs of their soul. They find their pleasure in things that are spiritual in things that are unseen and eternal. Because of this the people of God are exposed to the oppression of the wicked. They reproach the people of God saying, 'Where is thy God?'

The low state of the Lord's Cause in their own soul and in the world is another reason why the people of God are often cast down. When they examine themselves as to their hope and the progress of grace in their soul, they are often ready to write hard things against themselves. They are not what they would like to be. Grace which should be in living exercise in their soul seems at such a low ebb. Then when they look to the Cause of Christ in the world and see the ravages that the enemies of Christ have made within His Cause it makes them sad at heart and they become cast down. They grieve over the afflictions of Joseph. They desire to see Zion a quiet habitation but they find it far otherwise. All these things cause them to be cast down.

How then are they to be lifted up? The Psalmist gives the answer — "hope thou in God." They are to look to the God of their salvation and have all their hope and expectation in Him. They are to look away from themselves to the One who is mighty. In the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. However strong the power of sin and Satan and the world, there is One who is mightier. They are to look to the One who can do all things for them. It is not on creature strength that they are to rely but on the strength and power of the Almighty. The Lord will not give His people over to the will of the enemy. He will deliver them. They are then to have all their hope and confidence in Him, believing that He will be as good as His promise and that He will save them out of the hand of the enemy.

The people of God will have reason to praise God yet. "Hope thou in God", the Psalmist says, "for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God." In Psalm 71 he says, "But I will hope

continually, and will yet praise Thee more and more." The Lord is to give His people the victory over all their enemies, over sin, Satan and the world. They shall yet see them as vanquished foes lying on the field of battle. It is not in their own strength or by their own power that they are to have this victory but through Christ. The Apostle Paul had to say — "In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." They are to obtain full and final victory over their enemies. This will afford them ground for endless praise. In everlasting glory they shall sing: "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory, for Thy mercy, and for Thy truth's sake.

Lecture

by Rev. Donald MacFarlane

(Continued from page 43)

III. Well, the encouragement now; and what is the encouragement? I mentioned before that it is according to the need that the Lord speaks in comforting. It was to those who needed it that Christ Jesus said — "Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions." Every part, then, of the encouragement is to meet every part of the discouragement. What is the first part? First, "Be strong, for I am with you." What does that mean? What is that intended to remove? O, it is this: there were many against them. Sanballat was against them, the people and their governor were against them, so God says — "Courage, for I am with you." They might then say with Paul, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Here it is — there are many against the Jews, trying to oppose them in the work of the Lord, but God comes forward now when they are found in the path of duty, and not when they are neglecting the work of God. Be not depressed: "Who would set the briers and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together." What are all people in the world, what are men and what are devils, what are all enemies whatever if God be for us? And God is true, God is for His people, He is with them and He is with them especially when they are found in the path of duty doing His work. When they are neglecting that duty He rebukes them, as He sent

His word to rebuke the Jews by the prophet Haggai: "Is it time for you to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste?" Here is a word of rebuke; God does not deal always in the same way with His people. No, but He comforts them in a time of need, when they are faint and sorrowful when their hearts are cast down. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" said the psalmist, "what should discourage thee?" It is when their soul is cast down within them, it is then the Lord will come forward, and He suits the promise to their very case. "If men are against you," He says, "I am with you." Now, my friends, every time the church, the work of the Lord, the temple of the Lord is being built up, there are men who are against those engaged in the work of the Lord. I do not mean to dwell upon this; I simply draw your attention to it in order that you may not be discouraged. When we, as a church, took a stand in defence of the truth of God — for the benefit not only of our own souls and the present generation, but also of future generations — men rose up against us, and they used the same means to weaken our hands and to discourage our hearts as the Samaritans of old did. If we wanted a house to worship God in, such as the public school, there were letters in the newspapers not to give it. Every effort was made to put a stop to the glorious work; to what may be called, on a small scale at least, the building up of the cause of God in Scotland. Ah, this work in which we are engaged is the building up of that cause, and it may be needful that I should mention what a great and godly man, who is still living, said about it — a man whom some of you may know. Before any made a stand against error in the way in which we did, he was looking with a sorrowful heart on the state of God's cause in Scotland. He was seeing almost all the churches departing from the principles and doctrines of the church of God, and he was seeing that the judgment of God was coming fast after this declension. Then his heart was cast down. But when he heard that there was a stand made he took courage, and said, "The judgment will not yet come, but mark this," he said. "and some of you may see it, this is the last call to Scotland, the last call to Scotland, and if Scotland will not hearken to the call of God then the judgment will not be delayed any longer and some of you may see the judgment." We are encouraged, my friends, that there are some who have made a stand for the truth of God, whatever that may have cost them — even although it should have cost them what it cost others, the laying down of their lives. If lives are laid down for the cause of Christ, these lives will have a glorious resurrection. Ah! yes.

Well, my friends, this is the encouragement, then, that God speaks to your hearts who are interested in the cause of God. It is a suitable message

to deliver to you, this last day of the feast, in the city of Glasgow — “Be strong, for I am with you.” They had been rebuked, and this also led Him to say “Be strong.” The rebuke of the Lord had weakened them, and it ought to have had that effect, and it is a bad sign on any heart that is not weakened when the Lord rebukes. The psalmist says that they “perish at the rebuke of thy countenance.” “My flesh cleaves to my skin.” And we may feel assured that there was great need for the encouragement, “Be strong,” for it is said when God sent His word of rebuke to the people, for delaying the work of the Lord so long while attending to their own worldly matters, that they feared the Lord. He now says — “Be strong.”

There was a third thing in the encouragement: and what was it? Well, it was something to meet the discouragement which they had from comparing the small effort they were now making with that which had been made in former days from comparing the littleness of the house of God which they were endeavouring to build with the glorious temple of Solomon. “Is it not,” God says — and He brings out what they think themselves — “in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?” What is the meaning of this? You see, the temple of Solomon was made glorious outwardly with such as silver and gold, almost everything was covered with silver and gold. It was a beautiful sight to the natural eye to behold the temple of Solomon, on every side to which one could turn covered with silver and gold. But now the Jews could not make this temple so great and glorious, so beautiful with silver and gold, and they were discouraged. If they had silver and gold they would naturally make up the second temple as beautiful as the first. And what does God say? “Mine is the silver and mine is the gold.” What does He mean by that? Well, what I once thought of it was that, as they needed silver and gold to build the temple, the Lord was encouraging them to look to Himself for these things; but I changed my mind, and I think I saw that this was not the meaning at all, and that the meaning was — “I am as wealthy now as I was in the days of Solomon. The earth belongs unto the Lord, and all that it contains. Do you think I could not afford to give you as much silver and gold as I gave to Solomon? Mine is the silver and mine is the gold, but I withhold it on purpose, as I intend to make the second temple more glorious than the first.” And so, He says, “The glory of the latter house shall be greater than the former, saith the Lord of hosts: in this place shall I give peace.”

Now, my friends, you see this is the way He took to encourage them. They were discouraged because they could not make the second temple so beautiful with silver and gold as the first. But God said as much as: “I

am not at all become poor since the says of Solomon, but I withhold silver and gold which I gave liberally to Solomon from you on purpose, and my reason for withholding it is this, that I intend to make the second house more glorious with another gold, with the gold tried in the fire." "The glory of the latter house shall be greater." Jesus Christ, who is the brightness of His Father's glory and the express image of His person, was to come into the world and to assume human nature; He was to come into the world before the destruction of that second temple. We read, indeed, that there was a place in Solomon's temple where the presence and the glory of God were so much revealed that the ministers doing the service of God could not proceed with the weight of the glory of it. Even that, my friends, was only a manifestation of the glory of God, but here is God Himself, God manifest in the flesh, He who is the brightness of the Father's glory, He came to the temple. This was the way, then, He took to encourage them, in renewing the promise of Him who was promised early in the history of the world, Jesus Christ.

Now, my friends, the glory of any church is this — not silver and gold and wealth, but that Jesus Christ should come to that church. It was said at one time — "The glory is departed," and the glory is departed from any church where the Son of God is not, where His presence is not, where the Gospel in purity is not preached, where the doctrines concerning Jesus Christ and the salvation He wrought out are not held forth. That church has lost its glory. Oh! let us seek, my friends, to embellish and beautify our church, not with outward pomp and glory, but with Christ. Let us seek that Jesus Christ may be with us. Let us look to Him, let us cry to Him, and, when He does come, let us pray with the disciples who met Him on the way — "Abide with us, for it is toward evening and the day is far spent." The presence of Christ is the glory of any soul, the glory of any church, the glory of any community, the glory of any kingdom. "And His glory shall fill the whole earth." There is another thing that is the glory of a church (I mentioned it incidentally already), the truth of God. "The glory of the latter house shall be greater," because Jesus Himself was to come there. Well, the glory of any church is this, that the truth of God be in that church. That is the glory of a church. Oh! let us seek, then, that our church may be beautified. The Lord says to us — "Mine is the silver and mine is the gold," and, although we cannot show any such splendour as the temple of Solomon or the Free Church of old, we can, my friends, oh, we can be content if our church is beautified with the presence of Him who is the brightness of the Father's glory, and with His truth. I may mention in connection with this that the Free Church of old, like the old

temple built by Solomon, was beautified outwardly with silver and gold. The Free Church grew very rich, and she was not the better of that. We, for our part, do not regret that Sir William Mackinnon did not leave us thousands of pounds to carry on the work of the Lord, though it seemed a loss that he was taken away so suddenly before he cast in his lot with us, which he promised to do had he lived. But I thought it was a providence, arranged by the wisdom of Him who is infinite in wisdom, that he did not leave us a single penny. Had he left us thousands of pounds, another disruption would have been necessary in a few years. Why? Because we would have many ministers following us, not for the sake of principle. We went forth and said, with the great Master to the man who would follow Him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." "Will you follow me now?" Ah! no. It was a blessing from Him whose cause we have at heart, it was a blessing from the Lord that not a penny was left us by that worthy man, or, as I said before, in the course of a few years we would require to have another disruption. Here is the way that the Lord deals with us. It is a time of trial, and we must follow the Lord simply because He is worthy of being followed. We must stand up for the truth's sake, not from any worldly motives nor for any worldly profit. The truth is a great treasure, and those who will not defend the truth for the truth's sake are not worth being named Christians at all. Oh! how miserable we would be, my friends, if we had not the truth, or if we had the truth of God mixed with errors, as almost all other churches have. Could we have true happiness? What is the value of anything unless we enjoy happiness in connection with the cause of God in the world, unless we acquit ourselves like those who have to render an account and who wish to render that account with joy? We, my friends, profess to be the servants of the Lord, and what is the worth of a servant unless he is faithful to his master? If a man in this city of Glasgow had a large warehouse and employed servants, and if any of these servants allowed robbers and thieves to come in and steal his goods, was that servant faithful to his master? I say, No. And is a minister of Christ not to be more faithful than a servant in a warehouse? We must render an account, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ" to render our account. If you seek happiness of soul, peace of soul, in passing through this world, seek not only to be found in Christ but also to be faithful to Christ, and keep from turning to the right hand nor to the left. Oh! this is our duty, and when we do this we shall have to acknowledge (even if we could do all our duty) that we have not done but what was out duty. But instead of doing all our duty, how much is left

undone! What shame and confusion of face belong to us! What thankfulness to God that it is not on anything we may try to do our salvation depends, but on what Christ did! His work is perfect, His work is the foundation upon which God's people build. Still, although our salvation does not depend upon our endeavours, if we are unfaithful to God, and if we miss an opportunity of doing good, that must make us uncomfortable on a dying bed. Ah! yes. Although you should get to heaven, there would never be again for ever an opportunity for you to do good to anyone in this world, to warn your friend or your foe, to warn any "to flee from the wrath to come." You could not come back again to the world to do anything for God. No.

IV. The last thing (I am keeping you too long) is this, the duty now enjoined. Let us take it to heart, let each of us carry it with us. The duty enjoined is — "Be strong and work." The work was the work of the Lord; they were building the temple. They were asked to work, to proceed with the work, and in the records of the Kings it was found that a decree was given and proclaimed by Cyrus that the work was to proceed. And so, my friends, the enemies were confounded, and the poor people of God were encouraged to proceed again with the work which had been so long delayed. Let us seek grace, that we may do whatever our hands find to do. If you can do nothing more, oh, pray for those who are trying to do public work for God. Encourage them in every way, and do whatever your hand finds to do. We are all going on to another world. There is no knowledge nor device in the grave, to which we are all hastening. Let us — not only those whose duty it is to proclaim in public the truth of God, but let us all — try to do everything we can to put down evil. There is much work for all true Christians in this age, and in this city, in various ways, where iniquity abounds, and where errors abound. Let us raise our voice against them. One may say — "What is the use; there is such power against us?" Did you not read the promise, "I am with you?" Let it not weaken your hands, nor keep you back from doing your duty, that there is such power against you. Do you your own duty, and God will be with you.

"And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." — Rev. i. 17, 18.

Justified

by Bishop J.C. Ryle

III. Let me show you, in the third place, the rock from which justification and peace with God flow. That rock is Christ.

The true Christian is not justified because of any goodness of his own. His peace is not to be traced up to any work that he has done. It is not purchased by his prayers and regularity, his repentance and his amendment, his morality and his charity. All these are utterly unable to justify him. In themselves they are defective in many things, and need a large forgiveness. And as to justifying him, such a thing is not to be named. Tried by the perfect standard of God's law the best of Christians is nothing better than a justified sinner, a pardoned criminal. As to merit, worthiness, desert, or claim upon God's mercy, he has none. Peace built on any such foundations as these is utterly worthless. The man who rests upon them is miserably deceived.

Never were truer words put on paper than those which Richard Hooker penned on this subject years ago. Let those who would like to know what English clergymen thought in olden times, mark well what he says: "If God would make us an offer thus large, 'Search all the generation of men since the fall of your father, Adam, and find one man that hath done any one action which hath past from him pure, without any stain or blemish at all — and for that one man's one only action, neither man nor angel shall find the torments which are prepared for both'; do you think this ransom, to deliver man and angels, would be found among the sons of men? The best things we do have somewhat in them to be pardoned. How then can we do anything meritorious and worthy to be rewarded?" To these words I desire entirely to subscribe. I believe that no man can be justified by his works before God in the slightest possible degree. Before man he may be justified. His works may evidence his Christianity. Before God he cannot be justified by anything that he can do. He will be always defective, always imperfect, always shortcoming, always far below the mark, so long as he lives. It is not by works of his own that anyone ever has peace and is a justified man.

But how then is a true Christian justified? What is the secret of that peace and sense of pardon which he enjoys? How can we understand a holy God dealing with a sinful man as with one innocent, and reckoning him righteous notwithstanding his many sins?

The answer to all these questions is short and simple. The true

Christian is counted righteous for the sake of a Divine Saviour, Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He is justified because of the death and atonement of Christ. He has peace because Christ died for his sins according to the Scripture. This is the key that unlocks the mighty mystery. Here the great problem is solved, how God can be just and yet justify the ungodly. The life and death of the Lord Jesus explain all. "He is our peace" (Ephes. ii. 14).

Christ has stood in the place of the true Christian. He has become his surety and his substitute. He has undertaken to bear all that was to be borne, and to do all that was to be done. Hence the true Christian is a justified man.

Christ has suffered for sins, the just for the unjust. He has endured our punishment in His own body on the cross. He has allowed the wrath of God, which we deserved, to fall on His own head. Hence the true Christian is a justified man.

Christ has paid the debt the Christian owed, by His own blood. He has reckoned for it, and discharged it to the uttermost farthing by His own precious death. God is a just God, and will not require His debts to be paid twice over. Hence the true Christian is a justified man.

Christ has obeyed the law of God perfectly. The prince of this world could find no fault in Him. By so fulfilling it He brought in an everlasting righteousness, in which all His people are clothed in the sight of God. Hence the true Christian is a justified man.

Christ, in one word, has lived for the true Christian. Christ has died for him. Christ has gone to the grave for him. Christ has risen again for him. Christ has ascended up on high for him, and gone into heaven to intercede for his soul. Christ has done all, paid all, suffered all that was needful for his redemption. Hence arises the true Christian's justification — hence his peace. In himself there is nothing, but in Christ he has all things that his soul can require.

Who can tell the blessedness of the exchange that takes place between the true Christian and the Lord Jesus Christ! Christ's righteousness is placed upon him, and his sins are placed upon Christ. Christ has been reckoned a sinner for his sake, and now he is reckoned innocent for Christ's sake. Christ has been condemned for his sake, though there was no fault in Him — and now he is acquitted for Christ's sake, though he is covered with sins, faults, and shortcomings. Here is wisdom indeed! God can now be just and yet pardon the ungodly. Man can feel that he is a prisoner, and yet have a good hope of heaven and feel peace within. Who

among men could have imagined such a thing? Who ought not to admire it when he hears it?

We read in British history of a Lord Nithsdale, who was sentenced to death for a great political crime. He was closely confined in prison after his trial. The day of his execution was fixed. There seemed no chance of escape. And yet before the sentence was carried into effect he contrived to escape through the skill and affection of his wife. She brought him a woman's clothes into the cell where he lay. She disguised him in them and made him appear like her own maidservant. She then went out of the prison with him following as her attendant, and though he passed through guards and keepers, none detected him. Who would not admire the skill and the love of such a wife as this?

But we read in Gospel history of a display of love, compared to which the love of Lady Nithsdale is nothing. We read of Jesus the Son of God coming down to a world of sinners, who neither cared for Him before He came, nor honoured Him when He appeared. We read of Him going down to the prison-house, and submitting to be bound, that we, the poor prisoners, might be able to go free. We read of Him becoming obedient to death — and that the death of the cross — that we the unworthy children of Adam might have a door opened to life everlasting. We read of Him being content to bear our sins and carry our transgressions, that we might wear His righteousness, and walk in the light and liberty of the sons of God.

This may well be called a "love that passeth knowledge!" In no way could free grace ever have shone so brightly as in the way of justification by Christ (Ephes. iii. 19).

This is the old way by which alone the children of Adam, who have been justified from the beginning of the world, have found their peace. From Abel downwards, no man or woman has ever had one drop of mercy excepting through Christ. To Him every altar that was raised before the time of Moses was intended to point. To Him every sacrifice and ordinance of the Jewish law was meant to direct the children of Israel. Of Him all the prophets testified. In a word, if you lose sight of justification by Christ, a large part of the Old Testament Scripture will become a tangled maze.

This, above all, is the way of justification which exactly meets the wants and requirements of human nature. There is a conscience left in man, although he is a fallen being. There is a dim sense of his own need, which in his better moments will make itself heard, and which nothing but Christ can satisfy. So long as his conscience is not hungry, any religious toy will

satisfy a man's soul and keep him quiet. But once let his conscience become hungry, and nothing will quiet him but food, and no food but Christ.

There is something within a man, when his conscience is really awake, which whispers, "there must be a price paid for my soul, or no peace." At once the Gospel meets him with Christ. Christ has already paid a ransom for his redemption. Christ has given Himself for him. Christ has redeemed him from the curse of the law, being made a curse for him (Gal. ii. 20; iii. 13).

There is something within a man, when his conscience is really awake, which whispers, "I must have some righteousness or title to heaven, or no peace. At once the Gospel meets him with Christ. He has brought in an everlasting righteousness. He is the end of the law for righteousness. His name is called, The Lord our Righteousness. God has made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. v. 21; Rom. x. 4; Jer. xxiii. 6).

There is something within a man, when his conscience is really awake, which whispers, "there must be punishment and suffering because of my sins or no peace." At once the Gospel meets him with Christ. Christ hath suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, to bring him to God. He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. By His stripes we are healed (1 Peter ii. 24).

There is something within a man, when his conscience is really awake, which whispers, "I must have a priest for my soul, or no peace." At once the Gospel meets him with Christ. Christ is sealed and appointed by God the Father to be the Mediator between Himself and man. He is the ordained Advocate for sinners. He is the accredited Counsellor and Physician of sick souls. He is the Great High Priest, the Almighty Absolver, the Gracious Confessor of heavy-laden sinners (1 Tim. ii. 5; Heb. viii. 1).

This is the one true way of peace — justification by Christ. Beware lest any turn you out of this way and lead you into any of the false doctrines of the Church of Rome. Alas, it is wonderful to see how that unhappy Church has built a house of error hard by the house of truth! Hold fast the truth of God about justification, and be not deceived. Listen not to anything you may hear about other mediators and helpers to peace. Remember there is no mediator but one — Jesus Christ; no purgatory for sinners but one — the blood of Christ; no sacrifice for sin but one — the sacrifice once made on the cross; no works that can merit anything — but the work of Christ; no priest that can truly absolve — but Christ. Stand

fast here, and be on your guard. Give not the glory due to Christ to another.

What do you know of Christ? I doubt not you have heard of Him by the hearing of the ear. You know His name. You are acquainted, perhaps, with the story of His life and death. But what experimental knowledge have you of Him? What practical use do you make of Him? What dealings and transactions have there been between your soul and Him?

Oh, believe me, there is no peace with God excepting through Christ! Peace is His peculiar gift. Peace is that legacy which he alone had power to leave behind Him when He left the world. All other peace besides this is a mockery and a delusion. When hunger can be relieved without food, and thirst quenched without drink, and weariness removed without rest, then, and not till then, will men find peace without Christ.

Is this peace your own? Bought by Christ with His own blood, offered by Christ freely to all who are willing to receive it — is this peace your own? Oh, rest not: rest not till you can give a satisfactory answer to my question — Have you peace? Are you justified?

IV. Let me show you, in the last place, the hand by which the privilege of peace is received.

I ask your special attention to this part of our subject. There is scarcely any point in Christianity so important as the means by which Christ, justification, and peace, become the property of a man's soul. Many I fear, would go with me so far as I have gone in this paper, but here would part company. Let us endeavour to lay hold firmly on the truth.

The means by which a man obtains an interest in Christ and all His benefits, is simple faith. There is but one thing needful in order to be justified by His blood, and have peace with God. That one thing is to believe on Him. This is the peculiar mark of a true Christian. He believes on the Lord Jesus for His salvation. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "Whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Acts xvi. 31; John iii. 16).

Without this faith it is impossible to be saved. A man may be moral, amiable, good-natured, and respectable. But if he does not believe on Christ, he has no pardon, no justification, no title to heaven. "He that believeth not is condemned already." "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life: but the wrath of God abideth on him." "He that believeth not, shall be damned" (John iii. 18, 36; Mark xvi. 16).

Beside this faith nothing whatever is needed for a man's justification. Beyond doubt, repentance, holiness, love, humility, prayerfulness, will always be seen in the justified man. But they do not in the smallest degree

justify him in the sight of God. Nothing joins a man to Christ, nothing justifies, but simple faith. "To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." "We conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Rom. iv. 5; iii. 28).

Having this faith, a man is at once completely justified. His sins are at once removed. His iniquities are at once put away. The very hour that he believes he is reckoned by God entirely pardoned, forgiven, and a righteous man. His justification is not a future privilege, to be obtained after a long time and great pains. It is an immediate present possession. Jesus says, "He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life." Paul says, "By Him all that believeth are justified from all things" (John vi. 47; Acts xiii. 39).

I need hardly say that it is of the utmost importance to have clear views about the nature of true saving faith. It is constantly spoken of as the distinguishing characteristic of New Testament Christians. They are called "believers." In the single Gospel of John, "believing" is mentioned eighty or ninety times. There is hardly any subject about which so many mistakes are made. There is none about which mistakes are so injurious to the soul. The darkness of many a sincere inquirer may be traced up to confused views about faith. Let us try to get a distinct idea of its real nature.

True saving faith is not the possession of everybody. The opinion that all who are called Christians are, as a matter of course, believers, is a most mischievous delusion. A man may be baptized like Simon Magus, and yet have no part or lot in Christ. The visible Church contains unbelievers as well as believers. "All men have not faith" (2 Thess. iii. 2).

True saving faith is not a mere matter of feeling. A man may have many good feelings and desires in his mind towards Christ, and yet they may all prove as temporary and short-lived as the morning cloud and the early dew. Many are like the stony-ground hearers, and "hear the word with joy." Many will say under momentary excitement, "I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest" (Matt. viii. 19).

True saving faith is not a bare assent of the intellect to the fact that Christ died for sinners. This is not a whit better than the faith of devils. They know who Jesus is. They believe, and they do more, they tremble (James ii. 19).

True saving faith is an act of the whole inner man. It is an act of the head, heart, and will, all united and combined. It is an act of the soul, in which — seeing his own guilt, danger, and helplessness — and seeing at

the same time Christ offering to save him — a man ventures on Christ — flees to Christ — receives Christ as his only hope — and becomes a willing dependent on Him for salvation. It is an act which becomes at once the parent of a habit. He that has it may not always be equally sensible of his own faith, but in the main he lives by faith, and walks by faith.

True faith has nothing whatever of merit about it, and in the highest sense cannot be called a work. It is but laying hold of a Saviour's hand, leaning on a husband's arm, and receiving a physician's medicine. It brings with it nothing to Christ but a sinful man's soul. It gives nothing contributes nothing, pays nothing, performs nothing. It only receives, takes, accepts, grasps, and embraces the glorious gift of justification which Christ bestows, and by renewed daily acts enjoys that gift.

Of all Christian graces, faith is the most important. Of all it is the simplest in reality. Of all it is the most difficult to make men understand in practice. The mistakes into which men fall about it are endless. Some who have no faith never doubt for a moment that they are believers. Others, who have faith, can never be persuaded that they are believers at all. But nearly every mistake about faith may be traced up to the old root of natural pride. Men will persist in sticking to the idea that they are to pay something of their own in order to be saved. As to a faith which consists in receiving only, and paying nothing at all, it seems as if they could not understand it.

Saving faith is the hand of the soul. The sinner is like a drowning man at the point of sinking. He sees the Lord Jesus Christ holding out help to him. He grasps it and is saved. This is faith.

Saving faith is the eye of the soul. The sinner is like the Israelite bitten by the fiery serpent in the wilderness, and at the point of death. The Lord Jesus Christ is offered to him as the brazen serpent, set up for his cure. He looks and is healed. This is faith.

Saving faith is the mouth of the soul. The sinner is starving for want of food, and sick of a sore disease. The Lord Jesus Christ is set before him as the bread of life, and the universal medicine. He receives it, and is made well and strong. This is faith.

Saving faith is the foot of the soul. The sinner is pursued by a deadly enemy, and is in fear of being overtaken. The Lord Jesus Christ is put before him as a strong tower, a hiding place, and a refuge. He runs into it and is safe. This is faith.

If you love life, cling fast hold to the doctrine of justification by faith. If you love inward peace, let your views of faith be very simple. Honour every part of the Christian religion. Contend to the death for the necessity

of holiness. Use diligently and reverently every appointed means of grace; but do not give to these things the office of justifying your soul in the slightest degree. If you would have peace, remember that faith alone justifies, and that not as a meritorious work, but as the act that joins the soul to Christ. Believe me, the crown and glory of the Gospel is "justification by faith without the deeds of the law."

Letter

by Rev. Hugh Martin, D.D.

Montrose, 15th April, 1877

My Dear Friend,—I hope this will find you well. My own health is fairly good at present, at least, as the Scotch say — "I canna' complain."

I have been, for the last hour or two, revising the proof sheets of a small treatise I am writing on the "Inspiration of Scripture," and of which I hope to send you a copy shortly; and, as a relief from the strain of thinking, I now take up my pen to have a quiet talk with you. And if we at times find that it is a relief to unbosom our minds to a friend, what ought it to be to us to have the privilege of drawing near to a throne of grace, there to unbosom all our wants, our cares and our griefs, aye, and our poor praises? We would not be presumptuous with the Lord, but holy familiarity is not presumption. People that live together in family have intercourse and communing that those outside do not know anything about; and does not our living in family as redeemed, adopted children, with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost suggest and warrant a holy liberty and intimacy of communion with God which the world knows nothing of? "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

For example, when we pray for our children, are we not ourselves to speak to God as children to a Father able and ready to help us? Are we not to be earnest and importunate in asking from Him what we most of all desire for them, and that is their salvation? And can we contemplate seriously the possibility of not getting an answer in peace regarding them, and not be stirred up to further solicitude and importunity on their behalf? Can we bear the thought that any one of them should be an enemy of God, and in a state of guilty and irrecoverable rebellion against Him to all eternity? We cannot. And are we not in our prayers to tell this to God? We are. Are we not to tell Him that we cannot and dare not anticipate

anything less at His hands than the salvation of each one of them? Will He be offended if we tell Him that we cannot endure the thought of their everlasting perdition — of their being left to be blasphemers of His name to all eternity? Will He be displeased if, in our infirmity and agony of feeling, we thus bring before His grace and power the case of their immortal souls? I do not believe that He will. Has He not said that from those who walk uprightly He will withhold no good thing (walking uprightly does not mean, as some foolishly imagine, walking in celestial perfection on earth, but walking within the bounds of the covenant of grace), and is not the salvation of the children whom God has committed to my care a “good thing?” It may be true that in this matter I know not what spirit I am of, when I tell God that I cannot bear to think of any one of them being shut out for ever from His favour. But whatsoever spirit I am of in the matter, I shall tell the Lord of it fully and unreservedly, and He will know. And I will ask Him, what did He give me the example of Jacob for, who wrestled for the blessing? What did He give me the promise of His word for, “a seed shall serve him that shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation?” And what did He give me the name of Christ for, of whose name it is written that “men shall be blessed in Him, and all nations shall call Him blessed?” And what did Christ leave the promise of the Holy Spirit with His church for, who, “when He is come, reprove or convinces the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment?”

Also, when we pray for the church of God, for the cause of Christ and for the advancement of His kingdom in the earth, are we not to use holy boldness? Have we not the Lord’s own words — “The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force?” Do we give Christ credit for the loving kindness and condescension manifested in such a prediction — “The kingdom suffers violence, and the violent take it by force?” Christ is there evidently contemplating with satisfaction His children importunate on behalf of the kingdom; He is contemplating some of such wrestling as He had seen done in the past, as to be done still, and again in the future. It is our supposed vindication of ourselves in getting quit of a troublesome beggar. “O, the man was getting quite violent.” But it is Christ’s vindication of Himself for granting the victory and for bestowing the blessing — “O, the poor beggars are getting quite violent, I must suffer myself to yield, to be “taken by them.” “And he blessed him there!” And if Christ and His poor beggars understand one another, is not that enough? If He and they are of one mind — they not content without the blessing, and He not content without bestowing it — who else has any business or right to interfere? The devil, does he gainsay

them? Ah, but Christ and His children are standing together in the heart of the promise — “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed” — and are thus railed in within an impregnable barrier which has been placed there by God’s almighty hand. And, while Christ and His children stand together there within the fortress of the promise transacting their love-matches, Satan has been cursed off the ground with the beastliness of a creeping thing, awaiting in helpless rage and enmity the day when he and his seed shall be for ever shut out into the outer darkness.

This reminds me that I have a question to answer your A_____, “Is Satan glad at people’s troubles?” God bless the boy and teach him, and lead him early into the paths of His salvation. What can I answer? I hope he doesn’t think I have any special means of knowing the mind of the arch-enemy! Well, tell him from me that Satan is a being — a person — of pure unmingled malignity and venom, without a single good point to mitigate the unalleviated fulness that is in him of sin, and nothing but sin; not a single redeeming point about him to make him even pitiable or deserving of anything but the unrelieved eternity of woe that is before him. Perhaps this is not a direct answer, but, as I have told A_____ what sort of a being Satan is, let him answer his own question himself. And tell him from me, moreover, that to incur Satan’s hatred for fleeing to Jesus Christ — who is unmingled love and holiness, and who has in His cross triumphed over Satan and is blessed for ever, and blessed specially in blessing — to incur Satan’s hatred for fleeing to Jesus is nothing to speak of, cruel and fearful though his hatred be. Yea, rather, if his hatred is incurred for Christ’s sake it is something not only not to be dreaded but something we should be glad and thankful for having got grace to do.

But I have given you enough “talk” to-night. With affectionate interest in you and yours — I am, &.,

HUGH MARTIN.

Separation

by Rev. James S. Sinclair

Separation from an Unsound Church viewed in the Light of Scripture

In last number we referred our readers to the testimony of the Old Testament on the subject of separation from an unsound Church, and quoted a series of events from that part of the Word of God that shed light

upon this subject. We adduced in succession the call of Abraham the case of Lot and Sodom, the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, Achan in the camp, and Israel's separate position as a nation and church, as historical facts that give directions to all who desire to follow the Lord fully in His truth and cause.

II.—Let us observe, secondly, special passages in the Old Testament that point out the path of duty in this matter.

(1) The first passage to which we direct attention is 2 Chron. xix. 2—“And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? Therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord.” These words were addressed to Jehoshaphat after he returned from Ramoth-gilead. He had joined affinity with Ahab, and had gone out with him against the Syrians. The Syrians were the enemies of both Israel and Judah, yet the Lord was displeased with Jehoshaphat king of Judah for assisting Ahab king of Israel, even when he was arrayed against the common enemy. Ahab was a wicked king, the patron of idolatrous worship, and the persecutor of the true prophets of God. It was not meet, therefore, that the good Jehoshaphat should, on any account, have fellowship with him, and therefore he incurred the righteous anger of the Lord by what he did. Strange to say, Jehoshaphat did not leave his religion behind him even when he went out as Ahab's helper, and yet this did not take away his guilt. We find that Jehoshaphat was not satisfied with Ahab's 400 prophets, and asked if there was any other prophet of the Lord to be found. Ahab said, “There is yet one man, by whom we may enquire of the Lord; but I hate him, for he never prophesied good unto me but always evil; the same is Micaiah the son of Imla.” And Jehoshaphat, entering a mild protest against Ahab's angry words said, “Let not the king say so.” Micaiah was brought, and again prophesied evil. Ahab bitterly rejected the prophet's testimony. Jehoshaphat heard it in silence, and went up with Ahab to battle. Ahab was killed, and Jehoshaphat returned to find by the mouth of another prophet that he had incurred even a greater judgment, the anger of the Lord. The words of Jehu embody a principle which runs through the Word of God, that it is not the duty of those who fear the Lord to help those who hate Him, but rather to maintain a consistent testimony against them. Of course, due care must be taken to act upon this principle in a Scriptural way. Ahab not merely lacked the root principle of true religion, but was an open enemy to God. We may not be called upon to separate from men whose doctrine, life, and conversation are consistent with the Gospel, though they do not

appear in our private judgment to have much or any spiritual life in them. But when men publicly rise up against fundamental truths of the Word of God they show themselves enemies to the Lord and subverters of His cause, and we are, therefore, bound to have no fellowship with them. When religious bodies protect and honour men of this stamp and adopt their views, in spite of appeals and protests to the contrary, it is our duty to separate from these bodies in order to maintain the truth.

(2) Another passage is to be found in Psalm 26: 4-5. "I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers. I have hated the congregation of evil doers; and will not sit with the wicked." Now, we are not to understand by this that the psalmist would not come into contact with vain persons in any circumstances whatsoever. He must needs then have gone out of the world. But the passage plainly points out that he would not associate with such persons and make them his companions, counsellors, and brethren. The following illustration has been sometimes used wherewith to make the Free Presbyterian cause appear ridiculous and contemptible in the eyes of men. A house is attacked by robbers, and the children instead of abiding by their aged and helpless parents make for the door and leave them to the mercy of the intruders. How unchristian and unfaithful a course this is! The illustration entirely misses the mark. What would one think of children who remained in the house, received the robbers as brethren, gave them everything in it, allowed them to usurp the parental place of authority, and submitted to see their parents thrust into a corner, there to live or die, at the mercy of those robbers? That is the exact state of the case with those who remain in the Free Church. But would it not have been a nobler part for the children to have left the house and taken the parents with them rather than to have placed the whole family in the hands of robbers? Who are the real parents in the case? Just those who adhere to the original standards of the Free Church. The Free Presbyterians, therefore, whatever their sins and shortcomings, acted the more faithful and Christian part in not leaving the people to the mercy of men who were robbing the Church of its best treasures, yea, of its very life, but rather left the house with its temporal belongings and took their parents with them in order to save the family from death. The psalmist, under the teaching of the Holy Ghost, would not sit with men and call them brethren, whom he regarded not merely in their private but in their public and ecclesiastical capacity as evil doers, robbers of the Church of God.

Other passages from the Old Testament might be quoted, but these will suffice. They show that it is a highly Scriptural duty for the true Church to

maintain a position in the world separate from those who are opposed to the cause of God.

Objections — (1) It may be objected to what has been stated on this subject that in Old Testament times we have such cases as Joseph in Pharaoh's house, Obadiah in Ahab's, and Daniel and the other Jews princes in Babylon. Let it be observed, however, that these eminent men occupied civil not ecclesiastical offices in their several stations, so that their religion was not compromised thereby. Besides, their recorded deeds prove that they were faithful to the Lord in a more than ordinary measure, notwithstanding the temptations of the environment.

(2) An objection may be also raised from the fact that Israel was bound even in backsliding times to worship where the ark of the Lord rested. But where does the ark rest now under the new dispensation? Certainly, not in one fixed locality, but wherever the truth as it is in Jesus is maintained and declared in its purity. The confinement to a fixed locality for divine worship was evidently a part of the bondage of the former dispensation. It was very specially felt to be so in periods of declensions, for in the time of Eli's wicked sons, we are told that the people abhorred the sacrifice. There was then a disposition among the pious in Israel to refrain from coming to Shiloh, a disposition that did not spring from sin but from holiness, and it was only the peculiar divine arrangements for that dispensation that would have prevented an entire renunciation of the place of sacrifice.

(3) The last objection we shall now consider is that sometimes drawn from the words: "I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord." — (Zeph. 3:12). The words "in the midst of thee," are emphasised by objectors as if in any body, however corrupt, the Lord promises to leave "an afflicted and poor people," and that, therefore, it is our duty to remain in such bodies. Now, we are not prepared to say, but the Lord, in His mysterious providence, may leave some of His people even in such a corrupt body as the Church of Rome, but would any reasonable person on that account join that body, or were our Reformers wrong in leaving it because Martin Boos and a few good people remained in it? Far from it. But the passage before us is not applicable to such cases as these. It contains a promise to Judah which represents the true Church, that it is not merely the Lord's providential but His gracious purpose to leave in the midst thereof a people who shall trust in His name. No body that does not bear the marks of the true Church can consistently lay claim to this promise. The Lord may leave particular so-called Churches, that have departed from the

faith, wholly destitute, so that it is vain for men to make use of this promise to defend their own unfaithfulness in staying in corrupt bodies such as the Free Church.

Romanism Self-condemned (2)

by Rev. John MacLeod MA, Stornoway

(Continued from page 58)

In Roman Catholic circles 1978 will be particularly remembered as the year of the three Popes. Paul VI died in August and his successor John-Paul I seven weeks afterward. The present John-Paul II was then elected and inaugurated. There were two breaks with tradition: the John-Pauls were not publicly enthroned like their predecessors and the surviving one is a non-Italian. The mass-media manipulators saw to it that millions throughout the world were made aware of what was happening. The pomp and pageantry of the successive inaugurations with a centre-stage Pope surrounded by scarlet-robed cardinals and mitred bishops provided the spectacular setting for what was described as "magnificent theatre".

The fact that the present Pontiff was not ceremonially crowned does not, as we see it, mean that he has renounced in any way the claims made by his predecessors who were. The very title "John-Paul II" implies a regal or imperial claim. The adoption of a double name by the last two Popes was an innovation and some have thought that this was done to indicate the bond of continuity with immediate predecessors on the papal throne. Both John XXIII and Paul VI were crowned and we do not believe that John-Paul II regards himself as in any way inferior to them. The three-tiered crown with the inscription "*Vicarius Filii Dei*" (Vicar — or substitute — of the Son of God) was not actually, or publicly at least, placed on his head but all that is symbolised by it is still laid claim to. When Paul VI was crowned in 1963 he was addressed thus: "*Receive this tiara, adorned with these three crowns and know that thou art Father of Princes and Kings, the Pastor of the Universe, and the Vicar on earth of the Lord Jesus Christ*". Have we heard or read of the present Pontiff declaring himself as not to be regarded as invested with the same titles and powers as Paul VI and all his 262 supposed predecessors right back as it is

claimed to the Apostle Peter? We have not, and we would be naive in the extreme were we to think that at some future date John-Paul II will announce to the world that such claims were both blasphemous and spurious! The Papal coat of arms in 1981 still prominently features the crossed keys and three-tiered tiara; the Papal seal bears the title JOHANNES PAVLVS II — PONTIFEX MAXIMUS and he is, by all accounts, as authoritarian as ever any of his predecessors. A recent publication from a Roman Catholic source and issued, it is believed, with the full approval of the present Pope sets forth the position with unmistakeable clarity. "The Bishop of the Church of Rome is the successor of St Peter and therefore the ultimate Guarantor of the Teaching and Will of the Divine Founder, and he cannot fail in this role"



. . . "He is not a first among equals, a prime minister; he is a Sovereign, by divine authority as well as election." If the claim to be the Vicar or Substitute of Christ on earth is to be with credibility and consistency maintained then the claimant must still demand recognition as one invested with both temporal and spiritual jurisdiction over all nations. Christ is "King of Nations" as well as "King of Saints" and His "vicar" must be supreme in both spheres also. The Pope's claim to temporal jurisdiction may be played down in our day but that is only because it is not politic or expedient to emphasise it. If Rome were to gain total ascendancy we would soon know the truth. In the line of Papal succession Leo X occupies a prominent place. There were no television or cine cameras around when he was crowned in the early 16th century but the event was still to be kept in remembrance by means of a medal which was struck at Rome. It may be seen in the British Museum. The medal gives us an insight into the manner in which the coronation was carried out and at a glance we should be able to discern the blasphemous nature of the ceremony and see that the mitred attendants of John-Paul II's 1978 inauguration were present there also.

On the reverse, it will be noted, is the inscription (found also, we are told, on other medals) *Quem creant adorant* ("whom they create, they adore"). Does not what Rome herself has stamped in enduring metal confirm the Reformers' view, that the incumbent of the Papal chair was none other than the "Man of sin" and "Son of perdition" of 2 Thessalonians, Chapter 2, "who opposeth and exalteth himself above all



that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God?"

Leo X goes down in history as the Pope defied and denounced by Luther. It was he who authorised Tetzel to practice the nefarious trade of indulgence-selling. Wylie neatly sums up Leo's design. "From the Seven Hills would flow a river of spiritual blessing. To Rome would flow back a river of Gold." Tetzel led the procession from town to town carrying a great red cross on which the Papal coat of arms were suspended. "The Lord our God no longer reigns," Tetzel was wont to preach, "He has resigned all power to the Pope." Collision with Luther was inevitable. When the Wittenberg professor heard of what was being perpetrated in the name of the Christian religion, he said, "*By the help of God, I will make a hole in his drum.*" That was no idle boast and the carrying of it into effect was to lead to the shaking of Europe and the rending of the very foundations of Leo's imperial throne in Rome. It led to the burning of the "execrable bull of Antichrist" and to the identification of the Church of Rome with apocalyptic Babylon. Four hundred and sixty years later Leo X's successor came to Germany and met the leaders of Martin Luther's Evangelical Church and, in the interests of ecumenism, acknowledged that the Roman Catholic Church's conduct in 16th Century Germany was not blameless. To be of any value we would think any admission of guilt ought to be commensurate with the notoriety of the evils perpetrated at the time. That was not forthcoming.

In common with Leo X, John-Paul II, as noted already, styles himself "PONTIFEX MAXIMUS" or Supreme Pontiff. Hislop investigated the origin of that title as well as the whole of the Papal system and the conclusion he came to (fully documented) we give in his own words. "From the Pope downwards, all can be shown to be *now* radically Babylonian. The College of Cardinals, with the Pope at its head, is just

the counterpart of the Pagan College of Pontiffs, with its "Pontifex Maximus", or "Sovereign Pontiff," which had existed in Rome from the earliest times, and which is known to have been framed on the model of the grand original Council of Pontiffs at Babylon. The Pope *now* pretends to supremacy in the Church as the successor of Peter, to whom it is alleged that our Lord exclusively committed the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. But here is the important fact that, *till* the Pope was invested with the title, which for a *thousand* years had had attached to it the power of the keys of Janus and Cybele, no such claim to pre-eminence, or anything approaching to it, was ever publicly made on his part, on *the ground of his being the possessor of the keys bestowed on Peter*. Very early indeed, did the bishops of Rome show a proud and ambitious spirit; but, for the first three centuries, their claim for superior honour was founded simply on the dignity of their see, as being of the imperial city, the capital of the Roman world. When, however, the seat of empire was removed to the East, and Constantinople threatened to eclipse Rome, some new ground for maintaining the dignity of the Bishop of Rome must be sought. That new ground was found when, about 378, the Pope fell heir to the keys that were the symbols of two well-known Pagan divinities at Rome. Janus bore a key, and Cybele bore a key; and these are the two keys that the Pope emblazons on his arms as the ensigns of his spiritual authority. How the Pope came to be regarded as wielding the power of these keys will appear in the sequel; but that he did in the popular apprehension, become entitled to that power at the period referred to is certain. Now, when he had come, in the estimation of the *Pagans*, to occupy the place of the representatives of Janus and Cybele, and therefore to be entitled to bear their keys, the Pope saw that if he could only get it believed among the *Christians* that *Peter alone* had the power of the keys, and that he was Peter's successor, then the sight of these keys would keep up the delusion, and thus, though the temporal dignity of Rome as a *city* should decay, his own dignity as the *Bishop* of Rome would be more firmly established than ever. On this policy it is evident he acted. Some time was allowed to pass away, and then, when the secret working of the mystery of iniquity had prepared the way for it, for the first time did the Pope publicly assert his pre-eminence, as founded on the keys given to Peter. About 378 was he raised to the position which gave him, in Pagan estimation, the power of the keys referred to. In 431, and not before, did he publicly lay claim to the possession of Peter's keys. This surely, is a striking coincidence. Does the reader ask how it was possible that men could give credit to such a baseless assumption? The words of Scripture, in regard to this very

subject, give a very solemn but satisfactory answer (2 Thessalonians 2: 10,11): "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved . . . For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." Few lies could be more gross; but, in course of time, it came to be widely believed; and now, as the statue of Jupiter is worshipped at Rome as the veritable image of Peter, so the keys of Janus and Cybele have for ages been devoutly believed to represent the keys of the same apostle."

Notes and Comments

New President of the United States

In January Mr Ronald Reagan was sworn in as 40th President of the United States of America. He comes to the White House at a difficult time in the history of America, the nation having been humiliated by the hostage crisis when Iranian students seized her diplomats in Teheran and held them captive for 444 days. President Reagan has also to face up to the very real threat of Russian communist expansion and its recent armed occupation of Afghanistan. Like Great Britain, America has to a considerable degree forsaken the teachings of God's Word. Only a return to the Bible can change the state of affairs in both countries. If President Reagan and the people of America give heed to the text on the open page of the Bible on which the President took the oath of office then there would be good hope for America. The Bible lay open at 2 Chron. 7:14, "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." May Britain follow the same course.

Violent Death Rate in Scotland

The latest figures issued show that the violent death rate for Scotland rose by 15 p.c. in the last year. A total of 84 persons died violent deaths in the country. This figure, though not as high as 1976 and 1977 when the figure rose above the 100 mark, is alarming and shows the serious state to which lawlessness has risen in the land. The sin of murder has become so common that it no longer causes the feeling of revulsion which it once did. This is not because this sin has become any less heinous in God's sight, but only because men have ceased to be affected by it as they ought. What need there is for a return to the Word of God as the only rule to guide us nationally and individually.

Scotland and Drink

In Scotland alcoholism has become a serious problem. In recent times under-age drinking has caused great concern and this early addiction to strong drink is likely to increase the cases of alcoholism in the future. Grampian Region report that under-age drinking is a serious and growing problem in their area. The production of whisky is one of the main industries in Scotland, yet the baneful effects of the misuse of intoxicating liquor cannot be fully measured. We fear that so far as much of this trade is concerned, it will bring many to an early grave and will bring misery in this life itself to thousands of people throughout our land. Those who grow rich at the expense of that misery will yet have to give account to God for their part in it. May the day speedily come in Scotland when strong drink will no longer be abused by the people of the land. Only a day of God's power throughout the nation will bring this about.

Church Notes**Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)**

Western: At Laide on Tuesday 10th March at 11 a.m.

Northern: At Dingwall on Tuesday 14th April at 2.30 p.m.

Skye: At Portree on Tuesday 21st April at 11 a.m.

Committee Meetings (D.V.)

The following Committees will meet at Inverness Church:

Tuesday 24th March

9 a.m.—10 a.m. Church Extension.

10 a.m.—11 a.m. Church Magazines.

11 a.m.—12 noon Religion and Morals.

Sabbath Observance.

Welfare of Youth.

12 noon.—1 p.m. Publications.

1.30 p.m.—2.30 p.m. Training of Ministry.

2.30 p.m.—4.30 p.m. Finance.

7 p.m.—9 p.m. Jewish and Foreign Missions.

Wednesday 25th March

2.30 p.m.—4 p.m. Dominions and Overseas.

Notice to Conveners/Clerks of Standing Committees

The Conveners/Clerks of all Standing Committees should note that all Committee Reports to the Synod must be in the hands of the Clerk of Synod by 31st March, 1981, (DV) for printing purposes. These Reports should contain information of the work of the Committees during the year. Recommendations and proposals should be sent up as separate items for the Synod Agenda.

*(Rev) Donald MacLean,
Clerk of Synod.*

Notice re Synod Agenda

Clerks of Presbyteries, Conveners/Clerks of Committees, and all other interested parties should note that all items of business intended to be placed on the Synod Agenda must be in the hands of the Clerk of Synod by Thursday, 9th April, 1981. (DV).

*(Rev) Donald MacLean,
Clerk of Synod.*

Protest re Pope's Proposed Visit

Rt. Hon. George Younger, M.P.,
Secretary of State for Scotland,
New St. Andrew's House,
EDINBURGH.

Dear Sir,

I am instructed by the Southern Presbytery to write to you to protest in the strongest terms at the proposed visit of the Pope to Britain and in particular to Scotland. Glasgow and Edinburgh have been mentioned as places likely to be visited and as both cities fall within the bounds of this Presbytery we feel we must make known to you our feelings on this matter.

The Presbytery feel duty bound to point out that our democratic institutions and many of the secular freedoms we enjoy are the fruits of the Reformation by which our land was delivered from Romish darkness. It is also worthy of note that the Westminster Confession of Faith, which has for over 300 years been the official subordinate standard of the Church of Scotland and which is secured in the constitution by the Act of Settlement and the Treaty of Union, says of the Pope: "There is no other head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ: nor can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof; but is that Antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the church against Christ and all

that is called God." I need hardly add that the Confession referred to is based altogether on Scripture, the Bible as the Word of God.

No doubt many will regard this language and sentiment as out of date but let it be remembered that the present Pope has not retreated in a single step from the position held by any of his predecessors but makes the same extravagant claims as they did, styling himself, "Supreme Pontiff", "Holy Father" and "Vicar of Christ" and openly averring that the salvation of all men is dependant upon submission to the Bishop of Rome. I need hardly remind you that still, in 1980, the Papacy claims to itself the power to free people from the lawful allegiance they owe to kings, queens, parliaments, etc.

Such spiritual and secular claims the Presbytery regards as blasphemous and utterly false and must by their very nature be obnoxious to all true Christians as being a denial of Christ's Headship of His Church in all ages, of His Mediatorial Office and of "the faith once delivered to the saints."

It is on such solemn and Scriptural grounds that the Presbytery bases its objections to the proposed visit of the Pope. We feel most strongly that to entertain this person would be a serious denial of the Protestant faith and a betrayal of our Reformed heritage and that that is the light in which it will be viewed by the R.C. Church. It is our fear that such a visit will cause the visitation of the wrath of God upon us as a nation and we urge you to use all the power and influence of your office to prevent it.

On behalf of the Presbytery.

Yours faithfully,

D. J. MacDonald,
Clerk of Southern Presbytery

Acknowledgment of Donations

The General Treasurer, Mr W.D. FRASER, 20, Daleview Avenue, Glasgow, G12 0HE acknowledges the following donations with sincere thanks:—

Sustentation Fund: F. Campbell, £15; Mrs MacKellar, Tarbert, Lochfyne, "In memory of my father, John Weir", £100.

Home Misslon Fund: F. Campbell, £5.

Home of Rest Fund: Mrs M. MacLennan, late of Lochcarron, now of Portree, £200.

Chesley Manse Fund: Anon., £20; A Friend, Glasgow postmark, £7; Psalm 72v19, Lairg postmark, £30; Interested Friend, Gairloch postmark, £5.

Trinitarian Bible Society: North Tolsta congr., £58.62; Glendale Congr., £55.50; Ness Congregation, £207; Raasay Congr., £12; Staffin Congr., £115; Duirinish Congr., £82; Vatten Sabbath School, £10.

FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND **CONGREGATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS SENT TO GENERAL TREASURER — YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 1980**

Places	Ministers and Missionaries	Sustentation Fund	Home Mission Fund	Jewish and Foreign Mission Fund	Aged and Infirm Ministers, etc. Fund	College and Library Fund	Organisation Fund	General Building Fund	Dominions and Overseas Fund	Publications Fund	TOTAL
NORTHERN PRESBYTERY											
Aberdeen	Rev. J. M. Tallach	£1123.02	£36.67	£173.94	£96.97		£31.20	£51.47	£86.70		£1599.97
Bonar Bridge }	Mr D. M. Campbell	760.00	102.00	107.00	41.00		26.00		35.00	34.00	1105.00
Lairg }		817.00	112.00	141.00	35.00	£3.00	41.00	19.00	35.00	40.00	1243.00
Beauly }	Rev. D. B. MacLeod	1669.86	89.00	490.95	60.00		41.00	60.00	70.00	167.00	2647.81
Dingwall }		2500.00	268.00	388.80	150.00	4.00	100.00	100.30	104.00	224.00	3839.10
Dornoch }	Mr D. M. MacLennan	361.00	204.00	202.00	17.30		30.80	13.00	25.00	14.00	867.10
Rogart }		120.00	260.00	120.00	50.00		20.00	20.00	27.00	20.00	637.00
Fearn }	Rev. J. Ross	1650.00	130.00	170.00	65.00		65.00	70.00	55.00	78.80	2283.80
Tain }		1650.00	188.00	237.00	198.00	0.50	68.00	70.00	89.00	118.00	2618.50
Halkirk }	Rev. D. A. MacLean	485.71	79.00	105.00	31.00		22.00	23.00	25.00	19.00	789.71
Helmsdale }		150.00	10.00	10.00	10.00						180.00
Thurso }	Rev. A. F. MacKay	496.71	56.00	70.50	53.00		11.00	37.00	2.00	5.00	731.21
Inverness }		12000.00	2000.00	2500.00	2500.00	500.00	1000.00	1000.00	600.00	400.00	22500.00
Kinlochbervie }	Rev. S. F. Tallach	1560.40	200.50	238.00	45.00		71.00	42.40	43.00	40.00	2240.30
Scourie }		378.00	79.00	71.00	22.00		37.80	22.45	22.00	23.35	655.60
Daviot }	Mr Jas. MacLeod	773.00	171.86	182.14	62.00		54.00	50.00	70.00	15.34	1378.34
Tomatin }		445.00	120.00	133.00	48.00		50.00	43.00	60.00	15.33	914.33
Stratherrick }	Rev. R. R. Sinclair	700.00	91.72	118.30	54.10	5.00	40.00	43.00	38.25	15.33	1105.70
Strathay }		126.00	303.00	159.00	54.00		44.00	37.00	43.50	50.30	816.80
Wick }		1362.00	222.10	308.79	105.60		87.50	81.85	80.45	88.70	2336.99
		£29127.70	£4722.85	£5926.42	£3697.97	£512.50	£1840.30	£1783.47	£1510.90	£1368.15	£50490.26
SOUTHERN PRESBYTERY											
Dumbarton	Rev. J. M. Brentnall	£1747.99	£113.00	£193.00	£75.00	£1.00	£44.60	£38.00	£56.00	£50.00	£2318.59
Edinburgh	Rev. D. Campbell	3067.85	300.00	379.50	131.79	43.29	111.28	117.28	161.61	158.00	4470.60
Fort William	Rev. J. A. MacDonald	1979.00	151.00	190.00	74.00	11.00	66.00	76.00	60.00	76.00	2683.00
St Jude's, Glasgow	Rev. D. MacLean	8454.77	1187.28	1761.96	551.45	116.01	447.81	430.51	539.77	437.30	13926.86
Dunoon }	Rev. L. MacLeod	230.00	15.00	15.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	5.00	4.00		299.00
Greenock }		1401.00	135.10	132.20	61.80		50.00	41.30	51.90	48.20	1921.50
Kames	Mr D. MacPherson	748.00	121.30	169.00	51.50		57.90	49.40	55.20	42.35	1294.65
London	Rev. A. MacPherson	2299.00	227.21	428.72	136.50	10.14	54.00	75.00	62.14	124.80	3417.51
Oban	Rev. A. Morrison	1193.00	103.00	123.00	42.31		61.35	48.72	41.80	40.40	1653.58
Stirling }	Rev. D. J. MacDonald	260.00	93.00	50.00	12.00		5.00	10.00	12.00	15.00	457.00
Dundee }		289.00	38.50	37.00	26.50		15.00	15.00	20.00	28.00	469.00
Perth }	Rev. D. Beattie	597.00	99.00	91.00	51.00	13.00	33.00	25.00	47.00		956.00
Barnoldswick		350.00	30.00	50.00	17.00		20.00	20.00	10.00	20.00	517.00
Vancouver, Canada	Rev. D. Beattie										
Toronto, Canada	Rev. M. MacInnes			126.70					49.53	107.80	284.03
Chesley, Canada											
		£22616.61	£2613.39	£3747.08	£1240.85	£204.44	£975.94	£951.21	£1170.95	£1147.85	£34668.32

Stornoway }	Rev. J. MacLellan	5287.45	497.70	612.35	241.00		298.90	183.80	171.30	207.80	7500.30
Bayhead, North Uist	Rev. A. Morrison	1629.96	150.50	157.50	32.90		49.00		56.50	49.50	2125.86
Breasclete		339.20	122.20	114.00	32.45		27.20	35.20	32.80	46.30	749.35
North Tolsta		3992.00	452.10	465.20	104.25		137.10	120.35	118.10	129.30	5518.40
North Harris	Rev. A. MacKay	2625.20	536.74	336.10	194.50	10.50	1.00	143.90	159.60	145.55	4153.09
South Harris	Rev. D. MacLean	3107.35	377.10	152.20	145.70	1.00	126.55	1.00	108.00	131.70	4150.60
Ness, Lewis	Rev. W. MacLean	2168.56	127.72	153.72	4.00	4.00	44.00	52.00	58.00	32.00	2644.00
Uig, Lewis	Rev. D. A. MacLennan	2260.00	60.00	65.00	60.00	30.00	25.00	50.00	25.00	50.00	2625.00

£22048.72	£2363.06	£2100.07	£835.80	£45.50	£724.75	£604.25	£754.30	£819.15	£30295.60
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WESTERN PRESBYTERY

Applecross	Rev. A. Murray	£1342.09	£203.50	£239.50	£47.39		£50.70	£44.94	£46.30	£30.25	£2004.67
Gairloch	Rev. A. MacDonald	3858.00	479.00	442.27	122.05		162.50	127.20	140.00	93.00	5424.02
Laide	Rev. D. A. Ross	1626.55	275.14	319.28	69.20		53.55	70.00	57.00	80.00	2550.72
Kyle of Lochalsh }	Mr J. D. Van Woerden	924.60	106.70	76.10	38.20		43.25	35.00	42.60	29.61	1296.06
Plockton		189.30	24.85	31.67	7.15		11.75	8.14	8.75	9.90	291.51
Lochbroom	Rev. N. Ross	2700.00	300.00	350.00	105.00		81.00	86.00	88.00		3790.00
Lochcarron	Rev. J. W. Ross	1600.00	197.00	358.50	38.00		47.12	36.70	45.00	56.62	2378.94
Lochinver }	Rev. A. Macaskill	1184.57	210.00	412.50	80.00		75.00	60.00	80.00	60.40	2162.47
Stoer & Drumbag }		1159.00	364.00	414.00	103.00	£3.00	88.00	83.00	83.00	70.00	2367.00
Shieldaig	Rev. D. M. Campbell	1794.62	154.00	217.00	53.00	1.00	28.00	54.00	59.00	39.00	2399.62

£16378.73	£2314.19	£2860.82	£662.99	£4.00	£640.87	£604.98	£649.65	£548.78	£24665.01
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SKYE PRESBYTERY

Bracadale		£1658.60	£126.00	£83.00	£76.00		£48.50	£55.50	£47.00	£67.50	£2162.10
Strath		2091.10	232.00	306.40	72.00	£3.00	55.00	57.00	53.00	51.50	2921.00
Flashadder	Mr D. MacKay	300.00	200.00	50.00	30.00		25.00	20.00	25.00	15.00	665.00
Glendale }	Rev. D. Nicolson	963.00	106.10	136.50	51.00	13.00	46.00	49.00	41.00	20.00	1425.60
Vatten }		765.50	85.50	105.50	45.40		41.00	36.65	47.00	47.00	1173.55
Waternish }		199.75	27.00	32.00	12.00		12.50	11.50	13.50	15.40	323.65
Portree	Rev. F. MacDonald	6020.41	1088.30	1133.72	303.08	11.71	299.53	310.55	346.76	305.70	9819.76
Raasay		1965.01	296.80	249.21	104.71	3.00	88.70	65.70	114.05	113.00	3000.18
Staffin	Rev. J. MacDonald	2125.40	175.10	201.50	80.00		61.10	53.50	81.75	88.60	2866.95

£16088.77	£2336.80	£2297.83	£774.19	£30.71	£677.33	£659.40	£769.06	£723.70	£24357.79
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AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND PRESBYTERY

Grafton, Australia	Rev. E. A. Rayner			£97.46	£95.96			£73.84			£267.26
Gisborne, NZ	Rev. J. Van Dorp	£200.00		271.60	116.00	£124.20		163.36	£100.00		975.16
Auckland, NZ				173.92	94.96			86.29			355.17
Sydney, NZ								50.00			50.00
Wellington, NZ		15.00		15.00				15.00			45.00

£215.00		£557.98	£306.92	£124.20			£388.49	£100.00	£1692.59
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SUMMARY

Northern Presbytery		£29127.70	£4722.85	£5926.42	£3697.97	£512.50	£1840.30	£1783.47	£1510.90	£1368.15	£50490.26
Southern Presbytery		22616.61	2613.39	3747.08	1240.85	204.44	975.94	951.21	1170.95	1147.85	34668.32
Outer Isles Presbytery		22048.72	2363.06	2100.07	835.80	45.50	724.75	604.25	754.30	819.15	30295.60
Western Presbytery		16378.73	2314.19	2860.82	662.99	4.00	640.87	604.98	649.65	548.78	24665.01
Skye Presbytery		16088.77	2336.80	2297.83	774.19	30.71	677.33	659.40	769.06	723.70	24357.79
Australia and New Zealand Presbytery		215.00		557.98	306.92	124.20		388.49		100.00	1692.59

£106475.53	£14350.29	£17490.20	£7518.72	£921.35	£4859.19	£4603.31	£5243.35	£4707.63	£166169.57
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The Treasurers of the following Congregations acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:—

Aberdeen: K.M., Stornoway, £10; Anon per R.M., £5; Anon per R.M., £10; M.G., Glasgow, £5; "F", Inverness Postmark, £10; A.G., Inverness, £3; Glasgow postmark, £7; Edinburgh postmark, £5; Anon per Rev. J.T., £35; Anon per Rev. J.T., £5; Friend, Finsbay per D.K.L., £100; Friends, Leverburgh per D.K.L., £20; Anon, Lairg, £25; all for Aberdeen Property Fund.

Applecross: Anon, in memory of a loving Father (envelope in plate), £10; Alness Friends, £10 per Rev A. Murray; (Envelope in plate) Anon, £5; A Friend, £5; A friend, Kirkhill, £10, all for Sustentation Fund; A Friend, £5 for Jewish and Foreign Missions; Alness Friends, £10 per Rev. A. Murray; Mrs M. MacLennan, Portree (late of Raasay Cottage, Ardaneaskan), £200 per Rev. J.W. Ross, both for Congr. Purposes; Mrs C. MacD., Ballifeary Home £2; Mrs Macd., Lochcarron £2, both per Rev. A. Murray and both for Cuaig Mission Hall Repairs.

Dumbarton: Friend, Kyle of Lochalsh, £9 per T. MacRae; E.M. (27/11/80), £20; Friends (8/12/80), £20, all for Manse Fund.

Flashadder: Envelope in church plate, £20 for Sust. Fund.

Fort William,: A Friend, £5 for Sust. Fund and £5 for Minibus (Envelope in plate); D. MacD., £10 for Sust. Fund per Rev. J.A. MacDonald.

Greenock: R.A.C., Bangor, N.I. £15; A Friend, Helensburgh, £5 per Rev. L. MacLeod, both for Congr. Funds; Anon, £20 for Trinitarian Bible Society.

Inverness: M.A. Nichol, Achnahaird, Achiltibuie, £25; in memory of her beloved sister and brother.

North Harris: A Friend, Tarbert, £5 for Communion expenses; A Friend, Kyles Scalpay, £20 (£15 for Sust. Fd, £5 for Car Fund); A Friend, Thurso, £2 for Publication Fund; A Friend, Bayhead, Meavag, £5 for Church and Manse Property; a Friend, Leacklee, £5 for Car Fund, all per Rev. A. MacKay; A Friend, Harris House, £1 for door collection; A Friend, Grosebay, £100 for where most needed.

Oban: Mrs T, £10 for Congr. Fund; Mrs E.M. MacK, £5 for Italian Mission Fund, both per Rev. A.M. Envelope in plate, £5 for Sust. Fund.

Portree: Friend, £5 for Manse Expenses; Mrs F.G., Uig, £2; Anon (envelope in plate) £1.50, both for T.B.S.; Mrs. McK., Budhmer, £1 for Organisation Fund; Anon, £10 (envelope in plate) for Sust. Fund; Mrs M., Fingal Place, £5 for Congr. Fund; Anon (envelope in plate), £15 for Publications Fund; Anon (envelope in plate), £20 for Mission Work.

Raasay: Mrs MacLennan, Ardineaskan, £100 in remembrance of husband & family; A Friend, £5, both for Sust. Fund; A Friend, Inverarish, £1 for Property Fund.

Shieldaig: Anon, £3 for Car Fund per D.M.C.

South Harris: Tarbert Friend, £100 for Car Fund, per Rev D. MacL.; Mrs MacLennan, Raasay Cottage, Ardineaskin, £200 for Congregational Fund per Rev.D. MacL.; Friend of the Cause, £5 for Congregational Fund per Rev. D. MacL.; Friend of the Cause, £10 for Congregational Fund per D. MacKenzie.

Stornoway: Miss W.M., £10 for Minister's Car Fund; M. McD., £20 for Foreign Mission, both per Rev. J. MacLeod; Mrs C.M., 12 Balmerino Dr., Stornoway, £25 for Sust. Fund.

Strath: Friend, £2 for Sust. Fund per D.M.K.

Ullapool: 1 Chron. 29:14b, £100 for Sust. Fund.