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Behold, a greater than Solomon is here

Solomon was a type of Christ. Yet, as the types of the Old Testament were only shadowy representations of the reality which they represented, so, too, Solomon, notwithstanding his great glory and wisdom and riches and honour is only a shadowy representation of the One whom he typified — for behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

To the unbelieving generation amidst which Christ's lot was cast during the days of His humiliation, Christ would give no sign — though they desired a sign — but the sign of the prophet Jonas. To that generation He said: "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas." As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so the Son of Man was to be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. Because that generation repented not, the men of Nineveh who repented at the preaching of Jonas would rise up to condemn them, because a greater than Jonas was here. In a similar way would the queen of the south condemn the generation of Christ's day, for she had come from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon and behold, a greater than Solomon was here.

What a revelation of the splendour and glory of Solomon's Court awaited the Queen of Sheba when she came to Jerusalem on hearing of the fame of Solomon. She was well rewarded for her visit. She communed with Solomon of all that was in her heart and he answered all her questions. When she saw all his glory there was no more spirit in her and she had to confess that it was a true report that she had heard in her own land. Her acknowledgement was: "Howbeit, I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes have seen it: and behold the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard."

Yet after all, the eyes of the Queen of Sheba beheld only the glory of an earthly Solomon and her ears heard only the words of an earthly king.

When we turn, on the other hand, to Christ, who sits King upon His throne for evermore, we have to say, Behold, a greater than Solomon is here. The heavenly splendour and glory and wisdom of Zion's King exceeds that of Solomon as the heavens are above the earth. The kingship to which he had been exalted adorned Solomon; Christ adorned the Kingship to which He had been set apart. Solomon's glory was extrinsic glory; that of Christ was intrinsic, divine glory. As King of Israel Solomon possessed earthly regal glory; as King of Zion Christ possessed mediatorial kingly glory. Truly a greater than Solomon is here. Not only in personal glory but also in attendant glory does Zion's King exceed the glory of Solomon. If the Queen of Sheba had no spirit left in her when she visited the court of Solomon, what would be true of her if she visited the Court of the King of Zion. Who can tell but that in returning to her own land the glory of the greater than Solomon began to dawn upon her mind? She, too, like the Ethiopian eunuch who made a journey to Jerusalem at a later date, may have come to know the One whom the Father has set as King upon His holy hill of Zion, the One who is glorious in the eyes of His people because He was wounded for their transgressions and bruised for their iniquities. If by faith she came to view that glorious One she would then have to say, Behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

What was the message to the generation of Christ's day, and what is the message conveyed in these words of the Saviour to our own day? Is it not a message spelling out the certainty of eternal judgment to all who will not bow before Zion's King. All will be without excuse in the day of judgment who have not submitted themselves to Him. How slow poor sinners are to recognise His claims and render Him His due. Yet how certain it is that in the end of the day Christ will vindicate His right to the submission of all men unto Him.

Sermon

by Rev. Jonathan Ranken Anderson, Glasgow

'All things are ready: come unto the marriage.' Matt. 22:4.

We live in a fallen world. We are members of an apostate family. We lie under a heavy condemnation. But soon we must pass from our present state into another, and there receive according to the deeds done in the body, whether they have been good or bad.

In the prospect of this judgment we have everything to fear; for who can say he is pure from his iniquity? Who can stand at the tribunal of his own conscience? How then can any of the children of men stand at the bar of God, with the least hope of justifying himself, and obtaining a sentence of acquittal? 'If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?' (Ps. 130:3.). 'For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.' (1 John 3:20).

In this sad condition, the voice of mercy is heard in the everlasting gospel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. 'And well will it be for us, to listen to its tender and melting accents, and inquire seriously into their import and tendency. We owe this to Him from whom these accents come; for He is the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity. He is the great Creator of heaven and of earth, and of all the creatures that are therein. He is the Lord our Maker, and as such possesses claims upon us peculiarly weighty, and altogether unquestionable. Oh, let none turn away from Him who speaks to us from heaven! For soon the judgment shall be set, and the books shall be opened, and all the dead, small and great, stand before God. The eyes that now run over these pages shall then see the King of Glory on his great white throne; the truths that are set before them now will then form elements of the great assizes; and the gospel, which holds a prominent place here, will appear there as telling with powerful effect upon those who receive it or reject it. 'Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, Today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.' (Heb. 3:7, 8).

The form which the voice of mercy in the gospel assumes is that of invitation — a form benignant and persuasive. And to whom is it addressed? The answer returned by every page of the word of God is, to *sinners*. We may wonder at this. We believe the angels are amazed at it. But it is of the nature of mercy to show kindness to sinners; it is the design of grace to extend salvation to sinners; and it is the end of the plan of redemption to glorify its Author upon sinners.

Now, will any of our readers deny that this is their character? We doubt not that most, if not all of them, will be ready to allow that it is. By this admission you are shut up to the obligation of accepting the invitation given you to the marriage feast. And if this be not the practical result, rest assured you deceive yourselves, and do not allow you are sinners; or you are in ignorance, and do not know what it is to be sinners; or you are presumptuous, stifling conviction, resisting truth, and trifling with the salvation of your souls. Oh be persuaded to stop for a moment, and inquire which of these is your case, and take a course answerable to the

real posture of your affairs. To commit a mistake here, remember, may cost you your life — it may ruin your eternal interests — it may for ever damn your souls. 'Why will ye die, O house of Israel?' (Ezek. 33:11).

But if you deny you are sinners, or do not act upon the admission, then you sin against the light; and if you perish, surely your blood will be upon your own heads. For the scriptures plainly tell you, that you were 'shapen in iniquity, and in sin did your mother conceive you' — (Ps. 51:5) — that in you 'there dwelleth no good thing' — (Rom. 7:18) — but 'that every imagination of the thoughts of your heart is only evil continually' — (Gen. 6:5) — that from this corrupt fountain has proceeded all the wickedness you commit — all the wickedness which is committed in the earth — and all the wickedness against which the wrath of God will burn for ever in hell.

Now, why does that word which brings the tidings of salvation also bring the revelation of your sin? Is it to torment you before the time? Oh do not harbour so hard a thought. Is it to throw you into unnecessary alarm? Oh do not judge so unjustly of Him who is Love. Is it to unfit you for the society and business and enjoyments of life? The very reverse of all this. The revelation of your sin is put into your hands, that you may look into it, and ponder and pray over it. Nor will anything release you from the pressing obligation to do this. 'For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?' (Matt. 16:26).

The soul is infallibly lost, unless there be produced by the Holy Ghost a thorough and saving conviction of sin. For though the law speaks, men will not hear; though it shines with the clearest evidence, men will not see; though it is arrayed in majesty most awful, and supported by authority most sacred, men refuse to bow to it. And yet, it is through the law they are to obtain knowledge of their sinfulness, and conviction of their guiltiness. If, therefore, the law do not prevail over the stubbornness of human nature, the gospel is never reached, the marriage feast never tasted, and the soul never saved. But herein do we see the power of sovereign mercy, that, by the grace of the Spirit of God in the soul, the law does its work: and he who is brought under its influence for salvation is awakened, convinced, and self-condemned.

In pleading for such a work, we are not to be held as, in any degree, fettering the freeness of the gospel. The invitation which the servants of the King were instructed to offer, was not surely fettered because it was to be addressed to the halt, the maimed, and the blind. And neither is the freeness of the gospel affected by the fact, that its offers are to be made to sinners — that is as we have seen, such as really are in the condition, and

possess the character of sinners. The sick alone apply to a Physician, the lost alone seek after a Saviour: 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.' (1 Tim. 1:15).

The blessings of salvation laid up in Christ Jesus, and exhibited in the light of divine truth, are compared to a marriage feast — a comparison at once most apposite and instructive. For it has been shown, that the guests to whom the invitation is given, and by whom alone it is received, are sinners of this world. Now, it were the merest mockery of such creatures, to bid them to any feast, in which salvation was not the principal food — the most sweet and satisfying delight. The men of the world have a taste for riches, because they are covetous — for power, because they are ambitious — for fame, because they are vain-glorious — for things not meet to be named, because they are earthly, carnal, devilish. In this we find the true secret of the incessant toil to which they submit, and the endless bustle through which they pass. But to a poor sinner, under the solemn feeling of eternity, weighed down with a burden of guilt, and ready to be swallowed up in the abyss of his own corruption, the all-absorbing concern is, 'What must I do to be saved?'

O, how welcome to such a man, on the wayside of a vain, and weary, and worthless life, is the call, 'Come to the marriage!' To him it appears so marvellous, that he finds it hard to believe there is a feast, and that he is invited to be a guest. The great majority of those that are called christians find no difficulty in the matter. Is it for a moment to be supposed, they are so wicked, as to deny the truth of God, reject the Son of his love, and despise the gospel of his grace? The thing is absurd — it is a slander upon their character, and a stigma upon their profession. But let self-righteous men please themselves as they may — those that are truly alive to the plagues of their hearts are convinced, that however desirable the riches of divine grace, they have, by nature, no esteem of them; however free the offers of salvation, they have no relish for them; and however glorious the character of the Saviour, they put no confidence in Him.

In this, however, we see fresh occasion for the display of saving mercy. By such painful exercises and humiliating discoveries of the heart, men are broken off from their self-confidence, and brought helpless to the feet of sovereign grace. The marriage feast is open to all; pressing invitations are sent forth, and arguments used to enforce them. But if the gospel has arguments for, the world has arguments against compliance. The most of those that are bidden 'make light of it, and go their ways — one to his farm, another to his merchandise; and others take the servants, and

entreat them spitefully and slay them.' (Matt. 22:5, 6). Nor will it be otherwise with any, unless they are by the strength of divine grace subdued and humbled. The darkness that reigns in the soul must be dispelled, and the true light shine; the hardness that cleaves to the heart must be taken away, and softness communicated; in a word, there must be a new creation in the man; and the effect of this new creation is to bring him to the marriage.

By faith, springing from the work of God in the soul, or rather constituting the very essence of that work, a poor sinner receives Christ. He is the door into the marriage feast; by him if any man enter, he shall be saved. He is also the sum of the marriage feast; his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed. For the heart that is renewed has cravings which none but Christ can allay; desires which none but Christ can fulfil; wants which none but Christ can supply. 'And ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power.' (Col. 2:10).

In Christ Jesus, at the marriage feast — through the word and ordinances of God — by the effectual working of the Holy Ghost — a believer is given to the exercise of true repentance. The soul is in a poor and wretched state that is not alive to the evil of sin — that does not mourn for the offence which it offers to God — that does not turn from it unto Him against whom it is committed. In this carnal generation of so-called religious people, self-confidence seems to be everything. Let a man, as it is said, be conscious that he believes in Christ, he is safe — he needs no further evidence that his sins are forgiven him. On the other hand, it is reckoned a species of hell for a man to lose sight of his own grace, and despair of his own salvation. And is this, then, the marriage feast of which so much is said in the word of God — which has formed the grand theme of every gospel proclamation that has ever been heard in this world — which cost the Son of God his precious blood to provide it for perishing men — which none but the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is able to actually impart to the soul! What a delusion hath fallen upon men, who can weave such imaginations, and give them to the world as the true sayings of God! And what a delusion is at work in those who greedily receive it, as if it were a passport to the kingdom of heaven!

Let it be known to all men, and let those who care for their safety here and hereafter lay it to heart, that if men do not repent, they shall all certainly perish. The thing that hurts the soul, that has driven it from the presence of God, that has polluted, and corrupted, and damned it, is sin. Now, there is no salvation from sin without repentance — no interest in Christ without repentance — no evidence of interest in Christ without

repentance — no faith in Christ without repentance. Let men be conscious of what they please; let them see as much grace in themselves as their eyes can take in; and let them hope to the end of their days for salvation — it is all vanity and a lie, if there be not, with a contrite spirit, a thorough and universal turning from sin unto God in heart, speech, and behaviour. 'O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance.' (Matt. 3:7, 8).

The marriage feast is to a large extent deserted in our day — not, indeed, avowedly, though that too is perhaps nearer than is supposed. But the profession that is made of respect to it, and desire after it, is for the most part utterly hollow. We have men that call themselves Christians that do not know what a broken heart is, that never shed a tear over the dishonour they have done to the Holy One, that never looked upon Him who was pierced so as to mourn for him. Oh no! The sorrow that professors feel is altogether of a different sort; it is 'the sorrow of the world that worketh death.' (2 Cor. 7:10).

But those who by faith come to the marriage feast are truly penitent. Nor can they be said to be partakers of the feast at any time, unless they are in the exercise of this grace — 'with bitter herbs shall ye eat it.' In this frame they receive the remission of sins — another and eminent part of the marriage feast. But neither on this blessing do men at large set any value — they do not understand what it is, or how it comes; nor, were it possible to bestow it upon them, would they know what use to make of it, nor how to enjoy it. The Queen might issue as many pardons as Her Majesty pleased, but no one would pay the least regard to them, nor find the smallest use for them, but criminals shut up in prison, and about to be led forth to execution. Now, the great King, the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, the God of salvation, issues no pardon but in favour of the penitent; 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' (1 John 19:). 'I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.' (Ps. 32:5). 'Her sins, which are many,' said our Lord to the woman that was a sinner 'are forgiven; for she loved much.' (Luke 7:47). And wherein did her much love appear? She washed his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head.

The man that thus comes to the marriage feast is a partaker of true holiness. He has the principle of it in the new nature wrought in him by the Holy Ghost. But by the faith of Christ he cultivates it from day to day. He seeks out and mortifies his corruptions — his pride, his selfishness, his

envy, his carnality, his hypocrisy, his rebellion, his enmity. For all these still remain in his soul — they sorely vex him, weaken his strength, mar his comeliness, and impair his usefulness. He has from this source griefs that the world knows nothing of, and with which he gets no sympathy from a race of professors, whose heads may be full of notions, perhaps clear, and orthodox, and magnificent, but whose hearts are left under the power of deadly rancour to the pure truth, and to those who hold by it, and are willing to suffer for it. 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' (Rom. 7:24).

In Christ crucified, however, he finds virtue to kill the power of sin within him, and though to his own apprehension, he may seem to make little of it, nay, as if he were getting worse, yet he cannot give up the struggle, nor look to any other for relief. 'I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.' (Rom. 7:25).

Let sinners, therefore, hear the kindly voice that bids them to come to this feast. The time is short. The opportunities now given will soon pass away. The means of grace will soon cease. In any circumstances it were our wisdom to attend to the things that belong to our peace; but in these days there are considerations which carry peculiar weight and solemnity. The sky all around is gathering blackness. The visible church is rapidly decaying, and is to a large extent already dead. The profession of multitudes is completely withered. The pure word of the Lord is becoming very scarce. The power of the Spirit of God is to a fearful extent withheld. The ark is securing the few souls that are to be saved, and the still small voice is heard, 'Yet there is room.' But if it be neglected, soon the door will be shut, and a deluge of darkness and gloom envelope the land, to be exceeded only by the deluge of fire, that will at last burn up the world of the ungodly. Flee, then, oh flee from the wrath to come, and lay hold of eternal life. The door of hope may yet be opened to you. A cordial welcome may yet be given, and a rich repast spread before you. But soon your day of grace may close for ever, and the night of an undone eternity set in upon you. Haste, escape for your lives, tarry not in all the plain. For He who gives the marriage feast is rich in mercy to all that call upon Him. Strive to enter in at the strait-gate; for many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. (Luke 13:24).

It is the office of faith to believe what we do not see, and it shall be the reward of faith to see what we do believe.

Thos Adams

Justified!

by Bishop J. C. Ryle

No doctrine can be imagined *so beautifully simple* as justification by faith. It is not a dark mysterious truth, intelligible to none but the great, the rich, and the learned. It places eternal life within the reach of the most unlearned, and the poorest in the land. It must be of God.

No doctrine can be imagined *so glorifying to God*. It honours all His attributes, justice, mercy and holiness. It gives the whole credit of the sinner's salvation to the Saviour He has appointed. It honours the Son, and so honours the Father that sent Him. It gives man no partnership in his redemption, but makes salvation to be wholly of the Lord. It must be of God.

No doctrine can be imagined *so calculated to put man in his right place*. It shows him his own sinfulness, and weakness, and inability to save his soul by his own works. It leaves him without excuse if he is not saved at last. It offers to him peace and pardon without money and without price. It must be of God.

No doctrine can be imagined *so comforting to a broken-hearted and penitent sinner*. It brings to such a one glad tidings. It shows him that there is no hope even for him. It tells him though he is a great sinner, there is ready for him a great Saviour; and though he cannot justify himself, God can and will justify him for the sake of Christ. It must be of God.

No doctrine can be imagined *so satisfying to a true Christian*. It supplies him with a solid ground of comfort — the finished work of Christ. If anything was left for the Christian to do, where would his comfort be? He would never know that he had done enough, and was really safe. But the doctrine that Christ undertakes all, and that we have only to believe and receive peace, meets every fear. It must be of God.

No doctrine can be imagined *so sanctifying*. It draws men by the strongest of all cords, the cord of love. It makes them feel they are debtors, and in gratitude bound to love much, when much has been forgiven. Preaching up works never produces such fruit as preaching them down. Exalting man's goodness and merits never makes men so holy as exalting Christ. The fiercest lunatics at Paris became gentle, mild, and obedient, when Abbé Pinel gave them liberty and hope. The free grace of Christ will produce far greater effects on men's lives than the sternest commands of law. Surely the doctrine must be of God.

No doctrine can be imagined *so strengthening to the hands of a minister*. It enables him to come to the vilest of men and say, "There is a door of

hope even for you." It enables him to feel, "While life lasts there are no incurable cases among the souls under my charge." Many a minister by the use of this doctrine can say of souls, "I found them in the state of nature. I beheld them pass into the state of grace. I watched them moving into the state of glory." Truly this doctrine must be of God.

No doctrine can be imagined that *wears so well*. It suits men when they first begin, like the Philippian jailer, crying "What shall I do to be saved?" It suits them when they fight in the forefront of the battle. Like the apostle Paul, they say, "The life that I live, I live by the faith of the Son of God." It suits them when they die, as it did Stephen when he cried, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Yes: many a one has opposed the doctrine fiercely while he lived, and yet on his death-bed has gladly embraced justification by faith, and departed saying that "*he trusted in nothing but Christ.*" It must be of God.

Have you this faith? Do you know anything of simple child-like confidence in Jesus? Do you know what it is to rest your soul's hopes wholly on Christ? Oh, remember that were there is no faith, there is no interest in Christ; where there is no interest in Christ, there is no justification; where there is no justification, there can be no peace with God; where there is no peace with God, there is no heaven! And what then? There remains nothing but hell.

And now let me commend the solemn matters we have been considering to your serious and prayerful attention. I invite you to begin by meditating calmly on peace with God — on justification — on Christ — on faith. These are not mere speculative subjects, fit for none but retired students. They lie at the very root of Christianity. They are bound up with life eternal. Bear with me for a few moments, while I add a few words in order to bring them home more closely to your heart and conscience.

1. Let me, then, for one thing, request every reader of this paper *to remember its title.*

Are you justified? Have you peace with God? You have heard of it. You have read of it. You know there is such a thing. You know where it is to be found. But do you possess it yourself? Is it yet your own? Oh, deal honestly with yourself, and do not evade my question! Are you justified? *Have you peace with God?*

I do not ask whether you think it an excellent thing, and hope to procure it at some future time before you die. I want to know about your state now. Today, while it is called today, I ask you to deal honestly with my question. Are you justified? *Have you peace with God?*

May the question ring in your ears, and never leave you till you can give

it a satisfactory answer! May the Holy Spirit of God so apply it to your heart that you may be able to say boldly before you die, "Being justified by faith, I have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

2. In the next place, let me offer *a solemn warning* to every reader of this paper who knows that he has not peace with God.

You are not justified! You have not peace! Consider for a moment how fearfully great is your *danger*? You and God are not friends. The wrath of God abideth on you. God is angry with you every day. Your ways, your words, your thoughts, your actions, are a continual offence to Him. They are all unpardoned and unforgiven. They cover you from head to foot. They provoke Him every day to cut you off. The sword that the reveller of old saw hanging over his head by a single hair is but a faint emblem of the danger of your soul. There is but a step between you and hell.

You are not justified! You have not peace! Consider for a moment how fearfully great is your *folly*! There sits at the right hand of God a mighty Saviour, able and willing to give you peace, and you do not seek Him. For ten, twenty, thirty, and perhaps forty years He has called to you, and you have refused His counsel. He has cried, "Come to Me," and you have practically replied, "I will not." He has said, "My ways are ways of pleasantness," and you have constantly said, "I like my own sinful ways far better."

And after all, for what have you refused Christ? For worldly riches, which cannot heal a broken heart; for worldly business, which you must one day leave; for worldly pleasures, which do not really satisfy; for these things, and such as these, you have refused Christ. Is this wisdom, is this fairness, is this kindness to your soul?

I do beseech you to consider your ways. I mourn over your present condition with especial sorrow. I grieve to think how many are within a hair's breadth of some crushing affliction, and yet utterly unprepared to meet it. Fain would I draw near to everyone, and cry in his ear, "Seek Christ! Seek Christ, that you may have peace within and a present help in trouble." Fain would I persuade every anxious parent and wife and child to become acquainted with Him, who is a brother born for adversity, and the Prince of Peace—a friend that never fails nor forsakes, and a husband that never dies.

May God the Spirit apply this warning to some reader's soul! May some who began to read this paper in thoughtlessness find it a word in season, and be led into the way of peace!

3. Let me, in the next place, offer *an affectionate entreaty* to all who want peace and know not where to find it.

You want peace! Then seek it without delay from Him who alone is able to give it — Christ Jesus the Lord. Go to Him in humble prayer, and ask Him to fulfil His own promises and look graciously on your soul. Tell Him you have read His compassionate invitation to the labouring and heavy-laden. Tell Him that this is the plight of your soul, and implore Him to give you rest. Do this, and do it without delay.

Seek Christ Himself, and *do not stop short of personal dealings with Him*. Rest not in regular attendance on Christ's ordinances. Be not content with becoming a communicant and receiving the Lord's Supper. Think not to find solid peace in this way. You must see the King's face, and be touched by the golden sceptre. You must speak to the Physician, and open your whole case to Him. You must be closeted with the Advocate, and keep nothing back from Him. Oh, reader, remember this. Many are shipwrecked just outside the harbour. They stop short in means and ordinances, and never go straight and direct to Christ. "He that drinks of this water shall thirst again." Christ Himself can alone satisfy the soul.

Seek Christ, and *wait for nothing*. Wait not till you feel you have repented enough. Wait not till your knowledge is increased. Wait not till you have been sufficiently humbled because of your sins. Wait not till you have no ravelled tangle of doubts and darkness and unbelief all over your heart. See Christ just as you are. You will never be better by keeping away from Him. From the bottom of my heart I subscribe to old Traill's opinion, "*It is impossible that people should believe in Christ too soon.*" Alas! it is not humility, but pride and ignorance that make so many anxious souls hang back from closing with Jesus. They forget that the more sick a man is, the more need he has of the physician. The more bad a man feels his heart, the more readily and speedily ought he to flee to Christ.

Seek Christ, and *do not fancy you must sit still*. Let not Satan tempt you to suppose that you must wait in a state of passive inaction, and not strive to lay hold upon Jesus. How you can lay hold upon Him I do not pretend to explain. But I am certain it is better to struggle towards Christ and strive to lay hold, than to sit still with our arms folded in sin and unbelief. Better perish striving to lay hold on Jesus, than perish in indolence and sin. Well says old Traill, of those who tell us they are anxious but cannot believe in Christ: "This pretence is as inexcusable as if a man wearied with a journey, and not able to go one step further, should argue, '*I am so tired that I am not able to lie down,*' when indeed he can neither stand nor go."

May God the Spirit apply this invitation to some reader's soul! May it

be the means of leading some weary soul into the way of peace.

4. Let me, in the next place, offer *some encouragement* to those who have good reason to hope they have peace with God, but are troubled by doubts and fears.

You have doubts and fears! But what do you expect? What would you have! Your soul is married to a body full of weakness, passions, and infirmities. You live in a world that lies in wickedness, a world in which the great majority do not love Christ. You are constantly liable to the temptations of the devil. That busy enemy, if he cannot shut you out of heaven, will try hard to make your journey uncomfortable. Surely these things ought all to be considered.

Believing reader, so far from being surprised that you have doubts and fears, I should suspect the reality of your peace if you had none. I think little of that grace which is accompanied by no inward conflict. There is seldom life in the heart when all is still, quiet, and one way of thinking. Believe me, a true Christian may be known by his *warfare* as well as by his peace. These very doubts and fears which now distress you are tokens of good. They satisfy me that you have really got something which you are afraid to lose.

Believing reader, I advise you to beware that you do not help Satan by becoming an unjust accuser of yourself, and an unbeliever in the reality of God's work of grace. I advise you to pray for more knowledge of your own heart, of the fulness of Jesus, and of the devices of the devil. Let doubts and fears drive you to the throne of grace, stir you up to more prayer, send you more frequently to Christ. But do not let doubts and fears rob you of your peace. Believe me, you must be content to go to heaven as a sinner saved by grace. And you must not be surprised to find daily proof that you really are a sinner so long as you live.

May the Holy Spirit apply this word of encouragement to some reader's soul! May it be the means of establishing the feet of some doubting brother in the way of peace.

5. Let me, in the last place, offer *some counsel* to all who have peace with God, and desire to keep up a lively sense of it.

It must never be forgotten that a believer's sense of his own justification and acceptance with God admits of many degrees and variations. At one time it may be bright and clear; at another dull and dim. At one time it may be high and full, like the flood-tide; at another low, like the ebb. Our justification is a fixed, changeless, immovable thing. But our *sense* of justification is liable to many changes.

What, then, are the best means of preserving in a believer's heart the

lively sense of justification which is so precious to the soul that knows it? I offer a few hints to believers. But such as they are I offer them, though I lay no claim to infallibility.

To keep up a lively sense of peace, there must be constant *looking to Jesus*. As the pilot keeps his eye on the mark by which he steers, so must we keep our eye on Christ.

There must be constant *communion with Jesus*. We must use Him daily as our soul's Physician and High Priest. There must be daily conference, daily confession, and daily absolution.

There must be constant *watchfulness* against the enemies of your soul. He that would have peace must be always prepared for war.

There must be a constant *following after holiness* in every relation of life—in our tempers, in our tongues, abroad and at home. A small speck on the lens of a telescope is enough to prevent our seeing distant objects clearly. A little dust will soon make a watch go incorrectly.

There must be a constant *labouring after humility*. Pride goes before a fall. Self-confidence is often the mother of sloth, of hurried Bible-reading, and sleepy prayers. Peter first said he would never forsake his Lord, though all others did; then he slept when he should have prayed; then He denied Him three times, and only found wisdom after bitter weeping.

There must be constant *boldness in confessing* our Lord before men. Them that honour Christ, Christ will honour with much of His company. When the disciples forsook our Lord they were wretched and miserable. When they confessed Him before the Council, they were filled with "joy and the Holy Ghost."

There must be constant *diligence about means of grace, and good works*. Here are the ways in which Jesus loves to walk. No disciple must expect to see much of his Master, who does not delight in public worship, Bible-reading, private prayer, and constant efforts to mend the world.

Lastly, there must be constant *jealousy* over our own souls, and frequent self-examination. We must be careful to distinguish between justification and sanctification. We must beware that we do not make a Christ of holiness.

I lay these hints before you. I might easily add to them. But I am sure they are among the first things to be attended to by believers, if they wish to keep up a lively sense of their own justification and acceptance with God.

Reader, I conclude all by expressing my heart's desire and prayer that you may know what it is to have true peace in your soul.

If you never had peace yet, may it be recorded in the book of God that this year you sought peace in Christ and found it!

If you have tasted peace already, may your sense of peace mightily increase?

Letter

by Rev. Hugh Martin, D.D.

Edzell, Forfarshire, 28th May, 1878.

My Dear Friend, — I came here for change of air last week, and am happy to say that I have not had a touch of headache since I came. My old friend, Mr Inglis, shows me much kindness, and wishes me to remain a month at least.

That expression which I have just used, "shows me much kindness," reminds me of a sight which I got lately of the dire unbelief of my heart. You know that when we say a man "shows us kindness," we mean that he gave us, or bestowed on us, kindness. Well, I was the other day reading and pondering over the 85th Psalm, and on coming to the 7th verse, "Show us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation," it struck me that "showing" and "granting" were here identical terms. Thus, if one is "shown" mercy by God, it means that mercy is granted to him and given to him. Hence those to whom God has in any measure shown His salvation, ought not to doubt of His granting it to them, revelation being communicative, as in those other words, "Show kindness and do good, O Lord, to Zion, thine own hill." But I, in my dreadful unbelief, do often attribute less to God than I do to my fellow-creature, for while I may have obtained some view of God's salvation in and through Christ, and have been "shown" it as glorifying to God and suitable for sinners, I yet too often doubt God's willingness to grant or bestow it upon *me*. Yea, I may have obtained some spiritual knowledge of Christ and Him crucified, and after all may doubt His willingness to give Himself to *me*. As if the Holy One, the Fountain of all blessing and blessedness, should show His salvation to a poor sinner, and then in effect tantalise him by saying, "Do you not wish you may get it?" That be far from Thee, O Lord, Thou giver of all good; and yet that is in reality the language of unbelief! Oh, what would become of us if we had not a merciful and faithful High Priest, who has compassion on the ignorant and on those who are out of the way: "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief."

Of course I am anxious today, and who is not, as to the debate in the Assembly? Being here I will be a day behind in getting the newspaper,

and shall not know the result of the vote until Thursday, unless my brother William wires to me tommorrow. Although not a member this year, I have made known my mind pretty freely to some of the brethern who are members, and although not at present in the high places of the field, yet my voice may be listened to none the less from the quiet places, where one can speak more calmly. And, indeed, by God's blessing that is already true, for my pamphlet on "The Inspiration of Scripture" has met with a good reception not only from able men in our own church, but also from honoured names in other churches, some of whom have written to thank me for what they are pleased to call "a service to the cause of truth." No doubt a few extreme folks blame me for being too hard on the College Committee, but I can bear that, so long as the positions I have laid down are unassailed, which, indeed, they cannot be, except at the cost of the assailant. And yet last Assembly uttered no whisper when the "Report" of the Committee was laid before it, as to their divergence of view from that of the Confession, and in which I animadvert in my pamphlet. The Confession says: "It pleased the Lord to commit the revelation of Himself and of His will wholly unto writing," &c. The Committee says: "The revelation of God and of His will are committed wholly to writing," thus avoiding to state *by whom* they were committed to writing; and if divine authorship is not maintained, divine authority falls to the ground. Alas! I fear there will soon come to light throughout our church-courts an amount of sympathy with these unsound views such as will startle us. The U.P. Church, by her recent action, has, in my opinion, "made shipwreck" — neither more nor less. And the evils which she sanctions usually appear in the Free Church two or three years afterwards, so we may look out! Indeed — — has got into the habit of looking out, and paving the way for the evils as they come. How sad that men in important positions do not ask themselves as to any undertaking they are about to engage in, "How will this bear on the glory of God, and on the honour of His Word, which He has magnified above all His Name?" but ask, "How will this bear on our standing as before men?" We are all liable to regard the church of Christ too much as a "business concern," to be managed by experts; whereas it is the ordinance of God for the custody of His truth, "set" in the world by His appointment and under His control "for the defence of the Gospel." And as there is not in any land a nobler sight for the sun to shine on than a general assembly of a free, faithful, Scriptural church, for "there is the testimony of Israel, there do sit the thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David," so, therefore, it is with overwhelming dread and sorrow of heart that we contemplate anything occurring that

would tarnish, or even compromise, our profession of holding that high and solemn position.

I observe your question as to getting light on the path of duty. My own experience is, that if I believe a certain course to be warranted by the Word of God, I must go forward, although I have not light given me on probable issues and consequences. If, under a sense of my weakness, I stipulate for light and liberty before I go forward, the Lord may withhold it, because I am not yet in the actual need of it, and would most likely abuse it if I got it. It is usually in the performance of duty, and not before it, that the Lord vouchsafes that light and strength which supports the poor weakling, and confirms him in the all-graciousness of Him "under whose wings he hath come to trust."

And now, "my right trusty and well-beloved cousin" (as the Queen says of the Lord High Commissioner), let me just add that I hope to hear from you soon. I do not know that I can visit you this summer, but if not, it will not be for want of grateful recollections of my former visit. Indeed, the remembrance of the extent to which I drew upon your kindness is often simply oppressive.

Hugh Martin

Separation

by Rev. James S. Sinclair

*Separation from an Unsound Church
Viewed in the Light of Scripture.*

It is our present purpose to call attention to the testimony of the New Testament on the above subject. The Church now lives under a new dispensation and we find that there are directions in the Word of God fitted to give guidance amidst the peculiar difficulties that attend her altered case and circumstances. While the Old Testament contains the same general principles as the New, yet it is to the latter we chiefly appeal as our guide and authority as to what should be done in respect of separation from unsound religious bodies in these latter days. The New Testament speaks directly to the Church in its present position, as emancipated from the bondage of ritual and confinement to locality which was her divinely appointed lot during the earlier period of the world's history. We have already given the testimony of the Old Testament on this subject.

II. Let us look, in the second place, at the testimony of the New Testament.

(1) Consider the words of Christ in the tenth chapter of Matthew. He there addresses His disciples, immediately before they go forth at His command to preach the Gospel to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." He says, at the 14th verse, "And whosoever shall not receive you nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet." Again, at verses 34-38 — "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." The fourteenth verse indicates that the apostles were not to persist in obtruding themselves and their message where these were deliberately rejected, and we find that this principle was invariably carried into practice, as may be seen in the book of the Acts. It is a vain charity or faithfulness that leads men to take an opposite course from that prescribed by Christ Himself.

The other verses plainly intimate that the declaration of the true Gospel of Christ will be accompanied with results the reverse of pleasant to the flesh, and that all who will follow Him must be prepared to sacrifice, when His cause demands it, the favour of the dearest earthly friends, yea, to lay down life itself. It has been made a cause of reproach to our Church that its existence was the occasion of divisions in congregations and families. But has it been the means of producing any more serious results than those indicated in the above chapter? Again, many persons make a great cry about peace, as if that were the one thing needful. Well, we by no means disparage the value of peace, and deplore every unwarrantable division. But peace of conscience before God is more precious than peace with one's neighbour, and the former peace is absolutely consistent with the utmost opposition to sin and error, whilst the latter is frequently not so. It may be, therefore, necessary to separate from a so-called Church, to lose friends, comforts, and all earthly things in order to have a good conscience and to follow Christ.

(2) Observe the example of the Apostle Paul at Ephesus, in Acts 19:8, 9. There we are told that "he went into the synagogue and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. But when divers were hardened, and

believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus." This incident informs us that there is a time at which it is the highest duty of Christ's faithful witnesses to separate from men who condemn the way of the Gospel. The Jews, in the above case, not only hardened their hearts and refused to believe the truth, but began to speak evil of it. This revealed a deliberate opposition to the Gospel, and when there was added to this, the aggravation of venting this enmity "before the multitude," the Apostle withdrew from them and separated the disciples. When religious bodies, therefore, by their representative courts deliberately reject "the form of sound words," "the way" of the Gospel, we are at perfect liberty by apostolic example to separate from them.

(3) Note the following words of counsel which the Apostle, by the Holy Ghost, gives to the Church at Rome. "Now, I beseech you, brethren mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." — (Rom. 16:17). If this advice is valid in regard to our duty toward individuals it is no undue application of it to say that it points out the same duty toward collective bodies who cause offences contrary to sound doctrine. Frequently it is the small dissenting body that is charged with division and offence, and the large body is esteemed innocent. This is a prevalent notion in our times, but in the vast majority of cases it is a delusion. Again, it is written, "And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing." — (2 Cor. 6:15-17). Infidelity has gone to a greater height in the Free Church of today than ever it did since the Christian era began in any body professing to be a part of Christ's visible Church. If the above command — "Come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord" — does not apply to people within her pale, we confess we don't know where to apply it.

(4) Lastly, let us observe the Apostle's injunctions to Timothy. The latter was a minister of the Gospel, and the Holy Ghost by Paul gives special directions as to how discipline is to be exercised in the Church. At the close of the First Epistle it is written — "These things teach and exhort. If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness; from such withdraw thyself."

— (1 Tim. 6:2-5). Again, Timothy is warned that in the last days perilous times shall come, when men shall be lovers of their own selves, blasphemers, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; and a dark description of their several features is given, which concludes with the words “having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.” We do not know words that describe better the condition of things in the greater number of the professing Churches of our time, and we think the duty of all who would be faithful to Christ is unmistakeable.

In a future article we hope to answer objections to the above views anent separation, objections that have been drawn from the example of Christ in relation to the Church in His time on earth, and from some other passages of the New Testament.

Romanism Self-condemned (3)

by Rev. John MacLeod M.A., Stornoway

The hollowness of the Church of Rome's claim to unity and uniformity in doctrine and practice both now and in the past may easily be demonstrated by drawing attention, even in a superficial way, to the infamous teaching and conduct of the Jesuits within her pale and her own attitude towards them. The term “Jesuitry” is of common usage and has come in our language to be synonymous with “subtle duplicity” and “equivocation.” It embraces within its definition practices to which no true Christian accepting Biblical moral standards could possibly subscribe but rather recoil from with horror. Yet for centuries the Church of Rome openly condoned practices which were immoral and evil in the extreme. It connived at monstrous crimes perpetrated by Jesuits ostensibly in the name of religion but in reality with a view to advancing the Society's own ends and the pretensions of the Papacy.

The Bull officially confirming the “Society of Jesus” is dated 27th September, 1540, and was issued by Pope John Paul II's predecessor of the time, Pope Paul III. At the time, Protestantism was making rapid progress throughout Europe and the influence of the Papacy was very much on the wane. Luther was still in the Church militant and continuing by preaching and writing to inflict tremendous damage on the Kingdom of Antichrist. Calvin's “Institutes” had been in circulation for four years and who can estimate the number of souls that had been turned from darkness to light as a result? In far-away Scotland, St Andrews had witnessed the

martyrdom of Patrick Hamilton and George Wishart and the "reek" of the former had "infected as many as it did blow upon." The arrival of Loyola and his companions in Rome with their offer of help was thus in Papal eyes most opportune, and all the more so since members of this new Order were to swear unconditional obedience to the Pope and, in the church, devote all their energy to the strengthening of his power and the worship of the Virgin. After being formally constituted, members were in due course obliged, *above all*, to render absolute, blind obedience to their Superior-General or "Black Pope" as he is sometimes called. This epithet is given him on account of his dress and not because there is any distinction as to moral condition between himself and the real or "White Pope." Once constituted the Jesuits' success was phenomenal and can only be ascribed to the craft and power of Satan. It was certainly "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness" that they set about accomplishing their objectives. "There is no disguise which the Jesuit will not wear," Wylie writes in his 'History of Protestantism', "no art he will not employ, no motive he will not feign, no creed he will not profess, provided only he can acquit himself as a true soldier in the Jesuit army, and accomplish the work on which he has been sent forth . . . The key-note of their ethical code is the famous maxim that *the end justifies the means*. Before that maxim the eternal distinction of right and wrong vanishes. Not only do the stringency and sanctions of human law dissolve and disappear, but the authority and majesty of the Decalogue are overthrown. There is no conceivable crime, villainy, and atrocity which this maxim will not justify. Nay, such become dutiful and holy, provided they be done for "the greater glory of God," by which the Jesuit means the honour, interest and advancement of his society. In short, the Jesuit may do whatever he has a mind to do, all human and divine laws notwithstanding. This is a very grave charge, but the evidence of its truth is, unhappily, too abundant, and the difficulty lies in making a selection."

It is said that the whole honour of the Counter-Reformation belongs to the Jesuits singly. Within a generation or two they had captured all the key positions in the Roman church and had even infiltrated Protestant denominations. The Jesuit did not scruple, Wylie tells us, to execrate the Pope with the Lutheran and to subscribe the Solemn League and Covenant with the Covenanter. In many nations they were soon to gain so great an influence over political institutions and thrones that they came to be virtually in control of them. By the middle of the Eighteenth Century we find certain Popish kingdoms finding it necessary to expel them from their territories and demands made for the suppression of the Order.

Yielding to these demands Clement XIII appointed a secret conclave but the night before it was due to meet he died suddenly. His successor, Clement XIV, goes down in history as the one who issued, on the 21st of July, 1773, the famous Bull by which he "dissolved and for ever annihilated the order as a corporate body." On laying down his pen he told those around him that he had signed his death-warrant. On September 22nd, 1774, he was dead.

The dissolution of the Jesuits was an event sufficiently important to merit the striking of a commemorative medal. The reverse shows a figure purporting to represent the Saviour (for which reason we thought it not proper to reproduce it here) followed by figures representing Peter and the Pope driving out three Jesuit priests, with the words: "*I never knew you: depart from me ye all.*" They are taken from Matthew VII, 23, in the Vulgate, with the addition of "all" from Luke XIII, 27. Beneath is the Latin: "Exaug. Soc. Iesu. memor. MDCCLXXIII. Ps. CXVIII, 23," which reads: "*This is the Lord's doing: and it is marvellous to our eyes.*"

The document we are told sets forth as serious an indictment of the Jesuit order as ever proceeded from Protestant pen. After drawing up a long and formidable list of charges against them the Pope declares that his "dearly beloved sons in Christ, the Kings of France, Portugal and Sicily, found themselves reduced to the necessity of expelling and driving from their states, kingdoms and provinces these very companions of Jesus, persuaded that there remained no other remedy to so great evils; and that this step was necessary in order to prevent the Christians from rising one against another, and from massacring each other in the very bosom of our common mother, the Holy Church."

"The present ordinance," said the Bull in conclusion, "shall remain in full force and operation from henceforth and for ever." Another Papal bull, dated August 7th, 1814, and issued by Pope Pius VII, restored the Order of Jesus! If Rome claims infallibility for her Popes how are the actions of Clement XIV in abolishing the Jesuits to be harmonised with the contrary decree of Pius VII restoring them?

Without enlarging further on the Jesuit history, we might now well ask how the Roman Catholic Church can be regarded as Christian when she tolerates within her pale men adhering to standards of behaviour which are patently diabolical. Is it because the "Black Pope" is too strong for the "White Pope?" Or is it the case that the two of them find it expedient to co-operate with one another in order to present an outward united front in the conflict waged against the true Church of Christ in the world? At present the "Black Pope" is "Father" Pedro Arrupe and a recent book on the Papacy by Roman Catholic authors clearly hints that in the recent past

there has been some conflict between the Society and Paul VI and John-Paul I. The former, the book tells us, "had uttered dire warnings in his time," and the latter had prepared "a similar address *which death alone had prevented* him from delivering." (Italics ours). The present Pope has indicated that he is to assert his authority and as a consequence we find a Jesuit priest, who for ten years served as a Representative in the US Congress, being forced to resign. His General's disagreement with the Vatican was indicated by his offering the priest concerned his "deep respect and personal support in this difficult hour." As often in history as we find instances of a clash of interests between contemporary "Black Popes" and "White" so are we able to see that the unity boasted of was, and is, but a facade; behind it there has always been an on-going power struggle between opposing factions and this is clearly as true in 1981 as in the past.

We believe whatever difficulties the present Pope may be experiencing as far as curbing liberal-minded Jesuits is concerned, the Order is as useful to him in the political sphere as it ever was to his predecessors. Present day attempts to bring Britain back under Papal sway stem, we believe, from Jesuit-inspired political activity and intrigue as surely as that was the case when the Spanish Armada endeavoured to do it. Our Foreign Office has long been regarded as infiltrated by them and if a Papal Nuncio does come to be appointed to the Court of St James then this, we believe, will be one more Jesuit objective realised. The mass-media seem to be firmly in their grasp. In a recent issue of a national News magazine a Roman Catholic writer described the Jesuits as the "most carefully selected and exhaustively trained of all Catholic clergy . . . the Brigade of Guards of the Roman Catholic Church". "O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon Thee" II Chron. XX, 12.

Book Reviews

The Shorter Catechism Explained from Scripture by Thomas Vincent.
Banner of Truth Trust, price £1.50.

It was observed by Edison that "there is no expediency to which a man will not resort in order to avoid the labour of hard thinking." If this is true in the realm of science, how much more so in the vast field of truth pertaining to God's glory. The publication of a book written for the purpose not only of fastening the truth in the mind, but also to stimulate thought, is to be welcomed. In commending his work to "masters and

governors of families," the author states that "it is not sufficient for you to bring your children and servants to receive public instruction, but it is your duty also to instruct them privately." Mr Thomas Vincent has undoubtedly been successful in producing a book that will prove a substantial help to all parents that are anxious to impart the principles of truth to their families. Although some of Mr Vincent's congregation learnt all questions and answers by heart, it would appear more useful for them to be used by the parent as a guide to analyse and explain each Shorter Catechism question and answer. The book deserves a wide circulation and if used as a help to family instruction, will be a source of much good. No further commendation is necessary when we consider the book was recommended to the public by such outstanding ministers of Christ as John Owen, D.D., Thomas Manton, D.D., Thos. Brooks and Thomas Watson.

J.V.D.

Letters of John Calvin, price £1.95. The Banner of Truth Trust.

The introduction to this book clearly explains the purpose of its compilation, as we read, "But this picture of Calvin the man, and the pastor is often unknown because of a lack of knowledge of his writings. The true picture shines through his commentaries and sermons and appears frequently in his famous Institutes of the Christian Religion, when carefully read. Yet it nowhere appears quite so vividly as in his long-out-of-print letters. It is hoped that the selection of these now presented will introduce many Christians to a fellow-Christian whose teaching and example has much to say to the Church of today."

The review by the Banner of Truth on the back cover of the book describes the comprehensive view which can be obtained of Calvin from a study of his letters; "He wrote to kings and princes, reformers and friends, nobility and common people alike. His letters discuss affairs of State, but also the most mundane problems of everyday life, and through them all is revealed a man of deep pastoral concern, consistent and exemplary evangelistic zeal, with a humble sense of the final authority of God's Word."

Calvin's letters are edifying, instructive, solemn, and in some parts refreshingly amusing as for instance in writing to Melanchthon, he refers to Luther, "your Pericles allows himself to be carried beyond all due bounds with his love of thunder . . ." But at the same time Luther and Calvin loved each other as faithful servants of Christ. A similar touch of humour is evident in his answer to Farel's invitation to his marriage, when

he says, "When I told to your face that I would come neither to your espousals nor to your marriage, both because it was a thing not possible, and because I judged it inexpedient, I am surprised what your new invitation can mean. Had I the greatest desire to comply with your wishes, I am nevertheless prevented by several causes." Still Calvin and Farel, as eminent servants of Christ, were real friends right on to the end. In his last letter to Farel, Calvin writes, "Farewell, my most excellent and upright brother" And the noble tribute rendered by Farel to Calvin in a letter to Fabri evinces how closely knit to each other those Christian men were; "Oh why was I not taken away in his stead . . . Oh how happily he has run a noble race! May the Lord grant that we will run like him." His letters clearly indicate that Calvin was a great man and an affectionate Christian.

A. McK.

Extracts from Letters

(The following are excerpts from letters by African Christians in our church in Zimbabwe. Each dated extract is from a different person).

20 Sept 80 (From an old Elder)

I am not quite well, though I am happy the Lord is still giving me strength to move around, on whom I am now waiting as He keeps me alive and He gives me the opportunity to attend to His duties.

30 October 80

It is clear the Bulawayo congregation will soon have to prayerfully decide and make a call, and this is uppermost in my mind. We need the prayers of the Lord's people that the Lord who knows and searches the hearts of men would guide the congregation in this choice.

The communion at Bulawayo is getting nearer. How time flies swiftly, and with the passage of each day we are nearer eternity . . . the Lord prepare us for eternity, and may we say like Paul, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." II Cor. 5:1.

The Mbumba communion was last week, and to those who were there it was a refreshing season. Cameron Church is going on well and no doubt the Lord will yet bless this place where His word will flourish like Lebanon. We pray to be given grace to wait upon the Lord for an outpouring of His Spirit in this part of the world especially, when Africa will lift up her hands to the Saviour and be taught to trust in Him.

December 1980

Things have settled around Mbumba and other places. The situation has improved quite a lot. I am pleased to have to mention that we were able to hold a communion at Mbumba after three years. It is a communion to be remembered for a long time to come. The communion was a success. The Servants of God preached to us the everlasting Gospel, the Gospel of the Lord Jesus, the head of the church.

29 December 1980 (From a seeking soul)

Thanks for the magazines you sent me. I enjoyed reading the F.P. Magazine August 1980, letter P.240. Especially these words, "I am the resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John 11:25) Christ goes on to ask, "believest thou this?" Oh, this question, this is really where I felt the spiritual death in my own soul. Please pray for me and those who feel the same.

30 December 1980

O how we ought to be much on our knees pleading with the Lord of Heaven and Earth for all our needs. It does appear from scripture that the Lord himself delights to hear the prayers of his people ascending to the throne of grace. At least I do feel ashamed that I am very much lacking in this important duty of a Christian — to pray.

. . . I was thinking that the Lord will never be without witnesses for his glorious gospel. When one of his messengers . . . is laid aside, He raises up some to take the place of those who are gone. When Elijah ascends to heaven in a chariot of fire, Elisha takes his mantle and that seems to be the pattern of the workings of the God of heaven and earth . . . persecution will never destroy the church but unconverted material in the House of God will wreck the very foundations of the House of God . . . the church packed up with natural and unchanged material is worse than useless for the purposes of true Godliness.

13 December 1980 — 15th January 1981

A lot of souls are going to hell . . . learned and unlearned alike, rich and poor . . . may the Lord give the outpouring of His Holy Spirit from above for reproofing the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment, and converting as many as are ordained to life eternal unto the Saviour our Lord Jesus Christ.

As you know we had out time of refreshment in our spiritual warfare: it was really a time of refreshing during our communion in Bulawayo

D.A.R.

Extract from Owen

That the work of the Spirit of God in regenerating the souls of men is diligently to be inquired into by the *preachers of the gospel*, and all to whom the word is dispensed. For the former sort, there is a peculiar reason for their attendance unto this duty; for they are used and employed in the work itself by the Spirit of God, and are by him made instrumental for the effecting of this new birth and life. So the apostle Paul styles himself the father of them who were converted to God or regenerated through the word of his ministry: 1 Cor iv:15, "Though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." He was used in the ministry of the word for their regeneration, and therefore was their spiritual father, and he only, though the work was afterward carried on by others. And if men are fathers in the gospel to no more than are converted unto God by their personal ministry, it will be no advantage unto any one day to have assumed that title, when it hath had no foundation in that work as to its effectual success. So, speaking of Onesimus, who was converted by him in prison, he calls him, "his son, whom he had begotten in his bonds," Philem. 10. And this he declared to have been prescribed unto him as the principal end of his ministry, in the commission he had for preaching the gospel, Acts xxvi 17, 18. Christ said unto him, "I send thee unto the Gentiles, to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God;" which is a description of the work under consideration. And this is the principal end of our ministry also. Now, certainly it is the duty of ministers to understand the work about which they are employed, as far as they are able, that they may not work in the dark and fight uncertainly, as men beating the air. What the Scriptures hath revealed concerning it, as to its nature and the manner of its operation, as to its causes, effects, fruits, evidences, they ought diligently to inquire into. To be spiritually skilled therein is one of the principal furnishings of any for the work of the ministry, without which they will never be able to divide the word aright, nor show themselves workmen that need not be ashamed. Yet it is scarcely imaginable with what rage and perversity of spirit, with what scornful expressions, this whole work is traduced and exposed to contempt. Those who have laboured herein are said "to prescribe long and tedious trains of conversion, to set down nice and subtile processes of regeneration, to fill people's heads with innumerable swarms of superstitious fears and scruples about the due degrees of godly sorrow, and the certain symptoms

of a thorough humiliation." Could any mistake be charged on particular persons in these things, or the prescribing of rules about conversion to God and regeneration that are not warranted by the word of truth, it were not amiss to reflect upon them and refute them; but the intention of these expressions is evident, and the reproach in them is cast upon the work of God itself: and I must profess that I believe the degeneracy from the truth and power of Christian religion, the ignorance of the principal doctrines of the gospel, and that scorn which is cast, in these and the like expressions, on the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, by such as not only profess themselves to be ministers, but of a higher degree than ordinary, will be sadly ominous unto the whole state of the reformed church amongst us, if not timely repressed and corrected. But what at present I affirm in this matter is: 1. That it is a duty indispensably incumbent on all ministers of the gospel to acquaint themselves thoroughly with the nature of this work, that they may be able to comply with the will of God and grace of the Spirit in the effecting and accomplishment of it upon the souls of them unto whom they dispense the word. Neither, without some competent knowledge hereof, can they discharge *any one part* of their duty and office in a right manner. If all that hear them are born dead in trespasses and sins, if they are appointed of God to be the instruments of their regeneration, it is a madness, which must one day be accounted for, to neglect a sedulous inquiry into the nature of this work, and the means whereby it is wrought. And the ignorance hereof or negligence herein with the want of an experience of the power of this work in their own souls, is one great cause of that lifeless and unprofitable ministry which is among us.

2. It is likewise the duty of all to whom the word is preached to inquire also into it. It is unto such to whom the apostle speaks, 2 Cor xiii 5, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" It is the concernment of all individual Christians, or professors of Christian religion, to try and examine themselves what work of the Spirit of God there hath been upon their hearts; and none will deter them from it but those who have a design to hoodwink them to perdition. And — (1) The doctrine of it is revealed and taught us; for "secret things belong unto the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of the law," Deut. xxix:19. And we speak not of curious inquiries into or after hidden things, or the secret, veiled actions of the Holy Spirit; but only of an upright endeavour to search into and comprehend the doctrine

concerning this work, to this very end, that we might understand it. (2) It is of such importance unto all our duties and all our comforts to have a due apprehension of the nature of this work, and of our own concernment therein, that an inquiry into the one and the other cannot be neglected without the greatest folly and madness. Whereunto we may add, (3) The danger that there is of men being deceived in this matter, which is the hinge whereon their eternal state and condition doth absolutely turn and depend. And certain it is that very many in the world do deceive themselves herein: for they evidently live under one of these pernicious mistakes — namely, either, (1) That men may go to heaven, or “enter into the kingdom of God,” and not be “born again,” contrary to that of our Saviour, John iii:5; or, (2) That men may be “born again,” and yet live in sin, contrary to 1 John iii:9.

Notes and Comments

Unity Move

At the General Synod of the Church of England approval was given to a covenant plan for linking together the Church of England, the Churches of Christ, the Methodist Church, the Moravian Church and the United Reform Church. A report in the Scotsman states that “within the covenant the churches would welcome one another’s members at Holy Communion and accept one another’s ministries.” The report also states that “there would be a common ordinal — Service book and baptism, confirmation and reception of members would be by agreed rites. This new covenant plan aims at paving the way towards church unity. Whether it will indeed do so only time can tell. In the past the intransigence of the Church of England in its adherence to apostolic succession and non-recognition of a ministry not episcopally ordained, usually brought the unity process to an end. It is doubtful if this attempt at unity will fare any better. Even if it did succeed it will not add anything of real benefit to the religious scene in England as many, if not all, of these bodies have moved far away from “the faith once delivered to the saints.” What England, like Scotland, needs is a day of the Lord’s power in which sinners would be turned from the deadness of a formal religion to a living faith in a living Saviour.

Euthanasia

In the amoral society of today it is not surprising to find a group advocating the practice of suicide or aided suicide for the elderly. Euthanasia, as it is euphemistically called, could have no place in a truly civilised society and therefore we should expect it to have no place in present day society. However, when we enquire into the real nature of present day society and particularly its departure from Scripturally based moral principles, we are faced with the fact that human society at present is becoming increasingly uncivilised. Attitudes, once known only to heathen societies, are now being adopted by what were until recently civilised communities. The removal of unwanted unborn infants by abortion, an act once rightly regarded with repugnance and horror, is now looked favourably on as an act of compassion towards the mother or child or both. So, too, with euthanasia. The hastening of the end of the elderly and chronically sick, which once exposed the perpetrator of this crime to the full penalty of the law, is now being regarded in a more favourable light and the person who has done the deed excused.

Men today will glory in the "humanity" of those who act in this way, but let us have no doubt about this matter — the day is coming when these things will be looked on in a very different light and those who have advocated these enormities and those who have done these deeds will receive the due sentence for their crimes at the bar of a Tribunal from which there is no appeal.

Church Notes

Southern: At Glasgow on 7th April at 6 p.m.

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

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

Australia and New Zealand: At Auckland on Friday 12th June at 9.30 a.m.

Auckland Communion

The Kirk Session of the Auckland Congregation have decided to postpone the Auckland Communion for two weeks to the second Sabbath of June (D.V.).

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. (D.V.).

(Rev) Donald MacLean,
Clerk of Synod.

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: Mrs Humphrey, Ontario \$100.00; Mrs Ferguson, Carbost, per Mr D. MacI., £2.20; Anon, Drumbeg per R.W.M.M., £50.

Jewish & Foreign Mission Fund: Ness Sabbath School, £25; Mrs Humphrey, Ontario, \$100.00.

Aged & Infirm Ministers' etc Fund: Anon., £100.

Dominions & Overseas Fund: Mrs Campbell, California, "In memory of the late Mrs R.S. MacKenzie" £60; A Friend, £20 for Fede Viva.

Home of Rest Fund: Friend, £10; Anon., Visitor, £5. Correction in January issue — Miss C. Morrison, North Tolsta, £10 — not Miss C. MacLeod.

Trinitarian Bible Society: Lochinver, Stoer & Drumbeg Congregations, £166.10; South Harris, £120.65.

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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The Treasurers of the following Congregations acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:—

Barnoldswick: Two Dingwall sisters, £10 per R. Middleton; Glasgow Friend, £149.14; Edinburgh collection plate, £30; In memory of my beloved husband, £20; Anon, Glasgow per Rev. D. MacLean, £5; A Friend, Inverness per Rev. D. MacLean; E.K., £10; A Friend of Barnoldswick, £10, all for Building Fund; Anon, £30 per R. Campbell; Interested per E.S., £30; Friend, Inverness, £10; Communion Expenses, £5; A.F. towards Communion Expenses, £10; T.M., £10 per R. Middleton; Anon, for Congr. Purposes, £10; Anon, for Congr. Purposes, £20.

Dingwall: Anon, £50, in memory of a loved one, per Rev. D.B.M. for Dingwall Funds; Friend, Urray House, £10 for Sust. Fund per Rev. D.B.M.

Fort William: Mrs. C., Caol, £3; J.F. Oban, £5 for Sust. Fund; MacLeans Tyndrum, £5; Mrs G., Caol, £5, all per Rev. J.A. MacDonald; Envelope in plate, £2 for Sust Fund.

Glasgow: Anon, £15; Miss N.H., £4 per Rev. D.M.; A.R. McL, £5; Anon, £10, all for Sust. Fund; Anon, £5; Anon, £3; Anon, £5; Anon, £2.50, all for Bus Expenses; Anon, £10; Anon, £25, both for Bus Fund; A.M. per T.J., £10; Anon, £30 per Rev D.M., both for Congr. Fund; Harris Friends, £50 for Church Repairs; Anon, £10 for Barnoldswick Church Building; Anon, £2.50 for Hearing Aids; Anon, £5 for Trinitarian Bible Society.

Kinlochbervie: In memory of loved ones £100 for Sust. Fund.

Kyle/Plockton: Envelope in plate, £10; Plockton Friend of the Cause, £20; Envelope in plate, £10; Envelope in plate, £5; Friend, Kyle, £50; Skye Friends, £15, all for Manse Building Fund; Graham House, Dornie, £1.90 for Church door collection per Mr Van Woerden; Envelope in plate, £10 for Communion expenses; Donation, £2 for Church Door collection per Rev. A. Murray.

Laide: In Inverness Coll. plate, £5 per S.M.; Edinburgh Friend, £5 per D.M.R.; Stornoway Friend, £20, all for Laide Manse Fund.

North Harris: Friend, Tarbert, £2; Friend, Harris House, £2 per R.M., both for Church door Coll.; Friend, Cluer, £10 (£5 for Property & £5 for Car Fd); Two friends, Stockinish, £10 (£5 for Property & £5 for Car Fd); A Friend, Stockinish, £5 (£3 for Property & £2 for Car Fd); Friend, Stockinish, £2 for Property Fd; A Friend, £10 (£5 for Property Fd & £5 for Comm. Ex.), all per Rev. A. Mackay; Friend, Cluer, £2.80 for Sust. Fd per J.F. Morrison.

South Harris: M.M., Geocrab, £40 for Sust. Fund and £5 for Car Fund per R. Morrison; M.M.K., Northton, £20 for Car Fund per J. MacLean; Friend, Tarbert, £5 for Congr. Fund per A.J. Morrison.

Stornoway: Anon, £5 for Congr. Purposes; A Friend, £10 for Congr. Purposes; Dun Eisdean, £10; A Friend, £5, both for Congr. Funds, last 3 per Rev J. MacLeod; Gairloch Friend, £10; Dun Eisdean, £20, both for Car Fund; Miss C.M., £10, last 3 per Mr Neil Murray; Anon, £10, last 2 for Communion Expenses.

Waternish: In memory of loved ones £5 for Congr. Funds.