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## **“The Pope of Rome . . . is that Antichrist”**

All Free Presbyterian Church office-bearers at their ordination “sincerely own and declare” the Westminster Confession of Faith to be the confession of their faith. They own “the whole doctrine” therein contained to be “the true doctrine” and that to which they solemnly promise to firmly and constantly adhere. Ministers, in particular, undertake, to “assert, maintain and defend” the same, to the utmost of their power, as well “the purity of worship as presently practiced in this Church”. They also, of course, declare themselves as persuaded that “the Presbyterian government and discipline of this Church are founded upon the Word of God”, and they promise to “submit to the said government and discipline, and to concur with the same, and not to endeavour, directly or indirectly, the prejudice of subversion thereof”, but, again, to the utmost of their power, in their station, “to maintain, support, and defend the said discipline and Presbyterian government . . .” In view of “the dishonest and degrading manner in which the most solemn promises and engagements relative to subordinate standards” were being violated by many that held office in Presbyterian Churches, our Synod considered it appropriate, some years ago, to pass a resolution on creed subscription. It ends as follows: “The Synod expects of its office-bearers, as honourable men that whensoever they are conscious of having ceased to believe in any of these doctrines and principles, or to approve of the mode of worship, which they have vowed to maintain, they should lay down their office and not help to deprive the Church of its peace and purity; and finally it expects of the Church itself, through its courts, to see that in this connection its discipline is observed wheresoever in any case such honourable dealing does not appear to characterise any office-bearer whatsoever.”

In accepting the whole doctrine of the Confession we unreservedly



adhere to that much controverted statement in Chapter 25 of the Confession: "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, the son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the church against Christ, and all that is called God." With the advent of the ecumenical movement that statement was viewed with particular aversion by those who were in favour of dialogue with Rome and, as is well known, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, a few years ago, went so far as to remove it altogether from its subordinate standards. Its Moderator can thus unblushingly welcome the decision of the Scottish Roman Catholic hierarchy to become full members of Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS), the latest and most dangerous ecumenical body to be set up.

We do not believe that there are any office-bearers left in our Church who have any difficulty with regard to this statement but we have reason to fear that there are not a few in other Presbyterian Churches, over and above the Church of Scotland, who are more than ready to argue that the passages of Scripture which the Westminster divines applied to the Pope of Rome do not, in fact, apply to him at all. That is not, of course, a new line of attack. The Jesuit Ribera, as far back as the Sixteenth Century, invented the "Futurist" prophecy of an Antichrist who would appear "at the end of the age". The passages of Scripture which the Reformers applied to the Papacy were too apposite for comfort and the introduction of the futurist view was a crafty device to divert attention from the real Antichrist, who was already in place, and, instead, bring into view a shadowy, indistinct figure yet to appear. It would be a bold man, in our view, that would take issue with the Westminster divines on this matter. The history of the Papacy down the centuries has but confirmed that they were right. In Scotland such notable divines as Cunningham and Chalmers agreed with them and for theological learning and spiritual discernment their little fingers were thicker than the loins of those who now take upon themselves to adopt a different view.

The APC's Constitution, as is pointed out in the May 1990 Synod Statement, allows office-bearers belonging to that body to adopt the view that the Pope is not the Antichrist, if they so please. The Westminster Confession, together with the other documents which are declared to form their constitution, are accepted only "insofar as each and every one of these documents is consistent with the Holy Scriptures." Our people should know that and be able to see for themselves how false the APC's claim to be holding fast by the constitution of the true Free Presbyterian Church



of Scotland is. We would expect a body, whose spokesman appears before a battery of microphones claiming to be "holding tenaciously to the Westminster Confession of Faith" and at the same time falsely accusing us of adopting "double standards" would itself be very clear in its presentation of what it believes. We are not aware of any statement hitherto made by the APC's and which has been critical of Roman Catholicism. In one of their recent publications attention is drawn to the fact that the Apostle John stated that there were many antichrists but although the writer does refer to the familiar idea of "one pre-eminent antichrist" he fails to identify him. Is this a straw in the wind? "John looks for him", says Wylie, "In the guise of a Deceiver. 'Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many Antichrists.' After this announcement of a special and great Antichrist to follow in the wake of those minor Antichrists that were already arrived, and were urging their claims on the attention of the world, he comes to look more closely at the giant who was to stand up after these dwarfs had passed away." "Save us, O Lord," wrote Chalmers, in his "Scripture Readings", "from falling away, lest we share in the perdition that waiteth on the great apostacy. We hold the usurpation of Rome to be pointed at, and therefore let us maintain our distance, and keep up our resolute protest against its great abomination". May that continue to be our attitude.

## Notes of a Lecture

By the Rev. D. Macfarlane, Dingwall

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"And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" — 2 Samuel 9: 1.

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Although this portion of Scripture is neither a parable nor a type, it is quite legitimate to make spiritual use of it. David's enquiry here is like the call of the Gospel sent forth to sinners. In making this use of it I shall mention the points as I proceed.

1. The person who sends forth the call — King David, who is now king of the twelve tribes of Israel, and who seeks to do good to his subjects, even his enemies. In like manner the call of the Gospel is sent forth by God, who is King of the universe, and who is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in redemption, and who invites sinners to Him through the one Mediator, Jesus Christ, that He may do everlasting good to them. Seeing, then, that it is God that invites you to come to Him,



you have the highest authority to obey the call. You need not ask permission of a minister, priest, or any fellow-creature. This is a great privilege. "Arise, then, for the Master calleth thee."

2. The persons to whom the call is addressed. — King David's call was to those of the house of Saul. You know that Saul was a great enemy to David. The call of the Gospel is to enemies. All the human race are enemies in their minds to God, and showing their enmity by wicked works (Col. 1: 21). Sin is the cause of enmity. It caused enmity between God and man and between man and man. It is as an enemy you are called, and not better than an enemy. You are called to come as an enemy to be reconciled to God by Jesus Christ.

David's call was to *any one* of the house of Saul. The call of the Gospel is *universal*, addressed to each and all to whom the Word of God comes. "Preach the gospel to every creature." "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." Any sinner who hears the Word of the Lord — young or old, rich or poor, yea, the chief of sinners — is invited. So long as you are in the land of the living you are invited. But the call is not to sinners who have passed from time to eternity. David's call was to *any* "left of the house of Saul." Many of that house had died. The call was not to them. In like manner the call of the Gospel is not to those that have died, but to those that are living. Many of our fellow-sinners have died since we were born, and the great majority died in their sins, and are now lost for ever in the place of everlasting despair. What a wonder that we are still left to hear the gracious call of the Gospel!

3. By David's inquiry there was a person found — Mephibosheth. The Gospel call will find some sinners who will, by grace, obey the call. What was the condition in which this man was?

(1) He was an exile, far away from Jerusalem — the seat of worship — where the name of God was known, and where the Gospel was proclaimed.

(2) He was in poverty, having lost the inheritance that belonged to him by birth, being of the royal family. So are sinners. By sin we lost God, His image, and all that belonged to us in our first creation. We are, by nature, far away from God — like the prodigal — and in exile, fearing, the execution of the sentence of death: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die."

(3) He was lame in both his feet. How did he become lame? By a fall. When his father and grandfather were killed in battle, his nurse fled with him at the age of five years, fearing that they also might be killed; and in the hurry the child (and probably the nurse too) fell and broke his two legs, and thus he became lame. In like manner sinners are lame in both



feet. How did we become lame? By a fall — a far worse fall than the fall of Mephibosheth. The nurse in whose arms we were was the first Adam, and when he sinned and fell from the state in which he was created, we sinned in him and fell with him in his first transgression. Pelagians do not believe this, but by their practice they prove that they are lame. Their practice contradicts their theory. What are the feet on which we are lame? We are lame on the foot of *faith* and we are lame on the foot of *obedience*. When man sinned he ceased to believe God and he ceased to obey His law and to walk in the way of His commandments. This is true not only of the first man, but also of all his posterity that descended from him by ordinary generation. You have only to look at men's practice as they are in a state of nature as an evidence of this. Some are avowed atheists — all are practical atheists — and do not walk in the way of God's commandments. The Sabbath day will show that sinners are lame on both their feet. They do not believe the word of God nor obey His law.

4. A messenger was sent to bring Mephibosheth to King David. The Gospel must be sent to sinners, or they must come to the place where the Gospel is preached before they can come to God. Some, in ignorance of the Scriptures, are of the opinion that the heathen may come to God without the Gospel message, but there is not one instance of this in the history of the human race. It is therefore a delusion, and a sign that those who hold this view are not taught of God. They make a bible of their own heart. The commission given by Christ to His apostles, to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," condemns this false idea.

5. The reception Mephibosheth received when brought to David. David spoke kindly to him. He was full of fear when he appeared before the king. Perhaps he thought that on account of his grandfather's enmity to David, he was sent for to be killed. So David said, "Fear not." When the sinner appears before God under conviction of sin he is afraid that God will punish him for his sins. But, like David, it is to show kindness to the sinner God cites him to appear at His bar. It is a work of great kindness on the part of God to convince sinners in a day of mercy of their sins, that they may cry for mercy, while others are left to discover their sinfulness in eternity in the place of everlasting torment. But it is a greater kindness to speak peace and comfort to the guilty sinner through the blood of Christ — to pardon all his sins and to remember them no more — and that on a ground on which He is just and the Justifier of Him that believes in Jesus. "Who is a God like unto thee" that does this?

6. David restored to him the inheritance that belonged to Saul but which



was now in the possession of David, and at his disposal to give to whomsoever he pleased. And withal Mephibosheth was now to live in the royal palace, to be fed at the king's table, and to be attended to as a prince. What a contrast to his condition in Lo-debar! When the sinner is reconciled to God through the blood of Christ the inheritance which he forfeited by sin is restored to him; God is the lot of his inheritance, his portion; life eternal, grace, and glory are his; and he is now adopted into God's family and has a right to all the privileges of the sons of God. He lives in the palace of the King; is fed at the King's table, eating the bread of life and drinking the water of life; and when he is prepared for heaven — made "all glorious within" — by the work of sanctification, he shall be brought with gladness into the Father's house above, to join the happy company there in the everlasting song, "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever, Amen." This is no fable or an imaginary thing. It is God's word of truth.

7. All the kindness shown to Mephibosheth by David was done for the sake of another — Jonathan, his father. In like manner, all the kindness God shows to the believer — both in the state of grace and glory — is shown to him not for the sake of any merit of his own, but entirely for the sake of Jesus Christ, who alone merited all the blessings of salvation for His people by His obedience unto death. This is clearly revealed in the word of God, and all who are taught of the Lord know it. It is in judgment hid from those that perish. Oh, sinner, pray that God may open your blind eyes to see the way of salvation by Jesus Christ.

8. The kindness which David showed to Mephibosheth was in pursuance of a *covenant*. David and Jonathan entered into a covenant, in which David bound himself by an oath that he would show kindness to Jonathan's posterity, which he now begins to perform to his needy son. In like manner, God the Father and His son, Jesus Christ, entered into a covenant, the Father promising to give eternal life to Christ's seed or posterity on condition that the Son should perform His part of the covenant, which cost Him His humiliation unto death. This is the covenant of grace, which is everlasting, "ordered in all things and sure." When Christ fulfilled the conditions of the covenant the Father said to Him, "Ask of me, and I will give thee." Christ shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.

9. Although Mephibosheth was now in the palace of the king, living not at his own expense but at the expense of the king, yet he was still lame on both his feet.



The believer, notwithstanding his privileges, as justified, adopted, and made a new creature in Christ, is still lame on both his feet; not, however, so lame as he was in his natural state. He is lame in his faith and he is lame in his obedience. It was to His disciples Christ said, "O ye of little faith." The believer is lame in his obedience. He is not yet perfect in his obedience. He never yet managed to think a perfect thought, speak a perfect word, or perform a perfect action. If he is a preacher he finds that he never preached a perfect sermon, never prayed a perfect prayer — that is, without sin in some form mingling with his endeavour after new obedience. This keeps him from depending in any degree on any thing he does as a ground of salvation, in whole or in part. He is shut up entirely to Christ's finished and perfect work as the only ground of his hope for eternity.

He is imperfect in his nature. Sin still dwells in him; it dwells in all the faculties and powers of his soul — in his mind, will, and affections. There is saving knowledge in his mind and there is ignorance in his mind; there is willingness in his will and there is rebellion in his will; there is holiness in his affections and there is unholiness in his affections too. Grace and sin dwell together in the soul of the believer. The "new man" and the "old man" dwell in the same house. If a murderer dwelt in the same house with you, how dangerous your condition would be! What would you do to protect your life? You will say, "I would put the murderer in one room, and I would live in another apartment and lock the door." But you are to remember that there is no partition between grace and sin in the soul. Hence your danger. You need, therefore, to be always on the watch, and however watchful you may be, it is God only that can protect you from your enemy. The struggle between grace and sin shall continue till death, when the believer shall be completely, and for ever, delivered from sin and all imperfections, and shall enter heaven perfectly holy, "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." It shall not be known on his appearance that he ever sinned. There shall not be any lameness in him then.

10. The effect that David's kindness had on Mephibosheth.

(1) *Thankfulness*. — "He bowed himself before the king," which was an expression of gratitude for the benefits bestowed on him. When you give a penny to a needy beggar he takes off his cap, bows to you, and says, "Thank you." How much more thankful Mephibosheth was for the dignity to which David raised him, and the blessings which he conferred upon him!

(2) *Humility*. — There can be no doubt but his bowing to David was



a token of his humility. David was a king, and he a poor man, and to receive such favour in the sight of the king, instead of puffing him up with pride, had the effect of humbling him.

(3) *A sense of unworthiness.* — He said, "What is thy servant, that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am?" A living dog may be of some value, but a dead dog is worthless and loathsome.

(4) He is now willing to be David's *servant* — lame as he is. If he could not walk to serve the king, he could use his tongue to speak well of him to all with whom he came in contact. "Thy servant," he said.

The application of all this to the believer is obvious. The believer is thankful to the Lord for raising him out of the dust, and lifting him out of the dunghill, in which he was by nature, and setting him with the princes of His people. Indeed, he never thanked the Lord in sincerity and truth till he was converted. But now he sings in the language of the Psalmist — "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." Not only so, but he desires that others would praise Him — "Oh, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"

But he is not always in a frame of mind to thank and praise the Lord. The Pharisee, like a machine, could thank the Lord at any time he liked, but his thanks were *lip-thanks*. They did not spring from grace in the heart. There are many professors of religion of that kind. Such are as ready to sing vain songs as they are to sing praise to the Lord, yea, readier, for it is more congenial to their carnal taste. But if the believer is not always able to sing praise to the Lord, he will not sing the vain song. He will leave it to those who think that they can serve two masters — Satan and God — a thing that is impossible. He is dependent on grace for every duty. When he gets an evidence of his interest in Christ, he resumes his work — a pleasant work — of thanksgiving to the Lord for His mercy to him. "Thou has turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness: to the end that my glory may give praise to thee, and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever."

Like Mephibosheth, the Lord's loving-kindness humbles him. There is such a thing as *proud humility*, which is to be found in nominal professors of religion for getting a high position in the Church or in the State. When Samuel told Saul that he was to be king over Israel, he (Saul) showed great humility — "Am not I a Benjamite, of the smalles of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin?"



Wherefore, then, speakest thou so to me?" But Saul showed in his after life that his humility was not real. It was quite different from the humility of Saul of Tarsus after his conversion. When the Lord exalted him to the high position of an apostle, he said, in sincerity and in truth, "I am less than the least of all the saints." The greater the favour the Lord showed to him, the humbler he became. He did not say merely that he was less than the least of all the *apostles*, but "less than the least of all the *saints*."

Is it a fact that the believer considers himself less than all his brethren and sisters in the Church? If he is in a healthy state, conscious of his own unworthiness and the Lord's mercy to him in not dealing with him according to desert, I believe it is a fact. He esteems all of whom he is sure that they are in a state of grace, better than himself. He does not wonder so much that the Lord would save other sinners as that He would save himself. This is really the experience of the true Christian. What brought him to this estimate of himself? The loving-kindness of the God of salvation. Nothing else could do it. Although he should be suspended over hell-fire for many years under law work, that could not work true humility in him. It is God's grace in Christ that humbles the proud sinner and keeps him humble. We are not, however, to think that there is no pride in him at the humblest. There is, but that causes him pain and sorrow, and it forms part of the evil "that he would not." It is a member of the body of sin and death, under which he groans for deliverance.

The loving-kindness of the Lord produces a deep sense of unworthiness in him. What did Mephibosheth think of himself when David showed him such kindness? Did he say he was worthy of it? No, but he said in effect, "I am no more worthy of it than a dead dog." This is what grace works in the believer. He is made sensible that he is no more worthy of salvation — in the sense of meriting it — than a dead dog. He is saved by grace — the free favour of God — the original source from which every blessing of salvation flows to the sinful children of men. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us" (Titus 3: 5).

Those who think that they can merit salvation are under a great delusion, and are ignorant of God's plan of redemption. This gracious plan is hid from the wise and prudent but revealed unto babes — those that are born again of the Spirit. Not only does the Christian not merit salvation by anything he did in a state of nature; he does not merit it by anything he does in the state of grace. Although he would do the largest amount of good works by grace during his time on earth which any Christian ever did, he is at death as shut up to free grace as he was when he



began his Christian course. He cannot — yea, he *will not* — claim salvation on the ground of anything he has done or suffered in the Lord's service. He is a *debtor* to free grace entering heaven.

May the Lord add His blessing to these remarks, and to His name be the praise. Amen.

## Christ in the Psalms

by Rev. Alex MacPherson, London

(Continued from Page 18)

### MESSIAH

Through the centuries of the Old Testament, many believing souls had looked for the promised Deliverer. In due time, the Deliverer came to be known as the Anointed, which in Hebrew is Messiah, and in Greek, Christ. Under the Mosaic Law, the high-priest was anointed, and by the same ceremony, Saul, David and later kings were set apart to their office. From David's time the expected Deliverer came to be spoken of as the Messiah, so that even Herod the Great, an Idumean, knew that a descendant of David was expected to deliver the Jewish nation from the Roman lordship. So that, when the wise men arrived inquiring for the recently born King of the Jews, Herod at once wanted to know where *Christ* was expected to be born.

The word "anointed" occurs 13 times in the Psalms, and of these, 6 can be taken as certainly referring to Christ. In Ps. 2: 2, sinful rulers are described as acting against "the Lord and his anointed". In Ps. 45, the ascended Christ is greeted by his Father with the words, "Thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." And in Ps. 89: 20, God says, "I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him." The other occurrences are in Psalms 20 and 132.

### REJECTED

The Saviour came to his own and they did not receive Him. On the contrary, they *rejected* Him, and this also was foretold in the Psalms. The first 3 verses of Ps. 2 picture a universal refusal to have Christ reigning over them; "Why rage the heathen . . . To plot against the Lord . . ." In Ps. 118 mention is also made of Christ's rejection by the leaders of his people, and on the other hand, God's raising Him to the highest honour — "The stone which the builders rejected is become the headstone of the corner."



**SUFFERINGS and DEATH — PRIESTHOOD**

The rejection was complete; nothing but the death of Jesus of Nazareth would satisfy the unbelieving Jews. So, He was condemned to be crucified. It was common practice among the old divines to divide the Saviour's obedience into active and passive. His active obedience was his perfect keeping of God's law; his passive obedience was his enduring the death of the cross. While the distinction had its uses, it tended to mask the fact that the Saviour was intensely active in his dying. It was then that He performed the first part of his priestly office as clearly brought out in Heb. 7: 27; Not daily, but just once, "Christ offered up himself". Again, in Heb. 9: 14; "Christ through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God." And also in Heb. 9: 26, "Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

Two Psalms refer to Christ's priesthood. In Ps. 40 it is clear that the purpose of the Son's coming into the world was to offer the sacrifice of Himself that would really take away sin; "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire . . . burnt offering and sin offering has thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come." In Ps. 110 the Saviour is plainly designated a priest; "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."

As befits the great subject of the sufferings of Christ, the major parts of two Psalms are devoted to it. Ps. 22: 1-21 prophetically gives the very words of the Saviour as He hung on the accursed tree, and graphically brings before us sufferings of soul and body, thus supplementing the Gospel narratives. Five parts of this Psalm are referred to in the Gospels. In the first 21 verses of Ps. 69, there is again a foretelling of Christ's words on the cross, words which assist us to discern a little of what the sorrows and sufferings of our great high priest were in offering Himself. New Testament quotations once again let us see that it is not David who speaks, but David's great Son.

**RESURRECTION and ASCENSION**

The fact that Christ rose from the dead after redeeming his people is also given in his own words in Ps. 16: 9-11. "Therefore my heart is glad . . . pleasures for evermore." Forty days later, Christ ascended to God's right hand, there to continue his priestly work in the form of intercession. This is described in Ps. 24. He who ascended into the hill of God and stood in the holy place was the perfect Man who had been obedient unto death. Yet, at the same time, He is God and named the King of glory, the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle, the Lord of hosts.



When his people have One so glorious as their Intercessor, what reason they have to be glad and confident that their salvation will be to the uttermost!

### PROPHET

Christ discharged part of his prophetic office in his state of humiliation. He described Himself as a prophet when his countrymen were offended at Him: "A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house" (Matt. 13: 57). And while opinions as to his being a prophet varied during his ministry, there seemed to be general acceptance of the fact at the end when He was acclaimed as Messiah on his entrance to Jerusalem. "And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee" (Matt. 21: 10,11).

However, the principal discharge of Christ's prophetic office has been going on since his ascension. As the Shorter Catechism puts it, "Christ executeth the office of a prophet in revealing to us by his Word and Spirit the will of God for our salvation." Ps. 40 which we have already seen to teach of Christ's incarnation and priesthood, also speaks of his acting as a prophet. "The great congregation" must surely refer to the same multitude as mentioned in Ps. 22: 25, people worldwide whom He by his Word and Spirit would instruct in the praiseworthiness of the God of salvation. "I have preached righteousness in the great congregation . . . I have not concealed thy loving kindness and thy truth from the great congregation" (Ps. 40: 9,10). In Ps. 110: 2, the Lord is said to send the rod of Christ's strength out of Zion which in the light of Is. 2: 3 would make the rod or sceptre to be the Word of Salvation, which blessed by the Holy Spirit brings sinners into subjection to Christ. Verse 2 of Ps. 98, following upon Christ's gaining the victory, speaks of his work as a prophet: "The Lord hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly showed in the sight of the heathen."

### KING

The references to Christ's kingship in the Psalms are numerous, 17 by my reckoning. Thus I can only mention some of those in which the term king itself appears eg Ps. 2; "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." Ps. 21; "The king shall joy in thy strength, O Lord." Ps. 22: 28; "For the kingdom is the Lord's: and he is the governor among the nations." Ps. 24: 7-10; "Lift up your heads, O ye gates . . . and the king of glory shall come in." Ps. 45; "So shall the king greatly desire thy



beauty." Ps. 47: 2; "he is a great King over all the earth." The other Psalms in this class are 20, 23, 68, 72, 78, 80, 89, 97, 98, 110, 132. If it be wondered why Ps. 23 is included, the reason is that when the same Good Shepherd is spoken of in Is. 40: 11, his shepherdly work follows immediately a statement that He is, "The Lord God who will come with a strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him."

### JUDGE

Christ's final activity before gathering his people into heaven is to be that of judging. To this Ps. 50 clearly refers, especially verses 1-6. "He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people" (v. 4). "And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself. Selah" (v. 6). The Judge must be Christ, because He said while on earth, "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son" (John 5: 22). At the beginning of Ps. 72, Christ is twice said to judge with righteousness, and Ps. 96: 13 is very specific: "he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity."

The scope of this paper ought to show that there is much in the Psalms regarding Christ. Most of the Psalms are Davidic in origin, and as he was a type of Christ, it might be expected that his Great Son would figure in a number of his inspired songs of praise. What I have done is identify the Psalms which undoubtedly speak of the coming Saviour, and then show how these refer to a number of aspects of Christ's Person and mediatorial work. Thus, beginning with references to the Saviour's Deity, I have gone on to show how the Psalms testify to his Incarnation and Humanity, his Moral Character, his Messiahship, his Rejection, his sufferings and Death (involving his Priesthood), his Resurrection and Ascension, his Prophetic and Kingly offices, and his final function as Universal Judge.

It must be remembered that what the Psalms say on all these subjects was inspired by the Holy Ghost, and therefore is most sure truth, and his depth of meaning not found in any merely human composition. Ought we not, therefore, to make the fullest use of the Psalms when praising God, and in fact regard them as the only proper vehicle of public praise?

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"The Psalter is a little Bible, and the summary of the Old Testament. One verse of the Psalms is sufficient for the meditation of a day; and he, who at the end of the day finds himself fully possessed of its sense and spirit, may consider his time well spent. — **Luther**



## The Scriptural Bounds of Liberty of Conscience

Rev. D. M. Boyd

*(The first half of this article, extracts from a paper given at the Theological Conference in December 1989, dealt with Conscience; Liberty of Conscience; and The Bounds upon Liberty of Conscience.)*

### **The Place of the Regulative Principle with respect to Liberty of Conscience.**

The Regulative Principle is an important principle for the Church of God. It is that principle which requires the Church to regulate all the affairs of Christ's kingdom by, and according to, the Word of God; or, in other words, it is the principle which recognises "the regulative authority of the Scriptures" in the kingdom of Christ. I shall assume familiarity with the outworkings of this principle and move rapidly on to its practical importance.

It is not merely a principle that the Most High has revealed in Scripture for the Church of God to live by, but it has a very practical purpose. This purpose is to accommodate tender conscience in the Church.<sup>16</sup>

It operates like this. If the Church of God is to admit of nothing but which can be shown to be based upon Scripture or by good and necessary inference to be derived from Scripture, then no-one can object to being involved in such worship. However, as soon as something is introduced which is beside Scripture, conscience can become offended and the Church of God will be divided. So the Regulative Principle is that Principle which ensures the unity of the Church in its worship by disarming conscientious objection to the form of worship.

Therefore the Regulative Principle brings liberty to the Church of God by safeguarding liberty of conscience. When new ideas on worship were introduced in the 19th century into Scotland, they were introduced by overturning the Regulative Principle. For example, the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland, in introducing instrumental music in 1872, stated, "The Synod, in *relaxing a rule* which has never been made to rest on an avowed principle, could lay down no principle for dispensing with uniformity in practice, except *the principle of religious liberty in matters not subject of direct Scriptural command*; and in deciding that uniformity of practice in the mode of leading the service of praise is not imperative, the Synod does more to sustain its own authority than it could do by the con-

16. A fuller treatment of the Regulative Principle is to be found in *The Regulative Principle — its Scope and Application*, a lecture given to the Society for Biblical Standards, London, in October 1990, available on tape but due for publication in 1991, D.V.



tinuance of a rule which has not been enforced.”<sup>17</sup> (my italics). The United Presbyterian Church was ruling that Synodical authority should prevail over the Regulative Principle.

The Regulative Principle operates in the sphere of Church government as well as in the sphere of worship.<sup>18</sup> As far as ecclesiastical power is concerned, a contemporary Professor has attacked our church for allowing, so he thinks, our Synod to develop a form of papalism with its encyclicals. He must know that what he is attacking is nothing more than the normal exercise of ecclesiastical power as historic Presbyterianism has understood it.<sup>19</sup> Other churches have resiled from the true position because of the secular understanding of liberty of conscience invading the church.

It is a lawful exercise of church power to determine from the Scripture what is its doctrine and what is acceptable Christian practice. The former leads to Creeds and Confessions; the latter is at a premium nowadays. However, as one is legitimate, so is the other. The cleavage between doctrine and practice is continuing apace in our day, and it is one of the principles of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland that doctrine and practice must conform with each other.

**The APC idea of liberty of conscience is not consistent with that of the Westminster Confession of Faith and goes against the Regulative Principle.**

Two preliminary points may be made. Firstly, we must remind ourselves that the Associated Presbyterian Churches (APC) have given no clear statement of their understanding of liberty of conscience and how it applies to the present situation. This makes it difficult to ascertain their real views. They have made some dogmatic assertions but given no explanations. A gloss of their view may be that they say that they are escaping from a popish tyranny over liberty of conscience. Such a statement is unhelpful, and we may as vigorously assert that we are fighting for Christian liberty. We are holding to Galatians 5: 1: “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage”. We will not countenance the idolatrous worship of Rome.

Secondly, I give it as my personal opinion that the APC conscience has not been wounded by recent Synod decisions. Their conscience managed to live with these for long enough, for they tell us that our troubles go

17. *The Soul of a Scottish Church*, David Woodside, Glasgow 1918, p201. The Relief Church introduced hymns in 1792. It would be helpful to read Calvin's views on liberty in the 1536 edition of the Institutes, Chapter 6, “Christian Freedom, Ecclesiastical Power and Political Administration” (for in the normative 5th edition this chapter has been broken up) to understand how Calvin puts liberty along with the Regulative Principle.

18. The Barrier Act had as its purpose the prevention of sudden innovation, but also it had a regard to liberty of conscience in the department of legislation.

19. e.g. Bannerman, Vol. 1, pp169, 345-348. *The Free Presbyterian Magazine*, Vol 41, pp419-421.



back to the 1970s, so demonstrating that they have an elastic conscience which can stretch quite far. But I consider that people whose consciences will allow them to attend idolatrous worship and identify with the idolaters engaged in their idolatry are people whose consciences are very much asleep. (Note that this is not to accuse *them* of idolatry, which has been a common mistake, but rather it is to accuse them of countenancing idolatry). Therefore, I do not consider their schism to arise from conscience; the reason must be sought elsewhere.<sup>20</sup>

Let us remind ourselves that the Westminster Confession of Faith is a Puritan document and the conscience that they have described is a Christian conscience, or what we might call a Puritan conscience. The scriptural rationale behind chapter 20, section 2, is that they did not want their consciences to be imposed upon and they wanted to be able to worship God *purely*. It is a conscientious concern to worship God in a manner that does not offend their consciences.

Contrast with this, the INVERSION of this argument by the APC. They want liberty to attend the very type of worship which the Puritans were abominating! The Puritans were pleading liberty of conscience *against* imposing abominable worship; the APC plead liberty of conscience to be allowed to go to abominable worship. The Puritans were pleading liberty of conscience to prevent abominable practices being imposed upon them in worship, while the APC are pleading liberty of conscience to *attend voluntarily* abominable practices in worship. The APC conscience is not a conscience which is fending off imposition of idolatry and ceremonies, for which purpose the Regulative Principle and liberty of conscience exist. Their conscience is not the same as the Puritan conscience, the Christian conscience of the Westminster Divines.<sup>21</sup>

The APC liberty of conscience is therefore NOT the Puritan liberty of conscience; it does not relate to the Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter 20, section 2, at all.

### **The source of the modern idea of liberty and religious toleration.**

I shall now try to trace the origin of the modern view of liberty of conscience. When ordinary APC members plead liberty of conscience, I do not know what they mean. It sounds so like the secular view that I can

20. The Synod Statement of May 1990 says, with respect to the APC claim to conscientious scruples and their continued occupancy of Free Presbyterian property, "... the profession of the APC to have very tender consciences is belied by their conduct."

21. Contrast the APC permission to attend Roman mass voluntarily with the famous incident concerning Janet Geddes throwing her stool at the Dean of Edinburgh's head as he began to read the new liturgy, crying out "Villain, dost thou say mass at my lug!" *Sketches of Church History*, Thomas M'Crie, 4th edition, Vol. 1, p204. *The Story of the Scottish Church* Thomas M'Crie, 1874, reprinted by Free Presbyterian Publications, 1988, p141.

Contrast it, also, with the conduct of Queen Elizabeth I who walked out of the Christmas Day mass as soon as the reading of the Gospel was concluded, and before the elevation of the host. She repeated this performance at her Coronation service a month later. *The Reign of Elizabeth 1558-1603*, J. B. Black, 2nd edition, 1959, 1988, pp9-10.



only assume that they have been drinking so long at the fountain of the mass media<sup>22</sup> that they cannot tell the difference between fresh water and stale. People use liberty of conscience and the right of private judgment interchangeably and employ them as shibboleths rather than as meaningful concepts. It sounds as if they are speaking about liberty rather than liberty of conscience.

The right of private judgment seems to them to be the liberty to think, possibly to act, according to whatever they think the scripture says. It sounds right, it sounds just, but it is simply the religious equivalent of the secular views on liberty.

I think we must go to Voltaire to find our explanation for this secular view in our modern world.<sup>23</sup> Voltaire made vehement attacks on religious persecution. He came to hold views on rights, liberties and religious toleration which have become axiomatic today; at least they are often quoted.<sup>24</sup> He believed one should have the right to believe and to say whatsoever one wanted. This can be seen to be against all that I have said so far, but it was developed in the context of restraining intolerance, particularly religious intolerance. It was developed to restrain the persecuting spirit. He was not the first to speak or write like this, but his influence was felt.

This is, therefore, the world's method for restraining the passions of men. This method is to propound Voltaire's doctrine, which is encapsulated in that often quoted statement that is attributed to him — "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it." (attr. in S. G. Tallentyre, *The Friends of Voltaire* (1907) p199). I doubt that he would defend to the death their right to say it, and he would certainly disapprove of what I have to say, which is, that the sentiment is completely wrong to the Christian conscience. Yet how often does one hear people repeating this sentiment? For example, in the recent Salman Rushdie affair, how often do we hear these sentiments on radio programmes in an attempt to restrain Muslim passion from breaking out into violence? It is woven into the warp and woof of our society, so that to it may be attributed the sentiment behind such expressions as "You are entitled to your opinion" (Does God say so?), "We will have to agree to differ" (Does God allow us this option?).<sup>25</sup> Why has such a sentiment

22. The mass media is not the only source of the secular views on liberty, but, in the context, it is the source most likely to have affected the people of the APC, as well as others. Some APC members will have been influenced by other sources also.

23. Voltaire, (Francois-Marie Arouet, 1694-1778), is not the source but the populariser, of these views. For the post-mediaeval source we must go back to Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), John Locke (1632-1704) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) and their respective theories of the Social Contract.

24. "This small, brilliant book (*Lettres philosophiques*, Voltaire, 1734) is a landmark in the history of thought; not only does it embody the philosophy of the 18th century, but it also defines the essential direction of the modern mind." Article, *Voltaire*, Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1979, René Henry Pomeau.

25. This is not the same as Cromwell's "I beseech you, in the bowels of Christ, think it possible you may be mistaken." (letter to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 3 August 1650).



gained such a hold upon the public mind? I believe it is because *this is the world's way of restraining the angry passions of man*.<sup>26</sup> His being made tolerant of error or differences causes his violent passions to subside. However, the Christian way is better still; along with the Christian's intolerance of error is the restraint upon violence that is central to the Christian ethic. He does not need such tolerant doctrines to prevent violent intolerance. So, yet again, true Christianity is lumbered with the results of the persecuting intolerance of the mainline, dominant, persecuting religions, against which Voltaire fulminated. Instead, we preach law, gospel, and the grace of God to restrain man's wickedness, and the love of Christ to constrain him to the love of others, as the method to prevent persecution.

Therefore, the Christian Church cannot admit the right of other faiths to believe as they do, nor the right to say what they say, nor the right to do as they do; but this is held in conjunction with non-persecution of other faiths. The Christian Church is not alone in denying such things. The State denies it also in certain areas which are considered to undermine the security or morality of the nation. For example, to uphold the principles of justice, a witness swears to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. He is denied the right to say as he pleases, and will be punished for perjury if he tries to take Voltaire with him into the witness box. Another example: paedophiles have no right to spread and practice their nefarious beliefs.

The Free Presbyterian Church has not yet capitulated to the views on liberty of conscience that prevail even in the ecclesiastical scene; so this makes us the odd-man-out in present-day Presbyterianism. Some may feel rather embarrassed at being the odd-man-out and take this as a sure sign that we must be wrong. Rather, it demonstrates that the secular views on liberty of conscience have invaded the Presbyterian world to an alarming extent, and this leads us to consider the final section of this paper.

**The on-going challenge to the whole Christian community in the field of ideas.**

The challenge that faces the Christian Church is to alert others to these insidious views of liberty, to guard ourselves against them, but, especially, to state the Christian response to the multi-faith situation when other faiths assert the civil right given to them to practise their false religions.

Religious Toleration is the real subject. As far as the Christian Church is concerned it has been debated since the Reformation. Some bounds have

26. "It was to counteract such instinctive urges to violence disguised as religious fervor that some 'Politiques' presented a counsel of moderation." *The Beginning of Ideology, Consciousness and Society in the French Reformation*, Donald R. Kelley, Cambridge University Press, 1981, p332.



been clearly drawn, and some foundational matters have been largely agreed upon by the Christian community.

At the religious level, we are quite clear that idolatry is wrong. It is vain for a person to plead liberty of conscience to re-examine the question. At the moral level, personal violence is considered wrong. These foundational matters of conscience have been resolved by the application of many minds over many years to the question. The right of private judgment must be allowed to people to examine the question anew for themselves, but it is vain for them to say to the Christian community at the end of their examination, "I wish to plead liberty of conscience to worship idols and to kill my neighbour."

There are other matters in our modern society which are taken for granted as a matter of liberty, but whether these can be legitimately pled on the principle of liberty of conscience is questionable. For example, we have all heard of the right of freedom of speech. However, the Christian community would modify that right to the freedom to speak the truth. We have no freedom under God's law to speak lies, and sometimes under human laws we deny the right (e.g. we swear-in witnesses to speak the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth — not to do so will be treated as perjury). Under God's law we have no right to speak blasphemy, curses or insults. This is because they are judged wrong by conscience applying God's law to these matters. To plead liberty of conscience would, therefore, be nonsense, as the only liberty conscience has is to do that which is right.

In the area of freedom of thought we come even more into conflict with the prevailing views of the present era.<sup>27</sup> The Scripture is clear that man is wrong in his thoughts, which rebel against God. But the prevailing view of society is that a man's thoughts are his own, and that he should be allowed to have them as long as he does no-one any harm by them. There has been a long history of the suppression of thought, to the shame of the suppressors, so much so that modern man thinks he must have liberty to think whatever thoughts he wishes. George Orwell has given the matter concrete form in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, in which he describes the Thought Police in totalitarian regimes. I think he had Roman Catholicism in mind, just as much as communism, for a central character is called O'Brien.

Donald R. Kelley in *The Beginning of Ideology*<sup>28</sup> suggests that demands for liberty of conscience are the first stage of a new ideology. He tries to identify the stages in the development of ideology, which need

27. *The Free Presbyterian Magazine*, Vol. 41, p448; *The Practical Philosophy*, R. L. Dabney, pp303-317.

28. *The Beginning of Ideology, Consciousness and Society in the French Reformation*, Donald R. Kelley, Cambridge University Press, 1981.



not concern us here, but I emphasise that demands for liberty of conscience are *but* the first stage of a new ideology.

It was so at the Reformation. It was so at the time of the French Revolution, which ushered in a century given over to the new ideas of liberty and which so affected Church life that, in the 19th century Scottish Church scene, liberty of conscience was the mainstay of the method of introducing the new theology.

Rev. Fergus Ferguson was the man who occasioned the introduction of the first Declaratory Act into the Scottish and worldwide Presbyterian scene, in the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland. In 1871, Ferguson was challenged as to his orthodoxy and he was asked to subscribe four propositions to satisfy a Committee of the Synod of the U.P. Church. Reluctantly he subscribed these propositions, while understanding "that my liberty, as a minister of the gospel, to speak according to my own light, conscience, and sense of responsibility, remains unimpaired."<sup>29</sup> That liberty was explained by Dr James Brown at a latter date, after Ferguson's heresy trial in 1878, as: "... liberty on matters which do not enter into the substance of that faith,"<sup>30</sup> a phrase which was to gain notoriety in subsequent Declaratory Acts. In his heresy trial Ferguson defended himself on liberty of conscience. In one of his speeches, he referred to "the light of God's Word, and the light of those *equally divine gifts* of reason and conscience which God has given to men." He defiantly stated: "I hold that it is the height of intolerance and spiritual tyranny to say that a man ought to be severely punished by any body of his fellow-men for his religious opinions, whatever they may be, and I hold it is persecution to go on to the infliction of such punishment."<sup>31</sup>

Ferguson was a pioneer of the theological revision that was to introduce the Declaratory Act era and he, like the APC, appealed "from the subordinate standards to the Word of God"<sup>32</sup> although, in his case, it was motivated by a fierce opposition to the Westminster Confession of Faith<sup>33</sup>; compare the *Deed of Separation*, 1989, of the APC, which states, concerning the subordinate standards, "insofar as each and every one of these documents is consistent with the Holy Scriptures." Dr Samuel Miller says of this latter phraseology in 1833: "This, I acknowledge, appears to me a subterfuge which offers as direct an insult to common sense as it does to common honesty. Upon this principle it is plain that any man might, without scruple, subscribe *any confession of faith whatsoever*. For,

29. *Fergus Ferguson, His Theology and Heresy Trial*, J. H. Leckie, Edinburgh, 1923, p79.

30. *ibid*, p271.

31. *ibid*, pp126, 213.

32. *ibid*, p106.

33. *ibid*, p217.



surely a Socinian might, without the least hesitation, declare that he believed a rigidly Calvinistic Confession, so far as he considered it as coinciding with the word of God."<sup>34</sup> Rev. James S. Sinclair wrote similarly: "Notice its terms: 'The Confession of Faith is to be regarded as an infallible standard of faith and worship only in so far as it accords with the Holy Scripture, interpreted by the Holy Spirit,' . . . it is quite apparent that this new declaration approved by the Assembly . . . is just a Declaratory Act of a very dangerous character though it does not bear the name. . ."<sup>35</sup>

In the secular world there is much speculation about the death of ideology. D. R. Kelley finishes his book with a chapter on "The End of Ideology." This may simply reflect the current stage of libertarian thought. However, as long as there is resistance to libertarian free-will, there will be pleas for liberty of conscience as the springboard to develop new ideologies to liberate mankind from the bondage of the current thinking. Yet it is almost axiomatic, "There are none so intolerant as the liberals!"

Christ has promised to be with His Church; the gates of hell will not prevail against it. We may therefore expect Him to raise up a standard against satanic assaults. However, we are to attend to His revealed will in Scripture and to seek to satisfy the conditions that He imposes upon such a divine intervention. "I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them." Ezek. 36: 37. So let us pray to Him for this blessing, rather than sink down in despondency under the current onslaught of materialism and agnosticism. Let us not take the line of least resistance which, in things spiritual, is nothing short of Laodicean indifference. There is worldly wisdom in going with the stream; but its wisdom is in finding the favour and applause of the world; it will not find the favour of God. "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" John 5: 44. Let us rather look to the grace and strength of Him who is the Rock of ages, in whom is everlasting strength.

The APC have left us on the plea of liberty of conscience. It remains to be seen what ideology it is that they represent, and which they think could not find expression for itself within the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland.<sup>36</sup>

34. *Doctrinal Integrity: On the Utility and Importance of Creeds and Confessions and Adherence to Our Doctrinal Standards*, Samuel Miller, Presbyterian Heritage Publications, Dallas, 1989, p85; also Letter VI in *Letters to Presbyterians on the Present Crisis in the Presbyterian Church in the United States*, Samuel Miller, Philadelphia, 1833; and *The Presbyterian Magazine*, 1833.

35. *The Free Presbyterian Magazine*, 1903, Vol 8, p104. For further discussion of this type of subscriptional subterfuge see *The Erosion of Calvinistic Orthodoxy: Seceders and Subscription in Scottish Presbyterianism*, Ian Hamilton, Rutherford House Books, Edinburgh, 1990, pp19-20.

36. Notice, also, Thomas M'Crie's statement: "(Liberty of conscience) was revived by the Dissenters in England and Ireland near the beginning of the late century, who employed the most favoured topics of modern declamation as to dictating to consciences, depriving men of the right of private judgment, &c . . . in pleading exemption from human tests of orthodoxy, and the restraints of church authority with respect to opinions which they judged agreeable to scripture. In our own time we have abundant evidence of a similar operation of the same principle." *Statement of Difference*, Thomas M'Crie, 1871, p166.



## Book Reviews

**SEEING JESUS. The Case Against Pictures of our Lord Jesus Christ** by Peter Barnes. Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh. 50p.

The Author of this booklet of thirteen pages is a minister of a Presbyterian Church in New South Wales, Australia. He makes out a good case against pictures of Christ on Biblical grounds, with frequent Scripture references. His quotes are not from the A.V. Pictures of Christ are dependent on the imagination, are a means of introducing much error concerning Him, necessarily dishonour Him, and are in contravention of the Second Commandment.

However the author undermines his case in dealing with those who claim that God has used pictures of Christ to speak to them, using Count von Zinzendorf, a Moravian, as an example. The reply given in the booklet is as follows:- "It only means that God is so gracious that He will occasionally give blessing where the method employed is contrary to His revealed will." He takes the same line with reference to altar calls in evangelism — the method is unbiblical and does much harm but there are many cases of Christians whose testimony is that they were converted when they walked forward at the appeal." One can only ask here what sort of Christians these are, and what kind of theology are we being invited to accept in the first quote above. It is the reviewer's opinion that when writers on theological subjects, and preachers, go outside the A.V. of the Bible for their Scriptural quotes, then sooner or later defective theology by Westminster Confession Standards will appear. (See Review F.P. Magazine, August 1985, "Milk of the Word").

R.K.M.

**THE OLD IS BETTER** by Alfred Levell. Gospel Standard Trust Publications. £1.20. 61 pp.

This booklet by the President of the Trinitarian Bible Society is a defence of the Authorised Version of the Bible as the most trustworthy version of the Bible in the English language. In nine chapters it covers such topics as the main English versions, the Hebrew and Greek texts, thoughts on translations, "Thou" or "You", and the New King James Version. It brings out very clearly why it is our duty to continue to use the Authorised Version notwithstanding the multiplicity of versions of the Bible produced in recent times. We are glad to commend this booklet to readers of the Magazine.

D.B.M.



## Notes and Comments

### **The Gulf Crisis**

By the time the Magazine is in the hands of readers the 15th January deadline set by the United Nations for the Iraqis to withdraw from Kuwait will have passed and the outcome will be known. At this stage we can only hope that war will yet be averted. It is a truly mysterious revolution of the wheels of Divine providence that has brought so many of the nation of the world to be gathered together, with their weapons of war, and in an area so steeped in Biblical history. Whatever be the outcome in the Gulf crisis we are encouraged to believe that the Lord reigns and that finally the kingdoms of this world are to become "the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ". Then shall they learn war no more.

### **Capital Punishment**

For the second time in the life of this Parliament MP's have decided, after a full-scale debate and free vote, not to re-introduce capital punishment. The fact that one of their own number — the late Ian Gow — was recently brutally murdered by the IRA appears to have had little effect on the majority of members' thinking on the matter. The new Home Secretary, Mr Kenneth Baker, takes a different view from his predecessors and he voted for the status quo. The new Prime Minister's views differ from those of his predecessor, Mrs Thatcher, and he also, was, sadly, found entering the no-hanging lobby. All honour to those MP's who spoke strongly in favour of the re-introduction of capital punishment but we wish their arguments had been based more on what the Bible has to say on the matter and less on statistics and the deterrence factor. The Rev. Ian Paisley stated the Biblical position in a very able and forthright manner and is to be commended for doing so in that particular forum. We have always maintained that, supremely, capital punishment for murder should be on the statute book because God, the great Lawgiver and final Judge of men's actions, has plainly stated His mind on the matter: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." The majority of our Members of Parliament would seem to regard themselves as being more humane and wiser than God.

— J. McL.

### **Moderator's Views on Sabbath Ferries.**

It was already fairly well known that the present Moderator of the Church of Scotland General Assembly was not very tolerant of the views



of "fundamentalists", even within his own church, and his non-support of those opposing the introduction of a Sabbath ferry to Tarbert ought not to have surprised anyone. Professor Davidson is reported to have said: "I am divided on this one because I don't support this kind of Sabbatarianism as being central to the Christian faith. On the other hand, it is traditional to a way of life that the people wish to retain". The Church of Scotland Presbytery of Lewis issued a statement disassociating itself from the Moderator's remarks and pointed out that, among other things, they exhibited "a profound misunderstanding of Christian life in Lewis". In our view, the Moderator's remarks reveal a profound misunderstanding and ignorance of the Christian faith, full stop. Do the following statements give us any reason to believe that this man's mind has been enlightened by the Spirit of God?: "Ultimately it is not tenable intellectually, if you are going to argue for some kind of totally inerrant Bible, it's just not on. If you know anything about the whole history of the Bible and the way it has come down to us it is just not possible. . . . If you think then that the Christian faith believes that the world was made in six days, then you have got problems on your hands". That he should give utterance to such views and not be taken to task for it is an indication of how doctrinally adrift the Church of Scotland really is and of how little place is given to the ordinance of ecclesiastical discipline within its pale. "We love the Lord's day", wrote the godly Robert Murray McCheyne, "because it is His. Every hour of it is dear to us — sweeter than honey, more precious than gold. It is the day he rose for our justification. It reminds us of His love, and His finished work, and His rest. And we may boldly say that that man does not love the Lord Jesus Christ who does not love the entire Lord's day". — **J. McL.**

### **Caledonian MacBrayne and the Lord's Day**

Notwithstanding all the representations made to it to do otherwise, the Board of Caledonian MacBrayne have re-affirmed their decision to introduce Sabbath sailings this coming Summer on the Uig - Tarbert route. We believe that one man is mainly responsible for the Board's intransigence — Mr Colin Paterson, its Managing Director. Mr Paterson is clearly anxious that the general public should know that he professes to be a Christian and that he is a member of a Church of Scotland congregation but, in our view, his actions belie his profession. He may be of good standing in his own congregation but we could not possibly have fellowship with a man of his views and we are thankful that we are not under the obligation of taking him to our bosom. The Moderator's deplorable utterances



were, no doubt, very encouraging to Mr Paterson and the other members of the Cal-Mac Board who are like-minded.

In McCheyne's day it was the majority of the Directors of the Edinburgh and Glasgow Railway who were determined, in a manner that shocked the God-fearing, to open the railway on the Lord's day. This Christian minister, who would appear to have been of the meekest of men, trenchantly expressed his mind as follows and we may be sure that were he alive today he would be of the same mind with regard to Caledonian MacBrayne: "Unhappy men, who are striving to rob Scotland of this day of double blessing, 'ye known not what ye do' . . . Is it not possible that some of you may remember, with tears of anguish in hell, the exertions which you are now making, against light and against warning, to bring down a withering blight on your own souls and on the religion of Scotland. . . . Guilty men! who, under Satan, are leading on the deep, dark phalanx of Sabbath breakers, yours is a solemn position. You are *robbers*. You rob God of His holy day. You are *murderers*. You murder the souls of your servants. God said: 'Thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy servant;' but you compel your servants to break God's law, and to sell their souls for gain. . . . You are *moral suicides*, stabbing your own souls, proclaiming to the world that you are not the Lord's people, and hurrying on your souls to meet the Sabbath-breaker's doom." — J. McL.

### Meddling Prelates

The part played by Cardinal Hume and other Roman Catholic Church clerics in the proceedings which led up to the release of the "Guildford Four" (four Irish people imprisoned for pub bombings) is well known. Now it is the release of the "Birmingham Six" (who were found guilty of a similar crime) that is being sought, and foremost among those campaigning on their behalf are, again, Roman Catholic Church dignitaries. Prominent among them are Archbishop Winning of Glasgow and Archbishop Daly, the newly appointed head of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland. We are left to wonder if these gentlemen have access to sources of information not available to others when they so emphatically speak of the conviction of these bombers as "a massive injustice" (Winning) — "a disgraceful and horrendous injustice, which raises the most serious questions about the conduct of the Police and the judiciary and the entire system of justice" (Daly). Our Police officers are not infallible. We, however, believe that for honesty and competence they are second to none. The same may be said of our judiciary and it ill becomes clerics, who belong to the Church which set up the Inquisition and which, to this day, has



not truly expressed repentance for all the evil and excesses which it perpetrated in its name, to speak so disparagingly of them. Is it possible that these men think of themselves as having some sort of divine right to pronounce on these matters? Maybe. Pope Pius IX's 1864 Encyclical states, *inter alia*, "The civil power is inferior and subordinate to the ecclesiastical power, and in litigated questions of jurisdiction should yield to it." Cardinal Manning, speaking in the name of the Pope, says (in "Sermons on Religious Subjects," 1873): "I acknowledge no civil power: I am the subject of no prince, and I claim more than this, I claim to be the supreme judge and director of the consciences of men; I am sole, last, supreme judge of what is right and wrong. Moreover, we declare, affirm, define and pronounce it to be necessary to salvation to every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff." — J. McL.

### **Sabbath keeping**

Several local papers in the Highlands have been carrying features to raise the profile of the "Keep Sunday Special" campaign. However, the laudable aim of promoting the keeping holy of the Lord's Day is clouded by some unhelpful statements, for example: "The Lord's day is not the Jewish Sabbath. Jews had thousands of rules for the latter, and classified the work that was forbidden under 39 heads. Jesus rejected the pettifogging man-made rules of the Jewish tradition. We must not be guilty of confusing the Old Testament Sabbath with the New Testament Lord's Day."

This statement serves only to confuse the subject further. The impression is created that the Old Testament Sabbath was the same as the Jewish Sabbath with all its "pettifogging man-made rules". This was not so. The Old Testament Sabbath was a creation ordinance which was re-stated when it was enshrined in the Ten Commandments, "*Remember* the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." It is therefore part of the abiding moral law of God. Under the ceremonial law, the Jews had further observances with respect to the Sabbath commandment, which were fulfilled in Christ's redemptive work, which are no longer binding. Further, the Jews added their traditions to this.

It is therefore quite inadequate to conclude that we must not confuse "the Old Testament Sabbath with the New Testament Lord's Day." The Old Testament Sabbath as it stands as the fourth commandment of the Moral Law is still binding in New Testament times, and by the Lord's example it is to be identified with the Lord's Day. "Q.59. Which day of the seven hath God appointed to be the weekly Sabbath? Answer: From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, God appointed



the seventh day of the week to be the weekly Sabbath; and the first day of the week ever since, to continue to the end of world, which is the Christian Sabbath.” (Shorter Catechism).

The view that tries to put an essential difference between the Old Testament Sabbath and the New Testament Lord’s Day, by attacking Jewish Sabbatarianism, was promoted by the Church of Scotland in the 1960s (see *History of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland 1893-1970* pp272-274) This view has contributed to the lax views on Sabbath observance which now threaten to remove any restraints upon Sabbath trading in England and Wales. In an attempt to win the public to Keeping the Sabbath Special, the divine command is being played down and family life is being played up. It is questionable whether this attitude will have any force to prevent the deregulation of the Sabbath laws. As in the Warnock debate, if one uses the wrong authority and employs only arguments that appeal to the public, then once the weakness of these arguments has been exposed one loses the whole campaign. — **D. M. B.**

### **The Free Church and Purity of Worship**

An article entitled “Praise in Public Worship” in the December issue of *The Monthly Record* of the Free Church of Scotland raises again the question of that body’s position on purity of worship. The author of the article, Mr Andrew Fraser, says of the Free Church, “We are not committed to exclusive psalmody as such.” And hymns? “What about what we call hymns? Are they totally ruled out? Not necessarily.” Once again we are left wondering what the true position of the Free Church of Scotland is on this important question. Their College claims to be “Committed to the historic Reformed Faith” and the historic Reformed Faith in Scotland from the beginning did not permit the singing of hymns in the public worship of God. Lovers of the truth and of the Reformed Faith would welcome an unequivocal declaration from the Free Church on this matter if only to dispel the suspicion that the ground is being prepared for further departures from the Free Church’s avowed testimony. — **D. J. McD.**

### **The Latest Roman Catholic Basilica**

The recently completed “Basilica of Our Lady of Peace” is said to be the biggest in the world. It cost £300 million to build and it is located, not in plush surroundings within the boundaries of one of the more prosperous Roman Catholic nations of Europe or America, but in the heart of an area of scrubland near Yamoussoukro, capital of the Ivory Coast.



That is one reason why the wisdom of building it has been called in question. Attention has been focussed on "the contrasts between the cost of the church and the economic plight of the Ivorian economy and the poverty of many of its people" and this, we are told by Stewart Lamont in a *Glasgow Herald* article, has occasioned much criticism. He quotes one of Rome's own "saints", Bernard of Clairvaux, and we believe the quotation sums up what all right-thinking people think of the matter: "O vanity of vanities, yet no more vain than insane! The Church clothes her stones in gold and leaves her sons naked." — **J. McL.**

### **Instrumental Music Obsolete**

In a recent issue of *Life and Work* an organist complains that the advent of public address systems has raised a difficulty when a minister uses a lapel microphone and "sings directly into (it) at full volume." He explains, "The sensitiveness of amplification systems can mean that the minister, albeit unconsciously, makes it nigh on impossible for the organist and choir-master to regulate the nature and the tempo of the singing."

This appears to herald the demise of the last argument in favour of instrumental music. Organs and choirs were supposed to be necessary to regulate the singing. But now it appears that a trained precentor, with appropriate amplification, is sufficient to direct the congregational praise. It is to be hoped that churches will return to the purity of worship practised by the Apostles. They followed the pattern of worship in the synagogue, not the temple, in which the Psalms only were sung without instrumental music. — **D. M. B.**

### **Christianity Survives in China**

The savage shootings in a Peking square last year illustrated vividly the repressive nature of the Chinese regime. Yet even in such conditions the Church of God does not easily die out. A newspaper report published a few months ago in this country quoted an official Chinese newspaper reporting the effect of religion on Protestant children in a primary school in southern China.

The Chinese newspaper claimed that lessons were constantly being interrupted by children singing hymns and that children fall asleep in class because of prayer sessions the previous night. The report also asserted that the main reason these children are Christians is that their parents will not allow them to watch television or even to eat unless they become believers. Of the 128 pupils in the school, 42 were said to be Christians, ranging in age from eight to 14. One is quoted as saying, "I believe in



Jesus. If I didn't how would my soul go to heaven? I believe God created the world."

Clearly the original report was not produced to encourage Christians; most of the claims are obviously hostile propaganda. Equally clearly there is some evidence of religion, which the authorities wish to discourage in other places. We can only hope that this is evidence of true religion coming to the surface in a way which must be almost, if not completely, unknown in this country. The principle still holds true, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise."

Some observers of the Chinese scene claim that thousands of young people have turned to Christianity following on the authorities' crackdown on the movement for democracy. If Christianity is only being seen as the one possible vehicle of opposition to the Communist rulers of the country Christianity cannot be truly strengthened by these additions. One hopes that some at least will come to know the Saviour. Of one thing we can be sure, that a time will come when China will join all the other nations of the world to "become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ."

— K. D. M.

### **Roman Catholicism and Freedom**

Roman Catholicism is always keen to maximise its opportunities in countries where there is freedom of worship. Indeed the position is often such that those who oppose that system are labelled bigots.

There are still a number of countries where Roman Catholicism has such power that freedom for other religious bodies is strictly limited. In Venezuela recently a bid by a Protestant denomination to conduct evangelistic activities was quashed. The case reached the country's Supreme Court, which ruled that the Roman Catholic Church is the only "recognised organism" entitled to carry out religious activities in Venezuela. — K. D. M.

## **Mission News**

The Rev. D. B. MacLeod, the Rev. A. B. Ndebele and Mr Dick Vermeulen have been in Kenya from the 6th to the 21st of December. They have now travelled to Malawi, and will remain there until the 11th of January. The Rev. D. B. MacLeod will spend the remainder of his time



overseas in Zimbabwe, leaving for Scotland D.V. on the 24th January. This is the hot season and also the rainy season. We hear that in Zimbabwe there has been very little rain, and it is sad to hear that already a number of cattle and goats have died, for lack of food and water.

Mr and Mrs Neil Murray have arrived home safely, and Neil has already been engaged in preaching. Marion Graham is also home in Inverness. The Dutch nurse, Miss Terlouw, is now in Zimbabwe, and she and Miss Zekveld, who is expected early in the year D.V., will spend some time in Bulawayo studying Sindebele.

David Ndlovu, sadly still unwell, and in and out of hospital in Bulawayo, has, with his men, built a large kitchen attached to Mbumba Hospital, by Government orders. It has been roofed, but a great deal still remains to be done. In the past, relatives usually accompanied the patients, bringing food and cooking utensils with them. The relatives looked after their own people, cooking out in the open, making use of the plentiful timber in the forest around them.

It is recounted of Dr Alison Dunbar's visit to Mbumba Hospital in 1972, when she came to relieve Dr James Tallach for a period of months, that she went out at an early hour on her first morning on duty, to make a "ward round", only to find, to her consternation, that every bed was empty! The patients were out in the yard enjoying the morning sunshine. In the evening, now feeling assured that she would find all the patients in bed, she found that all the relatives were either under the beds, or strewn across the floors. Those days are about to end. There will be an enrolling of kitchen staff, transport of food in the new Mission lorry on the long hundred miles from Bulawayo, in sunshine and storm, the supervision of the cooking, and of the food which goes to the patients. This will add to the burdens of the hardworking staff. One cannot help feeling that there was much to be said for the old homely way of doing things. There are 23 Nursing Aids, and two Medical Assistants, in addition to three European Sisters and Dr Hak.

A young man, Dickson Mhlanga, was appointed a Hospital Evangelist, under the instruction of the Rev. P. Mzamo, at the beginning of the year. Dickson was an untrained teacher in one of our out-schools for a number of years, and has been a member in the Mbumba congregation for some time. He reads the Scriptures to the patients and prays with them, seeking to lead them into the Truth, as he may be enabled. It reminds one of the proverb: "In the morning sow the seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand, for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that — ." J. N.



# Church Notes

## Notice re Synod Agenda

Clerks of Presbyteries, Conveners/Clerks of Committees, and all 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 Tuesday 26th March, 1991 (D.V.).

(Rev.) D. B. Macleod  
Clerk of Synod.

## Notice to Conveners/Clerks of Standing Committees.

The Conveners/Clerks of all Standing Committees should note that all Committee Reports must be in the hands of the Clerk of Synod by Thursday, 21st March, 1991, for printing purposes (DV). 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.) D. B. Macleod,  
Clerk of Synod.

## Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

**Outer Isles:** At Stornoway on 5th February 1991 at 12 noon.

**Skye:** At Portree on 12th February 1991 at 11 a.m.

**Northern:** At Dingwall on 12th February 1991 at 2 p.m.

**Zimbabwe:** At Bulawayo on 13th March 1991 at 2 p.m.

**Southern:** At Glasgow on 19th February 1991 at 6 p.m.

## Committee Meetings will meet at Inverness Church:

### Tuesday, 19th March

|                         |                            |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 9.00 a.m. - 10.00 a.m.  | Church Centenary Committee |
| 10.00 a.m. - 11.00 a.m. | Training of Ministry       |
| 11.00 a.m. - 12 noon    | Church Magazines           |
| 12 noon - 1.00 p.m.     | Publications               |
| 2.00 p.m. - 3.00 p.m.   | Welfare of Youth           |
| 2.00 p.m. - 4.30 p.m.   | Finance                    |
| 3.00 p.m. - 4.00 p.m.   | Sabbath Observance         |
| 4.30 p.m. - 5.30 p.m.   | Dominions and Overseas     |
| 4.30 p.m. - 5.30 p.m.   | Religion and Morals        |
| 7.00 p.m. - 9.00 p.m.   | Foreign Mission            |

## Perth and Stirling Congregation

The Kirk Session have decided that there will be only one Communion in Perth Congregation and one Communion in Stirling Congregation for the coming year D.V.



### **Dr R. K. MacCuish**

It is with deep regret that we briefly record the death of Dr R. K. MacCuish, Ilkley, Yorkshire, who was an elder in our London congregation and well known throughout the Church. He was zealous and upright in the service of his Master and we mourn his loss. We desire to express our sympathy with his widow and family. A fuller notice will be appearing in due course.

### **Urgent Appeal for Foreign Mission Staff**

At Ingwenya, at John Tallach Secondary School, there is an urgent need for teachers having Mathematics or Science at degree level. Persons not having teacher training will be acceptable.

At Sengera in Kisii Province in Kenya there is urgent need for a doctor or nurse to supervise the setting up and running of the Hospital Clinic which has recently been built.

Again we would urge suitably qualified persons to give prayerful consideration to the above appeal. Anyone willing to respond to these needs should contact the Clerk to the Foreign Missions Committee, Rev. Dr. J. R. Tallach, Free Presbyterian Manse, Raasay, Kyle, IV40 8PB.

## **Acknowledgment of Donations**

The Treasurers of the following Congregations acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:

**Beaully:** "Where most needed", £20 (in church plate).

**Breasclete:** Anon., £30 for Sustentation Fund and £20 for Door Collection.

**Dingwall:** Mrs G., £20 for Sustentation Fund; Well-wisher, £20 for Foreign Mission Fund.

**Flashadder:** Mrs Kirkham, Glendale, £20 for Church Funds, per D. M. MacKay.

**Glendale:** Glendale Friend, "Where most needed" £20, per Rev. D. Nicolson.

**Glasgow:** Anon. £5, J.C. £20, both for Bus Fund; Anon. £4, Anon. £10, per Rev. D.M.; Anon. Mrs M. £10, all for Congregational Fund; Mrs M. £10, Anon. £15, Anon. £2, all for Sustentation Fund; Anon. £100, Anon. £50, both for Jewish and Foreign Mission Fund; Anon. £40; "In memory of a loving brother" £50, both for T.B.S.; Anon. £50, "Sponsor a Blind Child".

**North Harris:** Anon, Tarbet, £50 for Sustentation Fund, £25 for Home Mission Fund, £25 for Foreign Mission Fund; K. M., Harris House, £3 (in church plate); J. F. M., Tarbert, £77.99, per Gen. Treas.; Friend, Stockinish, £10 per Rev. K. D. M.; Friend, Stockinish, £10; Friend, Stockinish, £10; Friend, Stockinish, £2; last three per R. McC. and all for Congregational Fund.

**Stornoway:** £500, donated by the late Ewen Hector MacGillivray, Kilmacolm, in memory of his mother, Catherine MacGillivray (née MacLeod), who was born at 8 Keith Street, Stornoway; 'C', £100 for Sustentation Fund; Anon., Stornoway, £250 for Congregational Funds and £250 for Sustentation Fund.

**Uig, Lewis:** Friend of the Cause, £100; Anon., £40, both for church funds and both in envelopes in church plate; Friend, North Tolsta, £5 "Where most needed", per Rev. D. J. McD.