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A Wicked and Adulterous Generation

WHEN He was on earth the Saviour characterised the generation of that day as a "wicked and adulterous generation". As we survey the history of our own nation, it is difficult to come to any other conclusion than that the present generation is an especially adulterous generation. We today ought therefore to acknowledge with shame to God, as Ezra did, "O our God, what shall we say after this? for we have forsaken thy commandments."

The Seventh Commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," is treated as an irrelevance in this age. Throughout the nation marriage is in decline, and there is a steady increase in the number of unmarried couples living together. In England and Wales there were 8,000 fewer marriages in 1994 (the latest year for which statistics are available). The result is that about 40 per cent of babies born in 1995 were born out of wedlock compared with 9 per cent as recently as 1974.

To try to promote a Christian approach to such matters as marriage and sexual conduct, is to invite caustic ridicule. The appointment of Anne Aitkins (the vicar's wife who had the courage to condemn the "sin of homosexuality" on Radio Four) as the Daily Telegraph's first agony aunt, has moved some newspaper columnists to vent their hatred against her moral stand. One writer branded her as "a viper of the right". Another protested that "in the real world... sex before marriage is the norm", and expressed the fear of a "new puritan revolution" and of being enveloped by "a dark cloud of reaction".

Despite the hostility of liberal commentators, the church must give no uncertain sound when it speaks about sins of uncleanness. It is shocking that in a sermon, a Bishop of the Church of England obliquely condemned, and branded as heretics, Anne Aitkins and other "so-called Christians who peddle ludicrous, antiquated prejudices and even broadcast them to the public". He venomously added that "these heretics of today" should be burned at the stake as were "heretics in former times". The Director of Communications for the General Synod of the Church of England, instead of backing Anne Aitkins, arrogantly demanded that the BBC apologise for giving her the opportunity to speak as she did. In vain do people of the land look to the leaders of the Church of England

for clear and unequivocal guidance with regard to Biblical morality.

Also it is in vain to look to other organisations, such as Health Boards, from whom one might expect a sensible lead in guiding young people through the morass of problems arising from the permissiveness of modern society. The Highland Health Board (HHB) recently distributed to schools in the Highlands a "safer sex directory" aimed at pupils over 16. While the directory does give some helpful advice, many parts of it are immoral and offensive. On the whole, its tendency is to encourage young people to have sex outside of marriage.

One correspondent to the press rightly says about the HHB that "it is inexcusable for them to insist on the use of corrupt and misleading material when there are many excellent books and pamphlets produced on Aids, especially for young people, by such bodies as CARE or Family and Youth Concern." Although the HHB and the Education Authority were made aware of these books and pamphlets by concerned parents, they evidently ignored them. We suspect it was because the publications adopted a moral stance.

It is a serious dereliction of duty on the part of the HHB that it does not advise young people that the very best and safest course to follow is the God-appointed way of abstinence before marriage, and sex within marriage only. This message has gone down well and has been effective in many American schools, but apparently it is not a message that is consistent with the philosophy of the HHB. A spokesman for the Board said some time ago, "It is not the Board's role to make a judgement on any moral basis in this regard. Morality is the problem of the church, of the family and of other people."

Strange as it may seem, the HHB recently sent out a pack to ministers in the Highlands which provides "ideas for worship... on or around World Aids Day this year". Has the Board decided to adopt a moral stance? In the material there is not even a whisper of criticism of the specific sins which, for the most part, are the cause of Aids. In the "Prayers, Responses and Reflections" section, one of the prayers reads, "We pray for lesbians and gays who often dare... to be themselves." Perverse morality indeed! Health Boards ought to leave people in no doubt that the homosexual lifestyle is the principal cause of HIV spread and Aids in the Western world. In Britain the incidence of Aids is highest among homosexuals, as was announced by Baroness Cumberlege, a junior health minister, at the end of last November. Instead of steering men away from that destructive way of life, Health Boards and Aids organisations say we must "target more resources at gay and bisexual men". Already, total public spending on Aids in Britain has reached £270 million a year: very much more than is being spent on any other disease (for example, whereas 541 people died of Aids in 1995, the death toll from cancer was 140,790, and the amount spent on cancer research was £245 million).

It gives us no pleasure, but rather pain, to speak about the prevalent and increasing immorality which so deeply stains our nation - but speak about it we must, if only to make ourselves more conscious of our need to plead with the God of heaven to have mercy upon us. It was for the sin of uncleanness, as well as certain other sins, that God sorely punished Israel in Old Testament times. Nationally we are guilty before God, especially for condoning and legalising the sin which brought His righteous judgement upon Sodom.

No doubt our comments will be denounced by some as homophobic and lacking compassion. The fact is that we have had some little experience of being at the bedsides of people dying from Aids. We know what it is to feel for them deeply, and to try to pray with them and direct them to the Great Physician of souls. The medical staff in our mission hospitals have the constant work of caring for men and women smitten by Aids, and our missionaries and ministers do what they can to give spiritual counsel to these patients and their relatives.

Our prayer is that those who are caught up in the sin of uncleanness may experience the wonderful liberation of which Christ speaks, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." The Bible reveals hope for even the chief of sinners. It was said to people in the Church of Corinth who were formerly guilty of particularly serious sins of uncleanness, "Such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." □

Sermon

The Lord Doth Build up Jerusalem

Rev. Donald MacLean, Glasgow

The substance of a sermon preached at Inverness communion on Monday, 28th June, 1993

Text: *Praise ye the Lord: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely. The Lord doth build up Jerusalem: he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel. He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds. Psalm 147:1, 2 and 3.*

THE Psalmist is extolling the grace of praise, saying that it is "pleasant" and "comely" to sing praises to God. To the gracious soul it is pleasant and comely (or proper) to sing praises to our God, and it ought to be so to us today when we are met to render thanks to God for the means of grace. It is proper for us to give praise to God for providing these means of grace, and for giving us the opportunity to engage in His worship in His "tabernacles of grace" in this world.

The Psalmist points out a particular reason for praising God: that "God doth

build up Jerusalem". It is comely that we should praise the Lord as the one who builds up Jerusalem, gathers the outcasts, and reveals Himself so graciously in healing the broken in heart and binding up their wounds. The grace of God in building up Jerusalem involves gathering together the outcasts of Israel.

Jerusalem is a type of the church of God. Jerusalem was "the city of the great King". It was there that Zion was. It was the place of which God said, "This is my rest, here still I'll stay; for I do like it well," (Psl. 132:14). We are not concerned at present with the historical application of the text - that when God gathered the people of Judah and Jerusalem back from captivity they proceeded to build the city and the temple. We are concerned rather with the truth that "God doth build up Jerusalem" - that He builds His church.

We shall consider first, that it is by the gathering of the outcasts that Jerusalem is built up. Therefore we shall enquire, Who are these outcasts?

Secondly, we shall consider that the gathering of these outcasts together is by the King of Zion - the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He says, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold" (they, of course, in the first instance were those of the Gentile world who were outside the fold of Israel): "them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice..." (John 10:16). So there is the bringing in of other sheep, of outcasts, by the Shepherd King of Israel.

Thirdly, we shall consider that the gathering together of the outcasts is also by "the great trumpet" of which we read in Isaiah, chapter 27, verse 13, "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come that were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem."

I. First, let us consider that the gathering of the outcasts is the way in which Jerusalem is built up. Who are the "outcasts"? We view them first as all the members of the human family. They became outcasts from the favour of God. The covenant God made with Adam, the federal head of the human race, was a covenant made with both himself and his seed, but it was a covenant which he broke although he was placed in the garden of Eden. (Eden means "delight" or "paradise". It was a delightful place for him because he had fellowship and communion with God, and enjoyed the favour of God). Adam, by his sin in yielding to the temptation of Satan and breaking the covenant of works, became an outcast from the favour of God. God "drove out the man" from the garden. The word "drove" indicates that Adam was put out by the hand of God from that delightful place and became an outcast, ready to perish in his sins.

The whole human family, being in Adam, was driven out from the favour of God. You and I, "born in sin and shapen in iniquity", came into the world as outcasts from the favour of God. We are members of a guilty, lost, ruined and hell-deserving race. By nature we are outcasts from the favour of God, and have

lost fellowship and communion with God. We are outcasts who are exposed to all the miseries of this life, to death itself and to the pains of hell forever.

If we look back towards the tree of life, we see that between man and the tree of life there is a flaming sword turning this way and that way, closing him out from the tree of life and closing him in to the death that sin deserves. The Cherubims of glory were there to signify that behind the flaming sword is the throne of God - the throne where justice and judgement have their habitation. The throne of God would crack and the universe would go out of existence before one sinner could return by that way to the favour of God.

Among the outcast children of men, are those who are called in our text, "outcasts of *Israel*". Their father was Jacob, and they were set apart from the rest of mankind, not by any righteousness of their own, but because God declared, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated," (Rom. 9:13). That is, there are certain outcasts who were embraced from all eternity in the love of God. That merciful, gracious love was love to unworthy outcasts who were ready to perish. God's purpose was to gather them and bring them back to Himself, and so to build up Jerusalem. This was the purpose of His everlasting love. There was never a time when these outcasts to be gathered were not loved, and there will never be a time when they will not be embraced by that love. Therefore, it is good to sing praises with respect to the love of God. How David delighted in singing of the love of God, which was made known to him in the City of Salvation. It is a love which was made known to the people of God in every age and generation. It is a love of which God Himself said, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindnesses have I drawn thee," (Jer. 31:3). By drawing the outcasts, Jerusalem is built up.

II. Secondly, the outcasts are gathered together by the King appointed over Jerusalem, the Lord Jesus Christ. That glorious and mighty King was appointed by God the Father; He was set apart from eternity to be King over Zion, God's holy hill. It was He who was to carry out the decree of God's love in gathering outcast sinners, and to gather such a number as will exceed the stars of the sky. God "telleteth (or counts) the number of the stars", as we read in verse four, and "He calleth them all by names by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power," (Isa 40:26). He knows the names of all the stars, but it is better still for you and me that He knows the names of all those whom He loves with an everlasting love. It is He who has appointed Christ to be King in Zion, God's holy hill: to be King of Jerusalem.

There is some dispute among linguists with regard to the exact meaning of "Jerusalem". We all know the meaning of "salem". King of Salem means King of Peace. With regard to the meaning of the prefix "Jeru", there is, as I say, some dispute, but we believe that the true meaning of "Jerusalem" is "the vision of

peace". Therefore, when we think of Jerusalem, we may think of being given a view of the love of God in raising up this King of peace to bring the outcasts to have peace with God and to be restored to His favour. Therefore, this King is to be viewed not only as the Shepherd King but also as the priestly King who was to make peace. He is the High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. He is the King, yes, but His kingship is founded upon His priesthood.

It is with regard to His priesthood that the Saviour said, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring..." They were to be gathered together in Him and brought into the fold of God's favour in a particular way: by the death of the priestly King, the death of the Shepherd King, the death of Him who said, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep," (John 10:11). This, then, is the first way that we must view the outcasts being brought in and reconciled to God: by the death of the King of Zion, the death accomplished outside the city of the great King. How wonderful! Outside the city of the great King! That was the place where this death was accomplished. That was the place where the outcasts of Israel met in this glorious person in a particular way. In what way? In that the Lord laid upon Him the iniquity of them all. That is how they met in Him, their substitute: by the guilt of their sins being imputed to Him.

When the guilt of their sins was imputed to Him, and He was to lead them to the tree of life and to the favour of God, this meant that He had to meet the sword that was aflame with the fire of divine indignation against the sins of the outcasts. This is what He did. This is how He gathered them to be reconciled to God: by His death in which He was wounded for their transgressions and was bruised for their iniquities. The fire of holy, divine wrath against them was extinguished for all eternity in His wounds. When He said on the cross of Calvary, "It is finished," the work of reconciliation was carried out, inasmuch as everlasting salvation was secured for them. His death secured for them the certainty that they, as outcasts, would be gathered in; that they would be saved and restored to the favour of God.

He who died rose again by the power of an endless life, and ascended up on high. The "doors that do last for aye" were opened so that the King of Glory would return to His place. He Himself knew what it meant to be restored to the enjoyment of His Father's love when He finished the work that the Father gave Him to do. Now those who were in Him, and for whom He died, are gathered in and restored to the favour of God. This, then, is the first way by which the outcasts were gathered in: by their sins being imputed to Christ, and by His dying for the ungodly. "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us," (Romans 5:8). This leads me to notice the other way in which the outcasts are gathered together.

III. Thirdly, the outcasts are gathered together by "the great trumpet". We quoted from Isaiah, chapter 27, "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown." That trumpet is the gospel trumpet. It is a great trumpet! Oh yes, men despise the gospel nowadays, but the fact is that the gospel trumpet is a great trumpet. And its sound is a joyful sound! "O greatly blessed the people are the joyful sound that know;" (Psl. 89:15). The trumpet of the everlasting gospel is the great "jubilee trumpet" proclaiming "liberty to the captives, the opening of the prison to them that are bound", and the bringing of the outcasts near to God against whom they have sinned.

The gospel is typified not only by the jubilee trumpet, but also by the two trumpets which Moses was commanded to make, as we read in Numbers, chapter 10. These trumpets were each made in one piece, and of pure silver. There was no fault in them. So this great trumpet of the everlasting gospel, the trumpet of the Word of God, is pure and without error. It is inerrant, and that makes it a great trumpet. You may trust your soul for eternity to the Word of God and be assured that what the Word declares will be found to be true.

The inerrancy of the Word of God is founded upon its inspiration by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God so led those men (Paul, Peter, James, John, Jeremiah, Moses, and others) who wrote the Scriptures, that the Scriptures are inerrant. These men were borne along by the Holy Spirit to record the vision of peace, to record the glorious view of God as the God of peace through the Lord Jesus Christ. As Scripture itself declares, the Word of God is inspired or God-breathed. It is the fruit of the work of the Spirit of God and is therefore inerrant.

The Word of God is the instrument by which God builds up Jerusalem. It is the only way. The church will not be built up by other ways. The gospel trumpet, not the notions and unscriptural schemes of modern evangelism, is the instrument by which the outcasts are gathered in. All the talk that goes on about "dialogue" being better than preaching is irrelevant to this real issue that the gospel trumpet is the instrument by which the outcasts are gathered in.

Who is to blow this great trumpet? The trumpet of jubilee was blown by the high priest. But who is to blow the gospel trumpet? Ministers of the gospel! Paul says, "We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us:" (through our sounding the gospel trumpet) "we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." Therefore, the gospel ministry is instituted by God to build up Jerusalem. God provides ministers to sound this trumpet.

All those who are engaged in sounding the trumpet of the gospel (the instrument for bringing the outcasts to be reconciled to the favour of God) must themselves have spiritual experience of what it means to be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. They themselves must have heard the great trumpet proclaim the great salvation to their own souls. Also, they must know that if they

are to sound the trumpet of the gospel, they are to do so by divine teaching and in the strength of the grace of God the Holy Ghost. This is what ministerial grace is in the first instance: sounding the gospel trumpet in the strength of the grace of the Holy Spirit, and looking to God to build up Jerusalem by giving the increase. In their preaching, Paul (with all his knowledge in the doctrines of divine revelation, and his having been raised up to the third heavens), and Apollos (with all his eloquence, and all his knowledge of the Word of God, and his being full of faith and of the Holy Ghost), but planted and watered. It was God who gave the increase. It is God who builds up Jerusalem.

One of our great needs, as a church, is the raising up of ministers to preach the gospel - to sound the gospel trumpet. This ought to be a matter of prayer among us. The Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of prayer, is to be sought, so that there may be prayer for the raising up of ministers to sound the gospel trumpet.

When the gospel trumpet is blown it has its effects, by divine power, upon outcasts. When sin is declared to be sin, when the grace of God is shown as love to the unworthy, when the sacrifice of Christ is set out as the foundation for a sinner to trust upon in view of death, judgement and eternity, then souls are brought into a sense of being ready to perish, and of being outcasts from the favour of God. They are broken in heart and wounded. They are grieved in mind. What grief of mind do they have? Ask David. Here is what he wrote:

“Gainst thee, thee only, have I sinned,
in thy sight done this ill:

That when thou speak'st thou may'st be just,
and clear in judging still,” (Psl. 51:4).

The outcasts are grieved on account of having sinned against God: grieved on account of being cast out of the favour of God: grieved on account of being closed out from communion with God. They are broken in heart and wounded in their consciences. Faithful, my dear friend, are the wounds of a friend.

We read that when the great trumpet is blown, “they shall come”. Yes, they shall come. They shall come! A seed shall come and do service to Him. The outcasts who are ready to perish shall come because this gospel trumpet has a call. It is the call of the King. “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,” (Mat. 11:28). They hear through the trumpet of the gospel that a Saviour is provided who is able to save to the very uttermost all those who come unto God by Him. And they come.

When they come, they enjoy the blessings which are mentioned in the text: “He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.” There is healing in this trumpet. In the gospel there is healing for the broken-hearted, the binding up of the wounded conscience, the imparting of peace to the conscience by bringing the soul to a saving knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and

into the favour of God. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," (Rom. 5:1).

In being justified, the outcast is not only forgiven and restored to the favour of God, but also is brought to enjoy communion and fellowship with God, and to worship God in the holy mount. This is how Jerusalem is to be built up. "The living in Jerusalem" are they who hear the joyful sound. How greatly blessed they are who not only hear but also "know" the joyful sound, (Psl. 89:15). And what else is true of them? "In brightness of thy face, oh Lord, they ever on shall go." They are enjoying the favour of God, enjoying fellowship and communion with God. This is how God builds up Jerusalem.

Praise is to be given to God for building up Jerusalem. "Praise ye the Lord: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely. The Lord doth build up Jerusalem: he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel." This praise comes, first of all, from the people of God when they see souls being gathered in to Christ, when they see sinners getting healing for their souls and having peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ, and when they hear these sinners praising the Lord's goodness with the words of the Psalmist:

"All thine iniquities who doth
most graciously forgive:
Who thy diseases all and pains
doth heal and thee relieve," (Psl. 103 3).

Not only the Lord's people rejoice because of outcasts being gathered in, but the outcasts themselves have a song of praise. "He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God." Those who are taken out of the fearful pit and have their feet set upon the Rock of Salvation are praising the Lord, as we read in Isaiah, chapter 12, "Oh Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me." And what then is promised to them? "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." The soul that has been brought to Christ has this song of praise, "Behold, God is my Salvation! The Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song." This is their rejoicing: "Praise the Lord, call upon His name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that His name is exalted. Sing unto the Lord, for he hath done excellent things." He has done things that excel, things that demonstrate and make known the excellent glory of the mercy of God. These outcasts have become the worshipping people of God. They are now of that circumcision who "worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh," (Phil. 3:3). So Jerusalem is built up.

This is what we should be praying for: that the Lord would build up His cause among us as a branch of the visible church. We must begin here: "The Lord doth build up Jerusalem." He does so through the person and work of the

King of Zion, and by the instrumentality of the great trumpet of the gospel. When, by the power of the Holy Ghost, the gospel is blessed, then souls are gathered to Christ and God, and Jerusalem is built up.

Consider another view of the city and its King: that is, that the King rules. This city is "the city of the great King", and He rules by the sceptre of His Word. As he rules by His Word, so he uses instruments in that ruling work. These instruments are the officers of the church. Ministers and elders, composing the various courts of the church, (kirk-sessions, presbyteries, synods and so on) are concerned with rule in the church.

Rule in the church of God is for the protection of the church and of the people of God. This is mentioned in verse 13: "For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates." Through the government of the church He strengthens the gates against the enemies; and so, as we read next: "He hath blessed thy children within thee. He maketh peace in thy borders." The great importance of the government of the church and the Kingship of Christ is largely lost sight of in our day and generation. People were saying that it was absurd (and of course it was) for the Museum of Religion in Glasgow to have in its exhibition a statement to the effect that the Queen of Britain was the head of the Church of Scotland. It is all very well for people to be incensed at that and to point out that Christ is the King and Head, but what does it mean for Christ to be ruling in the church? He is now, as to His person, on the right hand of the majesty on High, but He rules and reigns in His church in the world through the officers who are appointed and called to office in the church. Therefore, they are bound to exercise rule in the church, and that is a great part of its protection.

One reason why the gospel is being largely lost in Britain is that discipline has not been carried out against those in the church who are trying to silence the sound of the great trumpet. They wish to put human ideas and their own religious notions into the trumpet, and they pervert the Word of God in various ways. So it is important that the gospel trumpet be preserved, and if it is to be preserved there must be rule in the church. When the trumpet of the gospel and the worship of God are interfered with and marred, then there will be no building of the church according to the mind of God. It is of great importance that the government of the church be maintained in a proper way so that the trumpet will sound out the truth concerning the glorious King and Priest of the church.

We read in the Revelation, chapter 11, of the two witnesses who "are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth." They were slain in the city, "which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified." The Lord said, "I will give power unto my two witnesses and they shall prophesy." Therefore, "the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet." This leads me to conclude that

these two olive trees are the Kingship and the Priesthood of Christ. (It is a reference back to the vision that was given to Zechariah of the the two olive trees and the golden oil going into the lamps. These two olive trees were "the two anointed ones", that is, Zerubbabel and Joshua in the first place, or the doctrines of the Kingship and the Priesthood of Christ).

We hear much today about the need for revival. My view is that as the Spirit of God made these two become alive, so there will be a revival of the doctrines of the Priesthood and Kingship of Christ. These two great doctrines will become prominent again, and the Lord will build up Jerusalem. These doctrines have been largely slain in the churches today. In how many places in the churches is there teaching about the priesthood of Christ, the sacrifice of Christ, and the blood of Christ cleansing from all sin? Where is the doctrine of the Kingship of Christ, and where is obedience to His Word by holding fast the worship and doctrine He has given? If there is to be a genuine revival it will be bound up with a revival of the great trumpet sounding these doctrines, the Kingship and the Priesthood of Christ, and all related doctrines. Then God shall build up Jerusalem, and He will appear in glory and majesty to men. "The Lord doth build up Jerusalem: he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel. He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." May we ourselves witness this.

"Thou shalt Jerus'lem's good behold
whilst thou on earth dost dwell.

Thou shalt thy children's children see,
and peace on Israel," (Psl. 128:5).

And may it be so. May the Lord bless His Word to us.

The Mode of Baptism

How Baptism should be Administered

(A paper delivered at the 1996 Youth Conference in Inverness)

Rev. K. M. Watkins

Part One: The meaning of the term "baptism", and instances of baptism

IN considering the proper *mode* of baptism, we aim to answer the question, *How?* - how should baptism be administered? It is the answer given by Scripture that we seek: "What saith the Scripture?" Now it is not unusual for Scripture's answer to lie not on the surface of her pages, but much deeper, making it necessary for us to search the Scriptures. This is the case with the subject of this paper: there is no other way to answer the question of the right mode of baptism but by a careful examination of the Scripture evidence.

Concerning the mode of baptism, the great controversy among Protestants is

between the so-called baptists and the paedobaptists. The former, whom we shall call immersionists, are united in believing with the London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689 that, "Immersion, or dipping of the person in water, is necessary to the due administration of this ordinance." Notice that for the immersionist, complete immersion under the water is not simply preferable but absolutely essential. If there has been no immersion, there has been no baptism. The paedobaptists on the other hand teach with the Westminster Confession that, "Dipping of the person into the water is not necessary; but baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person." Notice now that for the paedobaptist, whilst affusion (whether by pouring or sprinkling) is the preferred mode of administration, nevertheless immersion is still accepted as valid. As long as there is water, it is a valid baptism as far as most paedobaptists are concerned, unlike the immersionists who so insist upon their form of immersion as to deny any other mode to be lawful.

We shall group Scripture's evidence bearing upon the question into four categories, showing under each that not only is immersion not required by the Word of God, but also that in fact affusion (whether by pouring or sprinkling) is the preferable mode.

First: the Greek words that are used for baptism, contrary to loud and persistent immersionist claims, do not demand that baptism must be by immersion, but rather admit affusion as an altogether acceptable mode.

The great foundation stone of the immersionist argument is laid in their insistence that the Greek words employed in the New Testament for the ordinance of baptism are so rigid in meaning that their very use demands immersion. Of course, if they are to prove their point, they must show that those words are *always* used *only* for immersion and *never* for mere affusion. Anything less than this, even just one instance where the words do not mean immersion, will cause the immersionist argument to fail. The point is not whether these words *may* be used of immersion, which we do not dispute, but whether they are used *only* of immersion, such that whenever we meet with them we may as easily and certainly translate them "immerse" as "baptise." It is this that we deny.

Since the Greek word *bapto* is never used of the sacrament of baptism in the New Testament, we will not spend time on it, especially as immersionists themselves acknowledge with us that its use is not confined to immersion. Instead we will focus on the word *baptizo* and the words formed from it (*baptisma*, *baptismos* and *baptistes*). These are the words used for baptism in the New Testament, and it is these words that the immersionists argue can be used only for immersion. But the evidence shows that whilst these words are indeed used to speak of immersion, yet their meaning is not confined to that.

From the Church fathers in the early centuries after Christ, various quotations could be drawn to show that *baptizo* did not uniformly mean immersion to them. Just one example will suffice: Athanasias wrote in the first part of the fourth century, "Three baptisms, purgative of all sin whatever, God has bestowed upon the nature of men. I mean that of water, and again that by the witness of one's own blood; and thirdly, that by tears, in which also the harlot was cleansed." Water baptism is put alongside two others: that of a martyr's blood and a harlot's tears. A martyr cannot be immersed in his own blood - yet it is called a baptism. Even a repenting harlot washing the Saviour's feet with her tears cannot be immersed in her tears however profuse her weeping - yet that too is called a baptism. So in the writings of the early Church fathers, whilst often the word is used for immersion, it is plain that it is not always so used - baptism does not always speak of immersion.

Turning to the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament, which is of special relevance since it was so widely used among Greek speaking Jews in New Testament times, the immersionist has to show that every usage of *baptizo* means to immerse. But in Numbers 19:13, we read, "Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel: because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean." Only by the ritual sprinkling with the water of separation made from the ashes of the red heifer, could a man be cleansed from contact with a dead body - but elsewhere in this same piece of literature, the Greek Septuagint, this sprinkling is called a baptism! So that far from always meaning immersion, here *baptizo* expressly means sprinkling!

Now of course our immersionist friends will wish us to turn away from these human writings and translations of the Old Testament to the New Testament itself, to the inspired usage of these Greek words based on *baptizo*. We are very happy to do so, for the New Testament makes it clearer still that in the Greek language immersion is not always meant by *baptizo*. In 1 Corinthians 10:2, the children of Israel "were all baptised unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." But the Israelites were not immersed in Moses - the very idea is preposterous. Neither were they immersed in the cloud - for at that time it was expressly said to be behind them. Neither were they immersed in the sea - indeed the whole miracle of the Red Sea was that they were not immersed in it, when the Egyptians were. This passage shows that the Greek word for baptism may be used without any reference to mode whatsoever; thus immersionists can prove nothing concerning mode from its use. 1 Peter 3:21 is similar. Noah's deliverance from the flood is likened to baptism: "the like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us." But again, the whole point concerning Noah

and the others in the ark was that they were *not* immersed, when all the world was. So the word can be used in a context where the very opposite of immersion is spoken of!

Mark 7:4 is another testimony against the immersionist dogma: "And when they come from the market, except they wash [or baptise], they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing [or baptising] of cups, and pots, brasen vessels, and of tables [couches or beds, upon which they would recline at meals for example]." Perhaps they did immerse their hands in water, but we cannot believe that they immersed their tables, couches and beds in water! Hodge was surely right when he wrote, "To maintain that beds or couches were immersed, is a mere act of desperation." In Luke 11:37f., it is recorded of the Saviour that, "A certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: and he went in, and sat down to meat. And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed [or baptised himself] before dinner." If *baptizo* always means immersion, then among the Pharisees it must have been the custom to fully immerse themselves whenever they would eat. We know that they bound heavy burdens grievous to be borne upon men's shoulders, but the idea that they had to fully immerse their whole bodies just to eat is plainly ridiculous! Combining the information from these two texts we find that the New Testament usage of *baptizo* actually proves the affusionist argument not the immersionist - even that by the application of water to just part of the body, in this case the hands, the whole person is considered to be baptised.

In Hebrews 9:10 we read of "divers washings [or baptisms]." Immersionist doctrine demands that this must mean diverse (or various) immersions. Now in this place the apostle is comparing the cleansing efficacy of Christ's sacrificial blood with the inefficacy of the ceremonial washings of the Old Testament called baptisms. But the Old Testament washings were by affusion, or sprinkling, as the chapter expressly states, not just once but three times over: "the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean" v. 13; "Moses . . . sprinkled both the book, and all the people" v. 19; and "Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of ministry" v. 21. The only immersion in these diverse baptisms is forced into them by immersionist preconception. At the wedding in Cana were "six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews" (John 2:6). These were pots with narrow necks for pouring, not baths for immersing - for the manner of the Jews in baptising or washing was by affusion, not immersion.

Thus, the very bedrock of immersionism is found to be only the sand of error. The *only* place where the Greek words for baptism always and only mean immersion is in their own mistaken dogma. On the contrary the Greek words

show that those who hold to sprinkling and pouring, without altogether rejecting immersion, are building their doctrine of the mode of baptism upon the unassailable rock of truth.

Secondly: we now come to the **recorded instances** of baptism in the New Testament. Immersionists maintain that all such instances without exception were by immersion. Again we have only to show that in just *one* case baptism was not by immersion, and then the whole immersionist argument fails since they make immersion essential to baptism.

In attempting to prove their point, the immersionists make much of the prepositions used in these cases. Consider Matthew 3:6, "And were baptised of him in Jordan." This is enough for the immersionist: if the people were baptised by John *in* the river, then they must have been *immersed* in the river. Yet many times this same preposition is and must be translated *at*. But even if *in* is an appropriate translation, it does not *demand* the idea of immersion, for if they but went down to stand in the river, and there John sprinkled or poured water on them, it could well be described as being baptised *in* Jordan - they were in the river but never immersed in it. Indeed, Greek writings show that travellers pitched their tents "in the river Jordan" - meaning only upon the substantial dry river bed alongside the water stream that was relatively narrow for much of the year. The immersionist case is unproven. Later in that chapter, the Saviour's baptism by John is recounted. "And Jesus, when he was baptised, went up straightway out of the water" (v. 16). The immersionists make much of the preposition translated *out of*, but once it is realised that it is usually translated *away from*, the idea is given that Christ was not in the water but only alongside it. But even had He been in it, and then come out of it, this would not prove immersion, for He could simply have been standing in the water and then sprinkled.

A favourite immersionist text is Acts 8:38f., "And they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptised him. And when they were come up out of the water ..." Here is baptism by immersion, they cry, for the eunuch went down *into* (*eis* in Greek) the water, and came up *out of* (*ek* in Greek) the water. What can this mean but immersion? But in fact, this should be a favourite anti-immersionist text, for careful examination suggests the very opposite. Whilst *eis* can mean *into*, it can also mean simply *to*, as in John 11:38, "Jesus cometh to (*eis*) the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it." It is certain that He did not enter *into* the grave of Lazarus - a stone lay upon it, so how could He? Likewise, whilst *ek* can mean *out of*, it can also mean *away from*, as in John 12:32f., "And I, if I be lifted up from (*ek*) the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die." When Christ was crucified, certainly He was not lifted up *out of* the earth, but on the cross He was lifted up *away*

from the surface of the earth. Thus there is no reason whatsoever why the text in Acts 8 may not be rendered, "And they went down both to the water ... And when they were come up *away from* the water." How different the account sounds now! Any idea of immersion vanishes.

But although the Authorised Version's rendering is "into the water" and "out of the water", still there is no proof that baptism is by immersion. Why? For the simple reason that if this language demands that the Ethiopian was immersed, then it demands equally that Philip was also immersed. Four times over the text (verse 38) emphasises that whatever is said of the Ethiopian, is also said of Philip: "And *they* [first] went down *both* [second] into the water, *both* [third] Philip and the eunuch, and he baptised him. And when *they* [fourth] were come up out of the water." The one baptising was as much in and out of the water as the one baptised. Let immersionist ministers immerse themselves when they immerse others, if they would be consistent with their interpretation of the text.

The immersionists also like to mention John 3:23, "And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there." There you are, they say, because baptism is by immersion, much water is needed. But literally it is that there were many waters there. Aenon was a place of springs and fountains very suitable for affusion, not a large body of standing water necessary for immersion. And seeing that many people went out to John in the remote wilderness, it was necessary just for the sake of human subsistence that there should be sufficient water for drinking purposes, not for immersing purposes. Immersion can only be forced into this text, not drawn from it by exegetical necessity.

In fact, when New Testament baptisms are fairly considered, it is seen that immersion would often have been so impracticable as to be impossible. John the Baptist could not have baptised the multitudes by immersion. He would have needed almost miraculous strength to lower into the water and raise out of the water again the constant stream of persons who came to him. Neither could the apostles have immersed the three thousand converts on the one day of Pentecost. Where would all that water be found in a city like Jerusalem? The only reservoirs of water available within the city were for drinking purposes and strictly controlled — surely we cannot imagine that the whole city would stand back whilst thousands were plunged into their valuable water resource? How could so many have been baptised in just one day? In what clothing were they immersed — their ordinary clothes? Surely not. Whence came more suitable clothing then? Did the Philippian jailer — and his family — have sufficient water and a suitable container in the jail to be immersed in? Or did he allow the apostle to lead him to the nearest river, in the middle of the night, leaving the jail unsupervised? The very idea

is a most unnatural interpretation of the account given in Acts 16:33, "And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway."

At the apostle Paul's baptism he "arose, and was baptised" Acts 9:18. The more literal rendering of "standing up, he was baptised," shows how contrary to immersion Paul's baptism was. When he stood up, he was baptised - not when he had walked to the river to find sufficient water and a suitable place to be immersed in, but as soon as he stood up he was baptised, and that had to be by affusion. Again, when the household of Cornelius was to be baptised, Peter said, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptised, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" (Acts 10:47). The natural meaning is plainly that water should be brought and applied to them by affusion, not that they should be brought to water to be immersed in it.

The recorded instances of baptism are so far from proving universal immersion that many of them rule it out completely.

To be continued

Faithful Unto Death

A Sketch of the Life of George Wishart

THE cruel Archbishop of St. Andrews, James Beaton, died and went to his account in 1539. He was succeeded by his nephew, the more infamous David Beaton, who had been made a cardinal by Pope Paul III in the previous year, and who had been not only one of the cruellest of men, but was notorious also for his immoralities. On the 28th of February 1546, Cardinal Beaton brought before him on trial a notable man of God, found him guilty of heresy, and condemned him to be burned to death next day. That man was George Wishart.

Let us look at this striking figure. It was he who had taught John Knox the way of life more perfectly. The description given of him by Emery Tylney, one of his devoted pupils at Cambridge, shows that he was a man greatly beloved.

"There was in the University of Cambridge," says Tylney, "one Master George Wishart, of Benet's College, who was a man of tall stature, polled head, and on the same a round French cap of the best, judged to be of melancholy complexion by his physiognomy, black haired, long bearded, comely of personage, well spoken after his country of Scotland, courteous, lowly, lovely, glad to teach, desirous to learn, and well-travelled... He was a man modest, temperate, fearing God, hating covetousness, for his charity had never end, night, noon, nor day... Oh! that the Lord had left him to me, his poor boy, that he might have finished that he had begun."

George Wishart, son of John Wishart, Laird of Pittarrow, was born about 1516. After he graduated as Master of Arts at King's College, Aberdeen, he opened a school at Montrose about 1538, but had to flee to England because he was accused of heresy for teaching the Greek New Testament. Although he had discovered the errors of Popery his knowledge of the truth was yet immature, but he obtained a fuller knowledge of divine truth in Switzerland in 1540. When he returned to England he studied and taught at Cambridge. In 1543 he returned to Scotland and his career as a hunted preacher of the gospel began.

We take a glimpse at the work he did. He gave public lectures on the Epistle to the Romans at Dundee; then "begane to offerr Goddis Woord" in the southwest of Scotland. When he was preaching in Ayr with great freedom, the Bishop of Glasgow came to arrest him but, failing to do so, took possession of the church instead. Wishart proceeded to the Market Cross and preached there, for, said he, "Christ Jesus is as powerful in the fields as in the Kirk, and I find that He Himself oftener preached at the seaside and other such places than that He did in the temple of Jerusalem." Then at Mauchline, with the people round him, he preached for three hours, and a widespread awakening ensued.

Hearing that the plague had broken out in Dundee, he went there. He chose the East Port as his pulpit, and, with the healthy on the inside and the sick on the outside, preached good tidings. His first text there was, "He sent His Word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions." The people, much comforted by his discourse, pressed him to remain with them.

On one occasion while he was there, a priest named Sir John Wightman, having been bribed by Cardinal Beaton, waited at the foot of the stairs until the sermon was done, with a dagger drawn under his gown. Wishart detected him, and seizing his hand took the weapon from him. The people, enraged, called for vengeance on the would-be assassin, but Wishart protected and saved him.

Although the cardinal did not succeed on this occasion, Wishart believed that he would yet succeed. "I know that I shall end my life by the hands of that wicked man," he predicted. One night, in the house of a friend, James Watson, he was observed after midnight to go out into the garden. He fell on his knees, sobbing and groaning, and prayed for nearly an hour. On being pressed afterwards to say what was the cause of his great sorrow he said eventually, "I will tell you: I know assuredly that my travail is near an end; therefore pray to God for me that I may not shrink when the battle waxeth most hot."

His last sermon was preached at Haddington, and in it he solemnly warned the people of their sin and danger in despising and neglecting God's Word. At midnight he was arrested by the Earl of Bothwell and carried off to Edinburgh. John Knox, who attended him in those days, wished to accompany him but Wishart said, "Nay, return to your bairns and God bless you. One is sufficient for

a sacrifice at this time." And so the two great men parted on earth.

The cardinal called the bishops to St. Andrews, and Wishart was brought before them. His accuser, John Lauder, read a list of charges against him, and demanded, "What answerest thou to these sayings, thou runnagate! traitor!" Wishart was accused of denying the mass, purgatory, praying to the saints, and other Romish inventions, and was charged with asserting that Christ is the only Mediator, that priests might marry, and that without Scripture we should affirm nothing. His "godly answers and true reasons", given from the Scriptures and "with great solidity of judgement", were disregarded and scorned by his judges. They condemned him to be burned to death as a heretic.

Next morning, Wishart was led out to the stake in front of the Castle. Cushions were provided for the cardinal at the Castle window that he might comfortably view the awful spectacle. The martyr declared to the people that he felt much joy in offering up his life for the name of Christ, and entreated them to love the word of God and suffer patiently for it. He also told them, "Behold and consider my visage; ye shall not see me change my colour." He prayed with loud voice, "O Saviour of the world, have mercy upon me. Father of Heaven, commend my spirit into thy holy hands!". The Lord answered his prayer and gave him courage to suffer unto death in the fierce flames. And so, on that first day of March, 1546, he passed into glory to behold the King in His beauty.

The people now began to speak openly of the detestable cruelties done in the name of religion. Wishart's fearless death, following his noble and godly life, did much to turn men's thoughts to the truth of God, and bring about the happy deliverance of Scotland from the tyranny of an apostate Church.

*Adapted from *Martyrs of St. Andrews* by G. Goodman*

1996 Theological Conference Report

Rev D. J. MacDonald (Conference Chairman)

THE first paper given at the conference (in Inverness on 3rd and 4th December) was **Alexander Henderson** by *Rev. K.D. Macleod*. The more spiritual aspect of Henderson's life and work was dealt with, an approach that was refreshing to those of us who had been accustomed to hearing of Henderson in political situations. Henderson was thrust into the political struggles of his time but he took part in them, first and foremost, as a man of God: a man of whom a contemporary spoke as "the fairest flower, after John Knox, of incomparable memory, that ever the Church of Scotland did enjoy". We were led through Henderson's life from his conversion, when already in the ministry, to the renewing of the National Covenant and the 1638 General Assembly. These are heart-stirring events in the history of our nation and its Church: events

of which to a large extent our generation is ignorant, and towards which the professing church in Scotland, to its shame, is apathetic.

Though Henderson was virtually the leader of the Scottish nation against the tyranny of Charles I, and was responsible for the drafting of the Solemn League and Covenant, his chief concerns were the cause of Christ and the care of souls. During the 1638 Assembly, "Henderson and other ministers spent many evenings with Argyll. The Earl afterwards traced his conversion, or at least his assurance of salvation to these evenings he spent in Henderson's company in Glasgow". We were left with the abiding impression that Henderson was, as a contemporary said, "A man in whom I see much of the image of Christ and who fears God".

In his paper, *The Church of Rome at the Bar of History*, Rev. John MacLeod gave what he said "might loosely be called an extended review" of *The Church of Rome at the Bar of History* by William Webster. The Church of Rome was brought to the bar of history as to: 1, the status it gives to tradition; 2, the claims of the Papacy; 3, Mariolatry; 4, its doctrine of salvation; and 5, the Eucharist. On each of these important matters the Church of Rome not only cannot stand the test of Scripture, but even fails the test of history, because much of what Roman Catholicism claims as part of her changeless creed was both unknown to the Church Fathers and directly contrary to what they taught.

The Romish doctrine of placing tradition on a par with Scripture can be dated definitely to only the 16th century and was resorted to as a desperate attempt to stem the tide of the Reformation unleashed by Luther in his appeal to Scripture. That the central teachings of Rome are contrary to Scripture is not at issue but it was satisfactorily proved from her own writing that they have not always been held by her and have been added piecemeal over the centuries for reasons that have more to do with political power than with concern for the souls of men. The warnings against Rome were timely as the religious world is more and more allured by her and attracted to her theatrical and sensual worship.

In presenting his paper, *The Toronto Blessing*, Rev. K.M. Watkins gave it the subtitle, "A distinctly Reformed perspective". He proceeded to weigh the Toronto Movement "in the balances of our distinctively reformed doctrines". These doctrines were: 1, *Scripture*, in which the authority, necessity, and primacy of Scripture were highlighted; 2, *worship*, with particular reference to the manner and content of worship, and reverence in worship; 3, *the Holy Spirit*, which included the "Christ-exalting" nature of the work of the Holy Spirit, the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit, and the work of the Holy Spirit in sanctification; and 4, *Christian experience*.

The disparity between the Toronto Movement's teaching on Christian experience and the Scriptural, Reformed position was strongly emphasised,

because the Toronto Movement claims to be primarily a movement of "experience". "Reformed doctrine insists that the only way to the heart is through the mind". Conversely, "the Toronto Movement insists on bypassing the human mind, by way of a suspension of the intellectual processes in order to receive the spiritual". By all the given criteria the Toronto Movement was found to be utterly wanting. The need of thorough biblical reformation was impressed on us. The church that holds fast to these biblical and reformed principles in her doctrine, worship and practice, will be strong against every aberration and delusion with which the religious world may be visited.

In his paper **Personal Piety**, Rev. A. McPherson began with a brief definition of piety and proceeded to explain the "*necessity for personal piety*", stating, "Anyone claiming to believe in Christ for salvation who clearly is not aiming at piety, is raising a serious objection to his claim. Salvation is always to be salvation from sin - from its dominion as well as its penal consequences." In speaking on the "*measure of piety*", Mr. McPherson reminded us that the work of sanctification by which the godly or pious are enabled to die unto sin and live unto righteousness is gradual. "Enabled more and more", are the Catechism words. On the other hand, spiritual declension and backsliding will impede progress towards holiness and may even lead to open sin. The failure to grasp the necessity of holiness and to rest in a "current average of piety" was also warned against. The "*pursuit of piety*" was dealt with in three sections: 1, the negative aspect - sin to be forsaken; 2, the positive aspect - holiness to be earnestly sought; 3, the encouragements to the duty. We were left in no doubt from Scripture and from the writings of eminent theologians, of our need of earnestly pursuing piety, personally, patiently and perseveringly.

The final paper, **The Need for Creeds and Confessions**, by Rev. D. MacLean, was divided as follows: First, the *historical need for creeds*, (a creed was defined as "a public avowal of the doctrinal content of a person's religious belief"). Creeds were necessary from earliest New Testament times to establish the substance of the Apostles' preaching, prevent error, and instruct converts. The earliest extant creed is the Apostles' Creed, though no apostolic authority is claimed for it. More sophisticated statements of Christian belief, such as the Nicene Creed, became necessary in later times to refute error, and culminated in the peerless Westminster Confession of Faith.

Secondly, the *constitutional need for Confessions*. Dealing with the post Reformation Church, Mr. MacLean noted that Confessions were now necessary to define Protestant and Reformed doctrine in contra-distinction to Roman Catholic belief. Confessions were also necessary as a uniform basis of instruction and a bond of communion within the Church.

Thirdly, the *present need for Confessions*. A Confession emphasises the

identity of a Church. It is vital that the Westminster Confession of Faith, for example, be adhered to if the doctrinal distinctions of the Protestant Reformation are to be maintained. Mr. MacLean noted how the present Church of Scotland, though clinging to its claims to be the national church, is in danger of losing its identity, as is proved by its sliding away from its confessional basis and into ecumenism. The need for a continuing Confessional Church, Protestant and Reformed, was impressed on us and our attention was drawn to the distinctive testimony that we hold as a branch of the visible church in our day.

All the papers were informative and stimulating, and we trust they will prove of spiritual benefit to all present. Indeed, we hope that they will be available to a larger audience through the Magazine or on tapes.* All those who prepared papers in the midst of full and taxing programmes are due our thanks.

* (A cased set of five tapes, with one lecture per tape, is available from Mr Duncan MacDonald, 5 Falcon Avenue, Inverness, IV2 3TF, at £10 per set).

Paul and James on Faith

IN the following letter Rev. J. R. Tallach answers a question put to him by a correspondent.

Dear Friend,

Thank you for your letter asking about the apparent contradiction between *Paul's* comments on faith in Romans 1:7, "The just shall live by faith," and in Romans 3:28, "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law," and *James'* comments on faith in James 2:18, "...shew me thy faith without thy works and I will shew thee my faith by my works," and in James 2:14-16, "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?"

The answer lies, as it so often does, in the context. Paul is answering Job's question "...how should man be just with God?" (Job 9:2). His answer is plain. Faith alone in the Word of God alone. He goes on to prove that this has always been the case by showing that Abraham himself was counted just in the court of heaven by faith in God before ever the ceremonial law, embodied in the rite of circumcision, was introduced. Therefore he was not justified by the deeds of the law but "Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness," Romans 4:3.

James on the other hand is concerned to answer the question, What is true faith? Is a mere verbal profession of faith - "though a man say he hath faith" -

sufficient? Such faith is no better than mere verbal goodwill is to someone who is hungry and needs food, and cold and needs clothing (verse 16). The devils themselves have this bare belief in God. A living faith on the other hand will show itself by works of love as Abraham's faith did when he was prepared to offer up his beloved son Isaac as an act of faith which demonstrated that he loved God more than he loved his son (verse 21).

In summary, Paul speaks of faith as the essential banknote of heaven while James holds up this banknote to the light to show the authenticating watermark "Seest thou how faith wrought with his works and by works was his faith made perfect" (verse 22). Paul speaks of the faith that justifies, James of the faith that is justified.

The Puritan, Thomas Manton, has an excellent commentary on the Epistle of James (pages 231-270) in volume 4 of his collected works (also published as a separate volume by the Banner of Truth Trust).

You raise an interesting question on the Roman Catholic view of the above which I hope to take up in a further letter DV.

Kindest regards, Yours very sincerely, *James Tallach*

Conduct Appropriate to the Gospel

In this abridged extract from *Gospel Conversation* by Jeremiah Burroughs (reviewed on the next page) the author shows that because the gospel is glorious, the conversation (that is, the conduct) of the Christian should be to the glory of the gospel, and reflect the glory of the gospel.

THE gospel of Christ is a *glorious* gospel, 1 Timothy 1:11. It is called there "the glorious gospel of the blessed God." Mark what a title is here! The gospel is the glorious gospel of the blessed God because the glory of all the attributes of God appear in the gospel more brightly than they do in all the works that God has made.

There appears a great deal of the glory of God in the heavens, earth, and seas. You have seen much of the glory of God there, but have you seen more of the glory of God in the gospel than ever you did in all the works that God has made? If that be so it would be a good argument that you have had a true understanding of the gospel, and that the Spirit of God has shined in your hearts.

It is an evidence that the gospel is a saving gospel to your souls, if you admire the glory of God in the gospel. There is none, though never so weak in parts, yet if God has revealed Himself to him in the gospel, he sees that which makes him stand and admire God, and darkens all the world in his eyes. Have you seen the gospel thus? Then it is to you the glorious gospel of the blessed God.

In Second Corinthians we read, "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of

Christ should shine into them." Note this: he has blinded the minds of those *who do not believe*. If any who live under the gospel do not believe, it is because the devil, as he prevails in the world and by worldly things, hoodwinks the eyes of those who believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the express image of God, should shine into them.

Oh, the devil is loath that the glorious gospel should shine into the hearts of men. He labours to prevent the light of the glorious gospel of Christ from shining into them; for he knows that once it has shined into men's hearts, then all the glory of the world will be darkened in their eyes, and they will admire nothing but Christ. They will then say, "Oh, none but Christ, none but Christ! Whom have I in heaven but Christ, and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of my dearest Saviour, who is the fairest of ten thousand! I never knew God before I saw Him in the face of Jesus Christ; and now that I see God in the face of His Son, I see Him in another way than I ever did."

Oh, the gospel is a glorious gospel! There is more of the glory of God in one sentence of the gospel than in all the heavens and earth beside.

Now, our conversation must be as becomes the gospel. There must be a glory in our conversation; we must hold forth the glory of the gospel in our lives. Therefore, professors of the gospel should shine as lights in the world.

I beseech you to mark this one note: surely, you who are professors of the gospel should live so as to be the glory of the glorious gospel. What manner of persons ought we to be then? It is not enough that our conversation is not defiled with the filthy and abominable pollution of the world, but our conversation should be such as is a glory to the glorious gospel.

Look in the gospel. There shine the attributes of God. So, in our lives, there should be shining the glorious attributes of God, that all who behold our conversation may admire the attributes of God shining in our lives, and glorify our Heavenly Father. A child of God who keeps close to God and lives holily in this world shines out more of the glory of God to the world than the sun in the firmament. A Christian who professes the gospel, and walks answerably to the gospel, is a more glorious creature in this world than the sun in the firmament.

Book Review

Gospel Conversation by *Jeremiah Burroughs*.

Published by Soli Deo Gloria Publications. Hardback, 305 pages, £15.95 but obtainable at £13.50 from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LE.

JEREMIAH Burroughs (1599-1646), a member of the Westminster Assembly, was renowned for his piety, beloved for his gentle spirit, and famed as a preacher. He fled to Holland because of persecution, and ministered to an

English congregation in Rotterdam. On his return to London he became a preacher to the large congregations of Stepney and Cripplegate. As a writer, "he is both evangelical and practical. He sacrifices not the truth of his subject to the splendour of composition. His style is homely but his subject is excellent."

His aim in this book, *Gospel Conversation*, was to help professing Christians attain to the circumspect walk and adorning of the doctrine of God which characterised the godly of a previous generation. He would often say, "We seem to have more light now, but we have lost our heat and first love." First published in 1648, this work is still as relevant as it was when it first appeared.

The editor of this edition explains, "Today the word 'conversation' refers to an exchange of opinions or ideas in speech. But in the 17th century it was commonly used to mean 'conduct' or 'behaviour', and this is how it is used in this book. Today, this book could well have been called *Gospel Conduct*. It addresses the foundational question: How should a person live under the gospel?"

The three parts of the book are: first, seven sermons on the text, "Only let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ," Phil 1:27. Secondly three sermons on John 18:36, "Jesus answered and said, My kingdom is not of this world." These three sermons were preached shortly before his death and are very precious indeed. Thirdly, an "Appendix" with a sermon, "The Saints' Duty in Times of Extremity", on the text, "Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord," Ex 14:13.

Not much of the excellence of this work can be shown in a short review, but the following extract from the first part gives some idea of the doctrine. The author is dealing with the subject of love to the brethren, and says (on page 83), "Oh, but now those who profess the gospel of Christ, have one argument that is infinitely beyond all arguments that can be imagined, and that is in John 3:16, 'For God so loved the world.' He loved the world so much that He gave His only begotten Son. We hear how the love of God, that was in the heart of God from all eternity, is brought forth and revealed in the Gospel.

"Oh let this inflame our hearts with love! Oh that there might never be a Christian who professes the name of Christ but that it might appear in him that his heart is sweetened with love, and that he lives, as it were, in the very element of love, and is acted by love in all that he does! Oh this would beautify your Christian profession more than all your talking of this and the other things! Oh that it would come again: that this becoming conversation of Christians would come again in to the world!"

In warning believers against the love of the world he says, "Surely it is a very unbecoming disposition in one who is under the kingdom of Christ to be worldly,... and we find in Scripture that this is made an argument of apostasy, of one who is falling off from the profession of Christ to embrace the world. It is

said of Demas in 2 Tim 4:10, 'Demas hath forsaken me.' But what is it that has made Demas to forsake Paul? 'He hath embraced this present world?' So look upon many of our professors of religion; such as have been very forward in former times and had 'Oh, nothing but Christ!' in their mouths, but afterward begin to decline, and become worse and worse. Observe them. They embrace this present world. It is because of some honours and esteem, some comforts, riches, estate, that they would have, or live at ease in this present world. They cannot endure the hatred of the world."

In the third part (on page 263) the author, after opening the text ("Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord"), deals with four doctrines contained in it:

1. "When God is in a way of mercy and salvation to His people, many times He brings them into great straits, even when He is in a way of salvation.
2. "In time of these great straits, even the people of God are subject to having their hearts overwhelmed with trouble, distracting fears, and to be disquieted!
3. "It is our duty to stand still, keep quiet, and look for God's salvation in the time of the greatest straits.
4. "The sight of God's salvation coming after straits is a glorious sight to behold. Stand still and see the salvation of God."

We are indebted to the publishers for making this work accessible in a more readable form than the original. They have divided it into paragraphs where these were wanting, and changed some antiquated spellings and outdated words, while striving to remain faithful to the author's intentions, thoughts and words. However, in the process, several regrettable printing errors have crept in.

The book is recommended by such outstanding divines as Thomas Goodwin, William Greenhill and Philip Nye. This is sufficient recommendation!

(Rev.) L. M.

Protestant View

The Pope to Visit Scotland Again

Next June sees the 1400th anniversary of the death of Columba of Iona. Doubtless with their eyes on the favourable publicity which would be generated, the Roman Catholic hierarchy in Scotland are negotiating with the Vatican for a visit by the Pope to Iona to mark the occasion.

It is typical of Rome to attempt to associate with herself someone who has become a prominent figure in ecclesiastical history, although throughout his long life Columba never accepted the authority of the Bishop of Rome. Indeed Rome's influence in Britain only began with the mission of Augustine of Canterbury in 597, the year of Columba's death.

There has been no Roman Catholic presence on Iona since the Reformation,

but at the present time a Roman Catholic prayer house is being built only 400 yards from the world-famous abbey. It is reported that the mother of the Princess of Wales, Mrs Shand Kydd, who perverted to Rome two years ago, helped to raise the initial target of £100,000 for this project.

There are two things which may make the visit unlikely. One is the Pope's health, which has led to him cancelling some of his engagements in December. The other is logistical - the problems associated with bringing the Pope, his entourage and all the accompanying visitors to an island which can only be served by a small ferry.

The prospect of another visit to Scotland by the Pope is most unwelcome to true Protestants - those who, in line with the Westminster Confession of Faith, recognize him as "that Antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the church against Christ, and all that is called God". He has, however, cultivated an aura of holiness and humanity that has made him the object of uncritical adulation by unthinking multitudes although, in contrast with the spirit of the age, he is more reactionary than a number of his immediate predecessors.

May the Lord in His providence prevent the visit. May He also hasten the time when the cry will be heard, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen!" *K.D.M.*

The Pope lays down the law to Carey

IT is to be feared that we are becoming inured to the occurrence of meetings between the Primate of the Church of England and the Pope of Rome. In the past, the "courtesy" visit of Dr Fisher, Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1960, and the historic, official visit of his successor, Dr Ramsey, in 1966, when Anglican-Catholic dialogue began, gave rise to many protests. The recent visit of Archbishop Carey should arouse us for several reasons.

First, there are the renewed and determined commitment of the Vatican and the Church of England to eventual union, despite what the Pope called, "new areas of disagreement" which "loom large on the way to reconciliation".

Secondly, the Pope has made it abundantly clear that union must be on Rome's terms. After he rebuked Carey for the Church of England's ordaining of women priests, he bluntly told the Archbishop that only he, "as the successor to St. Peter" had the authority to lay down doctrine.

Let us beware. The arrogance of the Pope is but the continuing of the centuries-old, proud arrogance and pretensions of the papacy. It should convince us, if we need convincing, that if Rome regains the dominion which she lost at the Reformation, she will not hesitate to impose her tyrannical authority upon those who reject her heretical dogmas and who persist in teaching and preaching the doctrines of the Reformed faith. □

Notes and Comments

A defender of the faith - the Islamic faith

ONCE again Prince Charles has dismayed those who truly hold to Biblical Christianity. Recently, he championed Islam when he gave an address, on "Building Bridges Between Islam and the West", to Middle Eastern experts at Steyning in West Sussex. He stressed that he was dealing with the spiritual values of Islam, and stated, "In the West we need to be taught by Islamic teachers how to learn once again with our hearts, as well as our heads."

Would that he would see the utter impossibility of building a bridge between the spiritual values of Christianity and Islam. The recent answer given by a Cambridge scholar to the question, Why did Gibbon the historian admire Islam? is that Gibbon saw it as a religion "without doctrines which transcend human reason. There is no Trinity, no God-man... Muslims have never taught that human nature is fundamentally corrupt." Quite so! How dishonouring it is to Christ, the King of kings, when anyone, whether prince or pauper, promotes a religion that denies His divinity and dishonours the true God. □

The way of salvation according to Inclusivism

WE are all familiar with the term "Pluralism" as a way of describing salvation as coming through all religions - that all roads, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and so on, lead to God. We are also familiar with "Exclusivism" which states that there is only one way to God, and that is by Jesus who says, "I am the way... No man cometh unto the Father but by me."

A new term is gaining popularity, and that is "Inclusivism". According to this view Christ is the only way of salvation but His grace may be mediated through other religions. Thus the faithful Hindu is indeed saved but unbeknown to him it is by the grace of Christ operating through his Hinduism.

This view is certainly allowed for in a recent Evangelical Alliance definition of an "evangelical". (*Evangelical Times*, December 1996) It is reported (in a personal report from someone who attended) that at this year's Evangelical Alliance Conference this matter was aired and it was evident that some delegates were inclined to consider Exclusivism seriously. This led an Indian convert from Hinduism to ask why he had gone through all the pain of alienation from family and friends when he turned to Christ and away from Hinduism, if the grace of Christ was in Hinduism all the time. Why indeed! J.R.T.

The EU tightens its hold on Britain

THE current debate about the nation's relationship to Europe, and the fact that EU laws increasingly supersede British laws, some of them even without being debated in Parliament, show us the reality of our entanglement in Europe.

We take nothing to do with the politics or economics, as such, of the Union, but we are deeply concerned about the impinging of Europe's authority upon the life of this nation. As we forecast in the 1950's and since, our sovereignty is being steadily whittled away. Protestant Britain (for that is what Britain is yet) is being increasingly submerged in Roman Catholic Europe. The Vatican, although not a member state of the EU, continues to occupy a seat in its policy-forming bodies, and is exerting a powerful influence.

We have every reason to fear the evident endangering of the Protestant succession to the throne and of the safeguards enshrined in the 1707 Treaty of Union between England and Scotland. □

The appalling scandal of abortion

THE thirtieth anniversary of the passing of the 1967 Abortion Act looms close. It is worth our while to pause and consider the fearful slaughter of unborn infants since then.

The total killed in the UK since 1968 is now much more than four million, and only a minute proportion of these abortions were justified by the medical condition of the mother. In a shorter period, since 1973, there have been around 30 million abortions in the USA.

This unspeakable wickedness shows no sign of abating. Indeed, for the first quarter of 1996, there was the unexpectedly large increase of 6.7 per cent in the number of abortions in England and Wales, and it is feared that a similar trend will be revealed by Scottish figures when they are released.

It is no wonder that society sees more and more disregard for the sanctity of life in other spheres - with a much higher murder rate than in the sixties, and increasing pressure for the introduction of euthanasia. *K.D.M.*

Police warnings about underage drinking

OUR concern expressed recently about the easy accessibility to children of alcopops, fruit drinks laced with alcohol, is increased by recent reports from Tayside and Strathclyde of children being drunk and coming to serious harm.

In Nairnshire a 13-year-old girl was found drunk and collapsed in a wood. A police inspector of Northern Constabulary said that their officers 'are regularly having to take children as young as 13, considerably under the influence of drink, home to their parents, and in some cases, to hospital. He warned, "It is only a matter of time before someone is found dead."

The Crime and Punishment (Scotland) Bill now before the Commons will give power to the police to confiscate alcohol from teenagers drinking in public, but it is imperative that further measures be taken to make it much more difficult for underage drinking to take place. □

African Mission News

Zimbabwe

AT Mbuma, after the epidemic of malaria there and the tremendous strain the staff endured with 200 new patients every day, one and another of the European staff has been able to go on furlough overseas. This is possible because of the arrival of Miss Anne Zekveld from Canada, who expects to remain on duty until February, and the welcome assistance of Miss Jessie Coote who has come from Kenya to add her valued experience for a period of six to eight weeks, or longer if possible.

Miss Margaret Macaskill is at home until February. Miss Louise Leiper is also in this country, having arrived in Glasgow at the end of November.

It has been reported that one reason for the severity of the malarial epidemic was the fact that the countryside has not been sprayed from the air as in previous years to destroy the incipient mosquito plague.

(Locust plagues were common in the thirties and early forties, when every blade of green grass and every green leaf was devoured, unless the local community joined to scatter the locusts. On the other hand they were a welcome source of food, and as the classrooms darkened with the clouds of locusts descending on the fields around, the girl pupils were longing for the school bell, so that they could go out and collect as many as possible of the locusts in their pinafores, and fry them at lunch time. These were the hungry times when food was very scarce. In some of the kitchens one would see tubs full of preserved locusts. Of course, we read of John the Baptist living on locusts and wild honey. However, the spraying of the lands further north brought an end to the locust plagues and locusts became a rarity. On the other hand a menace to the crops was removed).

We hear with thankfulness that Rev. A.B. Ndebele is at home at Ingwenya. He is not strong enough to preach, but we trust in time he will be able to do so.

Miss Katie Macaulay arrived in Scotland early in December for a month's well-earned holiday. We wish her a refreshing break. J.N.

Kenya

FROM Sengera Rev John Goldby writes, among other things, that "work goes on as usual here in the spiritual sphere with our usual services. The catechism classes are going well, and also the Sabbath school. The Monday night Bible study can be quite lively and enjoyable.

"The patients in the hospital seem to appreciate a visit and respond well. We are able to distribute a little literature... With the books sent out in the container we have started a small lending library for those who are able to profit by reading Christian books.

"We do four hours of language study a day every other week. I am sure that the time spent on this is well spent as it is good even to be able to speak a few words to the people in their own tongue. The Dutch nurses have made good progress in the language and can converse freely with the patients.

Mr Goldby concludes: "The Aids virus is going to kill hundreds of thousands here soon. As you know, the Mission is in Nyanza Province, and it was reported in the press that this province has more than double the number of HIV positive people than any other - 268,000 known cases, with the true figure much, much higher. It is awesome to think that most of these 268,000 are at present infecting who knows how many others. It is reported that 111 people die of Aids every day in Kenya. The medical staff are now realizing that this is going to be one of the major parts of their work in the very near future."

Paul exhorted the Galatian believers, "Bear ye one another's burdens." One way of doing this is to constantly bring to the throne of grace in prayer those of our friends who work on the mission field. Let us be praying that their labours will be blessed by the Lord for the spiritual and temporal good of the people; and also that in the trying and stressful circumstances of mission life they will be constantly upheld by divine grace and be enabled to be workers together in harmony and unity for the extension of Christ's kingdom in Africa. *D.A.R.*

Church Information

Meetings of Presbyteries (D.V.)

NORTHERN: At Dingwall on Tuesday, 18th February, 1997, at 2.00 pm.

SOUTHERN: At Glasgow on Tuesday, 18th February, 1997, at 6.00 pm.

WESTERN: At Laide on Tuesday, 4th March, at 6.00 pm.

SKYE: At Portree on Tuesday, 11th February, 1997, at 11.00 am.

OUTER ISLES: At Stornoway on Tuesday, 4th March, 1997, at 1.00 pm.

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND: At Auckland on Friday, 24th January, 1997, at 2.30 pm.

Administrator for Church's Home of Rest, Inverness

Applications are invited for the part-time position of Administrator at Ballifeary House, Inverness. In order to fulfil the wide-ranging duties of this role, the applicant should:

- have a working knowledge of computerised accounting (Quickbooks), also of word-processing and spreadsheets;
- be able to produce monthly management accounts, bank reconciliations, etc;
- be capable of preparing and maintaining budgets for expenditure;

- have experience in all aspects of wages preparation using SAGE Payroll;
- be competent in dealing with cash in connection with residents' pensions and personal allowances;
- have good communication skills;
- be motivated, disciplined, reliable and of undoubted integrity;
- be in full sympathy with the principles of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

Remuneration will be commensurate with experience. For an application form, please write to Mr A.N. MacRae, 20 Inshes View, Westhill, Inverness, IV1 2DS

Acknowledgements of Donations

THE GENERAL TREASURER acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:

Sustentation Fund: E. McL., Fort William, £20.

Foreign Mission Fund: Anon (Nov.), \$100 Can., Providence Strict Baptist Chapel, Irthlingborough, £150.

Eastern Europe Fund: Providence Strict Baptist Chapel, Irthlingborough, £50, A friend, Skye, £10; Mrs P.L., Preston, £30; Mrs C.A.M., £20; Mrs J.T., £20; last two per D.A.M., Dingwall.

CONGREGATIONAL TREASURERS acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:

BRACADALE - STRATH: *Where most needed*: Miss M. MacAskill, £150, per Rev. G.G.H.; *Broadford F.P. Church Sustentation Fund*: Mrs J. Curtin, Heaste, "In loving memory of my dear husband," £700; *Bible Distribution*: Mrs J. Curtin, Heaste, "In loving memory of my dear husband," £300; both per the Treasurer.

INVERNESS: *Sustentation Fund*: Anon, £20; Anon, £50; Anon, £20; Anon, £30; Anon, £20; Anon, £40; Anon, £50; all per envelope in plate. *Where most needed*: R&M, £20, per envelope in plate; *Church bus maintenance*: Anon, £10, per envelope in plate; *Use of church for wedding*: Anon, £20 per D.C.; *Eastern Europe*: Anon, £10, per envelope in plate; *Kenya Mission*: Anon, £50, per envelope in plate; *Sustentation Fund*: Anon, £20, per envelope in plate.

KAMES: *General Funds*: Friend, Kyles of Bute, £120, per Treasurer.

LAIDE: *Sustentation Fund*: Friend, Stomoway, £5; Friend, Stomoway, £10; Friend, Aultbea, £20; Friend, Aultbea, £20; Friend, Aultbea, £20; Friend, Kishorn, £20; all per Rev. D.A.R.; B.M., £10, per C.R.; Anon, £10, per Collection Plate; *Laide Magazine Free Distribution Fund*: R. MacD., £10; Friend, Holland, £17; both per Rev. D.A.R. *Eastern Europe*: Friend, Stomoway, £20, per Rev. D.A.R.; Friend, Tolsta, £40, per C.R.; Friend, Laide, £50; Friend, Laide, £10; Friend, Laide, £16; all per collection plate; Friend, Laide, £2; Friend, Laide, £50; Isle View Nursing Home, £14.50; Isle View Nursing Home £7; all per Rev. D.A.R. Friend Aultbea £10; Friend Aultbea £30; Friend Glasgow, all per C.R. J.M. MacD. & Partners, £30; Miss P. (for medical aid), £10; Friend, Ardgay, £10; Fraser Auctioneers £3; Friend, Gairloch, £20; D.A.M.M., £100; A.J. Pollington, £10; all per Rev. D.A.R.; Anon, £40, per collection plate.

PORTREE: *For Portree Sabbath School*: Anon, £500, per envelope in plate; *Door Collection*: Anon, £20 per envelope in plate; Friend, £20, per S.Y.M.; *Church Bus*: Anon, £10, per envelope in plate. *Sustentation Fund*: Friend, £10, per S.Y.M.; *Eastern Europe*: Anon, £10, per envelope in plate.

RAASAY: *Congregational Fund*: Friend, Inverarish, £100, per Treasurer; *Communion Expenses*: I.F., Inverarish, £45, per Treasurer; *Car Fund*: D. Mackenzie, £10, per Rev. J.R. Tallach; C. Nicolson, £5; C.F., £20; Envelope in plate, £5; all per Treasurer. *Raasay F. P. Church*: Legacy re John M. MacLeod, £200, per Executors.

STAFFIN: *Where Most Needed*: Friend, Inverness, £60, per N.M.D.