

The Free Presbyterian Magazine and Monthly Record

Vol 102

February 1997

No 2

The Throne of Grace

PRAYER is a duty to which we are not prone by nature, and even the Lord's people, a praying people, feel their need of being exhorted to the duty and encouraged in it. It is therefore a consolation to them that it is written, "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need," (Heb. 4:16). Here is a call to prayer.

The place of prayer is described as the *throne of grace*. Of course, it is a person rather than a particular location that is referred to; it is the One who is seated upon a throne of mercy to whom we are approach. Let us marvel that it is a throne of grace to which we are called and not a throne of judgement. God is revealing Himself as waiting to be gracious. If He were to mark iniquities against us there would be no standing for us, but He is intimating that He is ready to forgive. Some are of the opinion that the phrase, "throne of grace", alludes to the mercy seat, of which God said to the Israelites, "There I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee..." And is not God saying to us today, "Draw near to me, and I will draw near to you"?

The term "throne" indicates that it is a sovereign whom we approach. He is "King of nations", "God over all, blessed forever". Great reverence becomes us in our approaches to Him. "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him," Psalm 89:7.

At the same time, (and this is very wonderful), we may come "boldly", that is, freely and in faith, pouring out our hearts unto Him, as a child to a father - the very opposite of that unholy boldness and irreverent familiarity which characterises many public prayers in our day. The word "boldly" shows that we are to come with trust, believing "that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him," and that His rewards are great. As someone has said:

"Thou art coming to a King;
large petitions with thee bring."

Pouring out our heart to Him means taking our every concern and request to him, not forgetting to bless His holy name for His gracious benefits already

bestowed upon us. Pouring out our hearts means that we spread out our cares, sorrows and needs before Him as King Hezekiah spread before Him the letter of evil words sent to him by his enemy. Pouring out our hearts means this too: that we be completely honest and sincere with regard to our sins and faults.

Surely it is *mercy* which we need to obtain most of all. Our iniquities testify against us. "All we like sheep have gone astray;" and we go astray day by day. Not a day passes but we have reason to pray, "Forgive us this day our trespasses." It ought to be an encouragement to a sin-burdened soul that God upon His throne is not only a holy and glorious sovereign, but also is "rich in mercy and ready to forgive." God's mercy is greater that we can never comprehend. He reveals in His Word that His mercy is "great above the heavens", and "from everlasting to everlasting."

How great also is our need of grace. To the throne of grace we must go to "find grace to help in time of need". While we have various and many needs every day (and therefore we are to pray always and not to faint), there are times of special need. There is the "day of trouble". Let there be no delay in going to pray in such a day. God says, "Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." Go to the throne of grace, and you will have reason to say, sooner or later, "The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble, and he knoweth them that trust in Him."

There are times when we are weighed down by a burden of responsibility and particularly onerous duties. Feeling our weakness and inadequacy we cannot but say, "Who is sufficient for these things?" It is certain that if we take our burden to the Lord that He will sustain us. Who was as burdened as the Apostle Paul, who had the "care of all the churches"? Yet he said, "I can do all things..." But how?... through Christ who strengtheneth me." He went to the throne of grace, trusting in the One who said, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." He could boldly say, "The Lord is my helper." Let us go to the throne of grace in all our weakness, for "they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

The child of God, although already in a state of grace, and in possession of grace, learns more and more his need of a continuous supply of grace. In the *Pilgrim's Progress*, Christian saw in the house of Interpreter, a fire burning against a wall and someone pouring water on the fire, but it burned higher. He saw the reason for this when he was shown a man behind the wall secretly pouring oil on the fire. So, however much the devil may try to extinguish the work of grace in the heart of a believer it will increase because the Lord, with the oil of His grace, maintains that work. So the believer is of this mind: "I must frequent the throne of grace so that I may obtain increase of the graces of faith,

hope, love, repentance, patience, and the fear of the Lord.” Then he will also be savouring the sweetness of this truth, “But he giveth more grace.” Let us come boldly to the throne of grace that we may. . . find grace.”

We are to note that this is a word of encouragement also for those who are not yet in a state of grace. There is no doubt about the welcome which awaits a poor sinner who cries for mercy at the throne of grace. The great lesson taught us by the parable of the prodigal son is surely this, as Gresham Machen says, that “God rejoices at the salvation of a sinner.” Matthew Henry, in commenting on the parable, says that it “intimates God’s desire of the conversion of sinners, and His readiness to meet them that are coming toward him.” Henry continues along these lines, “Here were *eyes* of mercy, ‘When he was a great way off his father saw him’. Here were *bowels* of mercy, ‘He had compassion’. Here were *feet* of mercy, ‘He ran’. Here were *arms* of mercy, ‘He fell on his neck’. Here were *lips* of mercy, ‘He kissed him’.”

The verse reads, “...therefore, let us come...”, that is, as the previous verse shows, on account of the person and work of the mediatorial high priest Jesus Christ. He, by His atoning death at Calvary, has opened up the way of access to God. Let us come therefore, in His name and pleading His merits, that we may obtain mercy and find grace. [

The Chariot of Salvation

*Sermon by the late Rev William MacLean, MA **

Preached on Sabbath, 23rd October, 1966, at a communion in Auckland, New Zealand.

Text: *Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon. He made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple, the midst thereof being paved with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem. Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart, (Song of Solomon 3:9-11).*

IT is clear that in the Song of Solomon a greater than Solomon is brought before us: even the New Testament Solomon, the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom King Solomon was a type. It is believed by many that the text refers to the chariot that King Solomon made to bring the daughter of Pharaoh, whom he had married, from Egypt to the house he had prepared for her at Jerusalem. Be that as it may, it is in the chariot of salvation or redemption, made by the New Testament Solomon, the Lord Jesus Christ, that sinners are brought from the Egypt of a state of nature to the heavenly house that He has prepared for them.

* See footnote overleaf about Rev. William MacLean

He has declared: "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you... that where I am, there ye may be also." Therefore we believe that the chariot in our text may be described as the chariot of salvation which Christ prepared for lost sinners. No other chariot can bring us safely to Immanuel's land but the chariot of His preparing.

First, we may consider *the need* for preparing such a chariot. **Secondly**, we may notice what is said about *the making* of the chariot: "King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon. He made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple, the midst thereof being paved with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem." **Thirdly**, we shall notice *the invitation* that is given. Christ, in the chariot of the gospel, is passing by, and this invitation is given: "Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart."

I. First, let us notice **the need for making this chariot**. The covenant of works which the Lord made with Adam was a chariot reflecting the glory of God. The chariot that Solomon made for the bringing of Pharaoh's daughter to the house that he had prepared in Jerusalem would be a chariot befitting Solomon's glory. The truth shows that there was no king so rich, so wise, so glorious in his day as was Solomon: and we can well believe that the chariot he made would reflect his glory. The chariot of the covenant of works that the Lord made with Adam was a chariot reflecting the glory of God in His attributes: the glory of His holiness, justice and truth. The way that Adam, as the head of the covenant of works, was to take was set before him by God. It was: "Do this and thou shalt live." It was the way of obedience to God's revealed will; and in going this way he would bring himself and all his posterity (which were included in the covenant) into possession of the life which was promised in the covenant. He and his posterity would be confirmed forever in a state of innocency.

But Satan, as an angel of light, came and set another way before Adam: the way of disobedience. In this way Adam thought to obtain greater glory and happiness. The way set before Adam by Satan did not appear to be the way of death but a way in which he and Eve could become as gods, knowing good and evil. Adam was deceived by Satan and took the way set before him by Satan: but instead of obtaining the happiness, honour and glory which Satan promised him

* Rev. William MacLean (1907-85) became the minister of the Ness congregation in Lewis in 1948. He was translated to the Gisborne congregation in New Zealand in 1962, to the Grafton congregation in Australia in 1973, and re-inducted to the Ness congregation in 1976, where he remained until his death. Under the pen-name of Ergatees he wrote *Arminianism - Another Gospel; Christ or Antichrist - Facts for Enquirers*; and several other useful pamphlets, published by Westminster Standard Publications. See *The Free Presbyterian Magazine*, Vol. 90, No.12, December 1985, page 378.

and he expected, he went over the precipice and brought himself and the whole human race into an estate of sin and misery. He broke that chariot: he broke the covenant of works, and brought death upon himself and his posterity.

Sinners will discover as surely as Adam did, that the way of disobedience is the way of death. Satan promises them happiness and satisfaction in the way of disobedience. The truth declares, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." The fall brought man into "an estate of sin and misery"; a condition out of which man could not save himself and in which he was now "liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself and to the pains of hell forever". Not only was man not able to deliver himself, but also the way into heaven was now shut because of the sin of man. The flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life, was proof that man was shut out by the justice of God.

What need there was of another chariot; the chariot of salvation. Man would have been shut out eternally if God did not have a purpose of mercy towards him. In the eternal councils He made a covenant with His only begotten Son, whom He set up as the head and mediator of the covenant of grace. It is because of grace in God that such a covenant was made for the saving of a countless number of the race of lost, perishing sinners to which we belong. With regard to Christ being set up as the head and mediator of this covenant of grace, and as the only redeemer of God's elect, He himself declares, "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." Under the covenant of grace, which is God's way of salvation, Christ undertook to come in the fulness of time and to suffer and die for all who were given to him by the Father. Christ was to give the obedience to the divine law which the first Adam failed to give, and thus He was to magnify the law and make it honourable. He was to meet with the flaming sword of God's inflexible justice; He was to suffer the penalty of the law, and thereby open up the way which man, by his sin, had closed up against himself. He was to prepare the chariot of salvation.

II. That leads us, **secondly**, to notice **the making of the chariot**; the preparing of the chariot of salvation by Christ, by his obedience unto death. This is symbolically brought before us in our text, "King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon. He made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple, the midst thereof being paved with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem."

First, with regard to the chariot of salvation, *the bottom or base of it is of gold*. By "gold" we understand Christ's eternal deity; for only God manifest in the flesh, God the Son, could work out redemption for lost sinners. The word "gold" also brings before us the preciousness of Christ's person. He is, as to his person, God's eternally begotten Son. The eternal Sonship of Christ is the base

of the chariot of redemption. In constituting Christ as redeemer and as priest, we find the Father saying to Him, "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." The glory of His person is bound up in His eternal Sonship, as it is written, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." This is the base of the chariot: Christ's eternal person as God's eternally begotten Son. He is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person.

How precious is this base or foundation! Christ has become precious to all who are in the chariot; who are saved by grace. "Unto you therefore which believe he is precious." They may have doubts about their relationship to Christ, and have fears about not being in Him, but where faith is in the soul by the Holy Spirit's operation, the person of Christ is precious to that soul. "We believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the son of the living God," said Peter. It is through divine teaching that Christ becomes precious to us, and through divine light that we see Christ as God's eternally begotten Son. Then we can never countenance any view that is derogatory to the glory of Christ's person.

The Holy Spirit will strip sinners of Arianism, as surely as he strips those he saves, of Arminianism. The essence of the lie of Arianism is the denial of the eternal Sonship of Christ. It makes Christ to be a created being only and says that He is not God. That lie is burnt out of the souls of those whom the Lord in his grace brings into this chariot. They are brought to set their seal to what the apostle Peter says, "We believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." They are brought therefore to worship Him as God. That is the base of the chariot, the preciousness of Christ's eternal person.

The chariot was also made "*of the wood of Lebanon*." By the wood we may understand Christ's human nature. There was no wood comparable to the wood of Lebanon. Now, there was a time when the wood of Lebanon did not exist. But then the wood of Lebanon was created. So there was a time when the human nature of Christ did not exist. His eternal deity existed, but the human nature did not exist until it was miraculously formed by the power of the Holy Ghost overshadowing the Virgin. It was then that Christ took a human nature into union with His divine person. For if He was to work out eternal redemption for sinners, He must take the nature of those who have sinned, and in that nature must render to divine justice the satisfaction it demanded.

Then we read about *the pillars of the chariot*. "He made the pillars thereof of silver." The pillars support the covering of the chariot. We may take these precious pillars to signify, in the first place, the proofs that Jesus of Nazareth was God manifest in the flesh and the promised Messiah. We may mention the following proofs: His fulfilling all the Old Testament types of the Messiah. They found their fulfilment in Him. His fulfilling all these types is a proof: a

pillar of silver supporting His claim of being the One who was to come.

Also, the Old Testament *promises and predictions* concerning the Messiah found their fulfilment in Christ. What was predicted concerning His death was fulfilled. The Scripture was fulfilled, "A bone of him shall not be broken." When the Pharisees, anxious "that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day", requested Pilate that their legs should be broken, Pilate gave orders that their legs should be broken to hasten their death. Then we read that the soldiers brake the legs of the first malefactor and of the second, "but when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they break not his legs." We also read there, "But one of the soldiers took a spear and pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water: and thus there was the fulfilling of the scripture which says, "They shall look on him whom they pierced." The fulfilling of these scriptures is as a pillar of silver supporting Christ's claims to be the One who came to work out eternal redemption for His folk.

His *miracles* also were proofs of His messiahship. In connection with His first miracle we read, "He manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him." His miracles were proof of His deity; they are as silver pillars supporting His claims to be the promised redeemer who is divine.

The pillars not only support the covering but may also serve as *a support to cling to* for those who travel in the chariot. As far as those people who have a hope that they are in this chariot are concerned, the *promises of God*, all of which are yea and amen in Christ Jesus, are pillars of silver to support and sustain them. What a pillar of silver this has been to many a poor and cast down believer: "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea I will help thee; yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." The promises of the truth are "exceeding great and precious promises" and are as pillars of silver for the strengthening and the supporting of those who are in the chariot.

These also are as pillars of silver to his people: that all *the purposes of God* are in the hands of Christ. All things are put into His hands and He is fulfilling God's eternal purposes in His providence and grace. Christ is in supreme control of every trial that befalls His people. Who was more tried than Job? In all that he met with he could see the hand of the Lord. He went beyond second causes and saw by faith the hand of the Lord in the losses that befell him; for he said, "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" That was a support to Job. He could say about God, "He knoweth the way that I take;" a way mapped out and appointed for him by the Lord. "But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." The Lord's people shall be tried as gold, for He says, "And I will bring the third part through the fire, and refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they

shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, it is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God." So when grace is in exercise, this promise and purpose of the Lord is a pillar that the hands of grace will lay hold of when they are passing through the fire, whatever the fire may be.

Solomon's chariot also had a *covering*: "he made the covering of it of purple." By the covering of purple we may understand the atonement that He made for sin by His death. The word "atonement" in Hebrew signifies "a covering". Only the atonement that Christ made can cover our sins. By His obedience unto death He brought in an everlasting righteousness and made reconciliation for iniquity. This is the covering of all who are in the chariot. All who have a hope that the Lord delivered them out of the Egypt of a state of nature, and to whom Christ is precious, have the blessing of being under this covering. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." They are under the shelter of the blood. "It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." Those who are in the chariot believe that nothing else could atone for their sins but the precious blood of Christ. God looks upon them in Christ; He is not looking upon them as they are in themselves, but as persons under this covering. God sees such infinite merit and efficacy in Christ's precious blood that He says about those who are in the chariot that He "hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel". They are perfect in Him. "Ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power."

We read too that Solomon's chariot was *paved with love* - "the midst thereof being paved with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem." It was in love that the chariot of salvation was prepared. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Those who are in the chariot are loved by Him with an everlasting love, and He gives them tokens of His love. Even the chastisements they receive are the pavings of love in this chariot. "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth... But if ye be without chastisements, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons." His dealings with them are in love, and are for the good of their souls and to His glory. We find the Lord saying about Lazarus' sickness, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." This chariot is paved with love inasmuch as He loves His people with a constant and unchanging love. "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." Their love changes, and at times waxes cold. We read in Scripture, "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." But however cold they may find their love to be, and may be wondering at times if they have any love to Him at all, His love to them is unchanging and everlasting.

To be concluded

The Mode of Baptism

How Baptism should be Administered

(A paper delivered at the 1996 Youth Conference)

Rev. Keith M. Watkins

Part Two: The symbolic import of baptism and the spirit of the gospel

IN Part One, "The meaning of the term baptism', and instances of baptism" (which appeared in the last issue), the author dealt with; 1: The Greek words that are used for baptism; and 2: The recorded instances of baptism in the New Testament. -Editor

3. THE symbolic import of baptism is much more fully represented in the mode of affusion than in the mode of immersion.

Most immersionists would be amazed to hear us make such a claim, for they are convinced that this is where they hold the ground alone. To the immersionist, baptism has one great overriding symbolic meaning — union with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection, and this meaning is fully and only symbolised by immersion. As Christ died and went down *into* the grave so the "old man" in the believer dies with Christ and is laid in the grave — this is supposedly symbolised by immersion *into* the baptismal water. And as Christ rose again *out of* the grave, so the believer rises to new spiritual life — this is supposedly symbolised by coming up again out of the baptismal water, leaving as it were the "old man" behind. The great proof text used by the immersionists for this concept is Romans 6:3-6, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him." To this they add Colossians 2:12, "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." As we proceed to refute this immersionist argument, the true and full symbolic import of baptism will become clear, and so will the superiority of the affusion mode.

First, to say that baptism symbolises union with Christ, especially in His death and resurrection, whilst true, is nevertheless only partially true. For baptism symbolises many other things in addition, including regeneration itself, the work of the Holy Spirit on the soul and purification from sin. Immersionists fail to explain why the symbolic act of baptism should refer exclusively to just one of its many imports, and why it should be union with Christ in His death and resurrection that should be so chosen, and all the other rich truths cast aside.

Even in the Romans 6 passage itself, other aspects of a believer's union are mentioned. Not only are believers buried with Christ so as to rise with Christ, but they are also said to be crucified with Christ and planted with Christ. If the Romans passage really is intended to teach us the correct mode of baptism, then a mode needs to be found that can combine all these imports. In no sense does immersion represent crucifixion nor planting. To seize upon burial and resurrection is entirely arbitrary.

In Galatians 3:27 we find that "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." There the analogy is to putting on a garment, for believers are clothed with Christ. It would be as justifiable to insist from Galatians on a mode of baptism that would involve say putting on some kind of white garment as to insist from Romans on a mode of baptism involving a kind of burial. The truth is, neither of these passages speak of the mode of baptism at all, otherwise they would be grossly contradictory.

Thus whilst in Romans 6:3-5 there is much reference to union with Christ in His death and resurrection, a precious truth that is symbolised in the sacrament of baptism, yet the sacrament itself and its appropriate mode are not mentioned here at all. Berkhof, speaking of Colossians 2:12 as well, says most correctly of both passages, "They do not speak directly of any baptism with water at all, but of the spiritual baptism thereby represented. They represent regeneration under the figure of a dying and rising again. It is certainly perfectly obvious that they do not make mention of baptism as an emblem of Christ's death and resurrection."

Secondly, in any case the idea that plunging under water is a suitable symbol of burial is unconvincing, to say the least. This is especially so in the case of burial at the time of the New Testament, which could be performed not by laying the body six feet under the ground, but by laying it in a cave at ground level. It is hard to see how plunging beneath water can have any resemblance to such burial whatsoever. This flaw in immersionist logic is especially telling in view of the Saviour's burial being by this latter method — and yet the immersionists think that by immersion under water they are buried "with Him".

Thirdly, although the immersionists make so much of burial in the symbolism of baptism, it is no easy matter to discover from Scripture what the great significance of Christ's burial was for His people. Yes, there was significance in His death and His resurrection, for He "was delivered [to death] for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Romans 4:25). But what was the significance of His burial? Says Dabney: "Sacraments (always few) are only adopted by God to be commemorative of the most cardinal transactions of redemption. Christ's burial was not such." The mention of burial in the context of Romans 6, in which the believer's dying to sin is being

expounded, is to show that the old life of sin is to be altogether gone, just as we say of the deceased that they are dead and buried. It is the dying rather than the burial that is of importance — yet the immersionist mode at best can only be said to represent the less important burial.

Fourthly, chief in the symbolism of baptism is purification from sin, and that by the influence of the Holy Spirit in the washing of regeneration uniting the soul to Christ. How many factors there are that lead inescapably to this conclusion, however much the immersionist insistence upon burial seeks to evade it. For one thing, excluding the exceptional case of burial at sea which is hardly to the point, the element of water has nothing whatsoever to do with burial even if one is immersed in it from head to foot, but it does have everything to do with cleansing and washing. Baptism with water speaks of purification. When John was baptising in Aenon, the question that arose between some of John's disciples and the Jews was "about purifying" not burying (John 3:25). Surely that was because baptism symbolises purification rather than burial. Ananias told Paul, "Arise, and be baptised, and wash away thy sins" (Acts 22:16), not, "Arise, and be baptised, and be buried with Christ." Only this is compatible with baptism's replacing the circumcision of the Old Testament, which symbolised the soul's being cut off from sin by the hear circumcising influence of the Holy Spirit.

Now having established that baptism's chief symbolic import is *purification from sin*, it needs to be understood that from the biblical point of view, purification is much more appropriately symbolised by affusion than by immersion. In the first place, the purifying influence of the Holy Spirit is never in all Scripture likened to a soul's being submerged in Him. Rather, He is always One who is poured out or sprinkled upon the soul. In the second place, neither is purification itself usually represented by immersion but by affusion. Thus in Ezekiel 36:25, the promise is, "Then will I *sprinkle* clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean." In the third place, the idea of being plunged into a pool would represent the very opposite of purification to the Jewish mind. Only running water, as in the case of the ceremonial cleansing of a former leper (Lev. 14) or the living water put with the ashes of the red heifer (Numbers 19), could give the idea of cleansing and purification; still water would be defiled the very moment the first sinner entered it. Thus the cleansing provided for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem would be by means of opening a fountain, wherein the purifying waters would be ever moving, not by filling a reservoir with stagnant water. Only sprinkled water, or water poured out, would always give the idea of purification, even if it came from a container of still water, as it did in the laver of the tabernacle service, because the process of affusion would give the idea of running water. Affusion, the application of water

to the person, is more representative of purification than immersion, the application of the person to the water.

Thus our brief review of the symbolic import of baptism has brought us to the conclusion that affusion is in fact a mode of baptism that more clearly represents purification, the central symbolism, than immersion ever could. Nevertheless, immersion does not invalidate baptism. The essential matter as to mode is the use of water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and this holds with immersion as well as with affusion.

4. Affusion and not immersion is more in keeping with the spirit of the gospel.

The affusion mode of baptism is entirely in accordance with the *universality* of the gospel. A sacrament of the New Testament must be generally appropriate for all nations and all persons at all times. Unlike immersion, sprinkling is as appropriate for frozen climates, where perhaps all water turns to ice for at least half the year, as it is in desert climates, where even sufficient drinking water can scarcely be found throughout the year. Likewise, sprinkling is appropriate for infants and the aged and the infirm, in situations where immersion could be harmful and even dangerous. We cannot think that God would command a sacrament of universal obligation to professors of the true religion and their children that would preclude many from its benefit and endanger the health of others.

Affusion is also in accordance with the *simplicity* of the gospel. How simple and unceremonial are sprinkling and pouring! The smallest quantity of water is sufficient; no lavish preparations are required. But what a ceremony is involved in immersion — it has to be seen to be believed! Special clothes to be worn, both by the minister often with his thigh-length anglers' waders and by the person immersed; special pools to be expensively built in churches or special places in rivers to be painstakingly sought out; special precautions to be taken such as heating the water beforehand; the trail of towels on the church floor between the baptismal pool and the place where the dripping wet immersee will change into dry clothes, and so on. Compare all this complexity with the obvious simplicity with which baptisms in the New Testament were performed. The laborious paraphernalia that proliferate with immersion are themselves sufficient to warn us that it cannot be a New Testament requirement, but affusion must be right when it fits so well with gospel simplicity.

Affusion and not immersion is also in accordance with the *decency* of the gospel. Great care has to be taken to preserve a modest appearance during immersion. Going down into the baptismal pool, the natural force of the water will cause women's skirts or dresses to rise. To counteract this some immersionist churches supply gowns with heavy sand sown into the hem, with

varying degrees of success. But even then, when coming up out of the baptismal pool in the full view of the assembled congregation, it is extremely difficult, especially for women, to find clothes that do not become decidedly immodest once they are dripping wet. However much the woman has tried, oftentimes decent and chaste eyes have to turn away from the sight of her wet clothes clinging so tightly to the shape of her body. If I offend you by describing it in such terms, turn your offence upon the indecency of the thing itself. If the immersionists really think that the holy God would sacramentally command a mode of baptism that necessarily involves women in such dangers with immodesty, that is their business, but we think that the God of unimpeachable holiness would never command such a thing. What? Shall the one God command that in day to day living "women adorn themselves in modest apparel" (1 Tim 2:9), and then in the special day of baptism command them to appear so immodestly? God forbid.

Thus sprinkling or pouring, not immersion, reflects the spirit of the gospel, in its universality, its simplicity and its decency. Surely then affusion is the gospel mode of baptism, not immersion.

By way of overall conclusion as to the proper mode of baptism, we shall do nothing more than reiterate the statement of the Westminster Confession: "Dipping of the person into the water is not necessary; but baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person." ●

Four Verses in Galatians

Rev. A. McPherson

THE reader will know that certain developments in the Galatian churches had greatly perturbed the apostle Paul. Their case was so bad that he found nothing in them to be thankful for, as he usually did when writing. Grief was the appropriate response rather than thanks, for very soon after their conversion from heathenism they had adopted another gospel which in fact was not another, but rather a perversion of the gospel of Christ.

After quite a long account of his own thorough conversion to the divinely revealed doctrine of salvation by grace without works, Paul (in chapter 3) speaks bluntly to the Galatians, and stresses the fact that they had the indwelling of the Holy Spirit after they believed in Christ, and thus they had clear evidence that they were saved. Why, then, should they pay attention to assertions that their salvation was incomplete without acceptance of parts of the Jewish ceremonial law?

Then in verses 6 to 22 in chapter 3, Paul argues for salvation by faith only, by quoting from the Old Testament. Below are some remarks on verses 6 to 9. Let us remember that Scripture is decisive in controversy over Christian belief. Today there are those who use only "the teachings of Christ" in the gospels to

establish their views. How little they know of Him! Others go by "the living Spirit" to enforce what they cannot find in the written Word. The question we put to them is, Who inspired the Word? It has been by its forsaking of the Bible that so much of the Visible Church has declined in its corrupt and useless state.

Consider now verse 6: "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." Abraham believed that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars, and his faith was accounted as righteousness. But this was by no means his first exercise of saving faith. At his calling (Genesis 12) he had believed that from himself would come the promised Deliverer from sin and misery through whom all the families of the earth would be blessed. The core of the promises was a Saviour from sin; Abraham believed in that promised Saviour and was saved and accounted righteous. The religion embraced by the Old Testament saints was essentially the same as Christianity. It is revealed religion in contrast to the alternatives invented by men which, one and all, make works essential, in contrast to divine grace.

Go on now to verse 7: "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." Faith is the hallmark of revealed religion; faith brought about by a great inward change wrought by the Holy Spirit. So that all who live by faith in God's revealed Saviour are the same spiritually as Abraham, and can be called his spiritual children.

This leads on to verse 8: "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." There are two statements here. The first is that Scripture foresaw that God would justify the heathen through faith. The earliest Scriptures, having God for their Author, spoke of things God would do in the distant future, including the fact mentioned here, that God would justify the heathen, people not descended from Abraham, by faith. The second statement is that the Scripture said that the gospel was made known to Abraham by the words, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." So, how were these words the gospel? In this way: that one of Abraham's descendants would be the promised "seed" of Genesis 3:15, the great Deliverer from sin and misery. And Abraham believed the promise; it was gospel to him.

Lastly, there is the deduction in verse 9; "So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." From the facts in verse 8, Paul now links heathens who in the Christian era believed, with Abraham the patriarch who believed. Abraham believed in a promised Saviour; the Gentiles believed in a revealed Saviour. Abraham was saved by faith; heathens who believed were saved in the same way. Man's works did not enter into it in either case; they were not conditions of salvation as the Galatians were now being pressed to accept. ●

The Covering of the Head in Public Worship

Rev. D. A. Ross

NOT so long ago, it was common practice in most churches for women to have their heads covered during public worship; now it is common to see hatless women in many church services. More and more Churches condone women worshipping in public with their heads uncovered, and even some Churches which profess to be Reformed permit it.

Were it not that the Word of God stipulates how we are to conduct ourselves in the house of God, head covering would not be an issue. However, God does require, as is shown in 1st Corinthians, chapter 11, verses 1 to 16, that in public worship the man should have his head uncovered, but the woman should have her head covered.

There are professing Christians who acknowledge that 1st Corinthians 11 has specific requirements for men and women regarding head-covering, but who go on to argue that it is not a matter of great importance and may therefore be left to the judgement of individual worshippers.

A wrong, because it is less heinous than a greater wrong, does not on that account gain some kind of approval. Thomas Witherow says, "Every Divine truth is important, though it may be that all Divine truths are not of equal importance. The simplest statement of the Bible is a matter of more concern to an immortal being than the most sublime sentiment of mere human genius." (*The Apostolic Church - Which is it?* p. 13).

Moreover, it can hardly be the case that the question of head-dress is inconsequential when it is God the Holy Spirit who is directing the Apostle Paul to expose and correct the errors in the Church regarding this matter. It would be presumption on our part to push aside what is dictated by the Holy Spirit as practice for public worship.

The fact that wrong practice regarding head-dress is put alongside the more serious faults of unworthy partaking of the Lord's Supper, drunkenness, and divisions in the Corinthian Church shows that these wrongs are treated equally (in the sense that they are all regarded as wrong and censurable), and that we are to take notice of the least wrong with a view to rectifying it, as surely we are to take note of the more serious wrongs and rectify them.

Paul, in dealing with this subject of head-covering in 1st Corinthians 11 says in verse 5, "Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head; for that is even all one as if she were shaven." Wrong practices regarding head-dress grieved the Apostle and, under divine inspiration, he writes to the Church to correct these faults.

At the time of public worship in Corinth certain women did not wear a head-covering. It appears that this fault took place when these women prayed or prophesied in public. This suggests to me that those women in the congregation who were not engaged in these exercises did in fact have their heads covered.

We may note in passing that although God gave gifts of prophesying to women as well as men in the early church, as we see from Acts 2:16-18 and Joel 2:28, it is clear from three chapters later in this very same epistle to the Corinthians that it was wrong for women to exercise these gifts in public worship. "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law," 1st Corinthians 14:34.

However, in 1st Corinthians 11:1-16, it is the matter of head-covering in public worship that concerns Paul. He states that on such occasions men ought to have their heads uncovered while the woman was to have her head covered.

The reason for the women covering her head is understood from verse three: "...the head of the woman is the man." The head-covering was a symbol which indicated that the woman was under the divinely appointed authority of the man, specially in public worship.

Not only did the head-covering on the woman indicate to the worshippers the woman's submission to God's creation order for the man and the woman, but also to the angels present at public worship, (1 Cor. 11:10). It would have been intensely offensive to these holy beings, who were familiar with God's order in creation, to see it ignored in the place where God was worshipped.

Paul also argues the propriety of the woman wearing a head-covering by referring to the woman's natural covering of her long hair, which also made a distinction between the woman and the man, (it being a shame for a woman to have short hair, as it is a shame for a man to have long hair). It was therefore altogether reasonable that God should require the added head-covering for the woman during public worship to indicate her submission to the authority of the man.

Finally, as I have already said, the need for the woman to cover her head in public worship was not merely the concern of the Apostle Paul but a rule given by God. The Most High prescribed the manner of worship for Old Testament worshippers, and does likewise for New Testament worshippers. Therefore, it was required in the Church of Corinth that the fault be rectified.

It is also evident that what was regarded as proper practice for believers in Corinth must be required practice for the Christian church today. To disregard this part of the Epistle as irrelevant today, is to position oneself to ignore any part of the Bible we wish. To offend in a small part of the worship of God is to offend in much, because it is God who is the author of His own worship. "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much." Luke 16:10. ●

Obituary

The late Captain James Henderson, Elder, Dumbarton

JAMES Henderson was born in the city of Glasgow on 11th August 1909. Both his parents were natives of Sanna, Ardnamurchan, Argyllshire. His father, Hugh, on leaving his native village, came to Glasgow and began a seafaring life. He also began to attend the services in St. Jude's Church, under the ministry of the Rev. Neil Cameron, where, in due time, he was awakened to a true sense of his sins against God. He obtained a saving knowledge of the Saviour through a sermon preached on a Sabbath morning from the words, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life," (John 3:14, 15). In 1924, Hugh Henderson became a deacon in the congregation and was held in high esteem by the people of God there. The message he left with his family when he died was this: "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

James's mother was a communicant in the Free Church before the founding of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland in 1893. Once she saw the clear need for a faithful stand on the side of the Word of God, she cast in her lot with the Free Presbyterian Church, and became a communicant in St. Jude's Congregation. She was a lively and spiritually-minded Christian, and the present writer spent many happy hours in her company.

James thus enjoyed the inestimable privilege of being brought up in a godly home, where true piety was evidently set before him. Such a privilege, though precious, is not sufficient of itself to turn sinners from the error of their ways, and James, who had decided to follow his father's footsteps as a seafarer, remained unconcerned about the welfare of his soul in his early years.

One Sabbath evening in 1936, however, he suggested to his sister that they should go to church to please the "old lady", a term he used to refer to his mother. The preacher that evening was the Rev. Donald Beaton, Oban, and James was arrested by the power of the Holy Spirit accompanying the sermon. He came under deep conviction of sin, and saw his need of salvation. After some time in this condition, his soul found a resting place as he was reading his Bible in private. The portion made precious to him on that occasion was, "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord." (Rom 8:38, 39).

James's conscience, being purged by the blood of Christ from dead works, was now tender with respect to the Word of God. The Sabbath work involved in his seafaring life at that time, caused him to feel that he could no longer continue in that career. As a result he did not complete the voyage for which he was engaged in 1937. He took up work in a shipyard with a much lower pay and inferior status. Peace of conscience was more precious to him than worldly gain of any sort.

In 1938 he went before the Kirk-Session of St. Jude's Congregation, and was welcomed as a communicant there. About this time, a group of young men in the congregation used to meet together for a private prayer-meeting in the home of an eminently pious lady, Miss Morton. She was a daughter of Thomas Morton, who had been an elder in the congregation of the renowned Rev. J. R. Anderson of Glasgow. James joined this group. With the outbreak of the Second World War, the group was broken up as each of the young men was called up for war service. (Now, only two remain of those who enjoyed much fellowship in the grace of prayer. One is the present writer; the other is the Rev. Alexander McPherson, Perth).

On being called up in 1941 for war service, he was appointed the Captain of a ship, and was preserved in safety during these war years. When he was discharged in 1946, he became the Captain of a Fishery cruiser, which policed the seas to prevent illegal fishing. Later, he became the Commodore of the Fishery Fleet.

In 1943 he married Miss Margaret MacDonald, a native of Applecross, who proved to be a true helpmeet to him in every way. They had a family of one daughter and three sons.

In September 1956 he was ordained as an elder in St. Jude's Congregation, Glasgow, and carried out the duties of that office to the satisfaction of all. In 1975 he moved house to Dumbarton, and in due course was inducted as an elder in the Dumbarton Congregation.

Like all the Lord's people, James had his share of troubles in this world. While still in his prime, his strong frame was shaken by a severe stomach operation which, to a considerable extent, affected and limited his activities from then on. The death, in 1992, of his youngest son James, was very deeply felt, as he had been a very dutiful son to his parents.

James was a loyal Free Presbyterian. Of this none could be in doubt who had any personal knowledge of him. His interest in each congregation where he had been an elder was deep and prayerful. The difficulties which arose in the Dumbarton Congregation in recent times he found to be painful indeed. He was a bulwark to those in Dumbarton who appreciated the position of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland when others turned their backs on its testimony

and went their own way. Although of an outwardly stern demeanour, James was in fact a most affable and pleasant companion. He and his like-minded wife were very happy when the Lord's people would gather at communion seasons and enjoy the hospitality of their home. .

Although he was carrying on his duties as elder and treasurer in his congregation, it began to be evident to all that his strength was almost gone. He was eventually taken to hospital, where he enjoyed great peace, and seemed to be feeding on Psalm 51. On 10th April, 1996, he passed away to his eternal rest. "Help Lord, for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men," (Psalm 12:1).

To his sorrowing widow and family we extend our sincere sympathy. May the One who is "a father of the fatherless and a judge of the widows," be near to each one of them. (Rev.) D. M.

James VI Versus Presbyterianism

JAMES VI was proclaimed King of Scotland in 1567 upon the abdication of his mother, Mary, Queen of Scots. When he assumed power in 1583 he established a strong central authority, and was determined to eradicate Presbyterianism, which he detested, and assert the supremacy of the State over the Scottish Church. The following extract from *The Story of the Scottish Church* by Thomas McCrie, (pages 88 and 89), explains and illustrates his hostility to the Church. McCrie states:

"The real secret of James' antipathy to presbyters was his ambition to be regarded as head of the Church, a claim to which Presbyterianism, from its very nature, stands directly opposed. His sentiments on this subject were discovered in two publications. The first of these, which is entitled *The True Law of Free Monarchies*, is an unvarnished defence of arbitrary power, and may help us to understand the meaning of his favourite maxim, 'No bishop, no king.' The king, according to James, is to be a free and absolute monarch,' at liberty to do what he pleases with his people, 'who,' says he, are not permitted to make any resistance but by flight, as we may see by the example of brute beasts and unreasonable creatures, among whom we never read or hear of any resistance to their parents, *except among the vipers.*' In the other treatise, *Basilicon Doron*, which was addressed to his son, Prince Henry, he maintains that the office of a king is partly civil and partly ecclesiastical; that a principal part of his function consists in ruling the

Church; that it belongs to him to judge when preachers wander from their text; that parity among ministers is irreconcilable with monarchy, and the mother of confusion; and in short, that Episcopacy should be set up, and the principal Presbyterian ministers banished from the country.'

"With principles so opposite to the spirit of freedom and of the Scottish Church, it is not surprising that James and the Presbyterian ministers should have been perpetually at variance. The clergy, jealous of their religious rights, openly and vehemently denounced the king's proceedings from the pulpit; and the king, on the other hand, threatened all with civil pains who ventured to condemn his measures, or question his authority as supreme potentate of the Church. 'There would never be peace,' he said, 'till the marches were rid between them.'

"Determined, however, to 'rid the marches' in his own person, he summoned one of the most zealous of their number, Mr. David Black, minister of St. Andrews, to answer before the Privy Council for certain treasonable speeches, as he termed them, which he had uttered in the pulpit. Black, in his own name, and in that of his brethren of the ministry, sent in a declinature to the council, denying their authority to sit as judges of his doctrine, *in the first instance*, or till he was tried by the Church courts. They saw clearly that this prosecution was put out as a *zealer*, to ascertain how far the Church would yield; and, to use their own language, they feared 'that their yielding on this occasion would be held as an acknowledgment of his majesty's jurisdiction in matters that are mere spiritual, which might move his majesty to attempt further in the spiritual government of the house of God, and end in either a plain subverting of the spiritual judicature, or at least a confounding thereof with [the] civil, if at any time profane and ambitious magistrates might by such dangerous beginnings find the hedge broken down, to make a violent irruption upon the Lord's inheritance; which the Lord forbid.' This faithful struggle for the liberties of the Church issued, as might have been expected, in the defeat of the weaker party, and Black was banished from St. Andrews." ●

David Black - A Scots Worthy

(From *The Scots Worthies* by John Howie. See review on page 55)

DAVID BLACK was for some time colleague to the worthy Mr Andrew Melville, minister of St. Andrews. He was remarkable for zeal and fidelity in the discharge of his duty as a minister, applying his doctrine closely against the corruptions of that age, whether prevailing among the highest or lowest of the people. In consequence of this, in the year 1596, he was cited before the Council, for some expressions uttered in a sermon, alleged to be against King James VI and his Council. But his brethren in the ministry, thinking that by this method of procedure against him the spiritual government of the house of God was

intended to be subverted, resolved that Black should decline answering the citation; and that the brethren should prepare themselves to prove from the Holy Scriptures that the judgment of all doctrine, in the first instance, belonged to the pastors of the Church.

Accordingly David Black, on the 18th November 1596, gave in a declinature to the Council to this effect: that he was able to defend all that he had said; yet, seeing his answering before them to that accusation might be prejudicial to the liberties of the Church, and would be taken for an acknowledgment of his Majesty's jurisdiction in matters merely spiritual, he was constrained to decline that judicatory because: First, the Lord Jesus Christ had given him His word for a rule, and that therefore he could not fall under the civil law, only in so far as, after trial, he should be found to have passed from his instructions, which trial only belonged to the prophets,... Secondly, The liberties of the Church, and discipline presently exercised, being confirmed by divers Acts of Parliament. approved of by the Confession of Faith, and the office-bearers of the Church being now in the peaceable possession thereof, the question of his preaching ought first, according to the grounds and practice aforesaid, to be judged by the ecclesiastical senate, as the competent judges thereof...

This declinature, with a letter sent to the different Presbyteries, was subscribed in a short time by between three and four hundred ministers, all assenting to and approving of it.

The Commissioners of the General Assembly, then sitting at Edinburgh, knowing that the King was displeased at this proceeding, sent some of their number to speak with him, unto whom he answered, that if Mr Black would pass from his declinature, he would pass from the summons. This they would not consent to do. Upon which, the King summoned Mr Black again on the 27th of November to the Council to be held on the 30th. This summons was given with sound of trumpet, and open proclamation at the Cross of Edinburgh; and the same day, the Commissioners of the Assembly were ordered to depart in twenty-four hours, under pain of rebellion.

Before the day of David Black's second citation before the Council, he prepared a more explicit declinature, especially respecting the King's supremacy, declaring that there are two jurisdictions in the realm, the one spiritual and the other civil, the one respecting the conscience and the other concerning external things; the one persuading by the spiritual word, the other compelling by the temporal sword; the one spiritually procuring the edification of the Church, the other by justice procuring the peace and quiet of the commonwealth. The latter, being grounded in the light of nature, proceeds from God as He is Creator, and is so termed by the Apostle (1 Pet. 2.), but varies according to the constitution of men; the former, being above nature, is grounded upon the grace of redemption

proceeding immediately from the grace of Christ, the King and only Head of His Church (Eph. 1, Col. 2). Therefore, in so far as he was one of the spiritual office-bearers, and had discharged his spiritual calling in some measure of grace and sincerity, he should not, and could not lawfully be judged by any civil power for preaching and applying the Word of God, he being an ambassador of the Lord Jesus, having his commission from the King of kings; and all his commission is set down and limited in the Word of God, that cannot be extended and abridged by any mortal king or emperor, they being sheep, not pastors, who are to be judged by the Word of God, and not to be the judges thereof.

A decree of council was passed against him, upon which his brethren of the Commission directed their doctrines against the Council. The King sent a message to the Commissioners, signifying that he would rest satisfied with Black's simple declaration of the truth. Robert Bruce and the rest replied that if the affair concerned Mr Black alone, they should be content; but the liberty of Christ's kingdom had received such a wound by the proclamation, that if Mr Black's life, and a dozen of others besides, had been taken, it had not grieved the hearts of the godly so much, and that either these things behoved to be retracted, or they would oppose so long as they had breath. After a long process, no mitigation of the Council's severity could be obtained; for Black was charged by a macer to enter his person in ward on the north of the Tay, there to remain at his own expense during his Majesty's pleasure. Though he was next year restored to his place at St. Andrews, yet he was not suffered to continue, for, about the month of July, the King and Council again proceeded against him; and he was removed to Angus, where he continued until the day of his death. He had always been a severe check on the negligent and unfaithful part of the clergy, but now they had found means to get free of him.

After his removal to Angus, he continued the exercise of his ministry, preaching daily unto such as resorted to him, with much success and an intimate communion with God, until a few days before his death.

In his last sickness, the Christian temper of his mind was so much improved by large measures of the Spirit, that his conversation had a remarkable effect in humbling the hearts and comforting the souls of those who attended him, engaging them to take the easy yoke of Christ upon themselves. He found in his own soul also such a sensible taste of eternal joy that he was seized with a fervent desire to depart and to be with the Lord, longing to have the earthly house of his tabernacle put off, that he might be admitted into the mansions of everlasting rest. In the midst of these earnest breathings after God, the Lord was wonderfully pleased to condescend to the importunity of His servant, to let him know that the time of his departure was near. Upon this, he took a solemn farewell of his family and flock with a discourse, as Melville says, that seemed to

be spoken out of heaven, concerning the misery and grief of this life, and the inconceivable glory which is above.

The night following, after supper, having read and prayed in his family with unusual continuance, strong crying, and heavy groans, he went a little while to bed. The next day, having called his people to the celebration of the Lord's Supper, he went to church. Having brought the communion service near a close, he felt the approach of death, and all saw a sudden change in his countenance, so that some ran to support him. But pressing to be on his knees, with his hands and eyes lifted up to heaven, in the very act of devotion and adoration and in a transport of joy, he was taken away, with scarcely any pain at all. Thus this holy man, who had so faithfully maintained the interest of Christ upon earth, breathed forth his soul in this extra-ordinary manner, so that it seemed rather like a translation than a real death. ●

Book Review

The Scots Worthies by *John Howie*.

Published by the Banner of Truth Trust. Hardback, 659 pages, £16.95. Available from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LE.

THIS volume was written to keep in memory 72 of the worthy men who stood for the truth in Scotland, from Reformation times until shortly after the Glorious Revolution of 1688. This is the edition edited by W H Carslaw, a nineteenth-century Free Church minister in Helensburgh. Rev Donald Beaton described it as "one of the most serviceable editions"; he also declared, "It is a book which should have a place in every household collection, however small it may be". And indeed *The Scots Worthies* once had its place in many Scottish cottages where a small bookshelf was sufficient to hold the household's entire library.

Howie begins with Patrick Hamilton, who after a very brief ministry became Scotland's first Reformation martyr. When the fire was kindled he cried, "How long, O Lord, shall darkness overwhelm this realm?" His last words were Stephen's: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Next follows George Wishart, whose preaching in Dundee and Ayrshire was so much blessed before he too suffered a martyr's death in St Andrews. Then 82-year-old Walter Mill, who suffered the same fate after bearing testimony against the mass: "The Scriptures are to be understood spiritually, and not carnally, and so your mass is wrong, for Christ was once offered on the cross for sin, and will never be offered again, for then He put an end to all sacrifice."

John Knox, of course, has an honoured place as the leader of the Scottish Reformation. The success of the movement is no doubt to be traced to Howie's

description of him: "An eminent wrestler with God in prayer, and like a prince prevailed." Knox is well known as one who did not fear the face of man - or Queen Mary - but there were others who followed in his steps. Andrew Melville, for instance, who told King James, "There are two kings and two kingdoms in Scotland: there is King James, the head of the commonwealth, and there is Christ Jesus, the Head of the Church, whose subject King James is, and of whose kingdom he is not a head, nor a lord, but a member; and they whom Christ hath called and commanded to watch over His Church and govern His spiritual kingdom have sufficient power and authority from Him so to do, which no Christian king nor prince should control or discharge, but assist and support. Otherwise they are not faithful subjects unto Christ." For his pains Melville was banished from the kingdom and lived out his days in France as a professor of theology.

We also meet John Welsh, so well known for his prayerfulness and for the success of his preaching in Ayr, before he too was banished to France for his faithfulness to the authority of King Jesus. And Robert Bruce, the minister of St Giles', Edinburgh, who, it is said, had more souls to his hire than any other Scottish minister. After he was put out of his charge he told John Livingstone, "I would desire no more from my first appeal from King James but one hour's converse with him. I know he has a conscience; I made him once weep bitterly at Holyrood House." Another minister who did not fear the face of man! One of Bruce's converts was Alexander Henderson, who became the leader of the Second Reformation. He had, we are told "the faculty of grave, good and fervent prayer, which he exercised till the end of the Assembly" — the great General Assembly held in Glasgow in 1638, of which he was moderator.

We see here something of James Durham's outstanding ministry in Glasgow, though he died at the age of only 35. At the end he was in a considerable degree of darkness about the state of his soul and he asked a colleague, "For all I have preached or written, there is but one scripture I can remember or dare grip unto. Tell me if I dare lay the weight of my salvation upon it: 'Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out'," He was assured, "You may depend upon it though you had a thousand salvations at hazard." And he died in a rapture of joy, saying, "Is not the Lord good? Is He not infinitely good?"

Then there are accounts of a number of the many who suffered under the persecution which followed the return of Charles II in 1660. The first to suffer death was the Marquis of Argyle, who was asked before he went out to his execution, "What cheer, my Lord?" "Good cheer, sir," he replied, "the Lord hath again confirmed and said to me from heaven, Thy sins be forgiven thee'." Argyle was soon followed to the scaffold by James Guthrie, whose last words were, "Jesus Christ is my light and my life, my righteousness, my strength and my salvation and all my desire. Him, O Him, I do with all the strength of my

soul, commend to you! Bless Him, O my soul, from henceforth, even for ever! Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation'." The authorities had intended that another victim should be Samuel Rutherford, writer of those marvellously spiritual letters, many of them from banishment in Aberdeen. The messengers, however, were told, "I have got a summons already before a superior Judge and judicatory, and I behove to answer my first summons, and before your day come [for a trial] I will be where few kings and great folks come."

The years which followed were times of cruel, vindictive persecution, when the faces of those who feared God were ground down fearfully. Yet these were times when the grace of God strengthening His children was also wonderfully manifest. It should be noted, however, that the book is written from the perspective of those who believed that Charles II and James II had forfeited all right to the allegiance of their subjects, and this colours Howie's handling of some accounts.

The volume is well produced, though some of the engravings are not particularly clear. A painting of Ayr, at the heart of Covenanting country, adorns the cover.

K. D. M.

Protestant View

Scottish Churches stage their ecumenical campaigns

THIS year of 1997 is termed the "Year of Faith" by the ecumenical body, Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS). The leaders of the main participating Churches, Cardinal Thomas Winning of the Church of Rome, Bishop Richard Holloway of the Scottish Episcopal Church, and Rev. John McIndoe, Moderator of the Church of Scotland, met at Dunblane recently to "launch" the "Year of Faith" as the first in a series of ecumenical campaigns leading up to the year 2000. It has to be said that some statements made on the occasion do not indicate faith but rather a further moving away by Protestant Churches from the Reformed faith, and an increase in infidelity.

It is disgraceful that Rev. John McIndoe should say he hopes that the dawning of 2000 will see all churches taking part in communion around "one undivided table", when he ought to know that this can only happen on Rome's terms. Cardinal Winning's statements in the recent past about ultimate authority being vested in the Bishop of Rome, and that the prerequisite for inter-communion must be full unity, should leave his ecumenical fellow-travellers in no doubt that his Church is not for turning, and that it is they who will have to give way.

Sadly, the Church of Scotland has ceased to be statedly and distinctly Protestant. Most of the leaders of our national Church appear to be embarrassed

by their Protestant heritage and to be more prepared to honour the Roman antichrist than the renowned Reformers of our land. It is high time that they ceased painting Rome in attractive hues and stopped leading their people Romeward. Some years ago our Synod issued a statement "deploring such attempts by Protestant Churches to move closer to the Church of Rome". The statement continues:

"To justify this closer approach, attempts have been made to present the Church of Rome in a more favourable light than the truth warrants, by suggesting, on the one hand, that there are evidences of a desire for reformation in the Roman Church, or, on the other hand, that it is not such a corrupt Church as Protestants have always contended.

"Like every other professing Church, the Church of Rome must be subject to the testing light of the Word of God with respect to its doctrine, worship, and practice. By adding tradition to Holy Scripture, Rome has tried to vitiate the authority of the Word of God. By making the Church the sole interpreter of revelation, Rome has sought to take the place of the Holy Spirit. By the exaltation of the Virgin Mary, Rome has struck at the mediatorial office of Christ. By its doctrine of the mass, it has dishonoured the divine sacrifice of the Lamb of God. By its teaching on the confessional, it has exalted its priesthood and kept multitudes of the human race in the chains of a most degrading bondage as well as giving them a false hope of the forgiveness of sins. By its delusions of purgatory, it fills its coffers with money and terrifies its people with a vain imagination. By its doctrine of Papal Infallibility, it places beyond all dispute the accurate description of the Pope of Rome given in the Westminster Confession of Faith, which is founded upon Holy Writ. 'There is no other head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ; nor can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof; but is that antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself against Christ, and all that is called God.'

"These, and a multitude of other errors, for which the Roman Church is notorious, justify the view held by every intelligent student of Scripture that the Church of Rome is the greatest perversion of Christianity which the world has ever seen or which the world is ever likely to see.

"The Synod, therefore, condemns as base treachery to Christ, and inexcusable unfaithfulness to the souls of sinners, the attempts by churchmen of all denominations to seek closer relations with, and eventual union to, the Church of Rome, whose spiritual corruption is so dishonouring to Christ and ruinous to souls."

We are to pray for the predicted downfall of this great Babylon, the release of the multitudes under its bondage, and the advent of that spiritual, universal unity which is promised in, and based upon, the Word of God. □

Notes and Comments

Free Church Professor in favour of remarriage of Prince Charles

NEVER did we think that we would see the day when a Professor of Systematic Theology in the Free Church of Scotland would recommend the re-marriage of an adulterer. We refer to a reported statement by Professor Donald MacLeod to the effect that he is in favour of Prince Charles, who by his own admission committed adultery while he was married to Princess Diana, marrying divorcee Camilla Parker Bowles, the woman with whom he is commonly reported to have been having an affair. Professor MacLeod stated, "They are both legally free to marry in terms of British divorce law... and it is in my view quite wrong to condemn them to lifelong celibacy."

The Professor ought to be well aware of the fact that British divorce law is seriously flawed in not being according to the law of God in certain respects. He should be pointing out that according to the Scriptures the remarriage of the Prince would be wrong, but he would have us believe rather that "Charles, like Princess Margaret before him, is a victim of a very dubious interpretation of New Testament teaching."

While we are in no doubt that the Scriptures teach that the innocent party in divorce may remarry, we are equally sure that a divorced person who has committed adultery during the time of his or her marriage is not permitted to remarry, and that such a marriage is adulterous. □

A rose-tinted view of IRA terrorism

THE IRA rocket attack on a fortified police post outside the High Court building in Belfast at the beginning of the year is yet another calculated and cynical attempt to provoke retaliation, end the ceasefire, and pressurise the Government into making political concessions.

At the same time a new film, *Some Mother's Son*, being premiered in London, is presenting a picture of the IRA that is powerful and most welcome propaganda for this evil and murderous organisation. The film, says a report, "is that hybrid of fact and fiction known as 'faction', and succeeds in sanitising IRA violence, glorifying the terrorists, presenting Protestants as ignorant brutes and the British as cruel oppressors.

While the cinema, and fiction and 'faction' films, are not on the agenda of the true Christian, he is concerned that thousands of film-goers will swallow the lying propaganda of *Some Mother's Son*, and other pro-IRA films such as the Hollywood version of Michael Collin's life.

We believe, however, that truth will prevail over deceitful propaganda with regard to Ulster - and for this we are to pray constantly. God, the judge of all the earth, will yet bring to light the hidden works of darkness. □

Europe, Britain and the Sabbath

THE British Government's determination to eliminate the Christian Sabbath was seen in a marked manner in its opposition to the European Union decision that Sabbath be set aside as a rest day throughout Europe. Britain appealed against the decision and gained a concession from the European Court of Justice, which stated that the prescribed weekly rest day need not necessarily be Sabbath.

This would mean that shop workers, who have limited protection under the 1994 Sunday Trading Act, would be deprived of even that protection, and other workers robbed of the divinely given right to rest on the Christian Sabbath. But people of other faiths would continue to have the right, under the Race Relations Act, to refuse to work on their "holy day".

A British Member of the European Parliament, David Hallam campaigned hard for the reversing of this oppressive decision, and presented a resolution to the European Parliament. The outcome is that the Parliament withdrew the special concession to Britain and called on all member states to acknowledge "the special character of Sunday as a day of rest throughout Europe." The Court also expects Britain and other member states to take into account "the particular views of those who have objections to Sunday work".

While we cannot for a moment approve of our being ruled from Brussels, we acknowledge that God could use the rulers of other nations to maintain His holy day in our country, just as He made use of King Cyrus of Persia for the benefit of the nation of Israel. We have much reason to be thankful to the Lord for intervening in His providence. □

Second case of assisted suicide in Northern Territory, Australia

IN July 1996 the Northern Territory Parliament passed the Rights of the Terminally Ill Act, which permitted medically assisted suicide under certain conditions. Only after several weeks did a candidate for assisted suicide emerge, who was able to meet the Act's restrictive criteria. He was Bob Dent.

Now, as a result of the assisted suicide, on January 2, of a second person, Mrs. Janet Mills, it appears that the procedures to be complied with for a legal suicide are simpler than previously thought. No sooner was the Northern Territory's law put into operation than the fears of many were confirmed: that we are on the slippery slope to wider euthanasia.

The eyes of the world have been on Northern Territory in being the first state in the world to attempt to codify and regulate a method of euthanasia. Now, as early as the death of only the second victim, we find that the law is easier to use than originally believed. Dr. Philip Nitschke, the doctor who supported the legislation and devised a computer programme for the self-administration of lethal drugs, originally believed that the Act required that the second medical

signature needed for an assisted suicide should be that of a specialist. But when Mrs. Mills sought to avail herself of the Northern Territory legislation, neither she nor Dr. Nitschke could find a specialist willing to co-operate. After much publicity and controversy surrounding the case, the Northern Territory's Attorney General pronounced that the second signature did not have to be that of a specialist. It could be that of any Northern Territory doctor.

The President of the Northern Territory branch of the Australian Medical Association (AMA), Dr. Wake, said that the Attorney General's clarification of the signature issue would facilitate the process and potentially lead to an "open door" to euthanasia. It has been stated in *The Australian* that, "There is now a momentum that is basically unstoppable. It's only a matter of time; when one State moves to introduce euthanasia, so will another". Many of those who wish to save costs in palliative care, or alleviate the distress caused to those watching a relative slowly dying, welcome the legislation. It opens up the way for pressure to be applied to the terminally ill to make use of the facility for suicide.

On the other hand, this second medically assisted suicide, and the increased momentum for euthanasia, are likely to generate support for the Federal Government private member's Bill to invalidate the Northern Territory law.

Scripture shows us that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him (1 John 3:15). Suicide is self-murder. Only God has the prerogative to give life and to take it away. Job said of the death of his family, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord," Job 1:21. E. A. R.

Family breakdown, not poverty, the major cause of crime

POLITICIANS and campaigners who say hooliganism, drug abuse and other crime are caused mainly by poverty, have swallowed a lie, says Newcastle University social scientist and old Labour' figure, Norman Dennis, in his new book, *The Invention of Permanent Poverty*. The major cause, he says, is the breakdown of the family and morality. Arguments that old-fashioned morality and family values oppressed the working class were first championed in the Sixties, he said. This helped to remove social constraints on sexual conduct and led to the crumbling of the culture of life-long monogamy. While poverty lessened between 1961 and 1979, there was a rise from six per cent to 33 percent in the number of unmarried fathers, and a rapid rise in recorded crime, riot, political extremism and drug abuse.

We are not surprised. As a Church we have said repeatedly that it is not so much poverty that is the cause of crime, as our departure from the Biblical morality which largely prevailed in previous generations. We cannot hope for any significant and sustained improvement until we go back to the Bible. □

African Mission News

Zimbabwe

ON 4th December, a severe storm passed through Zimbabwe and left considerable damage in its wake. At Ingwenya, where the storm lasted only 15 minutes, the roof of Form One Boys' dormitory was ripped off and crashed to the ground in pieces. Mercifully, there were no casualties. The boarding-school had closed for the summer holidays and there were no children around. For this we must be extremely thankful. It is said that the dormitory, which usually accommodates up to 60 boarders, will be very expensive to re-roof, and will probably cost up to £5,000; but this is only a preliminary estimate.

There was another episode towards the end of the school year which caused annoyance and disappointment, although it did not entail much financial loss. At the time of the examinations in the John Tallach School, when everyone was very preoccupied, four Form Four boys in their final year at the John Tallach School were engaged during the night in damaging the assembly hall. The hall had been set in order and locked up for the prize-giving the following day. The four boys got access to the hall and broke the ventilators in the walls and committed other acts of vandalism. On the day after the prize-giving the parents of the boys concerned and some education officials came out to Ingwenya to investigate. After much discussion the boys were excluded but allowed to sit their examinations. Whether their conduct was on account of some fancied grievance, or the effect of the general atmosphere of the modern world which has penetrated even the heart of Africa by television and the press, we cannot say. It is obvious that much prayer is required for the young people there and for their teachers and other supervisors.

There is a Former Pupils Students Association connected with the John Tallach School, known by the Sindebele acronym INFOSA. It organises the giving of a special donation each year of around £200, or about \$2000, for the good of the school. For 1996 it was donated for the assistance of the blind pupils. There are three additional blind pupils coming to the school in 1997 and there may be two more. Jairus Jiri (a well known charitable organisation in Bulawayo, begun years ago by a young African and called after him) also has been helpful to the school in giving donations towards the education of the blind pupils, but it itself is having financial problems at present.

INFOSA also gives two school prizes. One is for the most helpful student during the year, and the other for the pupil who has made most academic progress during the year. Two former pupils have arranged the giving of two additional annual prizes. The first donor was a Dr. Mthamo, a medical man, whose family in earlier days was well known in the Ingwenya congregation. A senior member of the family was an elder in the congregation in the days of the

late Rev. John Tallach. Dr. Mthamo is offering a prize for the best Science student in Form Three each year. The second donor is Council Nyathi. He and his sister Dadi came to the School from Donsa Dam in the seventies. Mr. Nyathi now has a Tourist Agency of his own. So he has awarded a trip to Victoria Falls for the two boys or two girls who do best in history and geography.

It is cheering to learn that Rev. A. B. Ndebele is continuing to slowly improve in health. He has been to church, but only to sit in the back seat. His great desire is to be able to return to his pulpit at Ingwenya and to the regular preaching of the Gospel, the Lord willing.

J. N.

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, 11th 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.

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:

Eastern Europe Fund: Anon, Harris, £50.

Jewish & Foreign Mission Fund: Anon, Canada (Dec), Can \$100, per Bookroom; Bible Presbyterian Church, Adelaide, £238.70; A. A. Berman, the Netherlands, £5.51, per Bookroom.

CONGREGATIONAL TREASURERS acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:

Assynt: Friend at Portree, £10, per K. Graham.

Breasclete: Sustentation Fund: Friend of Cause, £30; Friend of Cause, £20; Friend of Cause, £20; Friend of Cause, £20, all per Treasurer.

Dingwall: Congregational Fund: A friend, Invergordon, £10, per N. M. R.; *Eastern Europe Fund:* Envelope in plate, £300.

Edinburgh: Communion Expenses: Anon, £50, per D.M. Campbell; *Where most needed:* J. McC., £40, per D.M. Campbell.

Gairloch: Congregational Fund (Dec. 1996): Friend, Skye, £50, per Rev. A. E. W. MacDonald; *Congregational Fund* (Jan. 1997): Friend, Skye, £50, per Rev. A. E. W. MacDonald; *Where most needed:* Anon, £40; Anon, £10; both per J. M.

Glasgow, St. Jude's: Bus Fund: Anon, £10; Anon, £10; Miss A. Mack, £25; Anon, £20; Anon, £20; Anon, £5, per Mr. I. M. C.; *Congregational Fund for Manse Telephone:* Anon, £100; *Congregational Fund for Communion Expenses:* Miss J. C., £30; *Congregational Fund, in memory of loved ones, where most needed:* Anon, £60; T. B. S.: Anon, £60; T. B. S. & *Eastern Europe:* Anon, £40.

Inverness: Sustentation Fund: Anon, £5; Anon, £2; Anon, £20; Anon, £100; Anon, £400; Anon, £20; Anon, £15, all per I. A. M.; Anon, £50, per collection plate.

Ness: Sustentation Fund: Anon, £50, per envelope in plate; *As required:* Anon, Tolsta, £20, per M. G.; *Communion expenses:* C. M., Tolsta, £2, per plate; *Congregational purposes:* Friend, Stornoway, £5, per M. F.; On behalf of the late Angus Morrison, Glasgow, £60, per church plate.

North Tolsta: Sabbath School Outing: Anon, £10, per plate; *Congregational Purposes:* In Memory of My Mother, £50, per D.M.K.; *Church Repair:* Anon, £20, per Treasurer; *Communion Expenses:* Friend of the Cause, Breasclete, £10, per plate; *For Heating:* Mrs. Annie Graham, £100, per D.M.K.; Anon, £10, per Treasurer; *Trinitarian Bible Society:* Anon, £120, per plate.

Portree: Where most needed: Portree friend, £100; *Sustentation Fund:* Stornoway friend, £20; *Church Door Collection:* Stornoway Friend, £20; *Church Funds:* Anon, £150, all per F.M.; *Sustentation Fund:* A.C., £130, per F.M.; Stornoway friend, £10; Stornoway friend, £20; both per S.Y.M.; *Door Collection:* Lewis friend, £5, £5, £5, all per S.Y.M.; *Foreign Mission Fund:* £10, per S.Y.M.; *Where needed:* Tolsta friend, £20, per F.M.; Friend, £10, per S.Y.M.; *Ministers petrol:* Ebenezer, £50; *Manse Telephone:* Ebenezer, £50, both per S.Y.M.

South Harris: Sustentation Fund: Friend, Strond, £100; per D. MacKenzie; *Congregational Fund:* Friends, Leverburgh, £500, per D. MacKenzie.

Stornoway: Congregational Fund: Executor of the Estate of the late Miss Christina Anne MacDonald, £500, per Treasurer; Miss K.M.M., £100, per Rev. J.M.; *Sustentation Fund:* Anon, £120, per Treasurer; *Foreign Mission Fund:* Anon, £300, per Rev. J.M.; *Library Fund:* Anon, £10, per church plate; *Petrol:* Anon, £10; Anon, £10, both per collection plate; *Communion Expenses:* Anon, £10, per collection plate; *Trinitarian Bible Society:* "M", £10, per Rev. J.M.