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A New Decade

As we enter the nineteen-eighties it might be profitable to cast our eyes backward to the period that is gone and also look forward to the days that lie ahead. In this way it may be possible to discern some pattern which will give an indication of what may be before us as a nation during the decade that has just begun.

When we look back especially to the two preceding decades we are confronted with an era of continuous and almost unprecedented backsliding from God. This has continued up to the present moment and shows little sign of change. Such a situation must fill us with foreboding as to the future, and we do not feel that we are being alarmist in suggesting that there are dark, dark days ahead. We think that this is confirmed by the Scripture: "Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?"

The religious declension of our nation has continued over a long period of time — in fact from the second half of last century when the authority of God's Word was undermined by the higher critical attacks on the inspiration, infallibility and inerrancy of the Bible. This bore its own fruit in gross declension from the doctrines of God's Word. A gospel began to be preached in which man was his own saviour. The ultimate effect of this was that people forsook the Churches, as the Churches, by and large, had nothing to offer them. A social "gospel" was no substitute for the glorious gospel of the blessed God, and men saw the emptiness of it and abandoned the Churches where such a "gospel" was preached. It could never satisfy the needs of lost man.

Inevitably religious declension was followed by moral declension. The two world wars precipitated this. Instead of learning righteousness through the hand of God laid in judgment upon the nations, men became

hardened in their iniquity and a rising flood of wickedness and evil began to flow over the land. Yet it was not until the nineteen-sixties that the flood broke loose and all restraints appeared to be abandoned. Men now sought legal sanction for the evils they wished to perpetrate and facile and amoral legislators were waiting to accommodate their wishes until the land was turned into a veritable Sodom. Evil is now called good, and good evil, and those that depart from iniquity make themselves a prey, as the Word of God foretold. The nineteen-seventies showed no diminishing of the flood of ungodliness so that the nation is ready to be drowned in the cess-pool of its own iniquity. Few voices are heard in opposition to the prevailing climate of opinion throughout the land, and is it any wonder that the Lord should say: "Shall I not visit for these things? Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?"

It is not therefore with a hopeful outlook we enter upon a new decade and look forward to the years which lie ahead. We think that those who will be spared to see the end of this decade will have much to tell of the Lord's sore visitations upon His Cause and kingdom in this land of ours. It would be a sad, sad outlook and one of unrelieved gloom to which we would be closed in were it not for the many promises which God has given to His own people and Church. Whatever dark days may lie ahead in the immediate future, whatever trials the Lord may bring His Church through, yet we know that He will not forsake her. Also when he has brought her through the fiery trial she will come forth purified and will shine brighter than she ever did before in Scotland.

Our message then to the Church of God in Scotland and throughout the whole land at the beginning of this decade must be: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." 1 Peter 4:12, 13.

What the Churches Need

by Rev. John Colquhoun

From the Reformation to the present time the professing Church has been marked by many divisions, and many efforts have been put forth, not so much to heal these divisions, as to obliterate them in ways that have no reference to the Word of God. Very often the means used for that end have been far from being creditable to any branch of the

Christian Church using them. The Church of Rome, in its efforts to cause that there would be only one Church, used fire and fagots, the Episcopal Church of England, supported by royalty, had recourse in Scotland to the boot and thumb-screws, the Modernistic party in more recent times no doubt thought that they had been very successful in bringing about union by means of doing away with the time-honoured Confession of Faith in its original sense, and giving a formula which was so elastic that people of diametrically opposed opinions could sign it. Union by these means can only serve to make those who embrace them forget what the face of the Church of Christ in the world was like. Church Unions should be devised in Heaven, and, therefore, it is only means which the Lord will acknowledge that will bring about a true union. This clearly indicates the necessity of knowing the mind of the Lord in such a solemn matter. In turn, this raises the question, Who is it that has the mind of the Lord? The Bible supplies the answer, for it is written, "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant." Psalm xxv. 14. The fear of the Lord is that which is wrought in the soul through the saving work of the Holy Spirit, and that work of the Spirit in the heart causes the subject of it to walk in accordance with God's mind. This equally applies to Churches, and when the Holy Spirit is poured upon the various branches of the Christian Church it will provide them with a common foundation upon which to unite. Anyone looking at the religious world today can see plainly that the greatest need of the Churches is an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

We see, from the inspired narrative given of the day of Pentecost what this outpouring meant, in its nature and in its fruits. It is a mysterious work in which no creature has a hand, and, therefore, it is from Heaven, and manifests a power which no creature can resist. It overcomes the stoutest hearts, and humbles the proud spirit, so that the creature who is worked upon has to come down to the dust, dependent upon the Holy Spirit to show him how a poor sinner can be saved. This was the manner of the Lord's dealings with sinners on the day of Pentecost, and also the way He deals with them in every age of time.

The effect of this work is to cause those who have been worked upon to see matters in a different light from that in which they formerly saw them. Those who were converted on the day of Pentecost would not believe at the Crucifixion that Jesus of Nazereth was the Son of God, but when the Holy Spirit was poured upon them they saw the truth of what Peter laid to their charge: "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified

and slain," and they fully agreed to what he pressed upon them when he said, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." As such a work was needed on the day of Pentecost, so it is needed in our day. Where there is a union between individuals or Churches it should indicate that they are of one mind, and before parties can be of one mind there must be a common platform upon which they can meet. In the case of Church Unions the only common platform that can be found is the Word of God, and where that Word is not to be found there can be no real Christian Union. The Church of Rome has robbed the common people of the Bible, and their pretence of being one Church, and the only Church, is based on darkness, ignorance and superstition.

The Church of England claims to be in the direct line of Apostolic succession which, after all, they received through the Church of Rome, but the very fact that one will search in vain for this dogma in the Bible shows that they have discarded the Bible on a point so important in their estimation that it holds them in an attitude of aloofness to denominations which, during parts of their history, showed more orthodoxy and evangelical teaching than the Church of England could ever truthfully lay claim to. Again the Church of Scotland, as we have already seen in these articles, has embraced the destructive criticism of the Modernist, so that by the unwarrantable conclusions of these critics, and their so-called "assured results," they have, as far as their influence goes, robbed the people of the Bible, and left them like a ship at sea, without rudder, compass or chart. To destroy a people's faith in the Bible is a most serious matter, for the Bible is the instrument by which the Holy Spirit works, in both wounding and healing sinners. All who are thus worked upon by the Spirit find it very easy to unite upon one common platform. They are convinced by a very painful experience that the whole human race are ruined by the Fall of Adam, and that it is beyond the power of a creature to restore them; by a faith which is the gift of God they are brought to trust in the efficacy of that atonement which was completed on Calvary, and they know that the glory of thus trusting in Christ's atoning work does not belong to them but to the Holy Spirit who takes of the things of Christ and reveals them unto His people. Very often it has been noticed that when a genuine revival began in any part of the world, it began by the Holy Spirit being poured out as the "Spirit of grace and supplications." If there is to be a revival that will unite the different sections of the professing church it is, therefore, most obvious that the first need of the Church is an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This blessed union and its

gracious effects were to be seen after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. The devout Jews who came from various provinces, and who had not much in common beyond the fact that they were Jews, began to have "all things in common."

The second thing that may be noticed, as among the things which the Churches need, is a return to the Bible as the Word of God. Such a return to the Word of God is a fruit of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. True it is that it is through the Word that the Spirit works, for by it He wounds and He heals, and creates such a love in the soul to the Word that the quickened soul cannot live without the Word. When the Spirit is poured upon all flesh it will be easy for Churches to unite, "for all thy people shall be taught of the Lord and great shall be the peace of thy children." For many years now, it has been considered fashionable, and an indication of advanced learning, to treat the Bible as old-fashioned and not worthy of serious thought in the light of modern knowledge. However, the spade of the archaeologist, and the researches of the philologist, have shown clearly where the ignorance lies, and who are not worthy of serious thought. The things that were "most surely believed among us" by the Lord's people, and which they got from the Bible, have proved themselves to be an impregnable rock against which the gates of hell shall not prevail, for "the word of the Lord endureth for ever."

It is to this infallible Word, given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that the Churches must return. They must renounce the dogmas of the Church of Rome, the myth of Apostolic Succession and other myths of the Episcopal Church of England, the Arminian Creed of the Church of Scotland, and all the false systems of error and corruption in other churches, and return to the Bible as the only rule of faith and manners. Here they can find doctrines that are strictly in accordance with the mind of God, a mode of worship, church government and practice given infallibly by the Holy Spirit, and if the various churches took that course, church union would be easily effected.

A third need of the Churches is a **sent** ministry. In the New Testament we find a sent ministry brought very clearly before us. When the Lord Jesus appeared to His disciples after His resurrection, He gave them their commission to preach, saying, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world. Amen." Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. When thus sent forth, Christ's ambassadors must declare the whole counsel of God to perishing sinners

whether these sinners shall hear or whether they shall forbear. This is what is lacking today to an alarming extent. The most of those who go under the name of preachers of the Gospel reveal clearly that they are strangers to the Gospel. The public press bears witness to that in the fact that the most of professed ministers live as if their one mission in life was to amuse the people. They are ring-leaders at the dance, in the concert hall, and in all the frivolities set up in their parishes, and they seem not to see how incongruous it is to be presiding at vain gatherings, set up to please the flesh, on a Saturday night, and on a Sabbath morning serving a Communion Table. Not only does such conduct show a lack of appreciation of the fitness of things, but it proclaims loudly that such as conduct themselves in this way are blind leaders of the blind. Such can never be anything but a hindrance to the Cause of Christ, for their conduct grieves the Holy Spirit away.

It is another class of ministers altogether which the Church stands in need of. From the Word of God we see that those who were Christ's ambassadors were men who had passed through painful experiences in this world in connection with their effectual calling, their call to the ministry, and the fulfilment of that ministry. If we take the Apostle Paul as an example we find that it was not like a man asleep that he entered upon his God-honoured and God-honouring work. He knew the experiences of an awakened sinner under the curse of the broken law of God. "I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." Rom. vii. 9. He knew also what it was to be melted at the foot of the cross, saying, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world." He was no stranger to the devices of Satan, for he received a "thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan" to buffet him. In II. Cor. xi. he gives a long list of the hardships he passed through in preaching the Gospel, showing him to be a man fittest above any to give the exhortation, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, to Timothy, "endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." If we take the history of the Church of God, from the earliest times, we see that it was men of that stamp whose labours were acknowledged by God. They were, as the Apostle tells us, "the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ."

When the Lord comes to unite the Churches, it is not by joining together in an outward union churches whose government and outlook are diametrically opposed. It is by an outpouring of the Holy Spirit accompanying the pure preaching of the Word by men who have been

sent out by the Lord Himself, and who have no time for, or inclination after, the foolish amusements of this world. Such preaching, when it becomes world-wide, will throw the tiara off the Pope's head and wrench the crozier from the hands of occupants of Episcopal Sees; Diotrephes, "who loveth to have the pre-eminence," will be put in his right place, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day, for we read that "When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory." Part of that glory shall be His Church, delivered from all the excrescences of the flesh which men heaped upon her, and the simple New Testament teaching, worship, and government restored, accompanied by a beauty and harmony, impossible in connection with a man-made union. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth. Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion." Isaiah lii. 7, 8. This harmony can never take place apart from the Scriptures. There will be a searching of God's Word and a pleading for light upon the truth, and none will seek to accept as doctrine, worship, and government what is **merely not forbidden** in the Scriptures as the Episcopal Church does. They will act upon the sound principle upon which our Scottish Reformers acted, that nothing was to be allowed in the Church but what is positively commanded in the Scriptures. This will ensure that the face of the Church of Christ on earth will exactly correspond to the pattern of the face of the Church of Christ in the Word of God as was the case with the tabernacle under the Old Testament dispensation concerning which "Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle; for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount." Then the universal Church shall come up to the description of the Church given by the Holy Spirit: "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." Song vi. 10. This is a union indeed, never devised on earth, but having its origin in Heaven

(From a Series on Episcopacy and Presbyterianism)

New Year's Day Address

by Rev. J. A. T. Van Dorp, Gisborne, N.Z.

We may endeavour to meditate for a time as enabled on this portion of the Word of God in Psalm 119. We shall read again at verses 63 and 64 —

"I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts. The earth, O LORD, is full of thy mercy; teach me thy statutes."

We see that the writer of the Psalm, King David, expresses many precious thoughts and we see that he is "a companion of all them that fear thee," that fear God, "and of them that keep thy precepts," the precepts of God, or the statutes of God, or in other words, everything that God has enjoined in His Holy Word for us to keep. We see how he acknowledges that "the earth, O Lord, is full of thy mercy" and that he expresses a desire "teach me thy statutes." The Psalmist holds a distinct position and this distinct position is evident here. Of course it is evident in many ways but when we are endeavouring to meditate on this portion of the truth it is evident here in his acknowledgement of the mercy of God, in the circle of friends he has as his companions and also in the desire he expresses — teach me thy statutes Lord. Therefore we shall endeavour to notice three things: His acknowledgement of the mercy of God, the circle of friends he has and his desire "teach me thy statutes."

We see that the Psalmist has occasion to acknowledge the mercy of God. "The earth, O Lord, is full of thy mercy." That is something he desires to acknowledge; the Lord should be acknowledged for the mercy He bestows upon us. Surely it is a good thing we should do so at the commencement of a new year. We should acknowledge His mercy and acknowledge that the earth is full of God's mercy. Mercy is something that is undeserved; we have to acknowledge that the mercies that God bestows upon us are undeserved mercies, undeserved favours. We do not deserve these mercies. If we take a line of thinking that is of our own making and which is bound to be not in accordance with the Bible, then we take these things for granted. That is what people are doing all the time, they are taking these things for granted and often think that they enjoy these mercies because they made them themselves. When people are engaged in business and work hard and get on, they say, or tend to say, "well, it is my strength and my wisdom that has gotten me these things. I have these things because I work hard or because I am prudent in business." But if a person has an understanding of the word of God and frames his thinking in accordance with the word of God, he immediately acknowledges and knows that it is God who gives him strength, it is God who gives him wisdom. God favours and prospers him in this thing or that thing. It is right and proper that we should acknowledge God, the giver of all good. The Psalmist is acknowledging this and when we can look back, at the commencement of a new year we have to acknowledge God's

mercy. If he had dealt with us in accordance with our sins, if God should enter into judgement with us we could not stand before Him on account of sin; sin is the abominable thing which God doth hate. It is on account of sin that we do not deserve God's mercies. "The earth O Lord is full of thy mercy." Some of these mercies are of a temporal nature and other mercies are of a spiritual nature. Well, what great blessings we enjoy of a temporal nature. You see all the plenty that is being bestowed upon us in this land; the things of nature; the food and clothing we enjoy; the liberty and the freedom that we enjoy. Yet, we tend to take these for granted. We look about us in the world and the greater part of this world is undernourished and underfed. They do not have the clothes that we possess; do not have the means to purchase these things; do not prosper as we do in New Zealand and as others do in other parts of the world. Many people lack these things. What about the liberty we enjoy. People in communist lands, whilst they may have sufficient of the things necessary for this life, do not enjoy the liberty that we enjoy. They are not permitted to move about in their own country without permission and many people are deprived of their liberty and that often for very trifling reasons. The writer Solzhenitsyn, who was banned from Russia and who has written so many books about conditions in Russia, well, all the crime that he was guilty of in the war time was that he had correspondence with a friend in another part of Russia and that was not permitted and for that reason he was banished to slave labour for many years. I forget how long he was in a slave labour camp, something like ten years. Now what atrocious things those are. Those are the conditions that prevail in Russia and yet we have freedom and we have liberty not only to write to friends in another part of New Zealand, not only liberty to go and visit them when we desire to do so, but also liberty to read the word of God and liberty to gather together in proper assemblies around the truth to worship God, to publicly acknowledge God. What an outstanding blessing, what outstanding blessings they are. Now, whatever Russia and other communist lands profess to do publicly, and they do profess that people are permitted to read the Bible, yet the communist regime is against the Bible — it is against Christianity. What outstanding blessings we enjoy when we have all that liberty and we do well to acknowledge God for it. He has placed us in these circumstances. The Psalmist when he was living at that time in the land of Israel 1000 years or so before Christ came into the world, he recognised that "the earth O Lord is full of thy mercy." He could see what a distinct position they held as a nation. "The earth O Lord is full of thy mercy." Of course he could look beyond his

own nation and see the goodness of God in the earth. He often thought about the beautiful things of nature. "The heavens God's glory do declare, the skies his hand works preach; day utters speech to day, and night to night doth knowledge teach." He has regard for nature. When he considers his own nation however, he could also see other mercies bestowed upon them as a nation. What other nation was favoured with the word of God and with the worship of God as the nation of Israel? At that time the Psalmist could look beyond the boundaries of his own nation and what did he see? Philistines, Moabites, Babylonians, Assyrians, and did they have the Bible? They did not have the Bible nor the worship of God. The Israelites were distinctly favoured. They were a distinct nation, a nation favoured by the Most High. That was not just a matter of having classical books such as were written in Greece and in Rome by philosophers. When we have the Bible, the word of God, there we have books given by God, the inspired word of God. That is not just a matter of a natural gift. People talk of a poet being inspired, a painter being inspired. It is a different thing altogether with respect to the word of God. When we think of the word of God and speak of the word of God as inspired, we speak of it as the word that has been given by God himself. The Holy Spirit of God was so present with the writers of the Bible, that when they recorded these words, they recorded the word of God. So what we have here in the Bible is the word of God from Genesis to Revelation given under special conditions and also preserved for us under special conditions, so that now as we are living in the 20th century, we have commenced the year 1980, we have here the word of God from Genesis to Revelation. The Psalmist was aware of that when he is speaking of the statutes of God, when he is speaking of the mercies of God and when he is thinking of themselves as a nation having the word and the worship of God. He full well knew that what they had was given to them by God and that they had these things as a nation. He also knew well that the nations around Israel — the nations occupying other parts of the globe — did not have these things. These things were given to Israel. When he is saying "the earth O Lord is full of thy mercy" what an outstanding blessing he is conscious of. These are the things that are able to make and do make people wise unto salvation by the blessing of the Holy Spirit and that is what he had experienced in his own soul. When he was born into this world he was ignorant of these things and when he grew up he remained indifferent to these things until the Holy Spirit of God blessed that word to his soul and he was made a new creature in Christ Jesus and thus when he is speaking of the earth being full of the mercy of God, he is conscious

of distinguishing mercies being bestowed upon them as a nation and being bestowed upon him as an individual. He did not remain in the power of darkness but he was delivered from that darkness, a distinct spiritual mercy that came to him in the sovereign mercy of God. He was a new creature in Christ Jesus and what does the word of God say about a new creature in Christ Jesus? There is no condemnation! There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. Rom. 8:1. When at that time he was looking about him in the nation, he could also see this, that there were others that were born in a privileged nation and who had the word of God and the worship of God and yet they remained altogether indifferent to these things. There is such a thing as reading the word of God and there is such a thing as going to church and yet remaining quite indifferent, but not so with the Psalmist. His heart was in it. The Holy Spirit had enlightened him. The Holy Spirit had quickened him so that as a believer he was holding a distinct position altogether. That is the position of every believer. It is a distinct position, being a recipient of the saving mercy of God, so that he is a new creature in Christ Jesus. Now, when we find ourselves blessed in that way, we have occasion to say the earth is full, "the earth O Lord is full of thy mercy." There is occasion to acknowledge the mercy of God, to acknowledge His power and His wisdom and His love which is an everlasting love. "The earth O Lord is full of thy mercy." The Psalmist was holding a distinct position as is evident in their acknowledgment of God's mercy and it is evident in the circle of their friends. He is saying here, "I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts." Well, he was not just making friends with anyone in the world. He is bringing it before us here that his position as a believer is a distinct position that is evident in the friendships he built up. We read in the Bible, "can two walk together except they be agreed?" If people have friends, there must be friendship, there must be things there that bind them together. The word of God says "can two walk together except they be agreed?" There must be agreement between people when they walk together and often in the New Testament we see what the word of God declares about those who hold that distinct position and were being favoured by the Lord in this way to be partakers of the mercy of God. He delivered them from the power of darkness and brought them into God's marvellous light. The Apostle Peter in writing to believers says, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." That

is what is true of every believer. They are a distinct people. The word of God says "a peculiar people," or as we may say, a special people, a people favoured by the Lord. A people taught by the Lord, by His holy word. Therefore the Psalmist is saying "I am a companion." He is companion. He is not just on his own. He knows others that are like-minded, like himself and they are his companions. The word of God says "know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God, whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." He does not choose his companions from the people of the world. Now he is King of Israel; this man holds a very influential position in the land of Israel, occupying the throne. He was the King of Israel. Does he look for friends amongst the nobles of the land irrespective of what their train of thought is, what their outlook is and how they conduct themselves in the world? No! verily no! "I am a companion of all them that *fear thee*," that fear God. I am a companion of all them that fear God. Now, what is the fear of God? It is wrought by the Holy Spirit. By nature a man does not fear God. By nature he has no regard for the word of God. By nature he does not love His statutes and His precepts. By nature he has no regard for God's holy day. You see, he needs to be born again. The word of God speaks of being born again. But some people say, you can go to church here in Gisborne and the preacher will tell you, you are born again when you are baptised, through the water. That is not the teaching of the word of God. You are born again by the powerful operation of the Holy Spirit of God. That must take place if a person is to enter into Heaven at last. As the Saviour said to Nicodemus, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again." "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Now that is the work of the Holy Spirit, "born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever." But the Psalmist says, "I am a companion of all them that *fear thee*." All who are born again fear the Lord, that is with reverential fear, a fear of reverence. Just as children ought to fear their parents. It does not mean to say that they dread their parents or are unduly afraid of their parents, but it means that they have reverence for their parents and they love their parents. The fear of the Lord is that fear that every true believer has, every person that is born again. It is that fear that is mingled with love whereby they desire to keep God's statutes and his precepts and they desire to obey his laws and to do his commandments. You see, they do not have that outlook because they dread God but it is because they have the fear of reverence that is wrought in this work carried on by the Holy Spirit, when they were born

again. "I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts." That is joined together. If a person fears the Lord, if he is born again, his desire is to keep God's precepts, to walk in accordance with God's commandments in his secular life and in his life in the church. You see what a distinct position the Psalmist is in. I am a companion of all them that fear thee and of all them that keep thy precepts. They are my friends, they are my companions who are like-minded, who have a love for the word of God and a love for the ordinances of God. I am a companion of all them that fear thee and of them that keep thy precepts. That person keeps the precepts of God whether he is home in the family or in the city where he lives or whether he is in another town where people do not know him. "I am a companion of all them that fear thee and of them that keep thy precepts."

It goes without saying that this is a matter that applies to the worship of God. The precepts of the word of God have respect to one's life, to one's secular life, one's private life and they have respect to the worship of God. What we do in the worship of God should be altogether in accordance with the mind of God as we have it in the scriptures. We find that the writers of the Bible were very particular about that. They had been favoured by the Lord with positions in His cause, such as Moses, and he had instructions from the Lord to make everything and to do everything in accordance with the pattern that was shown him by God in the mount. God gave him a pattern and all the public worship of God had to be arranged and done in accordance with that pattern and it is recorded of him that "he did all things in accordance with the pattern that was showed to him in the mount." When Solomon built the temple he did it all in accordance with the pattern that was given to his father David. "I am a companion of all them that fear thee and of them that keep thy precepts." David was particular in that. He had a love for the word of God. He was a born again man and he showed it in all that he did in the cause of Christ. His desire was to do what is well-pleasing in the sight of God. "I am a companion of all them that fear thee and of them that keep thy precepts." They are his companions. You see how his position was a distinct position and that he was separate from those who brought in or desired to bring in things that were not in accordance with the mind of God. This is what applies now in the twentieth century. People may say that this way of thinking was good enough a thousand years ago or two thousand years ago, but now we live in the 20th century and they say, we must bring in new things into the church. However, it is the word of God that stands. Therefore, we take a separate stand as a church. Our stand is on the word

of God. Our worship and our practice must be in accordance with the word of God. That is why we take a separate stand because all over the world they are bringing in new things. They come with new ideas in the worship of God. Things that appeal to people; things that are attractive to people. This is why we are not affiliated with the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches and that is why we are not affiliated with local organisations of these churches for they are framing their worship and introducing things that are not in accordance with the word of God. You go to other churches in Gisborne, you go to other churches in New Zealand, throughout New Zealand, and you find people, you find ministers there who do not believe in the inspiration of the scriptures. They say, this portion of the word of God, that suits me; that portion of the word of God, we could do away with it, it doesn't seem to be suitable for the 20th century. That is human reasoning and it is ignorant reasoning. If people reason in this way it shows and indicates they have never been born again, that they have never been taught by the Holy Spirit. It shows that the word of God never had an entrance into their hearts to bring light into the understanding. We read in the word of God "the entrance of thy word gives light, it makes wise who simple are." For people who do away with the inspiration of the Scriptures, people who introduce things into the worship of God which are not in accordance with the mind of God, they go astray from the precepts of God. David says "I am a companion of all them that fear thee and of them that keep thy precepts." It's the precepts of God that must be our rule and our guide in the worship of God. People that come from outside into our church services may say, what! no instrumental music, no stained glass windows, nothing there to embellish the worship to make it more attractive? But what we have to do with is what God has laid down in His word in doctrine and in worship. "God is a spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." What is the worth of a person's prayer. You find people praying, and they still pray the Lord's prayer — "Thy kingdom come, *thy will be done* on earth as it is in heaven" and at the same time things are introduced into the worship of God which have no authority in the word of God. I am just thinking of what I read in one of the newspapers when I was in Holland three years ago. There was a man there who had visited Scotland and was in one of the congregations of our church in Scotland. He was commenting on the absence of instrumental music and he said, a person may just as well do away with electric light. Now, you see, such a way of reasoning is not permissible and should never be used. I wrote to him to point out that electric light is not an

element in the worship of God at all but instrumental music is. Instrumental music is an element in the worship of God. Our stand is on the Bible, the word of God, in doctrine, in worship and in practice. Therefore we cannot have companionship and fellowship with the churches of the World Council of Churches or of the National Council of Churches and that is why we take a separate stand. "I am a companion of all them that fear thee and of them that keep thy precepts." To hear people pray, "thy will be done," and then see them introduce things that are not authorised in the word of God, indicates there is something wrong. When we pray "Thy will be done," then we must go to the word of God to see what the word of God declares; what are the statutes of God; what are the precepts of God. That is why we take a separate stand. "I am a companion of all them that fear thee and of them that keep thy precepts."

Now we may just notice for a minute his desire, "teach me thy statutes." We should notice that this is the desire and prayer of this eminent man king David. You know what an eminent person he was and how gifted he was in all spheres of his life. This person was with his father on the farm and he kept the sheep; how able he was in that occupation and how well he acquitted himself. Then you find him fighting the battles for king Saul and how gifted he was in that sphere of work. People were singing, Saul hath slain his thousands but David hath slain his ten thousands. A very able man. At last we find him on the throne of Israel and he was very able there. Yet now we find him saying, teach me thy statutes, teach me Lord. You see what the grace of God, the mercy of God, did for him. He was not only an able man, he was not only a gifted man, but he was a very humble man. He took a very low place at God's footstool. Teach me, Lord. Now you say, teach him? Look at the Book of Psalms, what a knowledge he had of God; what a knowledge he had of Christ. Oh, you say Christ? but he was living about a thousand years before Christ came into the world. Yet you see how he was favoured, what an insight he had in the truth and what an insight he had into things that were yet to be accomplished. You find him writing about the Son of God that he was to be King and about Christ coming into the world. You look at Psalm 22 how he is describing the suffering of Christ, although Christ was to come into the world a thousand years later. How His clothes were to be shared amongst people and how they would cast lots for His vesture and how the feet of Christ were to be pierced. You find that in the word of God as evidence of the inspiration of the word of God. He knew of Christ and how precious Christ was to him and this Christ is precious to

every true believer. "Whom have I in the heavens but thee and there is none upon earth that I desire" but Christ. "My flesh and my heart doth faint and fail but thou art the strength of my heart and my portion forever." When you read all that David knew and the insight he had, you say, did he need to be taught? But you see the humility that is there. You see the sense of need that is there. "He must increase but I must decrease." He didn't take the position at all that he knew everything already. No, his desire is *teach me* thy statutes and when he is praying that, what he was desiring I believe, is that the Lord would keep these things before his mind. That he would not be left unto himself. He well knew what is in the heart of man. "The heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." He desired this favour of the Lord, that the Lord would be with him, and would keep these things before his mind. Now is that not a good desire to have at the commencement of a new year, that the Lord would teach us His statutes, that He would give us a retentive memory and that He would keep these precepts before our minds so that we would not depart from the ways of God as others have departed. Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. I am thinking just now of the history of Scotland, the church history. You see people may sometimes make a shining profession and make great claims, but think now of the man who was an eminent covenanter in covenanting days who signed the covenant. He was a preacher in the Church of Scotland and people could say, well, he is an eminent servant of the Lord. Wait a few years. Later on we find he has been made an Archbishop and became one of the most cruel persecutors that the Church of Scotland knew, Archbishop Sharp is his name. You see what need we have of being taught by the Lord, of being kept by the Lord, of praying teach me, teach me thy statutes Lord. I also believe that David expresses the desire that the Lord would not withhold His Holy Spirit from him; that the Lord would continually give him His Holy Spirit that the word of God would be with power to his soul; that these statutes and these precepts would always be beautiful to him and desirable to him. It is only by the Holy Spirit; "without Thee we can do nothing." What a need we have of the Holy Spirit therefore and to pray to the Lord, teach me thy statutes. I also believe that he was desiring that the Lord would enable him to make right decisions. That he would have such a knowledge of the statutes and precepts of the Lord that he would be enable to make right decisions. Although he is not a Levite and he is not a priest, yet as a believer he has the church of God at heart. His heart was in the church, in the cause of Christ, and it was his desire that he would have clean hands and a pure

heart, that he would be kept by the Lord in his situation and position as a believer. Is he not saying, "God is of mine inheritance the cup the portion; the lot that fallen is to me thou dost maintain alone." Ps. 16:5. It was God's distinguishing mercy that had brought him to that position of which he could say, "unto me happily the lines in pleasant places fell; yea the inheritance I got in beauty doth excel." Ps. 16:6. Of course there is this inheritance every believer has, the inheritance that is incorruptible and full of glory, which he must yet inherit at last in the presence of God. What an inheritance the church of God has. Also, what an inheritance every believer has in the church of God, when we have the public worship of God and when we have a way of worship in accordance with the word of God. It is an inheritance that excels in beauty. In connection with it, he has occasion to say,

*"I bless the Lord, because he doth by counsel me conduct;
And in the seasons of the night my reins do me instruct.
Before me still the Lord I set: sith it is so that he
Doth ever stand at my right hand, I shall not moved be."*

Ps. 16: 7 and 8 metrical.

Now, you see his desire was that he would not be moved, that he would not be moved away from the distinct position that he enjoyed, from that inheritance that excels in beauty. That was the position in which he was with his companions. I am a companion of all them that fear thee and of all them that keep thy precepts. It was not just as if they had formed a kind of club. People may associate together in a club. That's a different thing altogether. David and his companions were people who feared the Lord. Each one of them taught by the Holy Spirit, each one of them brought into that sphere of influence in the church of God and his desire was not to be moved away from that position. His desire was that he would have clean hands and a pure heart. It was a duty incumbent upon them as living stones in the building of which Christ is the foundation. That duty is to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace and what a precious privilege that is and that is a duty that the word of God lays on us. "I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts. The earth O Lord is full of thy mercy, teach me thy statutes." When we acknowledge the mercies of God, do we not have to acknowledge this great mercy, this distinct mercy, this mercy that distinguishes us from multitudes of others in other lands and in this nation. The Lord has handed down to us this inheritance that excels in beauty in the form of worship, doctrine and practice, foursquare upon the

word of God and that is a privilege. I know of no other church in this land that holds to this position, the distinct position that we hold as a church and what a privilege it is for it is in connection with the pure worship of God, that He gathers in His people, that He builds His church. What a distinguishing mercy it is when you think that this inheritance was handed down to us right from the other side of the world so that in the year 1980 we are enjoying these privileges in New Zealand. It was not given to the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand to have. We claim to have what is in accordance with the word of God, the statutes and the precepts that are dear unto us and which we must maintain. That is the duty laid on us in the year 1980. When we find our distinguished position to be on the word of God, what a favour we have, what a privilege we have and it is our duty to carry this on and it is our duty to seek grace, for it is by grace that we stand. We must seek grace to carry this on that it may be handed down to generations following. "I am companion of all them that fear thee and of them that keep thy precepts." They are our companions, all them that fear thee and that keep thy precepts, therefore that is what we must pray for, teach me thy statutes Lord, teach me, continue to teach me that we may be enabled to keep the unity, the unity of the Holy Spirit in the bond of peace. May the Lord enable us and give us grace to seek that and to be given to it. May the Lord bless His truth.

Thomas Boston's Fourfold State

by Rev. Angus MacKay, Tarbert

The eminent servant of the Lord, Thomas Boston laboured in the parish of Simprin for eight years and again in Ettrick for 25 years when at the age of 56 he passed away to be forever with the Lord.

We are told that the substance of the Fourfold State was preached from the pulpit of Simprin and that shortly after going to Ettrick it was recast and amplified and given from the pulpit there. These sermons were greatly blessed to those who heard them. If printed, thought Boston, might they not reach the many who never darkened Ettrick kirk. He would almost have been content with that. It was a lowly project but it determined him. He did not know what scattered multitudes were to be found and fed by the reading of the Fourfold State. If ever a book was steeped in prayer it was the Fourfold State. From January 1712 when Boston first put pen to paper for the final draft, it was daily spread before a throne of grace. At times it looked as if the book would never see the

light; and it was not till 1720 that Boston handled a bound copy of his work. Almost immediately it took hold; new editions came pouring in. We are told that it was discussed in Edinburgh drawing-rooms; and that the shepherd read it on the hills. It made its way into Highland crofts. For more than a hundred years its influence on the religious life of Scotland was incalculable. The substance of the book is so orderly and clear, so rich in just and beautiful citation, so searching and here and there so softening; it is so strong in its appeals, so full, for all its doctrines, of warmth and human life; it is couched in language of the homeliest and truest ring, rising at times into unquestionable eloquence, that the secret of its acceptance is not far to seek. And yet to Boston that was not all the secret. "When I have considered the acceptance that book met with" he writes in 1730, "I could not but impute it to the over-ruling hand of kind Providence, that would needs have it so".

I The State of Innocence

Boston begins his book with Man's Original Righteousness — the State of Innocence based on Ecclesiastes 7:29, "Lo this only have I found, that God hath made man upright: but they have sought out many inventions". He says that God made man *habitually* righteous; man was to make himself *actually* righteous; then the will of man was directed and naturally inclined to God and goodness, though mutable. His affections were orderly, pure and holy, which is a necessary part of that uprightness wherein man was created. It had power to do the good which he knew should be done, and which he was inclined to do, even to fulfil the whole law of God. There was nothing in the law but what was agreeable to his reason and will, as God made him. God set Adam's will towards good only, yet He did not so fix and confirm its inclinations, that it could not alter. Confirmation in a righteous state is a reward of grace, given upon continuing righteous through the state of trial, and would have been given to Adam if he had stood out the time appointed for probation by the Creator; and accordingly is given to the saints upon account of the merits of Christ, who was obedient unto death; and herein believers have the advantage of Adam, that they can never totally nor finally fall away from grace. Man was then a very glorious creature; we have reason to suppose that as Moses' face shone when he came down from the mount, so man had a lightsome and pleasant countenance, and beautiful body, while as yet there was no darkness of sin in him at all. There was no impurity to be seen without, no squint look in the eyes after any unclean thing, the tongue spoke nothing but the language of heaven, and in a word, the

King's son was "all glorious within" and his "clothing of wrought gold".

The Fourfold State informs us that God reduced the law, which he gave in man's creation into the form of a covenant, whereof perfect obedience was the condition; life was the thing promised, and death the penalty. How easy were these terms to him who had the natural law written in his heart, and that inclining him to obey this positive law, revealed to him, it seems, by an audible voice, the matter whereof was so very easy.

God promised Adam also eternal life in heaven to have been entered into when he should have passed the time of his trial upon earth, and the Lord should see meet to transport him into the upper paradise. This promise of life was included in the threatening of death; for while God says, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" it is in effect "If thou do not eat of it, thou shalt surely live". And this was *sacramentally* confirmed by another tree in the garden called therefore "The Tree of Life" which he was debarred from when he had sinned; so that he needed nothing to be expressed to him in the covenant but what concerned the eating of the forbidden fruit. The death threatened was such as the life promised was, and that most justly namely, temporal, spiritual and eternal death. However, that day, when he took and did eat the forbidden fruit, his body got its death-wound and became mortal. Death also seized his soul; he lost his original righteousness and the favour of God. There was grace and free favour in the first covenant, though the exceeding riches of the grace, as the apostle calls it, were reserved for the second. It was certainly an act of grace, favour and admirable condescension in God to enter into a covenant, and such a covenant, with His own creature.

This man was God's deputy governor in the lower world, and this his dominion was an image of God's sovereignty. This was common to man and to woman, but man had one thing peculiar to him, namely, that he had dominion over the *woman also* (I Cor. 11:7). Man, being set down in a beautiful paradise, it was an act of infinite wisdom, and of grace too, to keep him from one single tree, as a visible testimony that he must hold all from his Creator as his great landlord; and so while he saw himself lord of the creatures, he might not forget that he was still God's subject. Man was created with a *free will* to *good* which the tree of life was an evidence of, but his will was also free to evil, and the forbidden tree was to him a memorial thereof. His heart had nothing to reproach him with; conscience had nothing to do, but to direct, approve and feast him, and without there was nothing to annoy him. The happy pair lived in perfect amity, and though their knowledge was vast, true and clear, they knew no

shame. Though they were naked there were no blushes in their faces, for sin the seed of shame was not yet known; and their beautiful bodies were not capable of injuries from the air, so they had no need of clothes which are originally the *badges* of our *shame*.

The Lord put all mankind's stock, as it were, in one common ship, and as we ourselves would have done, He made our common father the pilot. God gave man ability to keep the law, but man lost it by his own fault. Mankind descending from Adam, by ordinary generation, sinned in him and fell with him in his first transgression. The guilt is ours. How wonderful to see and know by the Gospel that *free grace* will fix those whom *free will* shook down to a gulf of misery. The proud, self-conceited professor has eyes behind to see his attainments, but no eyes *within*, no eyes *before*, to see his *wants* which would surely humble him. But such blind professors of religion are such a spectacle of commiseration as one would be who had set his palace on fire, and was glorying in a cottage which he had built for himself out of the rubbish, though so very weak that it could not stand against a storm. The heart which was once the temple of God is now turned into a den of thieves. Let our name be Ichabod for the glory is departed. Boston, then writes, sounding clearly the free offer of the Gospel, "Come, O sinner, look to Jesus Christ, the second Adam; quit the first Adam and his covenant; come over to the Mediator and Surety of the new and better covenant; and let your hearts say, Be thou our ruler, and let this breach be under thy hand".

We have seen from the pen of Boston what man was as God made him — a lovely and happy creature; and so he proceeds to show "The Sinfulness of Man's Natural State" from Genesis 6:5, "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually".

It is observable to the reader that the Fourfold State is tinged with the Scriptural teachings of the Marrow of Modern Divinity; a book that Boston found in an old soldier's cottage at Simprin in 1700 — a book he closely studied and relished.

(to be continued)

"A Little Member"

by Rev. M. MacInnes, Toronto

If a man does not offend by speaking improperly, that man is a perfect man, and is able to control the whole body. A horse can be turned about by the bridle to its mouth, and a ship can be turned by a very small helm.

These illustrations are used in the Bible to show us the influence and effect of the tongue in the body. It is a very little member, but it may control the whole body. Many things have been tamed by mankind, "but the tongue can no man tame". How varied are its uses! With the tongue, we bless God, and we "curse men which are made after the similitude of God". Blessing and cursing proceed from the same mouth; this ought not so to be. The tongue has power for evil, for "it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature, and it is set on fire of hell". It has also a power for good, for "the tongue of the just is as chosen silver" and "a wholesome tongue is a tree of life". The power of the tongue is spoken of in the Bible, in many ways, among which we find evil-speaking, back-biting, the double-tongue, foolish talking, sinful boasting, and flattering lips. This is a matter closely related to our living holy lives, to our obtaining spiritual blessings here, and ultimately to the Day of Judgement. "By thy words shalt thou be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

The "**talebearer**" is a scourge to society. He will be at pains to circulate his report. God has spoken expressly against this sinful conduct. "Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among the people." Winslow observes in connection with the words "death is in the power of the tongue" that there is death in the work of the talebearer, death to domestic happiness and individual reputation. Shun the talebearer, set your face as a flint against him, and let him see "by our look that his presence is as distasteful as his mission is abhorrent". To a false sense of Christian love this may not seem the Christian thing to do, but God's ways are better than ours, and He has said that "The north wind driveth away rain; so doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue".

The "**slanderer**" falls under a similar condemnation. Here is what Winslow has to say about such: "The slanderer is not merely the idle gossip, he is more. He is the inventor, or, what is equally criminal, he is the propagator of calumny itself. Envious of a rival, resolved upon shading the lustre, or bent upon the total extinction of a star circling in a wider and brighter orbit than his own, he either coins or gives currency to a lie injurious to the character of some public servant of God, or the reputation and happiness of some private individual moving in the quiet and unobtrusive walks of usefulness. Is there not death in this unhallowed use of the tongue?"

The "**backbiter**" engages in an evil work. His is especially a cruel activity. He takes advantage of the absence of the victim, to do injury to his character and name. How unworthy of Christians, and how unlike the

heaven they profess to seek. "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly and worketh righteousness, and speaketh truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour."

The "**anonymous**" pen or tongue, spreading evil and causing unrest, must be classed among the dangerous elements in society. If the person's intentions are good, he need not conceal his identity. If they are evil, then how cowardly and mean is he. He conceals himself, while he injures others. He who resorts to the pen to malign others, behind their backs, whether he put his name to the writing or not, is not worthy of being called a "man", let alone a Christian. Those who, when they receive such letters, delight in them or further spread their contents, are as guilty as the one who gave them origin. It is our Christian duty to speak "man to man". He who cannot face you with what he has to say to you, hardly deserves the high title of "friend".

The "**flatterer**" is a dangerous person. He is more so because his words are pleasing to our fallen and vain minds. God says that "A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet". Few there are who do not fall victim to the praise of the flatterer. Few possess the humility of mind that strengthens against his devastating influence. To flatter the Christian is to oppose the lowliness of mind with which he should walk before God and fellow Christians. It is cruel, unkind, and unchristian.

We must learn the lesson so clearly illustrated in the Bible. The tongue can no *man* tame. No man can, but God can. Blessed by His grace to reign within us, we can think of and speak of, Christ. "Out of the abundance of the heart", the mouth will speak of Jesus.

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Book Reviews

The Confession of Faith by A. A. Hodge. Banner of Truth Trust, 404 pages, price £4.00.

This reprint of the Westminster Confession of Faith with commentary by Dr. A. A. Hodge appeared in the early part of last year, published by the Banner of Truth Trust. Little requires to be said in commending this fine volume which, since it first made its appearance in America in 1869, has been extensively used in the Presbyterian Church on both sides of the

Atlantic and elsewhere ever since. Dr. Hodge's well known powers of concise analysis and his gift of lucid exposition are apparent everywhere as he unfolds and explains the rich doctrines of the Confession which makes this, in the words of Professor Patton of Princeton, "a very useful book", for A. A. Hodge "held the Reformed theology as a sacred trust". The need for such a manual of Christian doctrine was felt by office-bearers in the Presbyterian Church in America as they prepared to subscribe the full Standards of their Church which included the Westminster Confession. It was not, therefore, designed to be controversial but to stimulate interest in the Confession and to promote the reverent study of the doctrines of God's Word. This present volume is the 5th reprint of A. A. Hodge's Confession by the Banner of Truth Trust in this country. When the first issue of this volume appeared in 1958, the prospects of a wide sale were not encouraging for in the foreword of that edition the Confession is spoken of as falling into oblivion in the low religious state into which the Evangelical Churches had fallen. May the present work awaken renewed interest in the Westminster Confession and lead to a deeper understanding of its doctrines.

The exposition by A. A. Hodge is severely textual and confined to the explanation of the doctrines of the Confession. When the Confession was adopted by the Presbyterian Church in America in 1788 as the doctrinal part of her Constitution, certain modifications were made by the General Assembly, mainly on the nature, powers and duties of the civil magistrate. The chapters affected were to a small extent chapters 20 and 21, and to a much greater extent, chapter 31. Over against the American doctrine on this subject, such works as Shaw on the Confession should be consulted to keep in due perspective the Confessional doctrine of the Westminster divines.

The present edition includes an Introduction consisting of A Short History of Creeds and Some Account of the Origin of the Westminster Confession and Catechisms. These two chapters and the chapters of the Confession itself are furnished with relevant questions to promote further enquiry and study, and a full Index. The print is large and clear and the binding is strong and the whole volume handsome and attractive which, offered at a moderate price, should enjoy a ready sale and be valued as a distinct acquisition on the book shelves of our ministers and people.

A.F.M.

Charges and Addresses by J. C. Ryle, First Bishop of Liverpool. Banner of Truth Trust, 384 pages, price £4.50.

These Charges and Addresses of Bishop Ryle were delivered originally to the clergy of Liverpool but because of the importance of the matters discussed are of more than local interest, and while they remain issues in the Church will continue to have a wide appeal. John Charles Ryle was the first Bishop of Liverpool, newly formed out of the large, ancient, sprawling diocese of Chester. Lord Beaconsfield, better known as Disraeli, recommended Ryle, who at the time was at Stradbroke and had just been made Dean of Salisbury, to the Queen for the See of Liverpool in 1880. This was his last act before giving up office after the defeat of his Tory Party by the Gladstone Liberals, some think in retaliation against the High Church party who were mainly responsible for returning Gladstone once more to power as Ryle was the outstanding leader of Protestant and Evangelical thought in the Church of England, abhorrent to Gladstone and the pro-ritualistic party. However that may be, Ryle had all the qualifications to fit him for high office in the Church, wide scholarship, a fine presence, great gifts of leadership, not afraid to controversy in which he displayed independence of judgment and wielded a trenchant pen, and above all a vervid love for the grand doctrines of the bible. A Cheshire man himself, he welcomed the appointment. Now at the age of 65 and entering upon the autumn of life, he took up the difficult task of organising and introducing order into this long neglected district of the Church with vigour and zeal. He held diocesan Conferences yearly and every three years what he termed Triennial Charges to the Clergy in which he gave guidance to his clergy and met the various committees and societies on Education, Temperance, Bible Distribution, and Mission and Pastoral work in his large diocese; he also in passing made outspoken comments on questions of national importance. In his first pastoral letter Ryle said: "Let us on no account be colourless Christians destitute of distinct opinions". For the next 20 years, Ryle continued to deliver himself of vigorous observations upon a great variety of topics.

From time to time, these Charges and Addresses were printed separately, and in 1903 all those copies which were obtainable were gathered into a volume which makes this book the rarest of all Ryle's works. Not all the Conference Addresses are here. The volume contains 17 articles, arranged into chapters, consisting of six Triennial Charges, eight Conference Addresses, a sermon delivered at Liverpool in 1889, an Address to Hull Conference in 1890, and his Farewell Address to his diocese on 1st February 1900. There is a short Introduction with a sketch of Ryle's life, full and interesting notes on some of the chapters, a fine

head portrait on the front dust cover and a helpful Index completes the volume. That same year of his Farewell Address, on 10th June Ryle passed to his reward, worn out by incessant labours and full of peace and honour, and was buried at Childwell, Liverpool. No better or more appropriate epitaph could be written of Bishop Ryle than the words on his gravestone: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" — II Tim. iv, verse 7.

Through these chapters three main themes recur, to which Ryle returns as often as he felt fresh comment was called for, the Cathedral, Romanism and Ritualism, and Higher Criticism. He had been accused of resisting the move to build a Cathedral at Liverpool but on this subject, while admitting the great need of a religious centre for the proper conduct of his large parish, more pressing matters came first, more clergy, more buildings to bring the Gospel to the people, and until these claims were met he continued to speak of a Cathedral, even as late as 1895, as "a beautiful luxury". During his life time at Liverpool, St. Peter's served as a pro-Cathedral, destroyed, it is interesting to note, during the last war. The present modern Cathedral, opened last year by the Queen, was begun by his successor, Bishop Chavasse. During his episcopate, Ryle waged unrelenting war against the Romanising and Ritualistic party in the Church. This theme, perhaps, predominates over all others. When the Revised Version of the Bible appeared in 1882, Ryle subjected the work to a critical review, and strongly recommended his clergy to stick to the noble King James Version in their public work.

These talks are written in the homely, racy style made familiar in Ryle's *Upper Room* and *Principles for Churchmen* and shows the bishop in conference with his clergy and with them discussing the larger questions which concerned the Church. Here, we are given the considered thoughts of the greatest churchman of a past age on such subjects as Romanism and Ritualism, Modernism and Higher Criticism, Discipline, Church Reform, Prayer Book, etc, many of which are still doing their deadly work and undermining the very foundations of the Christian Church. Here, too we may follow Bishop Ryle as he labours to make the cumbersome machinery of the Church of England, which he says is "the grandest old Church of Christendom", serve the interests of evangelical religion — the flaws of the episcopal system should be apparent to any informed Presbyterian and Bishop Ryle himself sadly confesses "discipline is dead", "every clergyman does what is right in his own eyes". Here, too, is a book to which ministers may turn with interest who are faithfully labouring in the vineyard against disheartening odds. Isaiah's

words are true of the present age: "This is a day of trouble and of rebuke and of blasphemy". The Christian Church today is faced with the same destructive forces which were gaining strength in Ryle's time. These papers are therefore timely. We are grateful to the Banner of Truth Trust for rescuing these fine Charges and Address from oblivion. The volume is in handsome binding, at a moderate price a worthy addition to the other works of Ryle printed by the Trust, and for this volume we wish a wide and ready sale.

A.F.M.

Princeton Sermons by Dr Charles Hodge. Banner of Truth Trust. £3.75.

Through the use of different paper this Banner of Truth reprint is a slimmer volume than before, but its 373 pages are no different. They are filled with nearly 250 excellent sermon outlines. These are full enough to give one the feel of the original discourses. Reading and thinking over one per day would be a rewarding exercise. The outlines are grouped in ten sections. Three on the Persons of the Godhead are followed by one on Satan and sin. Conversion from sin to God comes next, followed by no fewer than 163 sermons on Christian experience and kindred subjects. A section on the believer's responsibilities and duties follows, then others on the means of grace, death and the fulness of redemption, and a few addresses from the last year of his life. For the Christian who wishes to be informed widely on the truths of his religion, this book could be a home-study course taught by a "master in Israel."

A.McP.

Notes and Comments

Pope's Visit to Britain

From Press reports it would appear that plans are in hand for a visit by the Pope to this country during this year. It is expected that he will visit Liverpool and also Scotland. Moves are taking place diplomatically which would facilitate such a visit by the Pope. Recently Archbishop Hein, the Pope's Apostolic Delegate to Britain was granted official diplomatic recognition and diplomatic immunity was accorded to him. Another emissary from the Pope, one of the Vatican Cardinals, had talks with Dr Runcie, the new Archbishop of Canterbury who is known to favour closer links with Rome.

It is clear that these matters involve serious consequences for hitherto Protestant Britain and constitute a gross violation of her Protestant constitution, which does not allow for any recognition of the Antichristian papal system. Let the praying people of our land pray earnestly that the projected tour of Britain by the Pope may yet be prevented in the Lord's good providence, and our nation saved from the calamity of such a visit.

New Archbishop of Canterbury

Dr Runcie, Bishop of St Albans, takes over this month from Archbishop Coggan as the new Archbishop of Canterbury. The former Archbishop, Dr Coggan, was reckoned an evangelical, but proved as fervent an ecumenist as his predecessors. The new Archbishop is a professed ecumenist desiring closer links with the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches. He considers himself a "Radical Catholic" — whatever that may mean. He hopes that he may be able to shift the Anglican Communion in the right direction — not doubt, nearer to, or if possible actually into the Roman Catholic Church. We can only regret the advent of Dr Runcie into the leadership of the Church of England.

Scotland and Drink

The Scottish Council on Alcoholism has produced horrifying figures with regard to alcoholism in Scotland. Its report states that between 75,000 and 112,000 of the adult population of Scotland are believed to be problem drinkers. Alcohol was found in 1974 to be a major factor in 54 per cent of fire fatalities. Of 400 murderers in Scotland 58 per cent of the males and 30 per cent of the females were intoxicated at the time they murdered. The cost to industry of alcohol abuse is astronomical. These facts bring out clearly the extent to which drink affects the life of the nation and give cause for serious alarm. They also show to what extent moral restraints are being withdrawn from the nation as a result of the abandonment of religion by the masses of the people. Only by a return to the religious and moral training of the young can this sad state of affairs be remedied.

Church Notes

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Northern: At Dingwall on 22nd January, at 2.30 p.m.

Skye: At Portree on 5th February, at 11 a.m.

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

Outer Isles: At Stornoway on 26th February at 11.30 a.m.

Western: At Laide on 4th March, at 11 a.m.

Young People's Conference — 1980

This Conference will be held (D.V.) at St Andrews from Thursday, 3rd April (lunch-time) to Saturday, 5th April (lunch-time). These were the only dates available within the school holidays which did not overlap with the University term at St Andrews. The Chairman will be Rev. D. J. MacDonald, Perth, assisted by Rev. J. M. Brentnall, Dumbarton. (A fuller notice will appear later).

Aberdeen Property Fund Appeal

The Deacon's Court of the Aberdeen congregation would like to draw the attention of people throughout the Church to some developments in the congregation's financial situation.

There was discussion for some time about the desirability of obtaining more suitable manse accommodation. We are pleased to report that a new manse was purchased in September, and that the former manse was sold in October, the difference between the two being £18,000. Charges on the loan required to make this purchase are obviously considerable. Another matter involves the church hall, the end wall of which has given concern for some time. This wall requires substantial repairs, which are expected to cost around £10,500.

We have received encouraging support from within the congregation. But, especially as the congregation is largely made up of students and young families, we are prayerfully taking this step to make our needy circumstances more generally known. Anyone wishing to help by giving a contribution or an interest-free loan to the Property Fund should contact either the minister or the congregational treasurer, from whom up-to-date information about the state of the fund can also be obtained.

Dugald Macpherson
(*Cong. Treas.*)
58 Airyhall Drive
Aberdeen
(Tel: 324691)

John Tallach
(Chairman, Deacon's Court)
18 Carlton Place
Aberdeen
(Tel: 25250)

This Appeal is published with the support of the Northern Presbytery.

A. F. Mackay, Clerk

Letter to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth

May it please Your Majesty

The Religion and Morals Committee of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland learned with shock and dismay of the recent visit of Archbishop Hein, the Pope's apostolic delegate to Britain, to Buckingham Palace. If, as has been suggested by the Press, this visit was linked to a proposed visit by the Pope to this country, we as loyal Protestant subjects of Your Majesty, view this matter in an even more serious light.

We would remind Your Majesty of the solemn oaths sworn at the outset of your reign to inviolably maintain and defend the true Protestant religion. By these oaths and promises solemnly given in the presence of Almighty God, we understand that any recognition of the Pope of Rome and of the Roman Catholic faith was renounced and allegiance to the Protestant religion unequivocally and expressly made. In view of these solemn undertakings, we are dismayed that recognition should be given in any way to the Pope of Rome or his representatives. The blasphemous claims made by the Pope to be Christ's Vicar on earth and to possess infallibility in his official utterances, mark him out as the Antichrist of Scripture. Any place given to the Pope or his representative, therefore, not only imperils Your Majesty's throne, but the nation as a whole.

It is as the Protestant Queen of a Protestant land that Your Majesty's Protestant subjects give you their whole-hearted loyalty, and we are persuaded that Your Majesty's Protestant subjects would deeply regret anything that might intervene to place that loyalty in jeopardy.

Accordingly we humbly plead with Your Majesty not to receive the Pope's representatives, nor to give your consent to a visit to this country of the Pope of Rome, but to maintain to the utmost of our power the solemn undertakings given at the outset of Your Majesty's reign on behalf of the Protestant religion.

We pray that the Lord may bless Your Majesty with the riches of His grace in Christ Jesus.

On behalf of the Committee, etc.

Letter to Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

Sir

The Religion and Morals Committee of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland learned with shock and profound dismay of the official recognition recently extended by the Foreign Office to Archbishop Hein, the Pope's Apostolic delegate to Britain, and the according to him of

diplomatic immunity. The action of the Foreign Office in this respect is offensive to all true Protestants in this country and is, in our view, subversive of the Protestant Constitution of our country. If, as has been suggested by the Press, the recognition given to Archbishop Hein, is linked with a proposed visit to this country by the Pope — and Archbishop Hein's dining with the Queen and Cardinal Benelli's visit to Dr Runcie, the new Archbishop of Canterbury, would seem to confirm this — then the action of the Foreign Office is even more offensive and we accordingly protest strongly against it and urge that no provision be made for a visit by the Pope to this country.

We recognise that the claim is often made that the Vatican is a State and that any recognition is a civil matter. We hold, however, that the Pope's spiritual headship over the Roman Catholic Church makes it impossible for him to be treated merely as the Head of a State. His claim to be Christ's Vicar on earth and his asserting of divine prerogatives such as e.g. infallibility and headship over the nations, marks him out as the Antichrist of Scripture. A visit by such a person to our land would not only bring untold distress to all genuine Protestants, but would expose the nation to divine judgments as a consequence.

We would remind you that the Union Settlement of 1707 between the kingdoms of Scotland and England has secured national recognition of the Protestant religion in our country. A visit to this country by the avowed enemy of Protestantism would call in question that Settlement and would expose the nation to undermining influences which could well destroy the unity of the nation. In addition, it is proper to take cognizance of the nefarious role played by the Roman Catholic Church in history down to recent times, and, we believe, still being presently practised (e.g. in Ireland), and this should be sufficient to warn us that if we wish to retain our civil and religious liberties which were purchased for us at such a great price, then the less we have to do, as a nation, with the Antichristian system of Rome, the better.

Accordingly we wish to express our strongest opposition to any visit by the Pope of Rome and urge that such a courtesy be not extended to him.

On behalf of the Committee, etc.

Note: Contrary to the impression given in the Press report, it would appear that Archbishop Hein's visit to Buckingham Palace was to a public and not a private function. We regret that even this recognition is given to the Archbishop.

Editor

Acknowledgment of Donations

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

Sustentation Fund: D. Robertson, St Andrews, £5.83.

College and Library Fund: M.M.C., South Harris, £5.

Dominions & Overseas Fund: A Friend, £10 for Fede Viva.

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

Aberdeen: Anon., £10; Anon., £100, both for Manse Carpets per D.K.L.; Anon., £100; Anon., £10; Anon., £10, all in plate for Property Fund.

Greenock: In loving memory, £40; A Glasgow Friend, £5, both for Sust. Fund; A Friend — Valtos, £10, last two per Rev. L. MacLeod; R.H.C., Bangor, N.I., £10, last two for Congr. Purposes.

Laide: Friends, New Zealand, £26.95; Friend, Gairloch, £4; In memory of loved ones, £20, all for Laide Manse Building Fund.

Oban: Two Edinburgh Friends, £5; Glasgow Friend, £5; Skye Friend per M.M.L., £5, all for Congr. Funds; J.G., Portree, £5; Anon., £5, both for Property Fund.

Plockton/Kyle: Mr V.W., £10 for Sust. Fund; Anon., £5; Envelope in Kyle Plate, £10, both for Manse Building Fund; Graham House, Dornie, £2.30 (door collection); Graham House, Dornie, £1.80 (door collection), both per Mr Van Woerden.

Portree: Anon., Braes, £3 for Church Bus; Mrs M.B., Portree, £5 for Sust. Fund; Friend, £5 for Manse Expenses; C.N., £20 for Congr. Purposes, all per F.M.

Staffin: In memory of loved ones £100 for Church and Manse Repairs; Friend, Raasay, £5 for Car Expenses, both per Rev. J. MacD.; Envelope in Plate, £2.40.

Strath: Anon. (In Plate), £7 for Communion Expenses.

Tomatin: Envelope in Plate, £30 for Congr. Expenses.