

THE
Free Presbyterian Magazine
and Monthly Record

Volume 85

February 1980

No. 2

God's Sovereignty and Man's Responsibility

The Bible teaches both the doctrine of God's sovereignty and also that of man's responsibility. They are both weighty doctrines which men neglect only at their peril. They are to be received in faith as part of that divine revelation that God has been pleased to give to man for his salvation. Only by the teaching of God the Holy Spirit can we be brought to give our cordial assent to what the Bible teaches about the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man.

To many these doctrines appear contradictory. To the natural mind of man it would appear that if God is absolutely sovereign in His actings, then this leaves no room for responsibility attaching to man. Or, on the other hand, if man is wholly responsible for his acts, then God cannot be absolutely sovereign in His dealings with men. As a consequence, emphasis is placed on one of these doctrines rather than the other. One is stressed, the other is neglected or toned down. In this way the teaching of Scripture is perverted and the truth of God set aside.

In the light of these things, how are we to regard or deal with these *seemingly* contrary teachings of God's Word? We are required to accept these doctrines in their entirety without cavilling at them. Faith receives the Word of God as the Word of God i.e. as infallible truth. We are to believe the doctrine of God's absolute sovereignty and we are to believe the doctrine of man's responsibility because these doctrines are revealed truth. They are glorious and solemn truths and we are not to mutilate them to our own hurt. We are not to pit them one against another in a rationalistic way so as to evacuate one or other of them of all or part of their meaning.

But how, you will say, are we to reconcile them? God does not ask to reconcile them but to believe them. Has God stated them? Then that

should be enough for us. We are not to assume that what appears irreconcilable to the mind of man is so also to the divine mind. There is no confusion with God, nor any contradiction in the teachings of His Word.

The teachings of the Bible concerning the sovereignty of God is a revelation of one aspect of the glory of God and one fitted to lay the sinner low in the dust before God. Once the sinner sees that God is a sovereign Lord, that soul will see that only by an act of the free favour of God can he be delivered from everlasting death. It is this that brings the sinner to the mercy seat to intreat the favour of God.

The teaching of the Bible concerning man's responsibility, when it is borne home upon the conscience of the sinner by divine power, leaves the sinner without excuse. Responsibility and accountability are bound up together, and the judgment seat of Christ stares the sinner in the face. But what of man's inability? Does not this have some mitigating effect upon man's responsibility? In no way, for the sinner sees his inability only as an aggravation of his offence. Self-inflicted inability is culpable inability. The sinner consequently is closed in to condemnation for his sin — sin that is inexcusable.

These two doctrines of God's Word — God's sovereignty and man's responsibility — are both necessary in their own place in bringing poor sinners down to the dust of self-abasement and self-abhorrence before the majesty of a sovereign Lord. It is these teachings that will bring sinners to abandon all schemes of self-help and close sinners into that only way of deliverance — the way that the infinite wisdom of a sovereign God who holds man responsible has devised — that is, the way through a crucified, risen and exalted Saviour. The end result will be that man will take all the shame to himself, and give all the glory of His salvation to the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is no legitimate ground in the doctrine of predestination, or in any other doctrine taught in Scripture, why any man should despair, — should renounce all hope of salvation, — should act as if his condemnation were unchangeably determined, and on this account should refuse to comply with the offers and invitations of the gospel.

Wm. Cunningham

Notes of a Sermon

by Rev. Angus MacKay, Tarbert

(The following sermon was preached at Finsbay, Harris, at the Induction of the Rev, Duncan MacLean, on Wednesday evening, the 24th October, 1979).

"I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness." John 12:46.

In this chapter of God's word we read of the Saviour foretelling his death. He speaks of Himself as the light, and He counsels the people to walk while they have the light lest darkness come upon them. He exhorts them to believe in the light that they may be the children of light. The evangelist John tells us that although He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him, that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? Then we read that among the chief rulers also many believed on Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue, for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

We hear from the Word that Jesus claims equality with the Father and that He is one with the Father. "Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on Him that sent me. And he that seeth me seeth Him that sent me." Then Christ declares that He has come a light into the world, that whosoever believes on Him should not abide in darkness.

From the words of our text, as enabled, I will in the first place make a few remarks on the 'world' as brought before us here by Jesus; secondly, the Person here speaking and His declaration regarding Himself; and thirdly, the profound truth He states — that whosoever believes on Him should not abide in darkness.

Firstly — the world. In I John 2:16 we read 'for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.' This is the deplorable character of the world, lost, fallen in Adam as a covenant-head, and manifesting by their sins that they (the world) are fallen, corrupt and lost. In Genesis 6:5 we read 'And 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. The same is true in this age and the multitudes of the world, lying in wickedness, are proving this to be the truth of God although they do not lay it to heart. Men like to believe that there is much good in the heart of unregenerate men and women, but it is our wisdom to believe the word of God.

We read of the judgment of God upon those who persist in their sins and evil ways, and who die unregenerate, impenitent and Christless. We find that in Jude verses 14 and 15, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. O, friends, poor sinners, make sure that you will not die in your sins, flee to Christ while you are in the room of mercy, while He may be found, and call upon Him while He is near. 'Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him and to our God for he will abundantly pardon.'

Secondly — the Person speaking and his declaration regarding Himself. We hear from the holy lips of Jesus His divine message 'I am' — the 'I am' declaring, 'I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth in me should not walk in darkness.' In I John 1:5 we read, 'This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.' And Jesus Christ is God, and great is the mystery of Godliness, God manifest in the flesh. Here is brightness coming into a world of darkness — infinite, eternal, uncreated brightness, even the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person.

We see a ray of this brightness, penetrating the gross darkness, in the first promise that there would come of the seed of the woman that would bruise the serpent's head. From Adam's fall until the divine promise came, whatever duration that was, the world was in spiritual darkness without a ray of hope for light. O, the darkness of fallen, guilty, sinful, wretched man! Then this penetrating ray of light, emanating from the brightness of infinite glory, even the Father's glory, shone through the darkness of the world — I am come a light into the world. This is what we have in the first promise, 'And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed, it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.'

We see Noah, a preacher of righteousness, preaching to dark, ignorant, obstinate men and women, and warning them faithfully of the

judgment of God because of their sins. He was building an ark — a type of Christ. Here we have the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, by His servant Noah, shining into a lost world. And so it is to this day, dark and wicked as this generation is, Christ, by His own ordinance of preaching the Gospel by His servants, is shining upon a lost world, and saying loudly, I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.

In the types and the shadows — Aaron in his beautiful, priestly garments with the breastplate of precious stones — we see Christ, the brightness of the Father's glory, shining as the Sun of righteousness upon a dark world and lovingly declaring, "him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." Friends, read Isaiah 53, and Psalm 22 and then Malachi 4:2. What have we there? We have this light of the Gospel, though dimly, shining into the world — penetrating rays of divine light shining into the hearts of men and women, convincing sinners of their sins, their guilt and misery, and revealing to them savingly the Way of Salvation. O, dear fellow sinners, our great need of the Holy Spirit to bring home to our hearts the truths of God, to reveal to us the things of the Spirit of God!

Now we come to see the light shining exceedingly brighter. We hear the heavenly host, the angels singing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill towards men, for unto you this day in the city of David is born a Saviour and His name is Christ the Lord." And we see, in Bethlehem, the Child Jesus wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger — God manifest in the flesh — 'I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth in me should not walk in darkness.' Here we have, revealed to us in the Gospel, the blessed Saviour, the Prince of peace, in our very nature, come 'to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.'

Thirdly — the profound truth He stated — that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. That is, that whosoever believes savingly in Christ should not remain in spiritual ignorance of his lost state by nature and ignorant of God revealed to sinners in the scheme of Redemption. The sinner believing in Christ, by the saving operation of the Holy Spirit, will not remain in ignorance of the Fall of man and in ignorance of the Way of Salvation. O, our need of an experimental saving knowledge of being brought into a state of saving union with the Person of Christ.

Now, the people of God are the light of the world, we read in Matthew 5:14 'Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.' At night in a city there are lights and also here and there we see lights

above and brighter than the ordinary lights. And so we have in this city of God, the Church, the true believers in Christ and the Ministers of the Gospel sent out by Christ. With respect to their office, talents and gifts, anointed by the Holy Spirit for the great and noble work of the ministry, they are brighter lights than other believers, as we read in Daniel 12:13 'And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.'

In wartime, in a city as you know, there must be, for the safety of the city and its inhabitants what is known as a 'blackout' in order to keep it hid from the enemy. But that is not so in this city of God that has warfare continually without cessation or abatement. There must be no 'blackout' or dimming of our lights in this warfare. We are exhorted in Matthew 5:16 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.' In our own day when we have to a large extent night over the face of our nation, spiritually and morally, we the people of God, born-again believers, 'wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.' This is the warfare in which we are engaged, and it is a fight to a finish, and "we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." The chief target of the enemy, Satan, and of the religious and irreligious world, is the ministers of Christ, and in their hellish bombardment of the servants of the Lord their chief aim is to blast their character. But no weapon that is formed against them shall prosper; the Lord's promise to them is 'Lo, I am with you, alway even unto the end of the world. Amen.' The ministers of the Gospel and the people of God, in this warfare, are "enduring hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ," on their way, under the Captain of their Salvation, to that city of which we read in Revelation 21:23, "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

We are here tonight gathered at the induction of a minister of the Gospel to this congregation and I seek to encourage the Lord's people, and especially my brethren the ministers of Christ, by the word of God. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

Now, what have we to say to you sinners, who are darkness, (Eph. 5:8), walking in darkness, and on your way, if you will not repent, to the blackness of darkness forever? Come, O come to Christ who is come a light into the world that whosoever believeth in Him should not abide in darkness. To you He calls, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast

Boston's Fourfold State

by Rev. Angus MacKay, Tarbert

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II The State of Nature

Let us view man now as he has unmade himself, and we shall see him a sinful and a miserable creature. Boston writes, this is the sad state we are brought into by the fall — a state as black and doleful as the former was glorious. The scope and design of these words is, to clear God's justice in bringing the flood on the old world. The heinousness of their sin made the earth which God had so adorned for the use of man, a sink of iniquity, and a stage whereon to act their wickedness, in defiance of heaven. But God made them to know that *He* took notice of their sins and that *He* had not *forsaken* the *earth* though they had forsaken *heaven*.

The soul which was made upright in all its faculties, is now wholly disordered. The heart that was made according to God's own heart, is now the reverse of it, a forge of evil imaginations, a sink of inordinate affections, and a storehouse of all impiety. The heart is ever framing something but never one right thing. But is there not, at least, a mixture of good in their thoughts 'No' Boston writes 'They are only evil, there is nothing truly in them good and acceptable to God.' Whatever changes may be found in them, are only from evil to evil, not one holy thought can be produced by an *unholy* heart. Adam's fall has framed all men's hearts alike in this matter. The Fourfold State quotes many passages of Scripture to prove all that he writes. The original frame of man is utterly marred, that it cannot be mended, but must needs be made new or lost altogether. Now the waters of the deluge being a like figure to baptism, it plainly follows that they signified, as baptism does, the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost. Here we see clearly the total corruption of our nature and the necessity of regeneration. Man was made in the likeness of God, holy and righteous, but fallen Adam begat a son in his own likeness, that is corrupt and sinful. 'Man is born of woman, and how can he be clean that is born of a woman.' The omnipotent God, whose power is here not challenged, could bring a clean thing out of an unclean, and did so out of the man Christ, but no other can. Every person that is born according to the course of nature is born unclean, so the holiest of parents beget unholy children, and cannot communicate their grace to them as they do their nature, which many godly parents find true in their sad experience. As the corruption of our nature shows the

absolute necessity of regeneration, so the absolute necessity of regeneration plainly proves the corruption of our nature. God made man but 'a little lower than the angels' but now we find him likened unto the beasts that perish. He hearkened to a brute and is now become like one of them. The Scriptures hold out the natural man, not only as wanting the good qualities of the animals, but as a compound of the evil qualities of the worst of the creatures, in whom the fierceness of the lion, the craft of the fox, the un-teachableness of the wild ass, the filthiness of the dog and swine, the poison of the asp, and such like, meet. From whence comes the deluge of sin on the earth, but from the fountains of the great deep, the heart of man? out of which proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness. The corruption of nature is the same in you as in the most vile and profane wretches that are in the world. Lusts sometimes grow too strong for laws so that the civil law becomes slack as the pulse of a dying man. O, the corruption of man's nature, the awe and dread of the God of heaven restrains them not. Is not sinful curiosity natural to us? and is not this a print of Adam's image? How much like old Adam do we look in this eagerness for novelties, and disrelish of old solid doctrines? We seek after knowledge rather than holiness. Do not the eyes in our head often blind the eyes of our mind, and was not this the very case of our first parents? The soul is never cured of this disease, till *conquering* grace brings it back to take up its everlasting rest in God through Christ, but till this be, if man were set again in paradise the garden of the Lord, all the pleasures *there* would not keep him from looking, yea, and leaping over the hedge a second time.

There is a vileness in the body (Phil. 3:21) which as to the saints will never be removed, until it be melted down in the grave, and cast into a new form at the resurrection to come forth a spiritual body. Some are indeed brought to follow duties more closely, after convictions were sharp and piercing, but they are as far from Christ as ever, if not further. Thus it is evident that men's hearts are naturally bent to the way of the law, and lies cross to the Gospel method, and the charge against you that are unregenerate is that you are enemies to the Son of God.

The sin of our first parents was a total apostasy from God, a violation of the whole law, of all the commandments. A swine brought into a palace would soon get away again, to wallow in the mire, and corrupt nature tends ever to impurity. Thus the natural man lives but must die too, and death is a dreadful messenger to him. It comes upon him armed with wrath. The bodies of the wicked will be reunited to their souls and they shall be eternally shut up in hell, never to get the least drop of comfort,

nor the smallest alleviation of their torment. God will, through eternity, hold them up with one hand and pour the full vials of wrath into them with the other. There is no pain more exquisite than that which is caused by fire, and no fire so piercing as that of God's indignation, that burns into the lowest hell. To all eternity it will still be the wrath to come. As a gracious state is a state of glory in the bud, so a graceless state is hell in the bud. Behold in the death of Christ how severe God is against sin. He, who is the wisdom of God, becomes sore amazed, ready to faint away in a fit of horror. The sun was struck blind with this terrible sight, rocks were rent, graves opened, death, as it were, in the excess of astonishment, letting its prisoners slip away. What is a deluge, a shower of fire and brimstone on the people of Sodom, the terrible noise of a dissolving world, the whole fabric of heaven and earth dissolving at once, and angels cast down from heaven into the bottomless pit. What are these, Boston says, in comparison with this, God in human nature suffering, groaning, dying upon a cross. Infinite holiness did it, to make sin look like itself, that is, infinitely odious, and will man live at ease, while exposed to this wrath? God will break that brazen brow and make that adamant heart at last fly into a thousand pieces.

Then Boston shows man's utter inability to recover himself, and he puts the question, 'Why do you then preach Christ to us, call on us to come to Him, to believe, repent, and use the means of salvation?' And the servant of the Lord answers, 'Because it is your duty to do so, it is your duty to accept of Christ, as He is offered in the Gospel, to repent of your sins, and to be holy in all manner of conversation, these things are commanded you of God, and His *command*, not your *ability*, is the measure of your duty. O, that Arminians, proud, self-conceited, and hyper-calvinists, with their subtle rationalism, would pay attention to the Scriptural doctrines and exhortations of Thomas Boston, and that we would all tremble and examine ourselves as to what we have in view of eternity.

Well may we lament thy case, O natural man, for it is the saddest case one can be out of hell. It is time to lament for thee; for thou art dead already, dead while thou livest; thou carriest about with thee a dead soul in a living body; and because thou art dead thou canst not lament thy own case.

Thos. Boston

The Value of Creeds to the Christian Church

by Rev. D. MacLean, Glasgow

The value of creeds to the Christian Church is a very wide subject indeed. In order to confine its scope, I have decided to divide it into three heads.

- I. The Scripture and the Creeds.
- II. The history of doctrine and the Creeds.
- III. The practical value of the Creeds to the Christian Church.

I The Scripture and the Creeds

The word 'creed' comes from the Latin 'credo' — I believe — so that the creeds are expressions of what the Church believes. They are therefore an expression of the exercise of the faith of the Church. Since that faith is the gift of God, it is a belief in spiritual things, just as historical faith is a belief in historical events. The only source we have for our knowledge of spiritual things (or, to put it in another way, the things of the Spirit) is the Holy Spirit giving that revelation in the Word of God. Now, the first thing we must understand in order to find a relationship between the Scripture and the creeds is that the Scripture itself is inspired. I would like to make a few observations on that particular subject because it is one of great importance, not only in the Christian Church at large, but in the section of the Christian Church that goes under the name of Evangelical.

When we come to consider the doctrine of inspiration, we generally divide it into two sections. One section we call *revelation*, and the second section we call *inspiration*. Revelation is the act of God in revealing Himself and making Himself known. In creation, God has revealed His Godhead, His wisdom and power, to man as man; that is the first thing we must understand, that in the revelation of God given in creation, the person or individual to whom that revelation is given is man as man. Now, when we come to the Scriptures, we come to the revelation that God has given to man as a sinner. We must remember that great distinction. That distinction is altogether necessary for us because the revelation of God to man as man is of no value to us because we are sinners. The demonstration of the Godhead and the wisdom and power of God only brings us to understand that the God against whom we have sinned is the

One of infinite power and the One who can deal with us and will deal with us on account of our sins. Therefore the revelation which God has given in the Scriptures is a revelation of God to man as a sinner — that is the revelation which is of untold, unspeakable value to us.

In revealing Himself to man as a sinner, God did so in a progressive way. Just as when He revealed Himself in creation He could have created the world in a moment of time, instead of that He did it over a process of six days as the Genesis account tells us. Now, similarly, God in revealing Himself to man as a sinner, did so progressively. He did so to Adam in the Garden of Eden in the first promise that was given. He did so to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. Down through Old Testament times, God was revealing Himself, making Himself known in various ways — by dreams, by visions, by personal appearances, by word of mouth, and so on. I do not intend to go into the intricate details of that revelation at the present moment, but what I do wish to emphasise is that this is God revealing Himself to man — this is not man imagining about God, but God revealing Himself to man and making Himself known to him. That revelation culminated in the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Now, the Lord Jesus Christ was the Word of God. Just as the Scriptures are the written Word of God, the Saviour is the personal Word of God. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth." So the revelation which God has given, the revelation which culminated in the coming of the Lord of glory to this earth, is a revelation through Christ Jesus the Lord.

These revelations, which God gave of Himself progressively down through the ages, came to be recorded, in a written form. All the revelations given were not recorded, just the revelations which God chose to be recorded. For instance, with regard to the Saviour Himself, we read that Jesus did many things which are not recorded in the Scripture. All these things which He did were revelations of God to man as a sinner, but they were not all recorded. The ones which were recorded were the ones chosen by God to give the complete revelation which God intended sinners of mankind to have.

Now, the doctrine of inspiration is that special influence of the Holy Spirit whereby He moved and bore along and guided those who recorded the revelations that God had given of Himself in written form in the Scripture. That is the real doctrine of inspiration. This means that the form of inspiration which they enjoyed and which was peculiar to them only, when they were recording the Scriptures, was a special influence of the Holy Spirit whereby they recorded what God wished to be recorded,

recorded it in the words in which God wished it to be recorded. Consequently the agent in this recording, was the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, Who is called the Breath of God. Therefore when we read that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, it does not mean that the Scriptures are inspired because the Holy Spirit breathed into them, but that they are God-breathed; they are the operation of the Spirit of God — so leading, so guiding, so bearing along those writers chosen by Him that they have recorded the Word of God in an infallible and inerrant way.

It is most important that we understand this clearly. You see, recently I happened to have an interview on Radio Clyde on this particular point; the interviewer said to me, "O, but surely other people are inspired." People say that Rabbin Burns was inspired or that this man gave an inspired address. Now, all that has nothing whatsoever to do with the inspiration which is a special influence of the Holy Spirit, which none enjoy but those who wrote the Scriptures. So, when a man preaches the Gospel and when he preaches it with the liberty and unction of the Holy Spirit, this is a different exercise of power from that power exercised with regard to the recording of the Scriptures by divine inspiration. When the canon of Scripture was closed, then inspiration in that sense of the term came to an absolute and a complete end. This means that we now have in the Word of God that divine revelation of His divine mind secured in writing to us by the inspiration of the Spirit of God.

Scripture is therefore the all-sufficient rule of faith and practice. That we must always remember. We use a word in connection with being enlightened in the Word of God which we call illumination (e.g. this room is in darkness, someone puts on this light, then these lights illuminate this room). The Holy Spirit is the author of all divine light in the soul of man, He is the One who illuminates the understanding. That act of the Holy Spirit is different from inspiration; it is the Holy Spirit taking the Word of God and shining the light of that Word in the understanding. You have all heard of a gentleman called Karl Barth. He was a great theologian according to the principles of modern thought, and this was his fundamental error: he said the Word of God is inspired when it becomes inspired to you. That is the definition of illumination, not of inspiration. All these theologians have a great name — but when we come to examine what they really teach, we find that it is very flimsy and very lacking in true understanding. As I said, if all were sufficiently enlightened in the Word of God, there would be no need of creeds because everyone would then know the Word of God and everyone would

then have the same light upon it. But, because man by nature is darkened in his understanding in the Word of God, and since those who are regenerated by the Spirit of God have varying degrees of light, it was necessary for the Church to express its understanding of the Scripture on the various doctrines of divine revelation. While, therefore, creeds are not inspired in the sense that the Word of God is, they are statements of divine truth insofar as they correctly state the doctrine of the Word of God. They are not inspired in the same sense as the Bible, but they are authoritative insofar as they correctly state the doctrines of the Word of God. A great deal is made by the opponents of creeds — and that's nearly everybody nowadays, they don't want to be tied by creeds — that they are only the words of men, and so seek to place them in contradistinction to the Word of God. This is completely false, however. The real question is not between the Word of God and the word of men contained in the creeds, but between the tried and true faith of the collective body of the Church and the private judgment and unaided wisdom of the individual. That is a very, very essential distinction.

The Scriptures themselves contain expressions of the Church's faith in the form of credal statements. Since the Church is a confessing and witnessing body, its language is "I believe; therefore have I spoken." The believing was not to remain in the heart, but it was to come out by way of testimony or confession. "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." There is a good expression of the credal idea in the Old Testament confession of Israel, "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one God." In the New Testament also we have expressions of faith. Nathanael declares, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God." That is a credal statement. Peter too gives expression to his faith, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." A fuller statement of a credal nature is seen in II Tim. 1:9,10. I would just like to read it out to you to give some idea how credal statements appear in the Scripture. "Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel," and then he goes on to say in connection with that, "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou

hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.”

Since the creeds are expressions of the Church's understanding of the Word of God, the question naturally arises as to whether they may be in need of revision. Those who object to creeds make a great point of this. They assert that God is always causing fresh light to break forth from His Word and that Christianity is always a developing religion. They regard creeds as stagnating Christian scholarship and bogging down Christian meditation. It may be observed in passing that to attain to the knowledge of doctrine displayed in the creeds of a Scriptural kind, requires a good deal of spiritual knowledge. It is of course always possible that creeds could be revised. There are, however, two points which must be observed in any attempted revision. (i) The revision must be in accordance with the Word of God and be demonstrated to be a better expression of a particular doctrine. (ii) Revision is only profitable and should only be attempted when the Church itself is on a high spiritual plane. These two principles also apply to new translations of the Scriptures. A device sometimes adopted to revise a creed or confession is to introduce a Declaratory Act to give the Church's understanding, not of the Scripture, but of the confession itself. Instead of altering the confession itself, this Act purports to give the Church's understanding. When the Declaratory Act is at variance with the clear meaning of the creed or confession, however, the Act becomes a piece of ecclesiastical deceit. It was the passing of such an Act in 1892 by the then Free Church which brought about the separate existence of the Free Presbyterian Church. In other words, instead of revising the Confession, they introduced a Declaratory Act which gave the Church's explanation of particular sections of the Confession. Not only were they wrong in the attempts they made, but they did not give a proper expression of these doctrines themselves.

(to be continued)

Divine faith is a believing of what God has revealed, because God has said it or revealed it. And this divine faith is the product of the Spirit of God in the heart of a sinner, implanting the habit or principle of faith there, and exciting it to a hearty reception and firm belief of whatever God reveals in His Word.

Thomas Boston

Fencing the Table

The practice of fencing the Lord's table is a long-established one and one with which most of us are familiar. In beginning the duty the officiating minister very often refers to the fact that it is a practice that has been observed in the Church of Scotland "from its best days" and whatever may be true of other denominations it is to be hoped that we will always adhere to it. We should not be influenced by the false charity of those who say that it is the *Lord's* table and that it is high presumption on the part of any mere man to attempt to fence it.

"The Directory for the Publick Worship of God," approved and established by an Act of Assembly and an Act of Parliament in 1645 indicates, in general terms, the way in which this duty is to be performed. The minister, it is laid down, having ended his sermon and prayed, is to make a short exhortation:

"Expressing the inestimable benefit we have by this sacrament, together with the ends and use thereof: setting forth the great necessity of having our comforts and strength renewed thereby in this our pilgrimage and warfare: how necessary it is that we come unto it with knowledge, faith, repentance, love, and with hungering and thirsting souls after Christ and His benefits: how great the danger to eat and drink unworthily.

Next, he is, in the name of Christ, on the one part, to warn all such as are ignorant, scandalous, profane, or that live in any sin or offence against their knowledge or conscience, that they presume not to come to that holy table; shewing them, that he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself: and, on the other part, he is in an especial manner to invite and encourage all that labour under the sense of the burden of their sins, and fear of wrath, and desire to reach out unto a greater progress in grace than yet they can attain unto, to come to the Lord's table; assuring them, in the same name, of ease, refreshing, and strength to their weak and wearied souls."

The way in which that eminently faithful minister of Christ, Archibald Cook, went about the duty and what he had to say, on at least one occasion, is left on record. The ardour and solemnity which must have marked the speaker cannot ever now be reproduced, but we hope the translation which follows retains some traces of the pithiness of the original Gaelic.

'We now give attention to a solemn part of the day's service — the duty that most resembles the work of the day of Judgment than any other we

engage in — making a separation between the wheat and the chaff — between the sheep and the goats. You whom the Word of God debars from coming to the Lord's table, if death come upon you in that state, that Word will debar you from glory and Hell will be your eternal dwelling-place.

You will find a portion of the Word of God in I Cor. 6:9-10. Some are unclean in their lives. Awake and asleep it is unclean thoughts they have, yea, it is even unclean dreams they have. But "be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the Kingdom of God." Now this is the Word of God and it debars such from the holy table. The Word of God debars from the Lord's table every person who has never been under great concern about his soul. It is wonderfully precious when the Spirit of God expounds it to the soul; but the soul will not be at ease under the weight of — "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" When God came to the man, He put his soul, and his wife, and the world, in the balances, and you who put something else higher than concern for your soul, keep away from the holy table. But if you continue in that state you will not see the Kingdom of God. And we may say that your grave is ready — Hell is the grave that Justice dug for you. And the soul without concern — his deeds reveal that that is the place for him — even the way you go through the worship is revealing that you do not find anything in it. But keep away from the Lord's table; the Lord's table will not take you to glory. It may send you to Hell.

We debar from the Lord's table parents who do not on the Sabbath day instruct their children in the doctrines of the truth of the Gospel. If you went to many a family on the Sabbath, and you were to hear the vain talk, and you were to see how they were asleep in recesses, you would see how little of God there is in that family. And we, in the Lord's name, debar them from the Lord's table.

Again, we debar from the Lord's table such as have no concern for the cause of Christ. The cause of Christ is maintained by poor creatures in the world and you who have no concern for it, keep away. Where would you be to-day, and what would you have in the world, but for the death of Christ? That you have food or raiment, yea, that you have a drop of cold water or any comfort in the world, you have it as a fruit of Christ's death; and you who are not willing to support the cause of Christ in the world, I am, in the name of Christ, debarring you from the table. You who have a concern for Christ's cause, Christ has a concern for your cause.

There are some and they will uncomplainingly spend in the public-house, but it is too much for them to spend a half-penny on the cause of Christ. But let such stay away from the Lord's table : do not come here to eat and drink judgment to yourself. "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself."

On the other hand you will see those who are invited to the table in Matthew 5:3-12. They are called to the Lord's table. Such as are poor in spirit — such as mourn — the meek — they who hunger and thirst after righteousness — that are pure in heart — the peacemakers, and they are blessed, theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven — they shall be comforted — they shall inherit the earth — they shall obtain mercy — they shall see God, yea, they shall be called the children of God and we, in His name, invite them to the table.

We, in the Lord's name, invite such as have been brought alive to consider their state for eternity. You in whom there is a *drop* of concern regarding your eternal state, what you have there is the fruit of Christ's death, and those for whom Christ died He will bring a *drop* of concern in regard to eternity into their souls while in the world, and happy is the soul at death who is alive to a concern for eternity so as to cast himself on the Lord, for as He does this so the Lord makes Himself over to the soul.

Again we invite to the table every person in whom there is a true desire after assurance of his interest in Christ. Salvation is of free grace but it is from the *depth* of free grace it is that assurance is given to any person of his interest in Christ. You, yourself, know that at one time it was possible for you to be at ease without this, that you could go to rest at ease and rise again without the knowledge of your interest in Christ. But now, it is not so with you, but after every prayer, every watching, every striving, you are finding yourself getting worse and worse so that you have nothing now except you find it in Christ. For that reason you come to the table. Many a one found there what scattered the clouds and put a new song in their mouth.

We invite you to the table who will be finding yourself in trouble for rebuking sin. "I know . . . where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is," and you who find yourself in furnaces on account of rebuking sin come to the Lord's table. We invite you to the Lord's table you who love Christ's children in the world, and in whose company you would desire to be throughout eternity. You come to the Lord's table. You, who do not love them in the world, you will not obtain throughout eternity a heart to love them. But, "We know," says John. "that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." "By this we know that we love

the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments." We know that there may be warm affections where this love is not but you who desire to cast a veil over the weaknesses of the children of God, you come to the Lord's table. Again, you who found in the Word what loosened bonds which you thought would not be loosed to all eternity, you are invited to the table; yes, although today you would be as dry as a spout-fish spine (stoban muisginn). You come to the Lord's table. Christ never gave that to any that are to be lost. You, who will be in Hell, you will not get this; but you, who will be in glory, you found in the Word of God what you will get in the Word of God in this world — a *drop* that loosened your bonds and turned the eye of your soul on Himself and you are since that day waiting on Himself to make you holy even as He is holy."

J.M.

Book Reviews

The Days of the Fathers in Ross-shire by Dr John Kennedy. Christian Focus Publications. Price £3.75.

This is a reprint of the fourth edition of Dr Kennedy's book. It contains a brief biographical introduction on Dr Kennedy by Rev. Neil Ross, Ullapool. "The Days of the Fathers in Ross-shire" has been out of print for some time and therefore a reprint is very welcome. The book gives us some indication of the state of religion in Ross-shire and elsewhere in the Highlands in former times. It records interesting accounts of the noted ministers and men of Ross-shire at a time when Easter Ross particularly was like a well-watered garden. It pleased the Lord to raise up eminently godly ministers and men in Ross-shire who were shining lights in their day and generation. Sadly, these times have largely passed away and parts once highly favoured are like a desolate wilderness. What a galaxy of stars were ministers such as Thos. Hogg, John McKilligan, James Fraser, Alness, John Porteous, Hector MacPhail, Charles Calder, Lachlan MacKenzie, Mr Macadam, Cromarty, and Dr Angus MacIntosh, Tain. To these could well be added the names of the noted men of those times. A chapter on the religion of Ross-shire defends that religion from the many aspersions cast on it. In the chapter Dr Kennedy deals with such matters as the introspection of the Highlander, the development of the fellowship meeting, the paucity of communicants, etc., and indicates the view held by the Ross-shire Fathers on the difference

between admission to the sacrament of Baptism and to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

The second half of the book is on the Minister of Killearnan, Rev John Kennedy of Redcastle, Dr Kennedy's own father and a noted servant of Christ. He traces his father's life from his birthplace in Kishorn on to his student days in Aberdeen, then to Lochbroom in Wester Ross, Eriboll in the North of Sutherland, Assynt in the West of Sutherland and finally to Killearnan in Easter Ross. In all these places his labours were owned of the Lord in the conversion of sinners. Anecdotes are told of the noted Christians in these different parts, including the 'woman of great faith' from Kinlochbervie. At Killearnan great crowds would gather for the Communion which was held in the open. As many as 10,000 people met on a communion Sabbath, with nearly 2,000 communicants being present. On ordinary Sabbaths a few hearers walked twenty miles to Killearnan, and one woman, Jane Bain came all the way from Sutherland, a distance of thirty miles. What a thirst there was for the water of life in those days. Many of the utterances of John Kennedy concerning future events bordered on the prophetic. Dr Kennedy explains these in the words of Scripture: "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him."

We are glad to commend this book to our readers.

D.B.M.

The Beauties of Boston, edited by Samuel McMillan. Christian Focus Publications. Price £5.95.

This reprint of "The Beauties of Boston" has a brief foreword on Thos. Boston by the late Rev. Ian R. Tallach. The book consists of selections from the writings of the noted Thomas Boston of Ettrick. The selections were made by Rev. Samuel McMillan who also was responsible for the well-known volumes, "The Beauties of Ralph Erskine." Mr McMillan was well qualified for making the selection from Thos. Boston's writings as he was responsible for editing the 1848 edition of the Whole Works of Thos. Boston. In that edition Boston's Works extend to eleven volumes, giving a total of 6,700 pages, including his noted works on the Four Fold State, the Art of Man Fishing and the Crook in the Lot.

In the Beauties of Boston, McMillan has succeeded in reducing the matter to about one tenth of the whole, the present edition containing 616 pages. These selections contain extracts from Boston on subjects such as Scripture, Prayer, Priesthood of Christ, Faith in Christ, Election, the Fall

of Man, and the Covenants of Works and Grace, all of which Boston was well qualified to handle most Scripturally.

The 'Beauties of Boston' is to be welcomed as it will give an opportunity to many to become more acquainted with the writings of this eminent Scottish divine than might otherwise be the case. The massiveness of his complete works might be a discouragement to many, but this volume will remove that difficulty. We are glad to commend these writings, though they need no commendation from us.

D.B.M.

From Grace to Glory by Rev. Murdoch Campbell. Banner of Truth Trust. Price £1.50

This paperback is a reprint of Rev. Murdoch Campbell's Meditations on the Book of Psalms. These consist of brief meditations extending to about a page or two on each Psalm. They are rich and have an unction about them, indicating that the writer was deeply exercised in soul and had a relish for the Word of God as contained in the Book of Psalms. The Author's breathing after heaven — where he is now — is apparent throughout the book. The personal and other anecdotes in the book also add to its attractiveness. Its devotional content and short meditations would make it eminently suitable for daily reading. We are glad once again to commend it to our readers.

D.B.M.

The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment by Jeremiah Burroughs. Banner of Truth Trust. Price £1.50.

This is the reprint of a paperback issued earlier by the Banner of Truth Trust. It is by one of the Puritans on a subject which should be of the deepest interest to Christians. The grace of Christian Contentment is, as the Author indicates, a rare jewel, but it ought not to be so rare as it has become in our day.

Burroughs describes Christian contentment as "that sweet, inward, quiet, gracious frame of spirit, which freely submits to and delights in God's wise and fatherly disposal in every condition". He divides the treatise into four sections:

1. The nature of Christian contentment
2. The art and mystery of it.
3. Lessons needed to bring the heart to contentment
4. The glorious excellence of this grace

Under the first of these he shows that Christian contentment is not opposed to a due sense of affliction, nor to making our moan and complaint to God, and to our friends, nor to seeking for help in different circumstances, nor to endeavouring to be delivered out of present afflictions by the use of lawful means, but is opposed to murmuring and repining at the hand of God, to vexing and fretting, to sinking discouragements, to sinful shiftings to get relief and to rebellious risings of heart against God. Under the second matter — the mystery of Christian contentment — Burroughs explains that the contented Christian is not only the most contented man in the world, but also the most unsatisfied, Godliness, he says, teaches us this mystery; that is, not to be satisfied with all the world as our portion and yet to be content with the meanest condition in which we are, He explains it further by showing that a gracious soul can be satisfied with nothing less than the Lord as his portion. He shows also that the gracious heart gets its supply of all things from the Covenant, and so comes to have contentment.

Under the third matter, Burroughs explains what lessons are to be learned in order to attain to contentment. Some of these are as follows: That I am nothing and deserve nothing; that I can do nothing; that I am worse than nothing; also the vanity of the creature; and that one thing is necessary. The final section of the book shows that the excellence of contentment consists in this — that by it worship due to God is given to Him, grace is much exercised, the soul fitted to receive mercy and do service, is delivered out of many temptations and is comforted. Burroughs, to bring out more clearly the excellence of contentment goes in quite fully to the evils of a murmuring spirit and concludes the whole treatise with advice on how to attain to contentment.

All in all the book is a rich jewel leading to the attainment of a rare jewel. May many peruse this book in a prayerful spirit and attain to the virtue of which it speaks — that is, in the words of Apostle Paul: "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."

D.B.M.

A Lifting up for the Downcast by William Bridge. Banner of Truth Trust. Price £1.50.

This Puritan paperback contains thirteen sermons on Psalm 42:1. He speaks first of the inward peace ordinarily enjoyed by the people of God, then that this peace may be interrupted and God's people cast down, and, last of all, that the people of God have no reason for their discouragements whatever their condition may be. He shows that true

saving peace loves to be examined, is willing to be examined, loves to be tried but that false peace cannot endure examination, flies from the light and does not love to be tried. He indicates what a mighty deep of discouragements the people of God may fall into and yet be godly and gracious. In general he says, God permits this for their own good, yet he shows also that there is much evil also in these discouragements. The rest of the book, that is, the main part of it is taken up with proposing encouragements for the lifting up of the downcast discouraged (1) by their greater and grosser sins, (2) from weakness of grace, (3) from failing in duty, (4) from lack of evidence for heaven, and non-assurance of the love of God, (5) from temptations, (6) from desertions, (7) from afflictions, (8) from unserviceableness, and (9) from their condition itself.

As this is a day when the people of God have much to contend with to make them discouraged, here is a book fitted to lift them out of a downcast state and encourage them to hope in the Lord.

D.B.M.

Isaac Watts Remembered by Rev. David Fountain. Gospel Standard Baptist Trust Ltd. £1.50.

This book was written as part of the celebrations of the 300th anniversary of the birth of Isaac Watts at Southampton in 1674. The author is minister of Spring Road Evangelical Church, Sholing, Southampton. In the book we are taken back to the aftermath of the Act of Uniformity of 1662 which ejected 2,000 ministers of the Church of England, and are given a vivid picture of life among the Dissenters in Southampton, London and other places.

Isaac Watts, born when his father was in prison for his religion, was a puny, delicate child, and remained a weakling all his days. Nevertheless, he lived to the age of 72. Intellectually bright, he was given a good education and sound Christian upbringing. From the book we learn a great deal about family and church life among the Independents of the period, and it makes very interesting reading.

At the age of 24, Watts became assistant to Dr Chauncey at Mark Lane in London, and two years later became minister of the congregation. His long ministry was very intermittent on account of frequent and sometimes long-continued illness. He gained note also as a poet, author and educator.

As Isaac Watts is best known as a hymn-writer, Mr Fountain does not fail to inform us how it came about that, at a time when Psalm-singing was

the established form of praise, this dissenting minister should write and introduce hymns into the worship. His aesthetic taste seems to have been early offended by the Sternhold & Hopkins version of Metrical Psalms dating from 1562. These have been described as "very faithful, but somewhat coarse and homely in phraseology." To Watts their faithfulness did not at all compensate for their coarseness, because he did not believe that the Psalms were the sole God-given medium of the universal Church's praise in public worship. Watts took seriously the suggestion that he himself should try to improve this part of the worship, and he began, significantly, not to produce a better version of the Psalms in metre, but to write hymns. Later he began a process of offering and commending these hymns to the churches.

When he turned his attention to "paraphrasing" the Psalms, he went far beyond that. A paraphrase is a rendering of the sense of a passage in other words, but Watts (to quote the author) believed that the meaning "should be developed in the light of the fuller New Testament revelation." The result was that his version was really his own loose and free interpretation of the Psalms, containing such alterations, additions and omissions as would make them better described as "The Psalms of David as amended by Isaac Watts."

Mr Fountain uses Ps. 117 as one of his examples because of its brevity, but a comparison of Watts' two stanzas with the two verses in the Authorised Version shows that in even the shortest of the Psalms, the poet's treatment leads to the loss of the vital connection between the verses, the introduction of extra matter in the first verse, and the obscuring of the point of the Psalm which is that at a future time the Gentiles would praise the Lord for the very same reason as Israel. Watts' production does not compare with the Scottish Metrical Psalm for faithfulness to the original, and its poetry is no better either.

Contrary to the views on this subject expressed in this book and elsewhere, we believe that Isaac Watts did a great disservice to the Church of God in this land by introducing hymns into its worship, and regretfully we feel bound to describe his efforts at versifying the inspired Psalms as a presumptuous interference with Holy Scripture.

The book is a well written and well printed paperback with a good number of interesting illustrations.

A. McP.

Hope is never ill when faith is well.

John Bunyan

Notes and Comments

The World in Unrest

The situation in the world at present gives cause for serious alarm. Nation rises against nation. The Middle-East is almost continually in a ferment. What shall the end of these things be? Wars and pestilences and famines are promised but there is One that sits King upon His Throne forever. The potsherds may strive with the potsherds of the earth, but the Lord rules over all. In the midst of all the present confusion and unrest, the Lord God omnipotent reigns supreme. Amidst all the dangers, nuclear and otherwise, there is One who holds the reins of the government of the universe and nothing can happen in all His domains, down to the sparrow falling to the ground and to the least of His creatures without His permission. The rulers of Russia, of China, of America may seem to have the destiny of the world in their hands, but these same rulers God has in His hand — even their very breath — so that ultimately the destiny of the world is not really in their hands but His. He can say to this evil ruler or that evil power, “thus far shalt thou come and no further”, and immediately it is effectually restrained. Let us not fear then. God is upon His throne and is King for evermore. Of whom shall I be afraid?

Religious Education in Schools and the Churches

In an address given to the Church of Scotland's Committee on Education, Mr Alex. Fletcher, Minister for Industry and Education at the Scottish Office indicated his sympathy with those who felt a need to strengthen the teaching of Christian religion in the schools and declared that in the field of religious education it was vital that account be taken of the views of the Churches. He urged the Church of Scotland to continue to make appropriate representations to the Central Committee for the Curriculum on Religious Education, and he hoped that at local level the Churches would continue to take the close interest which they have shown in the past in religious education in schools. Mr Fletcher did qualify his statement by indicating that he had to observe the long-standing tradition by which the Secretary of State refrained from direct involvement in religious education. Notwithstanding this, it is gratifying to know that there are those in the Scottish Office who are sympathetic to the need for a more effective policy in connection with religious education.

One of the main difficulties in the teaching of religious education in schools is the question of what is to be taught. Apart altogether from the

attempt to bring in Comparative Religion in place of the teaching of the Christian Religion, there is no agreement among Protestants of what constitutes the Christian religion. Rationalistic and ritualistic teaching has so invaded the Churches of the land that the Scriptural doctrines of true Christianity have been undermined. This makes it virtually impossible to get agreement on a proper syllabus for the teaching of religious education in the schools. The absence of family religion which leads to woeful ignorance on the part of the pupils even of the basics of true religion poses another difficulty. The varied outlook of the teachers also presents an even more formidable barrier to progress. To these problems we see no easy solution until a day of divine power will come enlightening the minds of men in the knowledge of Christ and of His Word.

Housewives Out Working

A heading in the Scotsman of 3/1/80 declares: "Britain tops league for working housewives." Since 1951, the report — taken from the Quarterly Lloyds Bank review — states, the proportion of married women who go out to work has risen from one-in-five to one-in-two. In 1977, it is stated, 43% of women worked in Britain, a percentage which is not matched in similar European countries. This is a league in which Britain could well afford to take a lower place — best of all, the bottom place.

The practice of married women going out to work has carried over from the time of the Second World War especially but has grown in proportion in recent times. The cost of inflation is no doubt the reason some married women would give for going out to work, but we fear that in many cases lack of contentment with one's lot is the real cause. Others no doubt would make the excuse of the lack of fulfilment and the need for some external outlet for their energies. Such should have considered before marriage whether they had any real vocation for marriage. While recognising that there are special cases in which it is imperative, through the illness of her husband or other justifiable cause, for a married woman to go out to work, there is little doubt that the procuring cause of much of the delinquency and moral decline among the young at the present time is the simple fact that their mothers went out to work when their proper place was in the home. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." But this cannot be done if the mother is absent from the home. It may well be that not only delinquency of children but also the high incidence of the breakdown of marriage may be, at least in part, attributable to the same cause.

Violent Deaths in Scotland

In 1979 no less than 75 persons died violent deaths in Scotland. 49 of these cases were murder and the remaining 26 culpable homicide. These figures though not as high as the figures for 1976 and 1977, cannot be regarded as other than serious and wholly unacceptable in a civilised community. How many of these deaths might have been prevented had the death penalty for murder been in vogue, it may be idle to speculate, but we have little doubt that the figure would have been very considerably reduced.

A significant revelation is given in the fact that no fewer than 53 of the 77 deaths were in the Strathclyde Region; that is, nearly 70%. In that region is the highest concentration of Roman Catholics in Scotland. If the prisons could speak, they could tell of the high percentage of Roman Catholics which find themselves behind bars on account of murder and other offences. On this matter, the Roman Catholic Church maintains a discreet silence lest it should be thought that there is a direct relationship between the number of Roman Catholics in prison and the kind of morality taught by the Roman Catholic Church. The day is coming, however, when this shall be unveiled for every eye to see it.

The Pope and Prof. Hans Kung

The well-known radical Roman Catholic theologian, Hans Kung, has been declared to be no longer a theologian of the Roman Catholic Church. This has been done by the Vatican's Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and has the approval of the Pope. As a consequence Prof. Kung may lose his teaching post at the University of Tübingen in West Germany.

Prof. Kung has been a prolific writer and, as a radical theologian, has challenged the Roman Catholic Church on its views on papal infallibility and celibacy and other matters. He has carried on his struggle within the Roman Catholic Church for many years. He is no follower, however, of Luther or the Swiss Reformers of the Reformation period but attacks the Roman Catholic Church from the standpoint of a modernistic theologian. This includes questioning the doctrine of the divinity of the Saviour, Consequently there is little hope of a reformation within the Roman Catholic Church from this source. Indeed, Scripture gives us reason to conclude that the Roman Catholic Church is not to be reformed but destroyed, as is seen in the call to believers within her pale — "Come ye out of her my people and be not partaker of her plagues."

Rhodesian Settlement

Because of our Mission in what is now called Zimbabwe-Rhodesia, the people of the Church have followed with deep interest the events which have led to a cessation of hostilities in that land. While it is gratifying that the slaughter of so many innocent lives and the cruelties practised have now come to an end, yet the difficulty of obtaining real peace must remain a matter of great concern. The existence of two armies within one State is one major difficulty facing the new Government, and it is not easy to see how it will be resolved. The conflict between capitalist and marxist ideologies is another matter likely to cause serious difficulty.

In view of these and other uncertainties it is the duty of the Lord's people to continue to pray for Zimbabwe-Rhodesia and to plead that a Government will come to power in that land under which the Gospel will continue to be preached and the Church of God extended throughout the whole of the nation. We pray that all on the Mission may be graciously upheld in these changing times and that they may have the Lord's protecting care over them during and after the transitional period.

Church Notes

Deputy to Canada

Rev. Donald Nicolson, Glendale, returned to this country on 15th January after two months at Chesley, Ontario supplying the congregation there. We acknowledge the Lord's goodness in bringing Mr Nicolson home in safety to his congregation and pray that his labours in Ontario may be followed by a blessing.

Deputy to Australia and New Zealand

Rev. Alex. Morrison, North Uist, accompanied by his wife, is expected to leave for a visit to Australia and New Zealand on 6th February and expects to be away for three months. We trust that the Lord's protecting care will be afforded Rev and Mrs Morrison on their journey and that Mr Morrison's labours in the Southern Hemisphere may be owned of the Lord to the good of many souls.

Induction at Perth

On Friday, 30th November, 1979 the Southern Presbytery met in the North Church, Mill Street, Perth in the presence of a large congregation,

for the purpose of inducting Rev. D.J. MacDonald, MA, to the Church Extension Charge of Perth, Stirling and Dundee. Revs. S.F. Tallach, J. Tallach, J.W. Ross and D. McLean were associated with the Presbytery. After the Edict was returned and the Proclamation read, the Moderator conducted Public Worship, preaching from John 4:35. The Clerk then read the Narrative of Proceedings leading to Mr. MacDonald's settlement, and the Moderator put the usual questions and read the Formula to Mr. MacDonald. The questions being satisfactorily answered, and the Formula subscribed, the Moderator, in name of the Head of the Church and the Presbytery, proceeded to induct Mr. MacDonald to the Charge. Mr. MacDonald then received the right hand of fellowship from the Presbytery members. Rev. L. MacLeod then addressed the minister and Rev. M. Radcliff the congregation. Rev. S.F. Tallach then spoke on behalf of the Church Extension Committee. The Moderator then presented Mr. MacDonald with a gift from the congregation, for which Mr. MacDonald expressed his thanks. The Moderator also thanked Rev. Sloane, minister of the North Church, for the use of the building on the occasion. The congregation was then dismissed after singing part of Psalm 122 and after the benediction.

As the three cities represented by the Extension Charge were once deeply committed to the cause of Christ and the Protestant Reformation, it is our sincere hope that the Holy Spirit will once more be poured out on their inhabitants, so that many will publicly acknowledge the God of Wishart, Knox, Bruce and others who laboured here in the better days of the Church in Scotland.

John M. Brentnall (Clerk)

Young People's Conference 1980

This conference has been arranged as follows:

Venue The David Russel Hall, St. Andrews University, St. Andrews, Fife.

Dates Thursday 3rd April — Saturday 5th April (D.V.)

Cost Those attending will be asked to pay £6 each. It is hoped that the balance will be met by a grant from the Forsyth Bequest.

Chairman Rev. D.J. Macdonald, M.A., Perth

Speakers Rev. D. MacLean, Glasgow and Rev. John Brentnall, B.A.

Papers 1. The Necessity of Saving Faith — Rev. D.J. Macdonald, M.A.

2. Positive Christian Living — Rev. D.J. Macdonald, M.A. 3.

Reformation Principles — Rev. D. MacLean

The programme will also include time for daily worship, bible study, group discussion, psalm singing and an open session when questions from conference members will be put to the panel. An afternoon visit to see the historic sights of St. Andrews will be conducted by Rev. J. Brentnall.

Age Limit 16 years and over

Registration Please write as soon as possible enclosing cheque or Postal Order for £6 to Mr. W. MacKenzie, Dee Bank, 7 Crown Drive, Inverness. Joining instructions will (D.V.) be issued approximately one week before the conference.

Travel Arrangements It is recognised that some may have difficulty in returning home on the Saturday and to cater for any such two of the ministers taking part have offered to provide accommodation in their manse over the weekend where necessary.

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

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

Northern: At Kinlochbervie on 12th February at 5.30 p.m. and at 6.30 p.m. for Moderation in of Call.

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.

Presbytery Tribute to the Late Rev. Donald A. McFarlane M.A.

As a Presbytery we record with sorrow the removal by death of the Reverend Donald A. MacFarlane until recently the revered minister of our Dingwall and Beauly congregation for 43 years. Those who were acquainted with Mr. MacFarlane as a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospel and in the Church, and as a friend, feel a great sense of loss to the Church of Christ and sincere sorrow that such a godly and gracious witness to the Son of God and to the faith of God's Word, is no more in our midst.

He was acquainted with trials and afflictions during his pilgrimage; albeit the Most High spared him to the ripe old age of 90 years, and in the appointed time brought him comfortably through the valley of the shadow of death to be with his Redeemer and Lord, and to the rest that remaineth to the people of God in heaven.

It was apparent to discerning Christians, favoured with his company and conversation, that Mr. MacFarlane was one acquainted with the deep things of God in his spiritual experience, although he himself took a humble place at his Master's feet. His Christian character consistently signified that he was a man who feared the Lord greatly. To those capable

of judging, he was endowed with no ordinary but with superior intellect and at times spontaneously revealed that he possessed a powerful memory.

His preaching was lively and in a manner all his own. It was full of Gospel truth to the exaltation of the crucified and risen Lord; and exhibited his clear exposition of and devotion to Biblical and Reformed theology. His expressed desire was that sinners on the broad way to destruction would be turned to the Saviour by the grace and power of the Holy Spirit. He could on occasion expose and condemn erroneous teaching and superficial religion in an authoritative and most solemn manner. Yet he was outstandingly characterised by spiritual Christian and sincere charity and kindness towards his friends and all with whom he came in contact, the young as well as mature persons. And he was tender and sympathetic towards those in affliction of any kind. He possessed a goodly measure of the compassion exercised by the Lord Jesus as revealed in the Gospels.

As a man of prayer, he led those who heard him to the Throne of Grace, in the name of the Mediator, Jesus Christ, in a most solemn, gracious and earnest manner. He is now fully engaged in praising the God of his salvation in the company of the spirits of just men made perfect in Zion above.

Our sincere sympathy is extended to Mrs. MacFarlane, the widow who was to our late friend and brother minister, a helpmeet indeed, having lovingly and tenderly and in a most capable manner cared for his every need through the years till their being parted by death.

We also extend our sincere sympathy to all the other relatives. And may they and we be enabled to follow the Lord and also them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

“Help, Lord, because the godly man
doth daily fade away;

And from among the sons of men
the faithful do decay”

— Psalm 12:1

Apology — *We regret the delay in the issuing of the January Magazine. This was due to the installing of new equipment at the Printers.*

Acknowledgment of Donations

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

Sustenance Fund: Anon, 'M', £60; Harris F.P., £20; Friend, Stockinish, Harris, £1,500.

Home Mission Fund: Anon, 'M', £10; Harris F.P., £10.

Jewish & Foreign Mission Fund: Tolsta Friend, £6; Friend, Canada, \$20; Anon, 'M', £10; Anon, £20.

Aged & Infirm Ministers' etc Fund: Anon., £30; Anon, 'M', £10.

College & Library Fund: Anon, 'M', £10.

Organisation Fund: Anon., £20; Anon, 'M', £10.

General Building Fund: Anon, 'M', £10.

Dominions & Overseas Fund: Anon, 'M', £10 and £25 for Fede Viva; "In memory of our mother, Mrs Christina Fowler Gibson", Calgary, \$85.

China Mission Fund: Anon, 'M', £25.

Home of Rest Fund: Anon, 'M', £10; Friend, Melvaig, £5; Friend, Raasay, £1; Dr. MacKenzie, Idaho, U.S.A., £10; Friend, Raasay, £1.

Trinitarian Bible Society: Portree Congregation, £214; Ness Congregation, £145.70; Anon., £20.

The Treasurers of the following congregations desire to acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:-

Dumbarton: Friend, Glasgow £5 per T. MacRae (Twice); Friend, Glasgow (St Jude's Plate) £5, all three for Dumbarton Church Extension; Psalm 22:31 £5 for Sabbath School (in plate).

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Glasgow: N.H. £1 per Rev. D.M.; Anon, Dumfries £8; In loving memory of Alex. Campbell and Mary Mackinnon, Waternish £20; Anon £10, all for Sust. Fund; J.W.D. £10; J.C. £2; Anon £5; M.S. £5; E.M.M. £3; Anon £5; A.McP, £5, all for Bus Expenses; Anon £3, for Congr. Fund; In memory of Miss J. McK. £10 for Congr. Fund per Rev. D.M.; Anon £30; J.G. £10 per Rev. D.M.; A.M. £2.50 per Rev D.M., last three for Communion Expenses; Anon £5 for Trinitarian Bible Society; Anon £3 for Underground Evangelism; Anon £5 for Blythwood Tract Society; M.S. £2 for Welfare of Youth; Anon, £15 for Home of Rest.

Kyle: Inverness Friends £10; Envelope in Kyle plate £10; In Kyle Plate £50, all for Kyle Manse Fund; Graham House, Dornie, Church door collection £1.40 per Mr Van Woerden.

Ness: R & J.M., Port of Ness £10; Mrs & Mrs MacLeod, California £20; Friends, Stornoway £35; Mr & Mrs M., High St., Skigersta £10; Mr & Mrs M., 15 Skigersta £10; Mr & Mrs M., 20 Skigersta £10, Mrs MacL., Portrona Dr, Stornoway £20; Friends, Ness per A.M.L. £10; Friends, U.S.A. £235, all for Congr. Purposes.

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Oban: Mr. D.S., Perth £100 in memory of his wife; Mrs F., Stirling £11 per J.M.; Mrs T., Stirling £20 per J.M., all for Church Funds.

Perth, Stirling and Dundee: A Tolsta Friend £10 per W.D.F. for Joint Congregation.

Portree: Anon, Braes £5 for Church Bus per F.M.; Anon £30 for Foreign Missions (in church plate); Mrs R.L. £5 for Congr. Purposes per F.M.

Raasay: Friend, Inverarish £5; Friend, late of Raasay £5, both for Sust. Fund and both per J.M. MacLeod; Friend, Raasay £20 for Foreign Missions; A Friend, late of Raasay £2 for Church door collection; Friend, late of Raasay £5 for Communion Expenses; Friend at Communion £2; Friend, late of Raasay £2; last four per J.M. MacLeod, Friend, Raasay £3.

Stornoway: Lover of the Cause, Dun Berisay £6 for Congr. Fund; Two Friends, Inverness £30 for Congr. Purposes; Friend, Finsbay £20 for Car Fund; Friend, N.T., £15 for Sust. Fund, all per Rev. J. MacLeod.

Strath: In memory of Mrs MacKay, £20 from husband and family for Sust. Fund.

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