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The Cause of Christ

The Lord has a Church in this world with which His interests are bound up. He has what is often referred to as the invisible Church, that is, those who have been savingly wrought upon by divine grace in a day of God's mercy and grace and who belong to the election of grace. He also has a visible Church in the world, that is, those who profess His Name and who possess the blessings of His Word and worship and many other outward privileges.

It is clear from the Word of God that the Lord is to have a Church in the world so long as sun and moon endure. He is to have a seed to serve Him and He is to have a visible Church — a people gathering together to worship him, sometimes in circumstances of great danger to themselves, at other times in circumstances of more comparative ease and comfort. Wherever the Word of God is declared in purity, the sacraments administered according to Christ's appointment, and discipline exercised in a Scriptural way, there we may expect to find Christ's Cause in the world.

One evident mark of the Cause of Christ is that it will be beset with many enemies. Just as the children of Israel in the land of Caanan were surrounded by hostile nations so it is with the Church of God in the world. The world never was and never shall be a friend of the true Church of God. There is ever antagonism between them which shall never be resolved. So, too, Satan is ever an enemy of the true Cause of Christ. He will never cease from assaulting it at every opportunity. Again, the world in the Church is an inveterate foe to Christ's Cause.

Ishmael and Isaac are never to agree. "As then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now." The Cause of Christ, then, is not to lack enemies, whether it be from within or without.

How then is the Cause of Christ to endure, far less prosper and flourish? The apparent weakness of the Church of God belies her strength and power. Were she to rely upon some inherent strength and power her overthrow would be easy. But it is not so. Her strength and her power is in her God. She cannot be overthrown. Let her become as weak to outward eyes as she became in the days of Noah, yet the Lord will intervene and by His mighty power and strength preserve her alive. In doing so He will not only cause astonishment to be written on the faces of His adversaries but also make His own people wonder at the greatness of His power in their deliverance.

We live in a day of blasphemy and rebuke when men are ready to deride the Church of God and Cause of Christ in the world. The adversaries of Zion are ready to write her off as a spent force and as of no consequence whatsoever in the advanced state of mankind in the closing decades of the twentieth century. Such do not know the thoughts of God. The thoughts of God towards His Cause are far removed from the thoughts of the world concerning her: "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." And if these were His thoughts toward her in a day of backsliding when the stroke of His judgment was ready to fall upon her, what will His thoughts be toward her when she shall seek Him with her whole heart.

Let us take courage. The Lord is not to cast away His people, whom He foreknew. He is yet going to build up His Zion. The plottings of the enemies of Christ will not be able to prevent it. When He comes to build up His Zion and to gather together the outcasts of Israel and to embrace in the arms of restoring love His ancient people the Jews, what a day that will be! Let us plead for it and for the reviving of the Lord's Cause in our own midst, that the Lord would be pleased to pour out His Spirit upon us as a branch of His visible Church in the world. Let us embrace now by faith the promises concerning the building up of Zion and rejoice now, even in this dark day, in the ultimate fulfilment of them.

"For God will Judah's cities build,
and He will Sion save,
That they may dwell therein, and it
in sure possession have."

Sermon

by Rev. Donald Campbell, MA, Edinburgh.

(This sermon was preached at the Inverness Communion in January 1976.)

“O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice and thy countenance is comely.” Song of Solomon 2: 14.

There have been, and are, several opinions expressed as to the reasons why Solomon wrote this Song. The most common view, among the erroneous ones, is that it was a song written by Solomon to commemorate his own marriage with the daughter of Pharaoh. It is true that that was a great occasion in his life; not that we are to conclude that it was a beneficial one for the nation or for himself; for it was an affinity which set a dangerous precedent and example before the people, as one can clearly see centuries after all this in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. When these great men were actively engaged amidst much opposition in restoring the city and the temple and the wall this kind of affinity was discovered in the congregation. It was one which caused great grief, first to Ezra and then to the whole nation. But, the accepted view and the one which, no doubt, is the correct one is the one which maintains that we have here a greater than Solomon and, indeed, a greater than the daughter of Pharaoh; that we have none less than the Solomon of the New Testament, the Prince of Peace, the Saviour, the Son of God in our nature coming in God's great name to save His people with an everlasting salvation. Solomon saw the glory of Christ, just as Abraham did, and as the disciples, by the grace and the light bestowed upon them, saw the glory of the Anointed. So it was then, that the Holy Spirit in this song, using figurative language of the most sublime kind described the relationship between Christ and His Church.

It is in this light that we would endeavour just now to consider the portion before us. We should see Christ in it, evidently set forth in His relationship with His own spouse, His own Church, His own body whom He describes here, whose safety and security, whose comeliness in Him, He describes with great impressiveness.

1. The Church as described in the text in the words: “O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs.”

2. The Church trusted in the words: “Let me see thy countenance, let me

hear thy voice." The Lord has pleasure both in the countenance and voice of his people: He loves to hear their cry, He loves to see their tears and He knows that their countenance reflects His own image.

silly 3. The Church commended by none other than and none less than the Beloved Himself in the words: "For sweet is thy voice and thy countenance is comely." That is His estimate of her whatever you may think of her. It is true that the world's estimate of the Church of God in the world, of the members of that mystical body, the Church, is one of rejection. They are despised, they are persecuted, they are considered the lowest in the world; if possible they would be destroyed. Therefore those who are followers of the Lamb, those who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, who are united to Him in the bond of the everlasting Covenant should not think it strange when they are tried and persecuted and called upon to suffer much in this world. They have on the other hand to consider the fact that their safety and security are absolute, that no plague can come near their dwelling, no ill will befall them for they are kept through the power of God through faith unto salvation. It is impossible that any of them should perish. It was with that assurance that the Lord Jesus Christ left His people in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

Firstly 1. The Church described by her own Saviour, Husband and Lord — described first in the words "My dove". We know that the dove is a very timid creature; we also know that it was one of those birds, which was considered ceremonially clean for the sacrifice — and there are other things which one could say about the dove. But I think the particular matter to which the text directs attention with reference to the dove is the oneness of the Church. It does not say "My doves" neither does it say "the wings of my dove." It just says "my dove" — one Church, one body. The apostle confirms that and emphasises the fact when he says that in Christ Jesus there "is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3: 28. He has much to say on that aspect of the Christian Church, the Church of the living God in this world. But in so doing, the apostle is careful to show that "my dove" is a body of members; not a oneness which consists of one thing, but a oneness which has within it many members, each member having its own essential place and part to play in the lawful functioning of the body.

No member of the body of Christ can afford to despise another for one is very much dependent on the other for its own normal functioning. You can despise the failings and shortcomings of your brother; but if you

do you are only causing schism in the body; you are only causing unnecessary trouble. It certainly would behove us, and it would prove most beneficial for us all if we could live out our lives in terms of the apostolic injunction: "Let every one esteem (the) other better than himself, look not every one his own things but on the things which belong to others."

We may ask the question, where do we find or trace the unity of this dove? The oneness of this body the Church is traced of course first to the Head — the Head who is the Head over all things, having constant and absolute control of the body, and expecting the body to respond to every exhortation. It is derived then, first from the Head. Its very life, its motions, its activities, its witness, its ability to walk or speak or think — all these depend on the one source, on Him who is the fountain of living waters, out of whose fulness the church has received and grace for grace. Of course there is also the Spirit — the One Spirit, the Holy Spirit. The Spirit who works in the souls of sinners here in Inverness is the same Spirit who works in the souls of sinners in the Southern Hemisphere: Australia, New Zealand, Africa, or on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. The same Spirit which the Lord promised: Zechariah 12: 10 "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem" is poured upon all nations. One Lord and One Spirit, the One and only One who can glorify Christ by receiving of His and shewing it unto us.

My dove, my one, my church everywhere, my people from the rising of the sun to where it goeth down. Every one of them is included here. Those who are today suffering for righteousness sake in Siberia, in the cold, in these terrible conditions, deprived of human consideration and sympathy — the Lord is saying to them as He is saying to His people here today, "My dove." He is addressing His people and He is addressing them as a whole; every one of them, the unknown ones and the known ones for the most vital organs of the body are the hidden ones. It may well be that that has a special application in our day and generation. Public witness is weak, nevertheless the life of the church continues. Despite all the weaknesses of the church, the discouragements and so on He is saying to her "My dove." Wherever you are you are my dove. You are afraid, you are timid but you are clean and you are worthy of being offered on My altar. You give yourself in service day and night to Me, and I will bless thee and help thee to continue faithful to the end.

We must move on to the words, "that art in the clefts of the rock." First the rock. When we come across that word in Scripture, we are immediately referred to Christ Himself who said, "On this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Matthew 16: 18. We find the same in the promises. "I will lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation." Isaiah 28: 16.

It is a rock which is the hope of the people of God on which they rest their hopes for time and for eternity. "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and art sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." John 6: 68-69. Of course, He is a sure foundation, a tried stone. He is Himself worthy of being the foundation on which His people in all generations, could afford and can afford to build their hope for eternity. "None perish that him trust." He will present them all and present them in all the will of God before His glory with exceeding joy. "And the rock that followed them was Christ." I Corinthians 10: 4. Notice, the Rock following them was the water from the Rock. Every day they saw that water they were reminded of the Rock. They were also reminded of the clefts. If the Rock had not been smitten there would have been no water but because the Rock was smitten there was abundance of water. If the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ had not taken His place at the time appointed where He is now on the throne of God and of the Lamb, there would be no river of water of life flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb. No, there would be no leaves to heal or fruit to feed on. But, because the Rock was rent there is abundance of water and it is flowing freely. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." Revelation 22: 17. Say to yourself today, come, come and drink out of the river, the water of life, freely. It is the foundation of our salvation that the Rock has clefts. It is in these clefts that birds could obtain sanctuary and protection from their enemies. The figure here directs our attention to something which belongs to Jesus Christ our Lord, our Rock, our foundation stone. Can we think of Christ as our foundation without thinking of His wounds? Is it possible? Whether it is possible or not, it is certainly not lawful to think of Him as the foundation of our hope, the basis on which our sins are forgiven, if we think of that Rock without thinking of His wounds. Here is the Rock, and the clefts of the Rock; here is Christ presented to us with His wounds.

Where do we find Him first presented to us with His wounds? We find this first in the covenant. We are told over and over again in the Word of God that this was so when He entered into covenant with His Father. When the covenant was made it concerned sinners, transgressors of the Divine Law. That being so it was necessary that their salvation should be founded upon this eternal truth: "He was wounded for our transgres-

sions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." Isaiah 53: 5.

This is also the subject-matter of the Psalms. It is clear from the 40th Psalm, for example, that God was not and would not be satisfied with the sacrifices which men and women could offer in the world as a basis on which He could and would forgive the sins of a number which no man can number. "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not." Hebrews 10: 5. No, that is not enough but, "a body hast thou prepared ME" Hebrews 10: 5. "I was set up before the world was, from everlasting" and then before the world was, before there was a man created, "my delights were with the sons of men." Proverbs 8: 31. Where could He have delights with the sons of men when there were none but in the covenant and in the foreknowledge of God, who sees the end from the beginning? He undertook their salvation, and in doing so, He said, "I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me. I delight to do thy will, O my God." Psalm 40: 7,8. Then again, the clefts of the Rock, the wounds of the Redeemer are in the promises of the Old Testament, which is just a revelation of, or a discovering of the covenant, unfolding it to the Church of God; and from the first page of that volume we read of the wounds of the Saviour of men. In the first promise, itself, we read of the bruising of His heel.

Then he goes on to say: "in the secret places of the stairs" or (the ledges). A stair is for climbing. These ledges were on the stair which the climber could use to climb to the top of the Rock. And, the everlasting covenant, the Covenant of Grace, the Covenant between the Father and the Eternal Son, on behalf of that multitude to whom God destined to eternal life, includes not only the wounds of a Saviour, but it also assures the ascent of those people whose names are in the Covenant; they will one day reach the gates of Heaven. However hard the going may be, you may rest assured that this is a stair which leads to the safe place in which their lives are hid, where He is Himself, even Christ. But also, on these stairs there are secret places. In all probability it is true literally; certainly, it is true spiritually that there is a connection between the ledges or stairs and the clefts. No member of Christ's dove can ascend without having his or her eye always on Him who was wounded for our transgressions. They shall look on Him who they have pierced, "running the race set before us looking unto Jesus." Hebrews 12: 1,2. In looking to Him, we look at His wounds in which safety lies. "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them." Isaiah 63: 9. Here we have the church and this is her position; this is how she appears, this is how He sees her; chosen in Himself, safe in His wounds, assured

of her redemption; by the grace of God, going from strength to strength, ascending, having her conversation in Heaven; though in the world, yet not of it, and so she is on her way to a better country, to a wealthy place, to a city of habitation.

The dove in the clefts of the rock is always safe. No danger can reach her there. No man can erase from the Book of Life any of the names written in it. Whatever you may think of this one or that other one, if such a one has his or her name written in the Book of Life, he is like a dove in the clefts of the rock. No weapon formed against them shall prosper, their enemies will be found liars, they shall tread upon their high places. All the efforts that man puts forward in the hope that he can destroy the people of God and the church of God, will prove altogether futile. "My God shall supply all your need." Philippians 4: 19. The covenant is ordered in all things and sure. But the ledges of the stair are exposed. You do not have a stair inside a rock; the stair is on the face of the rock, exposed to the view of friend and foe. It has pleased the Lord — although He is sure of the final deliverance, although He knows He can save her out of all her trouble — it has pleased Him in His own Divine sovereignty, to place her in this world in a situation in which she becomes the target of the archers. They are there. The Psalmist knew it. They are there with their bows and with their arrows, also with their quivers full, and their target was David himself if they could destroy him. As we consider the history of the elect down through the ages: what they had been subject to, the dangers to which they had been exposed, how they had been from generation to generation the object of the world's enmity and hatred, persecuted men and women of whom the world was not worthy, they went about in sheepskins and goatskins, they were treated as the off-scouring of all things. The men who preached the everlasting gospel to Jews and Gentiles were treated and charged as the enemies of mankind. These men and women were on the stairs with their names written in the Lamb's Book of Life, on their way to Heaven. The enemy pursued their souls — enemies seen and unseen.

It may well be that that is how you feel today. You would not deny for anything in this world that you have a hope in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, that you have by the grace of God, committed to Him the salvation of your soul. At the same time you are persecuted, you feel exposed, you are afraid that the archers with their arrows may aim at you and wound you — and many have been wounded on the stairs. The Psalmist himself compares himself to the hart who thirsts after the water brooks. Poor David with the arrow in his soul, which the enemy had

lodged there — lust. If you are not afraid of lust, temptations, even when you feel confident that your feet are on the Rock, remember that they are on the stairs. Remember that you and I have need of grace and wisdom that, after we have done the will of God, we may obtain the promises. We must not relax the vigil. We must not think that, because we have a moment now and again in which we have occasion and reason to rejoice in God our Saviour, that we are immune from danger.

Then the secret places are on the stair. It is on the stair they are. Would you not say that this is one secret place on the stair on the way to Heaven? Would you not say that it is of the great High Priest of your profession; it is one of the secret places. I am sure if the apostle Peter were here today, he would say, “yes.” When he was in the hall of the high priest, wounded by the archers; they had aimed at him accurately and their arrow pierced his very soul, it poisoned him, it turned his very language into that of Satan’s and not the language of Canaan or the language of his spiritual mind. There he was cursing, there he was swearing, there he was asserting on oath that he did not know the Saviour. You may say, ‘That could never happen to me.’ That is why the Lord is saying to you not only — My dove you are in the clefts of the rock, you are, of course, in the wounds of the Saviour, in the Covenant of Grace and there you are safe always’, but also He is saying, You are in the stair, you are in the clefts — the same road. You must not think that you are a better or a more experienced climber than Peter and David or any of those great men who were renowned more so for their piety than for their impiety.’

Peter knew the secret places. The Lord said to him, “Satan hath desired to have you to, that he may sift you as wheat.” Luke 22: 31. If he can, Satan will make his net as wide as possible so that you will fall through and the Covenant of Grace will be proved insufficient and insecure as far as the salvation of the elect is concerned. But no, in Peter’s case, the secret place was there, the Intercessor was there. The Lord Jesus Christ, even at that dark hour could direct the attention of the Father as He did in the seventeenth chapter of John; He could say with all confidence: “none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.” John 17: 12. Also there is this secret place, and I hope we use it; it is nearer us than Heaven. There is secret prayer, the Throne of Grace. You see the angel of the Covenant has a censer and it is full of incense — the fulness and the merit of His own finished work. But He likes to have incense come from here below. Even he likes to see His people pouring out their souls. He loved to hear David himself, before the Saviour came; O how he loved to hear David uttering the fifty-

first Psalm, making his appeal to the grace and mercy of God, appealing to the mercy seat and the Intercessor within the veil. This is what you and I should be doing today if we are on the way to the Celestial City. We certainly should use the secret place in the stair, the secret place of prayer. For it is here down below that we have the opportunity of praying to Him. It is here down below that we are made sensible of our own weakness, our own insufficiency, our own constant need of grace. When we go up there we shall know ourselves as we are known, as He knows us in the Covenant and as He knows us saved with an everlasting salvation. There will be no sin there. While we are down here it behoves us to make as much use as we possibly can of prayer, of the Throne of Grace, that we may increase in our knowledge and in our experience of the great efficacy of the blood which cleanseth us from all sin.

The means of grace and the Lord's Table are secret places on the stair. Many present of the Lord's people here today have every hope of commemorating the death of Christ till He come. But there may be some and they are in the stair; they are on the same way, they are climbing up by the same way and by the same means. What are they doing? Is the enemy tempting you to make you more aware than ever of your weakness, your own inability, your own unworthiness and of many other possibilities which you never realised? He is tempting you so that you will not venture further, so that you will not do your duty, you will not pay your vows. Well, this is what you should do: take this from the Lord, "My dove in the clefts of the rock, in the secret place of the stairs." You go and you accept from Himself what He said to His servant, the apostle Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee." 2 Corinthians 12: 9. Be not afraid. You are not going to do it in your own strength; no one ever did who glorified God. You are doing it in the strength of God the Lord. Then once you get into that secret place you will hear the voice, not only from behind but from within, "I will constantly go on in strength of God the Lord; and thine own righteousness, even thine, alone, I will record." Psalm 71: 16.

Second

2. He says to her, "Let me see thy countenance." Now we know the countenance or the face is the part of the body by which we recognise one another. People who know us intimately would know our hand apart from our body and so on; but, generally we know each other by our faces. The whole man as it were, the whole image is expressed in the face. Now, the Lord in asking His people to show Him their countenance, has a reason for doing so. He wants to look at His Church's countenance — and He says that her countenance is comely — that He may recognise

her. He looked on Peter, and we would say that Peter was everything but a true and faithful Christian that day. But when the Lord looked on him, it was the old Peter, the same Peter and the Peter who would weep tears of repentance. He looked on Peter and although not a word was said, He had said enough, surely. He said, "My dove which art in the clefts of the rock in the secret places of the stair." Surely that is enough. 'Now let me see thy face to see if My own image is still reflected there.'

Let us look on one another. The apostle says this is how we are living our lives in response to His own command or invitation that we with open faces, unveiled faces (beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory). Let the bride take the veil off her face. Let me see her countenance, the countenance of the Church, so that the Church may look on Me.' We with open faces, with unveiled faces, looking on a glass, on what? On the glory of the Lord, the glorious Saviour, the One who in all our afflictions was afflicted, the One who took unto Himself our nature, who was born of a woman, made under the law that He might redeem us who are under the law that we might receive the adoption of sons.

"Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice." It is on the face or the countenance that the eyes with the tears are. It is on the same face that the mouth and tongue to speak are. Now the dove, the church is asked to speak, to give expression to the inner man. He says her speech is sweet. We would give this example: Peter at the sea of Tiberias. Notice the change there. The Lord asked him to show Him his countenance in the hall of the high priest and the dear man no doubt did so. The immediate result was the tears of sorrow and repentance; every one of them was put in God's bottle and preserved. But here he is now at the sea of Tiberias and he is asked to speak, he is given an opportunity to speak. "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" John 21: 15. The question was asked three times. Peter could answer graciously every time and, indeed, every time he spoke he gave an added proof that he had the image of Him whom he loved with all his soul. There was that love. There was a secret communion between his soul and the Beloved. "Thou knowest that I love thee." John 21: 15. But He said again, "Lovest thou me?" Peter was not discouraged, he was not embarrassed: 'Thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. And Thou art the Searcher of hearts, Thou who canst and hast full access to my heart, Thou knowest that in my heart I do not regard sin. I love thee. Thy name to me is as ointment poured forth.'

Well friends, you have your duty. You, who are members of the dove

of Christ, whose dove is in the clefts of the rock and who are in the secret places of the stairs on your way to Heaven. He would have you show your face to Him today and tomorrow. And not only so, but He expects this of you that you would open your mouth that He may fill it with that which refreshes and strengthens the soul. May grace be given to you and to me to follow the Lamb and to follow Him fully all the days of our lives.

Come Out

by Bishop J. C. Ryle

(Continued from page 176)

"Come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord."
— 2 Cor. 6: 17

II. Let me now try to show *what does not constitute separation from the world.*

The point is one which requires clearing up. There are many mistakes made about it. You will sometimes see sincere and well-meaning Christians doing things which God never intended them to do, in the matter of separation from the world, and honestly believing that they are in the path of duty. Their mistakes often do great harm. They give occasion to the wicked to ridicule all religion, and supply them with an excuse for having none. They cause the way of truth to be evil spoken of, and add to the offence of the cross. I think it a plain duty to make a few remarks on the subject. We must never forget that it is possible to be very much in earnest, and to think we are "doing God service," when in reality we are making some great mistake. There is such a thing as "zeal not according to knowledge." There are few things on which it is so important to pray for a right judgement and Christian commonsense, as about separation from the world.

(a) When St. Paul said, "Come out and be separate," he did not mean that Christians ought to give up all callings, trades, professions, and worldly business. He did not forbid men to be soldiers, sailors, lawyers, doctors, merchants, bankers, shopkeepers, or tradesmen. There is not a word in the New Testament to justify such a line of conduct. Cornelius the centurion, Luke the physician, Zenas the lawyer, are examples to the contrary. Idleness is in itself a sin. A lawful calling is a remedy against temptation. "If any man will not work, neither shall he eat" (2 Thess. 3: 10). To give up any business of life, which is not necessarily

sinful, to the wicked and the devil, from fear of getting harm from it, is lazy cowardly conduct. The right plan is to carry our religion into our business, and not to give up business under the specious pretence that it interferes with our religion.

(b) When St. Paul said, "Come out and be separate," he did not mean that Christians ought to decline all intercourse with unconverted people, and refuse to go into their society. There is no warrant for such conduct in the New Testament. Our Lord and His disciples did not refuse to go to a marriage feast, or to sit at meat at a Pharisee's table. St. Paul does not say, "If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast," you must not go, but only tells us how to behave if we do go. (1 Cor. 10: 27). Moreover, it is a dangerous thing to begin judging people too closely, and settling who are converted and who are not, and what society is godly and what ungodly. We are sure to make mistakes. Above all, such a course of life would cut us off from many opportunities of doing good. If we carry our Master with us wherever we go, who can tell but we may save some, and get no harm?

(c) When St. Paul says "Come out and be separate," he does not mean that Christians ought to take no interest in anything on earth except religion. To neglect science, art, literature, and politics, — to read nothing which is not directly spiritual, — to know nothing about what is going on among mankind, and never to look at a newspaper. — To care nothing about the government of one's country, and to be utterly indifferent as to the persons who guide its counsels and make its laws, — all this may seem very right and proper in the eyes of some people. But I take leave to think that it is an idle, selfish neglect of duty. St Paul knew the value of good government, as one of the main helps to our living "a quiet and peaceable life in godliness and honesty" (1 Tim 2: 2). St. Paul was not ashamed to read heathen writers, and to quote their words in his speeches and writing. St. Paul did not think it beneath him to show an acquaintance with the laws and customs and callings of the world, in the illustrations he gave from them. Christians who plume themselves on their ignorance of secular things are precisely the Christians who bring religion into contempt. I knew the case of a blacksmith who would not come to hear his clergyman preach the Gospel, until he found out that he knew the properties of iron. Then he came.

(d) When St. Paul said, "Come out and be separate," he did not mean that Christians should be singular, eccentric, and peculiar in their dress, manners, demeanour, and voice. Anything which attracts notice in these matters is most objectionable, and ought to be carefully avoided.

To wear clothes of such a colour, or made in such a fashion that when you go into company every eye is fixed on you, and you are the object of general observation, is an enormous mistake. It gives occasion to the wicked to ridicule religion, and looks self-righteous and affected. There is not the slightest proof that our Lord and His apostles, and Priscilla, and Persis, and their companions, did not dress and behave just like others in their own ranks of life. On the other hand, one of the many charges our Lord brings against the pharisees was that of making broad their phylacteries, and enlarging the borders of their garments, so as to be "seen of men" (Matt. 23: 5). True sanctity and sanctimoniousness are entirely different things. Those who try to show their unworldliness by wearing conspicuously ugly clothes, or by speaking in a whining, snuffling voice, or by affecting an unnatural slavishness, humility, and gravity of manner, miss their mark altogether, and only give occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.

(e) When St. Paul said "Come out and be separate," he did not mean that Christians ought to retire from the company of mankind, and shut themselves up in solitude. It is one of the crying errors of the Church of Rome to suppose that eminent holiness is to be attained by such practices. It is the unhappy delusion of the whole army of monks, nuns, and hermits. Separation of this kind is not according to the mind of Christ. He says distinctly in His last prayer, "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil" (John 17: 15). There is not a word in the Acts or Epistles to recommend such a separation. True believers are always represented as mixing in the world, doing their duty in it, and glorifying God by patience, meekness, purity, and courage in their several positions, and not by cowardly desertion of them. Moreover it is foolish to suppose that we can keep the world and the devil out of our hearts by going into holes and corners. True religion and unworldliness are best seen, not in timidly forsaking the post which God has allotted to us, but in manfully standing our ground, and showing the power of grace to overcome evil.

(f) Last, but not least, when St. Paul said, "Come out and be separate," he did not mean that Christians ought to withdraw from every Church in which there are unconverted members, or to refuse to worship in company with any who are not believers, or to keep away from the Lord's table if any ungodly people go up to it. This is a very common but a very grievous mistake. There is not a text in the New Testament to justify it, and it ought to be condemned as a pure invention of man. Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself deliberately allowed Judas Iscariot to be an

apostle for three years, and gave him the Lord's Supper. He has taught us in the parable of the wheat and tares that converted and unconverted will be together till the harvest, and cannot be divided. In his Epistles to the Seven Churches, and in all St. Paul's Epistles, we often see faults and corruptions mentioned and reproved, but we are never told that they justify desertion of the assembly, or neglect of ordinances. In short, we must not look for a perfect Church, a perfect congregation, and a perfect company of communicants until the marriage supper of the Lamb. If others are unworthy Churchmen, or unworthy partakers of the Lord's Supper, the sin is theirs and not ours: we are not their judges. But to separate ourselves from Church assemblies, and deprive ourselves of Christian ordinances, because others use them unworthily, is to take up a foolish, unreasonable, and unscriptural position. It is not the mind of Christ, and it certainly is not St. Paul's idea of separation from the world.

I commend these six points to the calm consideration of all who wish to understand the subject of separation from the world. About each and all of them far more might be said than I have space to say in this paper. About each and all of them I have seen so many mistakes made, and so much misery and unhappiness caused by those mistakes, that I want to put Christians on their guard. I want them not to take up positions hastily, in the zeal of their first love, which they will afterwards be obliged to give up.

I leave this part of my subject with two pieces of advice, which I offer especially to young Christians. I advise them, for one thing, if they really desire to come out from the world, to remember that the shortest path is not always the path of duty. To quarrel with all our unconverted relatives, to cut all our old friends, to withdraw entirely from mixed society, to live an exclusive life, to give up every act of courtesy and civility for the direct work of Christ, — all this may seem very right, and may satisfy our consciences and save us trouble. But I venture a doubt whether it is not often a selfish, lazy, self-pleasing line of conduct, and whether the true cross and true line of duty may not be to deny ourselves, and adopt a very different course of action. I advise them, for another thing, if they want to come out from the world, to watch against a sour, morose, ungenial, gloomy, unpleasant, bearish demeanour, and never to forget that there is such a thing as "winning without the Word" (1 Peter 3: 1). Let them strive to show unconverted people, that their principles, whatever may be thought of them, make them cheerful, amiable, good-tempered, unselfish, considerate for others, and ready to take an interest in everything that is innocent and of good report. In short, let there be no

needless separation between us and the world. In many things, as I shall soon show, we must be separate; but let us take care that it is separation of the right sort. If the world is offended by such separation we cannot help it. But let us never give the world occasion to say that our separation is foolish, senseless, ridiculous, unreasonable, uncharitable, and unscriptural. (To be continued)

Spiritual Experience of John Stevenson

(1655-1728)

(Continued from page 182)

Some time after my former happy outgate from my above mentioned distress, I found the clouds returning after the rain, and my soul environed and beset with thick darkness, though I continued to have a deep sense of my lost state by nature, and that I could not help myself, though I had destroyed myself, yea, though I was convinced a remedy was provided, and that there was no other name by which I could be saved than the name of Jesus Christ; yet I apprehended and was afraid that I had never got a saving discovery of the way of salvation through a Mediator, and concluded He was an unknown Christ to me. This perplexed my soul for some weeks, till one day I was in the fields and meditating on the works of God, where I was allowed to read the perfections of God in every creature. I observed that all of them had obeyed the law of their Creator, and never in the least acted contrary to the will of Him who by His powerful word had given them a being. This brought me to consider how man had carried towards his Lord and benefactor, and speedily I found that, though God made him upright, yet he soon found out many inventions unworthy of his God, and was the only creature, excepting devils, that ever disobeyed his holy, just, and good commandments, on which the depraved state of fallen man and my own state in particular, was more fully laid open to me than what I could well conceive before. But all of a sudden, a bright display of redeeming love did with power shine in upon my soul (so) that I was filled with wonder at the amazing goodwill of God to fallen man — to a creature so unworthy, ungrateful, and rebellious, when, at the same time, He had not only resolved to pardon his rebellion, and bring the elect world into favour again, but would do all this by sending His own Son, to be a propitiation for the elect's sin, when a little before He had doomed the fallen angels to endless misery, without the least pity or compassion shown to them, though of a nobler

rank by their first make than man. All this, I say, so filled my soul with high thoughts of redeeming love, and a strong admiration of all the perfections of God, which shined so bright in the face of Jesus Christ, and in the way of man's recovery from His lost estate, that my mouth was filled with praise, and my soul with joy. I thought I never could praise Him enough, who was exalted above all blessing and praise; on which I invited the whole creation to join with me in my melodious song. I bespoke them in the words of the Psalmist, in the 148th Psalm, "Praise Him, ye sun and moon; praise Him, ye stars of light; fire, hail, snow, vapours, and stormy wind;" and all that He hath made, help me to sound forth the praise of so great, so good, so condescending, and so faithful a God. Having finished for that time my song of praise, I concluded with prayer, and after went on my way rejoicing.

But all of a sudden the roaring lion did attack my soul. I was not by this time ignorant of his devices, but well acquainted with his wiles. He powerfully suggested to my mind that now I had got a brave sight of Christ. I being persuaded it was one of his hellish stratagems to make me think meanly of my attainment, answered the enemy with a holy boldness, and with an audible voice, What hast thou, O enemy, to say against it? To which the tempter speedily replied, You never asked if you had an interest in that Saviour, on whose account you so much praise. To which I replied, Alas! that charge is too true: though thou hast been a liar from the beginning, in this thou speakest truth; on which I looked up and cried to God, and begged He would let me know wherewith I should answer the enemy. Immediately it was impressed on my spirit, that a God of infinite goodness, mercy, and faithfulness, would never have made me to rejoice in His perfections, being so gloriously displayed in the great work of man's redemption, if I had not an interest therein; and I told the enemy that the God who had made me glad at His salvation would not, could not, deceive any of His creatures, and in this would I trust. The enemy then suggested, that I would not always be in such a frame. I replied, that I feared, but that I lamented; but told the tempter, though I should meet with winter blasts, after all this sunshine, I would imitate the wise mariner in a winter season, who keeps in harbour; but whenever a favourable gale came, or a springtide of heavenly influences, I should be in readiness to cherish the motions of the Spirit, and in the meantime would wait upon God, as a God of Judgment, and the God of my salvation, whose salvation had now set me up on high, and made me ride on my high places; upon which the enemy left me for a season, and I for some time was filled with joy and peace in believing.

Some time after the above exercise, I was in a considerable outward trouble, and having earnestly entreated God to deliver me out of it, I vowed that my praise should no longer wait for God, or be silent in Zion, than He would be to me in this particular, the Hearer of prayer; and so I bound my soul in the presence of God, to set apart a day for thanksgiving, if He would condescend to grant my humble request, and particularly that the 23rd, 24th and 25th verses of the 22nd Psalm, should be a part of my song; namely, "Ye that fear the Lord, praise Him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify Him, and fear Him, all ye the seed of Israel; for he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath He hid His face from him, but when he cried unto Him, He heard. My praise shall be of Thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear Him."

Accordingly, it pleased the merciful God to regard the voice of my supplications, and to command off my trouble; whereupon I resolved to sacrifice to God the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and pay my vow unto the Lord. But when I had fixed the day, the great adversary of God and man did assault me with his fiery darts, to keep me back from paying-in the rent of praise which was due by me to my great Deliverer, alleging that I need not praise so soon, for I was still under many troubles, suggesting that I had better delay my day of praise till all my troubles were removed, and then I might keep one day for all. To this I was helped to answer, that Israel of old, when carried safely through the Red Sea, did sing their song to Him who saved them, when they knew they were just entered into the wilderness, where many troubles did abide them; and as they did, so would I. Accordingly, I spent a day in returning praise, and found the God whom I adored very kind to my soul.

After some time I found a cloud arising, (of) which I may say, as the Prophet in another case, that at first it was as a man's hand, but gradually increased till it covered the whole heavens, as it were, and hid from me the refreshing and lightsome rays of the Sun of Righteousness. I may say I feared to enter into the cloud, and it was the greatest and of longest continuance that ever I met with in the house of my pilgrimage; the Lord covered Himself with a thick cloud, and made darkness His pavilion; and though I cried, yet He seemed to shut out my prayers. This cloud lasted for two years and some months. The first year my bitter complaint was, "He hath hid His face, and I cannot be troubled," "for my stroke is heavier than my groaning." The second year my mournful song was, "He hath hid His face, and I am troubled." In my first year's distress, His arrows stuck fast in me, and His hand did press me sore: "my

wounds did stink and were corrupted, and there was no soundness in my flesh: the arrows of the Almighty did drink up my spirits; night and day His hand lay heavy upon me, so that even my bodily moisture was turned into the drought of summer." When I said sometimes "that my couch would ease my complaint, I was filled with tossing to the dawning of the day," and then in the morning the cry was, when will it be night? and at night, when will it be morning? I remembered God, and was troubled, and I communed with my heart, wherewith I might ease my smart. I remembered the days of old, when He led me through the wilderness, and the Spirit of the Lord, as I thought, had caused me to rest, but now I was ready to cry out, "Is it true in very deed, that the Lord hath forgot to be gracious? Hath He shut up all His bowels of tender mercy in His wrath? Doth His promise fail for evermore?" I was ready to conclude that all men were liars, and all former experiences were delusions, and yet glad to cry out, "O that it were with me as in months past, when the candle of the Lord did shine upon my tabernacle, and when by His light I walked through darkness." But still the Comforter that should relieve my soul was far from me, and my broken bones were never like to rejoice. Though it be said, He hideth His face but for a moment, and that His anger endureth but for a night, yet the time of my sad exercise seemed the longest period of my life, for joy was never like to come in the morning. The second year of my distress, I was made indeed to alter a little the ground of my trouble, and cry out, "He has hid His face, and I am troubled."

In my first year's exercise, it was a great part of my burden, that I could not be duly burdened, when the glory was departed from me; but now I was made to own, that as He hid His face so this was my trouble, and indeed my trouble was so great, that I could not well speak. Amidst all my down-casting, I had the "roaring lion" to grapple with, who likes well to fish in muddy waters. He strongly suggested to me that I should not eat, because I had no right to food, or if I ventured to do it, the enemy assured me that the wrath of God would go down with my morsel, and that because I had forfeited a right to the Divine favour, and therefore had nothing to do with any of God's creatures. To this I answered, that even the wicked had a right to eat and drink by the law of creation and the indulgence of providence; for even an earthly judge had so much generosity as to allow a condemned criminal to be fed on bread and water, at least till the day of execution, and how much more compassion would God show to His creatures, the workmanship of His hands, even though under a sentence of condemnation, as long as He granted the

reprieve, or spared the execution of the formidable sentence; yea, I alleged I had a civil right by the laws of the land, and ought to make use of it for the preserving of the life which God had given, even as I was a member of the society in which providence placed me. However, so violent were the temptations of the strong enemy, that I frequently forget to eat my bread, and durst not attempt it; and when, through the persuasion of my wife, I at any time did it, the enemy through the day did buffet me in a violent way, assuring me that the wrath of God had gone over with what I had taken: thus went I from day to day about my ordinary employment, broken and much borne down, and the weak body scarce able to subsist any longer. Then the enemy persuaded me, if I would tell my case to any Christian friend, I could not give a greater evidence of gross hypocrisy than to pretend to soul exercise. In this I was indeed the devil's closet secreter (secretary), to my great prejudice and Satan's advantage; for had I revealed my distress to an interpreter, one among a thousand, the enemy, by God's assistance, might sooner have been foiled: but as my wounds did stink, so my folly made it so, having enjoined my wife to let none know my distress and exercise.

The enemy after all did so pursue me, that he violently suggested to my soul that some time or other, God would suddenly destroy me as with a thunder-clap, which so filled my soul with fear and pain, that every now and then I looked about me to receive the divine blow, still expecting it was a-coming: yea, many nights I durst not sleep, lest I had awakened in everlasting flames; and in this dreadful confusion, have prayed on my bed whole nights that God would avert the feared vengeance: "I cried to Him out of the depths and deep called to deep at the noise of His water spouts, and all His billows went over me," yet I was never like to hear His loving-kindness in the morning, yet still I had my prayer to the God of my life, sometimes crying out "My rock, why forgettest thou me so? How long shall I go thus mourning by the oppression of the enemy? It is like a sword in my bones, whilst my foes upbraid me, and whilst the enemy says unto my soul, "Where is thy God?" At another time crying out, "O send forth Thy light and Thy truth; let them be my guides, and then will I go to the altar of God — to God, my exceeding joy." Sometimes have I said, "O my soul, why art thou cast down within me, and why thus disquieted in me?" But yet after all, I durst not venture to say to my distressed soul, "Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God." Whilst thus I was in the fearful pit, and sinking in the miry clay, it pleased the kind God to devise means that His banished might be again brought home, and soon

after did say, "Deliver him from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom;" and my outgate from the pit, wherein was no water, was in the following manner.

The Presbytery had appointed our minister, Mr. Crawford, to supply at Kirkmichael, which was then vacant: he had intimated to us that we were not to expect sermon that day. Accordingly, he studied for Kirkmichael, but a providence falling out on the Saturday prevented his going there, which made him send word to some near his own church, that he would preach at home, because he was insuperably obstructed from going to Kirkmichael. On the Sabbath, amidst my great distress, I went to the House of God, for I still loved the habitation of His House, "the place where His honour dwells," and there that day He sent His word, which afterwards healed my soul. The minister laid aside his ordinary for that day, and preached from the text he had studied for Kirkmichael, which was this, in the 42nd Psalm, "O my soul, why art thou cast down?" &c. I thought when he read his text, that he singled me out with his eye, and looked always my way; and, in a word, his whole sermon was suited to the several parts of my long and sharp exercise, so that I was amazed what to make of the providence. In the multitude of the thoughts that rolled within me, the enemy suggested, that if the minister had not "plowed with my heifer, he had not read my riddle," and did insinuate that my wife had told the minister's wife my distress, and that she had told her husband, and therefore he had chosen the subject on purpose; so the enemy suggested I was a fool to take comfort which came not from God, but only from man; on which I suspended my taking comfort, till I inquired at my wife if she had discovered my case to any; and from her I found she had never divulged it. This made me on the Monday go to Mr. Crawford, and inquire how he came to choose that text that day. He answered, he always sought direction from God, in choosing what he was to preach on.

After which, the Lord shined on His word and providence, and said, as it were to the poor prisoner, "Go forth, show yourself." The Lord began that day to knock off the fetters wherewith I had been long bound, and sometime after more eminently shined upon my needy soul, at a time when my wife was nigh unto death, but wonderfully brought back from the gates of it. "Rejoice not thou over me, O mine enemy, though I fall I shall arise, though I walk in darkness, the Lord will be a light to me;" though He caused long grief, yet had He compassion, according to the multitude of His tender mercies, and suffered not the enemy always to rejoice over me.

The Textus Receptus

The Textus Receptus (Received Text) is the Greek text on which the Authorised Version of the New Testament is based. The Westminster Confession of Faith affirms that "The Scriptures were immediately inspired by God, and by His singular care and providence kept pure in all ages." The attacks on the Received Text are based on the assumption that the new versions of the Bible are based on more reliable manuscripts than those available in the 17th century. In the 1860's Codex Sinaiticus (Codex Aleph) and Codex Vaticanus (Codex B) became available to Biblical Scholars. Wescott and Hort, professors in Trinity College, Cambridge, advanced the theory that Codex Aleph and Codex B contained the genuine text of the New Testament. They accordingly produced a new Greek text based on these manuscripts, and devised an elaborate theory, elevating these two manuscripts and one or two others of a later date to the heights of almost infallible authority.

"They used these Codexes" wrote Dean Burgon "despite the fact that they disagree with ninety-five per cent of the extant manuscripts, papyri and Scripture portions of the early Church fathers, which on the other hand do agree with the Greek Text on which the Authorised Version and other Reformation translations are based. In fact the Westcott and Hort text represents a radical revision introducing as many as 5,337 changes in the Greek and more than 3,600 changes in the Revised English Version of 1881." Dean Burgon, a Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford, Gresham professor of divinity and, during the last 12 years of his life Dean of Chichester, branded the Aleph and B group of manuscripts as nearly the foulest in existence, being the depositories of the largest amount of fabricated readings, ancient blunders, and intentional perversions of the Word of God. "My one object," he continues "has been to defeat the mischievous attempt which was made in 1881 to thrust upon the Church and Realm the perversion of the Sacred Text which, recommended though it be by eminent names — I am thoroughly convinced and am able to prove is untrustworthy from beginning to end . . . It is however, the systematic depravation of the underlying Greek which so grievously offends one; for this is nothing else but the poisoning of the River of Life at its sacred source. Our Revisers (with the best and purest intentions no doubt) stand convicted of having deliberately rejected the words of inspiration on every page and of having substituted for them fabricated readings which the Church has long since refused to acknowledge, or else has rejected with abhorrence, and which only survives at this time in a

little handful of documents of the most depraved type.”

Bishop D A Thomson in “The Greek Testament and Modern Versions” states that in doctrine, Wescott and Hort favoured the Romanising movement in their Church, the “Larger Hope” (of F D Maurice and Dean Farrar) the Darwinnian hypothesis and the Old Testament Higher Criticism.

In his excellent brochure — “The Thinking Theories and Theology of Wescott and Hort” Cecil J Carter, Prince George, B C., Canada, confirms what Bishop D A Thomson says in the quotation he gives from the “Life and Letters of Dr Hort” published in 1896 by his son. The following are quotations from the brochure with the kind permission of Mr Carter.

In 1860 Hort wrote: “The book which has most engaged me is Darwin ... At present my feeling is strong that the theory is unanswerable. “Life and Letters Vol 1 p. 416. In 1861 Wescott wrote, “No result has been established more certainly by recent investigation than the gradual passage from lower to higher types of life in the natural world through enormous intervals of time.” Lessons from Work by Wescott p. 153.

Horts Views on the Evangelical Faith etc

“Further I agree with them (i.e. The Editors of Essays and Reviews) in condemning many leading specific doctrines of the popular theology as to say the least, containing much superstition and immorality of a very pernicious kind ... The positive doctrines of the Evangelicals seem to me perverted rather than untrue. There are still more serious differences between us on the subject of authority *especially the authority of the Bible*” (Life and Letters Vol 1 p. 400)

The Occult and The Textus Receptus

In vol 1 p. 172 Hort tells that he, Wescott, Benson Bradshaw etc were members of the occult society called the Ghostly Guild. They were spiritualists. Mr Cecil Carter writes, In 1 Timothy 4: 1, Paul speaks of seducing spirits and doctrines of demons. “Now the spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons.” It is only a short step from abandoning evangelical doctrines fundamental to the faith, to that of “giving heed” to seducing spirits and “doctrines of devils.”

“Any teaching” continues Cecil Carter “which contradicts the clear teaching of the Holy Spirit, comes from an unholy spirit i.e. a Demon, Dr Hort’s letters seem to literally abound in contradictions of Scripture;

and as we have already noticed glories in his rejection of evangelical doctrines. This is the work of Satan in the souls of men." In a letter to John Ellerton Dec. 20, 1854, Hort writes, "I had no idea till the last few weeks of the importance of texts, having read so little Greek Testament, *and dragged on with the villianous Textus Receptus ... Think of the vile Textus Receptus leaning entirely on late manuscripts.* It is a blessing there are such early ones." "Here we have" continues Cecil Carter, "the hidden background for the modern rejection of the Authorised Version. The followers of Wescott and Hort are following the lead of men who at the instigation of seducing spirits, have departed from the faith. In some cases this departure is *openly* manifested by a strictly forbidden praying unto the occult. These having received from the world of spirits a hatred for the true Word of God, are swiftly and securely leading multitudes into the same Satanic pitfall."

A Shocking Admission of Duplicity

In vol 1 p. 445, Hort writes, "Also — but this may be cowardice — I have a sort of craving that our Text should be cast upon the world, *before we deal with matters likely to brand us with suspicion.* I mean a text (Wescott & Hort Greek Text — parenthesis mine C.J.C.) issued by men already known for what will undoubtedly be treated as a dangerous heresy, will have great difficulty in finding its way into regions which it might otherwise hope to reach and when it would not easily be banned by subsequent alarms."

Horts Rejection of the Atonement

In a letter to F D Maurice, Hort writes, Finally St Paul's mysterious words, "without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins." But I have laboured so utterly in vain to apprehend in any measure what this idea is, that I hope you will deepen and widen the limits that you have already given ... Language cannot accurately define the twinge of shrinking horror which mixes with my thoughts when I hear the popular notion asserted ... I confess I have no repugnance to the primitive doctrine of a ransom paid to Satan though neither am I prepared to give full assent to it ... anything is better than a ransom paid to the Father."

Bishop D A Thomson, an authority on the Greek manuscripts says that the spate of modern versions with so many renderings has led to a decline in memorising texts of Holy Writ and has engineered confusion and a

veritable babel. "Better, far better," he writes, "to master the comparatively few obsolete words in the Authorised Version then exchange it for one of these more recent but inferior translations."

"The Westcott and Hort Greek Text" Mr Carter states "exerts a tremendous influence either directly or indirectly upon virtually every modern Bible version."

"The footnotes in the New Revised Authorised Version" contain according to Dr Ian Paisley all the poison of the modern versions. "I regret" he says "that those responsible for this Bible have fallen into this Satanic trap, and into this trap they have indeed fallen."

The integrity of the Textus Receptus has been ably vindicated by Professor Z G Hodges, of Dallas Theological Seminary. In *Bibliothica Sacra* for October 1968, he states, "The text from which the King James Version is based has in reality the strongest claim to be regarded as an authentic representation of the original text. This claim is quite independent of any shifting consensus of scholarly judgement about its readings, and is based on the objective reality of its dominance in the transmissional history of the New Testament Text. This dominance has not been and we venture to suggest — cannot be otherwise explained."

In Defence of the New Testament Majority Text

The author Donald A Waite, Th.D., Ph D., states that Dean Burgon made an exhaustive examination of citations of Scripture quoted by the Church fathers of antiquity, which is "sixteen thick manuscript volumes, to be found in the British Museum and contains 86,489 quotations." Dr Waite supports the claim of Professor Z G Hodges that from the standpoint of sheer numbers of existing manuscripts that have survived, the majority text upon which the King James version is based, has in reality the strongest claim possible to be regarded as an authentic representation of the original text. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God" II Tim 3: 16 "Sanctify them through Thy truth. Thy Word is truth" John 17: 17.

W.M.

We are bound to give thanks

by Rev. J. A. T. Van Dorp

Engineers, architects and builders have designed and erected structures that have become objects of admiration and some of which are now land-

marks of international renown. Wellington's parliamentary administration building is such a landmark. It has been named the Beehive because its shape is not unlike a giant beehive. Over the past few years it has commenced to take its place as the architectural creation that identifies Wellington not only as the capital city of New Zealand but also as the seat of government. It has become a familiar sight to the many tourists visiting Aotearoa (The Land of the Long White Cloud) as the early Maori people called New Zealand.

However, we believe that, almost in the shadow of the Beehive, gatherings occur in connection with which the apostle Paul, in similar circumstances, wrote: "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." (2 Thess. 2: 13). When the apostle laboured in Thessalonica, as in other places, he met both with discouragement and encouragement. Sometimes beaten up, sometimes publicly flogged, sometimes he was gaoled. Yet he found much encouragement, not only in the conversions that occurred, but also in the midst of the distressing circumstances that he often experienced. In the midst of the prison in Philippi, he and Silas rejoiced in spite of their tribulations. The cause of Christ in every age has experienced adversity as well as prosperity. The small congregation in Wellington, in the shade of the Beehive, is no exception.

Services were first commenced there by Rev. Wm. MacLean during his time as minister of Gisborne. In his report to the Synod of May 1967 he stated: "Since last November regular Sabbath services have been begun in Wellington, and a weekly prayer meeting." These regular services continued for a period of about five years when lack of interest forced a suspension and finally the one resident communicant member was transferred to Auckland by his employers. It is truly sad that the hundreds of Scots originating from Lewis and Harris, resident in the Wellington area, have turned their backs on the truth. Many no doubt have found it more attractive to be associated with a modernistic denomination or to give up religious practices altogether. Although there is such a great need of a separate witness throughout New Zealand, it seemed as if Satan had gained the day as far as services in Wellington were concerned. Until the end of 1978 there were only occasional services conducted there. From the beginning of 1979 however, something of a regular pattern developed with services for a time on a monthly basis. The numbers attending were small, only about ten. However, it was easier now to make arrangements as one person in Wellington had been accepted as a com-

municant member and was on the Gisborne roll of communicants. Another factor was the help being given by Mr. D. Vermeulen, who had been a communicant member since 1964 and whose daughter and family live near Wellington. Although he lives a considerable distance from Wellington, he agreed to help with the services there on a regular basis. About this time Mr. N. Hicklen, who until then was a communicant member in the Gisborne congregation, had to further his education at the Central Institute of Technology near Wellington and so he became a much valued addition and helper in the Lord's vineyard. When his course of instruction ended, an employment opportunity opened up in the Lord's providence so that his much appreciated assistance was secured where it was and is so much needed. After all, how necessary the witness of our denomination on the side of the truth is. The Presbyterian Church of New Zealand is a large but diminishing denomination. The Declaratory Act is responsible for her decline. The Rev. Wm. MacLean in his Australia and New Zealand Report in 1967 stated that "The Presbyterian Church of New Zealand has so far gone in apostasy since the passing of the Declaratory Act in 1901, that by its statement on the 'Resurrection of Christ' passed at its General Assembly in Wellington, it has forfeited the right to be called a branch of the Christian Church." The Anglican paper CHURCH AND PEOPLE, also quoted by Mr. MacLean in the same report stated: "Principal Geering won hands down: hence-forward his view that our Lord's body rotted in the ground may be taught by any Presbyterian minister," i.e. of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand. It is therefore a matter for great thankfulness that regular weekly Sabbath services were made possible in Wellington from 19th August 1979. The services have continued until now and the congregation, whilst still small, has become considerably stronger. They have not been without trials and discouragements. That of course is a matter to be expected. The footsteps of the flock are marked by tribulations. We cannot expect the devil to be idle when his palace is attacked.

At first a very suitable chapel was available in the Y.W.C.A. building for only a small rental. Suddenly it was no longer available as the Spiritualists block-booked the chapel a year in advance. Our services then had to be conducted in the public lounge in the same building. This was only fairly satisfactory on account of a noise factor. At last the building was sold which necessitated removal to the Trades Hall where the Board room proved a satisfactory venue until the building became the object of a bomb attack. This vile deed caused the death of the resident caretaker and aroused the anger of a broad segment of the public.

The consequence for the small congregation was a move to another building, also suitably situated in Central Wellington.

These difficulties make it clear that, small though the congregation is, a meeting place of a more permanent nature is desirable. The Australia and New Zealand Presbytery have approved the purchase of a suitable building should one become available. In 1980 the Presbytery appointed the Gisborne elders assessors for the Wellington congregation. The assessor-Kirk Session decided in due course that locally elected elders should be ordained. This was desirable on account of the long distances of the capital, both from Gisborne and Auckland and the need for local decisions to be made when necessary. As a measure of growth occurred in the Lord's good providence an election of office bearers became feasible. A total number of eighteen people now attend the services of whom seven are members in full communion, i.e. three women and four men. Messrs D. P. Vermeulen, N. F. Hicklen and A. van Dorp are the elected elders who conduct the services. There are two services on the Sabbath and a prayer meeting on Saturday evening.

The Reformers have pointed out that the three marks that characterise the true Church are the pure preaching of the truth, the dispensing of the sacraments and the scriptural exercise of discipline. It was therefore a healthy development and an expression of spiritual life when requests were made for the death of Christ to be remembered in Wellington in accordance with the Saviour's dying command: "Do this in remembrance of me." It is a commandment not easily dismissed by a person with spiritual life. The matter was first discussed in a Kirk Session Meeting in April 1983 but nothing eventuated that year. In April 1984 a resolution was passed that the Lord's death is to be remembered subject to His will, on the last Sabbath of August. Rev. E. A. Rayner agreed to assist. Brethren pray for us.

We know that persons of great skill were busy in designing and building the Beehive. When we consider that a much greater Architect and Builder is at work in building the Church, "we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord." Brethren let us give thanks. "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift."

Book Reviews

Expository Sermons on 2nd Peter by Dr M. L. Jones. Banner of Truth Trust. £6.95.

Much of the content of this volume is reminiscent of former works already reviewed in this Magazine. The sermons are distinctively ex-

pository, but none the worse for that. The book is a production that verifies the relevance of the Word of God for every age. The author has in some degree succeeded in establishing believers in the Truth of the Gospel, at a time when rationalistic forces are determined to undermine the faith once delivered to the saints. In these pages one finds a pleasing blend of doctrine, experience, and practice, with a much needed polemical and evangelical ring. The exposition is Christ-centred and has the note of personal conviction. The somewhat difficult art of using homely analogies is freely and skilfully used. On the question of personal assurance there seems to be a lack of depth, and verse 9 of chapter I applies to the believer rather than, if not as well as the unbeliever. In chapter 7 we have a simple but Biblical view of Christ's Second Coming; further on however, it appears to us that the Doctor had no hope of better days for the Church of God. If his view is correct, then some glorious predictions of Scripture are not to be fulfilled, and that of course is impossible. The closing chapters on growth in grace are practical and edifying.

F. M.

Precious Remedies against Satan's Devices by Thomas Brooks. 253 pp. £2.45.

The Banner of Truth Trust is to be commended for its work in re-printing many of the works of the Puritans. This paperback is the second reprint by the Trust of this treatise by Thomas Brooks. It is a volume that has been highly commended in the past and needs no additional commendation.

The Apostle Peter warned believers in his own day of their exposure to the attacks of Satan: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." If Satan was active and subtle then, we need not think that he is any less active and subtle in 1984. Surely by this time he must have developed his skills even more! The Apostle Paul could say: "We are not ignorant of his devices." Would that the professing Christians of our day could truly say the same! However that may be, here in this volume those who are tried and tempted by the wicked one will find instruction, not only as to the nature of these assaults but also as to how they are to be resisted. In our day the professing Church has grown very listless with regard to the reality and power of the devil and so easily falls a prey to his intrigues. May this volume be much used, by God's blessing, to bring the professing Church of God to an awareness of these things. To be forewarned is to be forearmed.

D. B. M.

Notes and Comments

The new Bishop of Durham

Professor David Jenkins who has held the chair of theology at Leeds University has been appointed the new Bishop of Durham. He has created a stir in some sections of the Church of England by saying recently on television that Christians do not have to believe in the Virgin Birth, miracles or the Resurrection. This is the man that the Church of England delights to honour! He will join a bench of bishops of which a goodly number agree with him. It is sad to think that men elevated to high position in that Church should be permitted to occupy these positions while denying fundamental articles of the Christian faith. The outlook surely is dim, for the Scripture makes abundantly plain that if the blind lead the blind then both shall fall into the ditch.

Church Notes

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Australia and New Zealand: At Wellington on Friday, 24th August at 2.30 p.m.

Outer Isles: At Stornoway on 28th August at 12 noon.

Southern: At Glasgow on 11th September at 6 p.m.

Western: At Shildaig on 18th September at 11 a.m.

Skye: At Portree on 25th September at 11 a.m.

Staff for Zimbabwe Mission

Advertisements for staff over the past months have failed to produce any response. It has been possible to open the Hospital at Mbuma on a full time basis from the 24th of May so that the need for a suitable qualified doctor to act as Medical Superintendent is now urgent. Ingwenya School still has a vacancy for a Teacher with Physics qualification. I will be happy, therefore, to hear from applicants wishing to take up this rewarding work in our mission in Zimbabwe. (Rev.) Alex. Murray, Applecross, Strathcarron, Ross-shire, IV54 8LT. Telephone: 052-04 207.

Sydney, Australia, Congregation Appeal

The Sydney congregation has recently purchased a block of land on which it is hoped a church will eventually be built. It is two and a half acres in size and close to Penrith, a satellite city of about 100,000 people. The cost of the property was \$37,500 of which \$14,500 was paid by way

of loans. As the congregation is small any donations would be of great assistance in helping to establish our Church in this strategic part of Australia. This Appeal has the approval of the Australian and New Zealand Presbytery. Any donations can be forwarded through the General Treasurer, Mr Wm. D. Fraser, 20 Daleview Avenue, Kelvindale, Galsgow G12 0HE.

Dundee Congregation Communion

The Kirk Session have decided to hold a Communion in Dundee on the 3rd Sabbath of September (D.V.). This will be the first Communion held by the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland in Dundee. Though we have our own Church in Dundee, the newly acquired Baxter Park Free Presbyterian Church, the congregation is very small and we trust that this will prove a means of bulding it up, in the Lord's providence. Our people in Dundee would desire the prayerful interest of the Lord's people in the Lord's Cause in this large city, where there is so little true Gospel, and we crave their prayers for this Communion Season.

The services will be as follows (D.V.):—

Thursday and Friday 7.30 p.m.; Saturday 3 p.m.; Sabbath 11 a.m. and 6.30 p.m.; Monday 7.30 p.m.

It is expected that Rev. L. MacLeod (Greenock) will assist at this Communion Season.

Theological Conference

The annual Theological Conference will be held in Inverness Church on Tuesday, December 4 and Wednesday, December 5, D.V. The Conference will begin on Tuesday afternoon at 2.30 p.m. and it is expected that the following papers will be read.

Tuesday afternoon, John Wycliffe — Rev. D. J. MacDonald, Perth; evening, 'The minister in his pastoral role' — Rev. A. F. MacKay, Inverness.

Wednesday morning, 'Medical Missions' — Rev. Dr J. Tallach, Raasay; afternoon, 'Christian problems in contemporary education' — Mr J. MacAskill, M.A., Stornoway; evening — 'Trends in American Evangelism' — Rev. D. MacLean, Glasgow.

As usual the Conference will be open to ministers, office-bearers and male members of the Church and the Committee trust that many will avail themselves of the opportunity of attending. Wednesday evening session will be open to the public.

D. J. MacDonald, Convener.

Acknowledgment of Donations

The General Treasurer, Mr Wm. D. Fraser, 20 Daleview Avenue, Glasgow, G12 0HE acknowledges the following donations with sincere thanks:

Foreign Mission Fund: Anon., Canada \$100.00 (twice), for famine relief in Zimbabwe.

Mr. R. W. M. MacKenzie wishes to acknowledge with sincere thanks, the following donations:—

Free Distribution Fund: per I. M. Edinburgh; J. M. — 50p; I. M. £2.20; B. N. — £2.70; R. C. £2.20.

Welfare of Youth Fund per Rev. D. J. M., Perth: Mr S., Broughty Ferry — £5.

The treasurers of the following congregations, acknowledge the following donations, with sincere thanks:—

Barnoldswick: E. K. — Sust. Fund — £40, Foreign Mission Fund — £10, Home Mission Fund — £5, Organisation Fund — £5, Retired Ministers Fund — £5, Cong. — £5; Anon., in collection plate, Foreign Mission Fund — £10; A friend, per A. McPhee — £20; Anon., where most needed — £25; Cong., a friend per R. M. — £10; Anon., Foreign Mission Fund — £10; Anon., Comm. Exps. — £10.

Bracadale: Anon., Skye, in appreciation, per J. C. — £50; Anon., for Struan Church door collection, per D. McP. — £10.

Fort William: Mr and Mrs Cameron, Lochaline — £50, I. Cameron, Lochaline — £10, both for Sust. Fund; Anon., for Cong. purposes — £10; all per Rev. J. A. M.

Gairloch: In plate, for Comm. Exps. — £10; Mrs Irvine, Sust. Fund — £30; Dr Dickie, Cong. Fund — £20; both per Rev. A. M.

Glasgow: Mrs MacKinnon (2 donations) — £10, G. Nicol — £1, per W. D. F.; both for Cong. Fund; Matt. 6: 3 (2 donations) — £20, Anon. — £5, £5, £5, £3. Miss D. G. — £5, all for Bus Fund; Anon. — £5, £2, for Sust. Fund; D. J. M. Sust. Fund — £5; Mr MacQueen, for tape ministry — £4; St. Jude's Sabbath School, for Jewish and Foreign Mission — £220.

Inverness: Miss A. MacDonald, for Church purposes — £15; Mrs J. M., for Sabbath School prizes — £20; R. M., Sust. Fund — £15; all per Rev. A. F. M.; 2 Inverness friends, for Sabbath School outing, per H. Gunn — £4.

Kames: Anon., Glasgow, for Church Funds — £10.

Lochcarron: Mrs A. MacDonald, for church heating — £10; Friend, Carnoustie, Sust. Fund, per A. M. K. — £10.

Lochinver: Rogart pensioners — £10 for Sust. Fund.

Ness: Inverness friend, per Rev. W. M. — £10; Ness friends, per A. M. L. — £20; R. and J. Morrison, Port — £20; Mr and Mrs A. Morrison, Glasgow — £20; Mr and Mrs A. Murray, SK — £10; Stornoway friend — £25; North Tolsta friend — £5; all for Cong. Funds. Ness friend, per A. M. L., Sust. Fund — £10.

Raasay: Dingwall postmark, Jer. 9: 23, 24, per J. M. M. for Sust. Fund — £6; Raasay friend, Sust. Fund — £20; Raasay friend, Aged and Infirm — £20; Rachel and Shiela, 37 Inverarish, Comm. Exps. — £12.

Portree: Friends, Windsor Crescent, per Rev. F. M. — £15; Anon. in plate — £20; Miss C. A. M., per F. M. — £5; all for Manse repairs. Mrs C., Bosville Terrace, per F. M. for Sust. Fund — £20; Anon. in plate, Organisation Fund — £12; A wellwisher (in plate), Foreign Mission — £10; T. B. S. — £10, widows and orphans — £5.

Shieldaig: Inverness friend, where most needed, per D. MacCuish — £30.

Staffin: From the estate of the late Miss Marjory MacDonald — £200; J. and M. Ins., per M. M. for Comm. Exps. — £5; Mrs Rhoda MacKenzie, Portree, Sust. Fund — £20.

Strath, Skye: Mrs Matheson, Lunepar, per Rev. M. I. M., for Sust. Fund — £5.

Stornoway: Peter Macleod, Canada, in memory of Capt. K. K. Macleod, for Cong. Fund — £5.

Tomatin: A. G. (in plate) for Manse Fund — £40.