

THE
Free Presbyterian Magazine
and **Monthly Record**

Vol. 90

OCTOBER 1985

No. 10

Leaving the Church?

It would be very strange if we were not painfully affected by the spectacle of some of our young people leaving our Church and commencing attendance at other Churches which we do not believe for a moment to have a purer Gospel or a more Scriptural form of worship and practice. We are loathe to part with any but especially young men and women upon whom, humanly speaking, the future witness of our Church depends. In departing from us they do what we sincerely believe to be wrong and contrary to their own spiritual interests; hence the pain.

It was to be expected that the godly men and women who founded our Church were such as diligently sought Divine guidance in severing their connection with the Declaratory-Act Free Church. Even those who call in question the necessity of that separation concede that, at the time, "many of the most pious and loyal of the Highland people connected themselves with the Free Presbyterian Church. It was poor in supporters of wealth and in leaders of ecclesiastical experience, but it was rich, within the limits of its sway, in those things which form the true glory of any Church — men and women of believing hearts and godly lives." In different parts of the country there were those who, in answer to prayer, came to be fully persuaded that the path of duty was set before them in the words: "Let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them." That was to them the mind of the Lord on the matter and they acted accordingly. We are not surely to entertain the thought that in between their day and ours there has been a change and that those who now go in the opposite direction do so with His approval.

The wonderful experience of one young woman in coming to decide which Church she would attend is recorded in an obituary written by the

late Rev James Tallach. She was an Isobel Morrison of Ness who, in later life, was known as Mrs W J MacDonald, Stornoway. In her young days the Reverend Duncan MacBeath was the Free Church minister of Ness. 'For some time as a young girl, Miss Morrison served in the manse of Mr MacBeath, where she daily witnessed the life and example of true godliness. Only the Day of Judgement will reveal the eternal blessings which arise from early association with true piety in the home. Those are greatly privileged who enjoy such blessings in early life.

During this time she heard from her minister a sermon on Romans 1, 16, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ." This sermon left a deep impression on the young girl's mind.

Like many other godly men and women belonging to the Free Church of his day, Mr MacBeath was well aware of the grave departures from the truth in doctrine, practice and discipline which had begun to be all too apparent in the church he loved and served. These ominous declensions caused him the greatest foreboding and sorrow, and he warned his people against them. To young Isobel he said, "The clouds are darkening, the storm is gathering. I should not wish to be alive when it happens; but should only three take up a stand on the side of Truth in the parish of Ness, see to it that you be one of them. The day will come when you will have to meet the people of the parish, many of them your own co-ages, going one way while you go the opposite way, and they will try to persuade you to go with them, but be sure you will not yield to them." Young Isobel never forgot these words, and the time came after Mr MacBeath had been gathered to his fathers, that she had cause to remember them.

In 1893 Miss Morrison, now a woman of 25, had left her native parish and was living in Stornoway. For all those who had an interest in the Cause of Christ those were stirring days. The Declaratory Act had been passed in 1892. The following year by the protest of the Rev D MacFarlane, the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland was called into being to preserve the heritage and testimony of the Reformed Church in Scotland in unbroken continuity, and to hand it down to future generations. Some seriously thinking people in Stornoway were sympathetic to the movement. A meeting of those was to be held in the Drill Hall. Miss Morrison had heard of the proposed meeting and the news placed her in a very difficult position. She knew in her heart that it must be either the Church or the Drill Hall. If the Church, could she continue her connection with it and keep a clean conscience? If, on the other hand, it was to be the Drill Hall, how could she face up to the opposition and possibly

the scorn and hatred of some who had previously been among her most intimate friends? The problem was one inseparable from the question of the day and many others in different parts of Scotland were faced with it.

In this perplexity Miss Morrison reached a corner of the street where the next step would commit her one way or the other. She stood for a moment pondering; it was then that the advice of her former minister, the Rev Duncan MacBeath, came warmly and powerfully home to her heart. This was accompanied with the text which had previously impressed her, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ." Needless to say the truth prevailed and Miss Morrison, guided as by a necessity which would take no denial, found her steps leading her to the Drill Hall. She learned afterwards that, all unknown to her, her father in Ness had passed through a similar experience and had made a similar decision. He was one of the 'two or three' who upheld the cause of truth there, and formed themselves into a congregation of the Church which afterwards came to be known as the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

We can only imagine the deep satisfaction experienced by both father and daughter in learning that each had been guided to make the same decision on such an important issue quite independently of each other.

The events of the following 63 years provided many occasions which severely tested the loyalty and faithfulness of those attached to the cause and testimony of the Free Presbyterian Church; but from her early choice Miss MacDonald never wavered. At the age of 85 years, when in her last illness, it was a pleasure, both edifying and instructive, to listen to her recalling the events of 63 years before. Her memory then was clear and precise, and the happy and animated manner in which she related these events gave unmistakeable evidence of her intense satisfaction for the part she had been led to take in them.'

If the date were 1985 instead of 1893 would we expect Isobel Morrison to be guided otherwise?

We cannot think that any leaving us could justify their action by maintaining that they were hearing unsound doctrine preached. Nor, we believe, could they say that they saw the Sacraments administered in an unscriptural way. Our form of worship, also remains the same as it was in the best days of the Scottish Church. We fear that the majority of those that leave us do so because the conditions of discipleship within our pale are too close to Scripture and thus too demanding in terms of self-denial. It is clear that we owe much to those who have gone before us and it is right and proper that we should bear it in mind and not be ashamed of them nor of the Cause which they espoused and defended so valiantly.

Sermon

by the late Rev. William MacLean M.A.

(Mr MacLean visited the Mission in 1972 on which occasion the following sermon was preached. Of that visit he himself wrote: "My visit to the Mission in Rhodesia has been one of the happiest episodes of my life. It can be summed up in what the Queen of Sheba said when she visited King Solomon. 'Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes have seen it: and, behold the half was not told me.' Whenever I preached I felt drawn out in love to the Africans. They are a loveable people, kind and most courteous. It is a cause for thankfulness to see such gatherings of people and of young people at the services, and to meet among them those who gave evidence that they had passed from death to life. The footsteps of our God and King are to be seen in the forests of Africa where He has planted His vineyard, that shall yet extend from sea to sea according to the prophecy, 'Princes shall come out of Egypt: Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands to God' (Ps. 68: 31). It should be a cause of encouragement to the people of the Church at home and abroad and to the many friends in Holland whose financial support is so generous that the gospel in its purity is preached at the Mission, that the worship and ordinances are in accordance with the mind of the Lord as revealed in His Word and that Christ as the alone Saviour of sinners is lifted up and extolled. May ministers, doctors, teachers and nurses hear the Macedonia cry of Rhodesia, 'Come over and help us,' and be led to labour in this wonderful country.'")

"My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." John 10: 27, 28.

In this chapter Christ is speaking so Himself as the Good Shepherd and in the words of our text He is bringing before us what is true of His sheep. In the first place we may notice the person who is speaking — the Good Shepherd and in the second place what He is saying concerning His sheep.

Christ is speaking of Himself as the Good Shepherd. He is the Good Shepherd as distinct from the false shepherds whom He calls thieves and robbers. They did not enter in by the door into the sheepfold, that is into the church, but they climbed up some other way. But Christ says in connection with Himself as the Good Shepherd; that He entereth in by the door, and that is true of all who are under shepherds, that they enter in

by the door, into the fold or into the church. To enter in by the door is to enter in by a lawful way. Christ entered in by the door because He was called and appointed to be the Shepherd of the Sheep.

He began His public ministry at the age of 30, after His baptism in Jordan by John the Baptist. In old Testament Times the Levites at the age of 30 entered on their ministry in the tabernacle, by having pure water sprinkled upon them at the door of the tabernacle. We have brought before us in the Book of Numbers that once they were sprinkled with pure water at the door of the tabernacle, the door of the tabernacle was opened for them to enter their public ministry.

Christ at the age of 30 came to John the Baptist to be baptised of him. He was fulfilling as He said "all righteousness" and in being baptised by John, He was fulfilling that which was typified of Him, for the Levites were types of Christ in their public ministry and as they entered at the age of 30 by having pure water sprinkled upon them, so Christ in entering on His ministry was baptised by John and in the light of the type which Christ was fulfilling it would therefore appear that John sprinkled Him in the river Jordan does not imply that He was immersed in Jordan. He came up from the place where the water was, and when coming up out of the water, the Holy Spirit came down in the form of a dove and abode upon Him. He got at that particular time a baptism of the Holy Spirit, for as Mediator He was given the Holy Spirit in human nature without measure. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is always spoken of as the sprinkling or pouring forth, never as immersion. In the light therefore of the type which Christ was fulfilling and in the light of reality, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, we believe that Christ's baptism was through pure water being sprinkled upon him.

After His baptism and after His temptation for 40 days in the wilderness, He entered on His public ministry. We read that He came to the synagogue in Capernaum and read from Isaiah chapter 61. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because the Lord hath annointed Me, to preach good tidings unto the meek. He hath sent Me to find up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;" and so on and these words were being fulfilled in their hearing that day in the synagogue.

Christ as the Good Shepherd was chosen and appointed to the work. God the Father speaks of Him as "My Shepherd" and "the man that is My Fellow." The words "my fellow" there mean the one who is equal. For the One who is the shepherd of the sheep, is God's co-equal and co-eternal Son, the One who was called and appointed to be the Shepherd of

the Sheep. He therefore entered by the door, and the Porter was opening to Him, and by the Porter we understand the Holy Spirit. He had the Holy Spirit in abundance. It was through the Holy Spirit that He preached; it was through the Holy Spirit that He performed miracles. The Holy Spirit as a Porter was testifying that He was the Shepherd. He was opening the door for Him. That must also be true of those who are under shepherds; they have to enter in by the door, because called to the work of the Holy Ministry. They are not only called by grace, but they are called to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ as the apostle said, "Unto me who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the unsearchable riches of Christ." They are dependent on the Holy Spirit to guide them. He opens a door of utterance for them and a door into the place where they are to labour. "Behold I set before thee an open door and no man can shut it."

Christ is the Good Shepherd because it is the truth of God that He preached in His Ministry. He declared to Pontius Pilate, "To this end I was born and to this end came I into the world that I might bear witness unto the truth." He preached the Truth, the truth about God. No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten of the Father He revealed Him. He preached the truth about man as lost, ruined and hell-deserving. He preached the necessity of the new birth; as he said to Nicodemus, "Verily, verily, I say unto you thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." He preached the truth about heaven and about hell. Many people in our day deny the truth about everlasting punishment, but Christ as the true witness preached these doctrines.

He is the Good Shepherd in the sympathy that He has for His sheep. We read that in all their afflictions He was afflicted, that He was tempted in all points as they were, yet without sin. Although He has now entered into heaven He has a fellow feeling and sympathy for them. He is able to succour them that are tempted. It is good in time of trial to receive sympathy from our fellow men, but there is none who can enter into the troubles and trials of the Lord's people like the Good Shepherd. He is the Friend who sticketh closer than a brother. He says, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." They may say at times, "The Lord hath forgotten me, and my God hath forsaken me." But he says, "Can a mother forget her suckling child that she could not have compassion on the son of her womb. They may forget, but I will not forget Thee. For behold I have engraven thee on the palms of my hands and thy walls are continually before Me."

He is the Good Shepherd in that He is making continual intercession on behalf of His own. He is the Good Shepherd especially in this respect that He laid down His life for His sheep. He died in their room and place and by His obedience to death. He paid the debt to the uttermost farthing; and as proof that He paid their debt (a debt which they could never pay and which the lost in hell will never be able to pay), and as a proof that He made reconciliation for iniquity and brought in everlasting righteousness as the God of peace, He brought again from the dead that Great Shepherd of the sheep and He is now exalted and glorified in His human nature with the glory which He had with the Father, before the world was. And in connection with His resurrection and ascension we read that He received gifts from men, even for the rebellious. That is brought before us in Psalm 68.

"Thou hast, O Lord, most glorious, ascended up on high; and in triumph victorious led captive captivity." Thou hast received gifts for men and as the apostle explains in His epistle to the Ephesians, among the gifts which he obtained, were prophets, apostles and evangelists. Christ is therefore the Good Shepherd in that He provides pastors after His own heart to feed His flock with knowledge and understanding.

Now we shall notice what Christ says about His own sheep. He says, "My sheep hear My voice." He speaks of them as 'My sheep.' He has a right to them because they were given to Him by God the Father: they were elected in Him before the foundation of the world. God could have left all mankind to perish, as He left the angels which kept not their first estate but according to the good pleasure of His will, He chose in Christ, a number which no man can number from among all nations and languages and tribes. They are His therefore as the Father's gift, as we find Himself declaring, "Thine they were and Thou gavest them Me." They were given to Christ in the everlasting Covenant of grace in a past eternity and Christ willingly and lovingly received them in order that He would suffer and die in their room and place. He purchased them with His precious blood. He made an atonement for their sins and paid all their debts to the uttermost farthing.

They are His sheep in this respect that they are persons who have been saved by Him, saved by His grace. They came into this world as children of wrath even as others; they went astray on the mountains of sin, of vanity and error. But, it is true of all who are Christ's sheep, as the apostle Peter says, "For ye were as sheep going astray but now you are turned to the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."

It was the Lord who found them; they had no desire themselves to turn to the Lord and if the Lord had left them, they would have continued on the broad road to everlasting destruction but the Lord sought them out. We read in one of the parables of the Shepherd going to seek the sheep that was lost, and when He had found the sheep, He lifted it up on His shoulders and rejoiced because He had found the sheep that was lost. And in connection with that, Jesus said that there is joy in the presence of the angels of heaven over one sinner that repenteth. For all of Christ's sheep are brought to repentance; those who do not repent shall surely perish. For those who are His sheep shall hear His voice and through grace they are enabled to give obedience to His voice. "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." If we are not giving place to that invitation we are proving that we are not His sheep, that we are not hearing His voice.

In bringing His lost sheep to Himself we find Christ saying, "I am the door. By Me if any man enter in he shall be saved and shall go in and out and find pasture." It is by entering in by the door that any sinner is saved. The day in which the sinner closes in with Christ, in that day he is saved with an everlasting salvation.

We notice that when the Shepherd found the sheep that was lost that He lifted the sheep onto His shoulders. It would appear that the sheep could not walk, that it lay down to die but the Good Shepherd lifted up the sheep on His own shoulders. The sheep was now resting on the shoulders of the Shepherd and that is true of the sheep that enters in by the door, that day that he is resting on the finished work of Christ. He cannot rest on anything of his own, he is resting on the finished work of the Good Shepherd.

Now we have heard the marks that are true of the sheep of Christ. We should consider if we have these marks. Many people profess to be Christ's sheep but are not of His sheep. We have here the marks which Christ Himself gives of His sheep. He says, "My sheep hear My voice," and Christ's voice is to be heard in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. "They are as new born babes seeking sincere the milk of the Word, that they may grow thereby." "They hear My voice and I know them." He knows them. "The Lord knoweth them that are His." He knows all their troubles and trials and afflictions. Other people may not know what they are passing through, but Christ knows their trials and afflictions. Job's friends could not enter into His trials and afflictions but

this was a comfort to Job as he confessed, "The Lord knoweth the way that I take and when He hath tried me, as gold I shall come forth."

We find Christ in one place saying, "I know thy poverty and thine afflictions, but thou art rich." "For blessed are the poor in spirit for their is the kingdom of God." He knows them in this sense that He loves them. Concerning each of them He says, "Yea I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." And the everlasting love of a triune God to your soul is revealed in that you were turned from your evil ways to the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls. And their desire is now to follow Christ in this world.

"My sheep hear My voice and I know them and they follow Me." They follow Him in His doctrines or His teachings. We read of many who professed to be Christ's disciples and for a time they showed great zeal in following Him, and wanted to make Him a King. But when Christ began to teach them the doctrines of His word, they said in connection with these doctrines, "This is an hard saying, who can hear it?" They went back and walked no more with Him. They could not endure sound doctrine. They were not the sheep of Christ. And persons who cannot endure sound doctrine are not the sheep of Christ. They do not follow Him in His doctrine. But when Christ asked His disciples, "Will ye also go away?" Simon Peter answered, "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

These doctrines which are an hard saying to the multitudes are to their souls the words of their eternal life, and they follow Christ out of the places where there is no pasture for their souls. For His sheep will not follow strangers but will flee to Him. Persons who show that they are strangers to the work of the Holy Spirit in their souls and who do not preach the Gospel in its purity, they flee from such, for where Christ is not honoured this people cannot remain. For in all things He must have the preeminence and He leads His people out of the places where they should not be. He calleth His own sheep by name and leadeth them out. And when He putteth forth His sheep, He goeth before them and His sheep follow Him for they know His voice.

And there are times when His sheep find themselves in such places where there is no true pasture for them. That is brought before us in the Song of Solomon when the Bride of Christ found herself among those who had no true pasture for her soul. They were at rest but she could not be at rest. We find her saying to the Lord, "O, Thou whom my soul loveth, tell me where thou feedst thy flock and where thou dost cause thy flock to rest at noon. For why should I be as one that turneth aside by the

flocks of thy companions." She is here making distinctions between those whom she calls the flocks of Thy companions, and those who are not. They claim to be Christ's sheep, but the pasture wherein they feed cannot feed their soul. "She found no rest there."

The Lord said to her, "If thou knowest not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth. Separate from them and go by the footsteps of the flock." And you will find the pasture and the rest beside My shepherds' tents. For there My shepherds are — those who have entered in by the door. I have commissioned them to feed My sheep and to feed My lambs, and therefore if you are seeking pasture for your soul, seek it where My shepherds have their tents.

He goes before them and they go forth outside the camp to follow Him bearing His reproach. "They follow me, and I give unto the eternal life." It is because He gives eternal life to their souls that they seek to follow Him in this world and that they are seeking the pasture to feed their souls.

"I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish." Satan and unbelief tells them that they shall perish. To meet their fears and the temptations of Satan, Christ says that they shall never perish and He says elsewhere, "Fear not little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom."

They shall never perish. That implies that they shall persevere unto the end, for they are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation. "Neither shall any man pluck them out of My Hand." They are in His keeping and He shall keep them to the end, "The Lord thee keeps, the Lord thy shade on thy right hand doth stay. The moon by night thee shall not smite, nor yet the sun by day. Henceforth thy going out and in God keep for ever will."

Are they not a happy people who are Christ's sheep in this world? At the Great Day of Judgement there shall be the separation made between the sheep and the goats; between the righteous and the wicked. Christ shall put the sheep on His right hand and the wicked on His left hand and He shall say to those on His right hand: "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world. But to those on His left He shall say, depart from Me ye wicked to everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." And these shall go into everlasting punishment but the righteous unto life eternal.

Now in the light of that Great Day — the Great Day of Judgement, we read "that God commands every man everywhere to repent because He

hath appointed a Day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man Whom He hath ordained, where of He hath given assurance to all men in that He hath raised Him from the dead."

The day of our death will be to us a judgement day. In view therefore of death and judgement, God commands every man to repent — to turn to the Lord and to plead for mercy. We read, "This poor man cried, God heard and freed Him from all his distresses." May we be seeking this blessing, that we be found among Christ's sheep and Christ's lambs, for Christ has lambs in His flock, and Christ is still saying in the Gospel, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not for such is the Kingdom of God." And He took them up in His hands and blessed them. And Christ is able to give a blessing to young children, where the Gospel is preached. He alone is able to give the blessing, and whom Christ blesses that person is blessed for time and for eternity.

"Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest."

The Person of the Surety

*The following is a further extract (slightly edited) from
"The Economy of the Covenants" by Herman Witsius
(1636-1708)*

These four things are required as necessary to *the Person of a Surety*, that he might be capable to engage for us. First, that he be *true man*, consisting of a human soul and body. Secondly, that he be *a righteous and holy man*, without any spot of sin. Thirdly, that he be *true and eternal god*. Fourthly, that he be all this in the *unity of person*. Of each severally and in order.

(1) That our surety ought to be *true man*, is what Paul declares more than once, Heb 2. 10, 11, 16, 17. *It became him*, it behoved him, it was becoming God *that he who sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, be all of one*, of one human seed, so that they might call each other brethren. *In all things, it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren*, in order to be their *Goel* or kinsman-redeemer: *for verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham*, (did not take upon him to deliver angels, but to deliver the seed of Abraham.)

This assumption, or taking, does not seem to me to denote the assuming human nature into personal union, but the assuming of the elect, in order for their deliverance. For, first, the casual conjunction *for*,

indicates, that the Apostle uses this middle term (or this as an argument) to prove, what he had said v.14 about the partaking of flesh and blood, and which v.17 he deduces by the illative particle, *wherefore*. But the middle term must be distinguished from the conclusion: and so there is no tautology in the Apostle's very just inference. Secondly, since the assumption of the human nature was long before the Apostle wrote those things, he would not speak of it in the present tense, as he does here, but in the past, as he did ver.14. Thirdly, as it would be an uncouth expression to say, the Son of God assumed or took man, if we suppose he only meant, that the Son of God assumed human nature; and in like manner this other expression would appear harsh, the Son of God did not assume angels, to denote that he did not assume the nature of angels. Fourthly, in the Scripture style the Greek word used signifies to deliver by laying hold of one. It is thus in Matthew 14, "and immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him:" and this signification is most apposite to the context. For, in the preceding verse, the Apostle had said, that Christ *delivered them who thro' fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage*, alluding it seems to the bondage of Egypt. But God is represented to us in Scripture, as with a stretched out hand laying hold on, and bringing his people out of Egypt.

Which the Apostle expresses by saying, "in the day when I took them by the hand, to lead them out of the land of Egypt:" where we have the same word in Greek.

Moreover, it may be proved by invincible arguments, that it was necessary our surety should be man. Let us pause a little here, and see whether we may not possibly search this truth to the bottom. The legal covenant entered into with the first man, is founded on the very nature of God; at least with respect to the commands of the covenant, and the threatenings annexed to them. So that it would be a contradiction if these precepts of the law of nature should not be proposed to man, or if man, after the violation of them, should be saved without a satisfaction; which I now pre-suppose, as having proved it before, and shall further confirm it in the sequel. I therefore, proceed: this satisfaction can be nothing else but the performing the same precepts and the undergoing the same penalty with which God had threatened the sinner. Because from our hypothesis it appears to be unworthy of God to grant life to man but on condition of his obeying those precepts; nor possible for the truth and justice of God to be satisfied, unless the punishment which the sinner deserved should be inflicted. I add, that as those precepts were given to man, so no creature but man could perform them. This appears, first,

because the law which is suited to the nature of man, requires, that he love God with all his soul, and serve him with all the members of his body, seeing both are God's. None can do this but man, who consists of soul and body. Secondly, the same law requires the love of our neighbour; but none is our neighbour but man, who is of the same blood with us. To this purpose is that emphatical saying of God to Israel, Isa. 58: 7 "that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh." And thus our surety ought to cherish us, as one does his own flesh, and consequently we ought to be *of his flesh and of his bones*. Thirdly, it requires also, that we lay down our lives for our brethren, which we have shewn was contained in the royal law of love, and none but man can do this. For who else is our brother?

Or who besides could lay down his life for us? No other creature but man could undergo the same sufferings, as hunger, thirst, weariness, death. It became God to threaten sinning man with these things: that even the body which was the instrument of sin might also undergo its share of the punishment. And after the threatening, the truth of God could not but inflict these things, either on the sinner or the surety. The dignity of the sufferer might indeed sufficiently compensate for the duration of the punishment. But the truth of God admits of no commutation of the species of punishment. Wherefore our surety was "partaker of flesh and blood that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death." All these things put together, incontestably prove that our surety ought to be man; that he might satisfy the law for us.

This is what the Apostle means when joining these two together by an inseparable connection, "made of a woman, made under the law." For he intimates, that the principal and immediate scope and end of Christ's incarnation was, that in the human nature he might be subject to the law, to which it is under obligation: and so that God, according to the same right, might renew with him the same covenant which he had before entered into with the first man; which he could not have done with any other created nature, without a contradiction.

There is this further consideration; our surety ought to have such a nature, in order to our being united to him in one body. For it is necessary that the satisfaction of one be as it were the satisfaction of all, and the Spirit who fits for a holy and happy life, should flow from him as the head to us as his members; and so that he become "the saviour of the body." The Scriptures frequently call this mystical union *a marriage*. But it is the inviolable law of marriage that the persons married be of the same nature: "and they two shall be one flesh." Paul hath taught us,

that the mystery of the spiritual marriage of the church with Christ lies concealed in these words, Eph 5: 31, 32.

(2) We observed that the second condition required in the surety was, that he be "*a righteous and holy man*: in all things like unto his brethren, yet without sin."

This holiness required that from the first moment of his conception he should be free from all guilt and stain of sin of his own; and on the contrary, be endowed with the original rectitude of the image of God: that moreover, through the whole course of his life, he should keep himself from all sin, and perfectly fulfil all righteousness: and in fine, constantly persevere in that purity to the end, without yielding to any temptation.

And this also is clear from what has been already said. For seeing our surety ought to save us, according to the first treaty of the covenant, whereby perfect holiness was required of man, it also behoved him to be perfectly holy. And as sin shut the gates of heaven, nothing but holiness could set them open again. This the Apostle urges, "for, as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." But that obedience excludes all sin. And then how could a sinner satisfy for others who cannot satisfy for himself, for by one sin he forfeits his own soul? "For who is this (from among sinful men) that can engage his heart to approach unto me?" says God. Or who but one who is free from every sin can be our priest, familiarly to approach to God, and offer an acceptable sacrifice and prevalent intercession to him? "Such an High-Priest became us who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." He then can offer himself, as a lamb "without blemish and without spot," whose offering may be to God "for a sweet-smelling savour". For none else who cannot offer himself to God "without spot, can purge the conscience from dead works." This was formerly signified by the legal purity of the High Priest, without which, it was such a crime for any to intermeddle in holy things, that he was to be punished by death; and by the purity of the beasts, which were to be without any blemish. And seeing it is well known that "God heareth not sinners", whose prayers are an abomination to him, who else can be the general intercessor and advocate of all with the Father, but he who is eminently *righteous*? In fine how could he who is himself impure, "sanctify the church, and present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish," there cannot be more in the effect than there is in the cause. Since then all these things ought to be done by the surety, it appears necessary that he be a holy man.

But here the adorable wisdom of our God shines forth: our surety ought not only to be man, but also taken from among men, that he might be *the son of man*; for if his human nature was created out of nothing, or out of the earth, he would certainly be true man, yet not our kinsman, not our brother. In order to this therefore, it became him, like other “children, to be a partaker of flesh and blood,” and to be “born of a woman”. But it seemed inconsistent with the unspotted holiness of the surety, that he should be descended of the posterity of Adam, who all derive hereditary pollution from him: for “who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?” Here let us adore the unsearchable wisdom of God. Though he would have a surety to be born of a woman, yet she was to be a virgin. For this, if there was nothing else intended, was at least an evidence of these two things: first, that the surety was not from Adam’s covenant, as not being born according to the law of nature, and consequently not under the imputation of Adam’s sin. Secondly, nay that he could not be so much as considered as existing in Adam when Adam sinned. Seeing he was not born in virtue of that word whereby God blessed the state of marriage before the fall; *increase and multiply*; but in virtue of the promise concerning the seed of the woman, which was made after the fall. And thus he was created a second Adam in opposition to the first. “For the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, a woman shall compass a man”. We are it seems to take this in the utmost signification the words can admit of. That *a woman*, who is only such, and without any thing of the woman but the sex, *should compass*, not by embrace, but by conception. (For such a compassing is meant, as is the work of God alone, and not the voluntary operation of man.) *A male*, denoting the more excellent sex, as Rev 12, 5. “and she brought forth a male child.” This then is a *new thing*, and a *creation* altogether divine. On this depends the blessing of the earth, and the satiating the weary soul, which are promised in the following verses.

(3) Thirdly, it is further required in our surety, that he be *true and eternal God*. “I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the holy one of Israel.” “I, even I am Lord, and there is no saviour besides me.” Salvation is not such work, that it cannot be said, “and the Lord hath not done all this”. It is peculiar to the true Saviour to say of himself, what Isaiah prophesied, *Surely in the Lord (he said to me, or concerning me, namely, the Father, who beareth witness of Christ) are righteous and strength, even to him shall men come*: and the reasons are evident.

None but God can restore us to true liberty. If any creature could

redeem and deliver us, we should become the peculiar property of that creature. For he who sets us free, makes a purchase of us for his property and possession. But it is a manifest contradiction to be freed and to be free and yet at the same time to be the property and servant of any creature. True liberty consists in subjection to God alone; so that all things are ours, and we belong to God, and Christ himself. Adam before the fall was subject to none but God. If, by our deliverance from the fall, we were put under the dominion of any creature, that would rather be a change of servitude than a deliverance. Therefore, our Lord says, "if the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

None but God can give us eternal life; which consists in the most intimate union with God; nay in having God for our inheritance, possession and treasure, and even *our portion for ever*. But what creature can possibly bestow God upon any? None but God can give God. He gives himself. Hence, these two are joined, "the true God and eternal life".

None but God can give us *power or right to become the Sons of God*; and even this belongs to the office of surety. For, who but God can bestow the Spirit, by whom we become the sons of God by regeneration; so that of him the whole *family in heaven and earth may be named*. Who but God could "give us these great and precious promises, by which we might be partakers of the divine nature?" Who else but God, who alone is Lord of heaven, can bequeath by testament the heavenly inheritance? And who but God can give us that Spirit, who is so the Spirit of the Father, as to be also the Spirit of the Son: "by whom we may cry Abba Father" and who beareth witness with our spirit concerning the future inheritance?

In fine, for man to glory in any one, as his Saviour, and give him the honour of the new creation, to resign himself to his pleasure, and become his property, and say to him, thou art lord of my soul; is an honour to which no mere creature can have the least claim. "In Jehovah shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory". "My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour". Whom we acknowledge to be our Saviour, we must likewise acknowledge to be our judge, our lawgiver and our king. A holy soul can only thus rejoice in God; "the Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of isles be glad."

It appears then, that none but he who is true God, could possibly be surety, but the question is, was it absolutely necessary, that he should be Son of God, and the second person in the Trinity? No better reason can be assigned for the *Son's* undertaking the suretiship, than the holy good pleasure of the adorable Trinity. But when it is revealed to us, it is our

duty to observe, and proclaim, the wisdom and goodness of God in this constitution.

Did not God most wisely order, that he who created man should restore, and as it were, create him a-new? That he who is the personal Word of God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, and by whom all things were made, should be that great publisher of the word of the Gospel, whereby God shines in the hearts of the elect, and new creatures not yet existing, are effectually called, and by that call brought, as it were, into being: Further, as the second person alone is the Son, and our salvation consists in adoption, was it not proper, that the Son of God should become the son of man, that having obtained a right of adoption by him, we might be made his brethren and co-heirs? Moreover, let it be observed that the Son alone is called "the image of the Father" and by way of eminence, "the beloved of the Father." Seeing man therefore had, by sin, shamefully defaced the image of God, which he received in the first creation; and thereby most justly exposed himself to the hatred of God: was it not worthy of God to restore that image by his own essential image, in the human nature he had assumed; in order by that means, to open a way for our return to the favour and love of the Father? In fine, could the philanthropy and love of the Father, be more illustriously displayed to us, than in giving his only begotten Son to us and for us, that in him we might behold the Father's glory? Christ himself lays this before us, John 3,16.

(4) The last condition requisite in the surety is, that he should be God-man; God and man, at the same time, in unity of person: "one mediator between God and man." For as it was necessary he should be *man*, and also *God* and *one* surety; it was necessary he should be both these in unity of person, "God manifested in the flesh". "The word made flesh", "Of the seed of David according to the flesh," in such a manner, as at the same time to be "the Son of God with power". Which may be further made appear.

Had he been God only he could neither have been subject, nor have obeyed, nor suffered: if mere man, his obedience, subjection, and suffering, would not have been of sufficient value for the redemption of the elect. Nay, a mere creature is so bound to fulfil all righteousness for itself, that its righteousness cannot be imputed and imparted to others: and should we suppose a man, truly and perfectly holy, but yet a mere man, who, according to the law of love, offered himself even to die for his brother, he himself would doubtless obtain a reward by his righteousness; but could merit nothing for a guilty person, unless perhaps exemption

from punishment at most. And therefore it behoved our surety to be man, that he might be capable to submit, obey and suffer; and at the same time God, that the subjection, obedience and suffering, of this person God-man, might on account of his infinite dignity, be imputed to others, and be sufficient for saving all, to whom it is imputed.

Moreover, a mere creature could not support under the load of divine wrath, so as to remove it, and rise again, when he had done; "who knoweth the power of thine anger; even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath," Psal. 90, 2 see Nah. 1, 6. It was therefore necessary for our surety to be more than man, that by the infinite power of his Godhead, he might support the assumed human nature, and so be able to bear the fierceness of divine wrath, and conquer every kind of death.

I shall not conceal what is objected to this argument; namely, that God could have so supported the human nature, though not personally united to himself, by his divine power, as to have rendered it capable to endure and conquer all manner of sorrows. I dare not refuse this. But yet that would not be sufficient in the present case. Because, by that hypothesis, it would be God himself by the surety, who would have vanquished his enemies. But it is necessary, that our surety should do this by his own power, that "his own arm should bring salvation unto him" and therefore be "the mighty one of Jacob", the mighty God Himself, "stronger than the strong man", "having life in himself" and "having power to take his life again". to which is required "the exceeding greatness of his power" and so should "be declared to be the Son of God with power".

These are the tremendous mysteries of our religion, "which were kept secret since the world began, but are now made manifest, and by the scriptures of the Prophets according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith".

From, hence, the divinity of the Christian religion appears with evidence. What penetration of man or angels was capable of devising things so mysterious, so sublime, and so far surpassing the capacity of all created beings? How adorable do the wisdom and justice, the holiness, the truth, the goodness, and the philanthropy of God, display themselves in contriving, giving, and perfecting this means of our salvation? How calmly does conscience, overwhelmed with the burden of its sins acquiesce in such a surety, and in such a suretiship; when here at length, apprised of a method of reconciliation, both worthy of God, and safe for man? Who, on contemplating these things in the light of the Spirit, would not break out into the praises of the most holy, the most

righteous, the most true, the most gracious, and the most high God? Oh! the depth of the wisdom and knowledge of God! O the height of mysteries, which angels desire to look into! Glory to the Father, who raised up, accepted, and gave us such a surety! Glory to the Son, who clothing Himself in human flesh, so willingly, so patiently, and so constantly performed such an engagement for us. Glory to the Holy Ghost, the revealer, the witness, and the earnest of so great happiness for us. All hail! O Christ Jesus, true and eternal God, and true and holy man, all in one who retains the properties of both natures in the unity of Thy person. Thee we acknowledge, Thee we worship, to Thee we betake ourselves, at Thy feet we fall down, from Thy hand alone we look for salvation. Thou art the only Saviour; we desire to be Thy peculiar property, we are so by Thy grace, and shall remain for ever. Let the whole world of thine elect, with us, know, acknowledge and adore Thee, and thus at length be saved by Thee. This is the sum of our faith, and hope, and this the top of all our wishes. *Amen.*

Gleanings from Samuel Rutherford (2)

Time, the World, etc.

Do not weary; you must be riper ere you be shaken; there is less sand in your glass now than there was yesternight.

The stranger, in an uncouth country, must take with smoky inns, and course cheer, and a hard bed, and a barking, ill-tongued host. It is not long till day, and he will pursue his journey on the morrow, and leave them all. Indeed our fair morning is at hand, the day-star is near the rising, and we are not many miles from home.

We may laugh at the feathers that children are chasing here.

Verily I have seen the best of this world, a moth-eaten, thread-bare coat. I purpose to lay it aside. O for my house above not made with hands!

As for worldly things, seeing they are meadows and fair flowers in the way to heaven, a smell in the by-going is sufficient.

It were best for us, like ill bairns (who are best heard at home), to seek our own home, and to sell our hopes of this litle clay idol of this earth, where we are neither well summered nor well wintered.

As a child cannot hold two apples in his little hand, but the one

putteth the other out of its room, so neither can we be masters and lords of two loves.

It is impossible a man can take his lusts to heaven with him: such wares as these will not be welcomed there.

How many counterfeit masks will be burned in the day of God!

Set not your heart upon the world, since God hath not made it your portion — for you will not have an upper heaven and an under heaven too — let go your grip of this life.

Some few years will bring us all out in our blacks and whites before our Judge.

Men have no more of you to work upon than some few inches and span-lengths of sick, coughing, and phlegmatic clay: your spirits are above their benches, courts, or high commissions, and all the malice of earth and hell can only hurt the scabbard of a believer.

Were this life heaven, there were not much gain in godliness, but there is a rest for the people of God.

Think not the common way of serving God, as neighbours and others do, will bring you to heaven.

This world is a great forest of thorns in your way to heaven, but you must go through it.

Whether God come to his children with a rod or a crown, if he come himself with it, it is well.

Love of Christ

I am pained with wondering at new opened treasures in Christ.

O that time would post faster and hasten our long looked-for communion with that fairest — fairest among the sons of men. He hath left a fire in my heart that hell cannot cast water on to quench or extinguish it.

I caused not Christ's wind to blow upon me, his love came upon a withered creature whether I would or not; and yet by coming it procured from me a welcome.

Any little communion with him — one of his love-looks should be my begun heaven — it would soften hell's pains to be filled with his love.

O would to the Lord I had not a myself but Christ: not a my lust, but Christ: not a my ease, but Christ: not a my honour, but Christ! O sweet word "Yet not I but Christ liveth in me!"

O if the heaven and the heaven of heavens were paper, and the sea ink and the multitude of mountains pens of brass, and I were able to write that paper, within and without, full of the praises of my fairest, my dearest, my loveliest, my sweetest, my matchless well-beloved!

Suppose our Lord were to make ten thousand heavens of good and glorious things, and of new joys, devised out of the deep of infinite wisdom, he could not make the like of Christ; for Christ is God and God cannot be made. O that he and we were together. There are many heads lying in Christ's bosom, but there is room for your's among the rest.

This soul of ours hath love, and cannot but love some fair one: and oh, what a fair One, what an only One, what an excellent lovely One, is Jesus! O but Christ is heaven's wonder, and earth's wonder! What marvel that his bride saith, "He is altogether lovely!"

Grace, grace, free grace, the merits of Christ for nothing, white and fair, and large Saviour-mercy, which is another sort of thing than creature-mercy or law-mercy, yea a thousand degrees above angel-mercy, hath been and must be the rock that we drowned souls must swim to.

Lovely Jesus, must be our song on this side of heaven's gates. And even when we have won the castle, then must we eternally sing, "Worthy is the Lamb who hath saved us, and washed us in his own blood!"

I would counsel all the ransomed ones to learn this song, and to drink and be drunk with the love of Jesus. I think it is possible on earth to build a young new Jerusalem, a little new heaven, of this surpassing love.

Christ, is my choice in heaven and earth. I rejoice that he is in heaven before me: God send a joyful meeting; and, in the mean time, the traveller's charges for the way — I mean, a burden of Christ's love to sweeten the journey, and to encourage a breathless runner.

You cannot but see that the mark at which Christ hath aimed these 24 years and above, is to have the company and fellowship of such a sinful creature in heaven with him, for all eternity.

The Arm that hath knocked 5,000 years aches not yet: behold, He stands and knocks, and will not give over till all be his, and till the tribes in ones and twos be over Jordan, and up with him in the good land.

Better a thousand times live under the government and tutory of Christ, than be your own and live at will. Live in Christ, and you are in the suburbs of heaven; there is but a thin wall between you and the land of praises — ye are within an hour's sailing of the shore of the new Canaan.

"Because he liveth ye shall live also." And what is that else but as if the Son had said, "I will not have heaven except my redeemed ones be with me; they and I cannot live asunder."

Causes, Nature and Marks of a Decline in Grace

The following letter from the pen of the eminent John Newton sets forth the views of a mature Christian on this subject.

I remember, when I once had the pleasure of waiting on you, you were pleased to begin an interesting conversation, which, to my concern, was interrupted. The subject was concerning the causes, nature, and marks of a decline in grace; how it happens that we lose that warm impression of divine things, which in some favoured moments we think it almost impossible to forget; how far this change of frame is consistent with a spiritual growth in other respects; how to form a comparative judgement of our proficiency upon the whole; and by what steps the losses we sustain from our necessary connexion with a sinful nature and a sinful world may be retrieved from time to time. I beg your Lordship's permission to fill up the paper with a view to these inquiries. I do not mean to offer a laboured essay on them, but such thoughts as shall occur while the pen is in my hand.

The awakened soul (especially when, after a season of distress and terror, it begins to taste that the Lord is gracious), ends itself as in a new world. No change in outward life can be so sensible, so affecting. No wonder, then, that at such a time little else can be thought of; — the transition from darkness to light, from a sense of wrath to a hope of glory, is the greatest that can be imagined, and is oftentimes as sudden as wonderful. Hence the general characteristics of young converts are zeal and love. Like Israel at the Red Sea, they have just seen the wonderful works of the Lord, and they cannot but sing his praise; they are deeply affected with the danger they have lately escaped, and with the case of multitudes around them, who are secure and careless in the same alarming situation! and a sense of their own mercies, and a compassion for the souls of others, is so transporting that they can hardly forbear preaching to every one they meet.

This emotion is highly just and reasonable, with respect to the causes from whence it springs; and it is doubtless a proof, not only of the imperfection, but the depravity of our nature, that we are not always thus affected; — yet it is not entirely genuine. If we examine this character closely, which seems at first sight a pattern and a reproof to Christians of

longer standing, we shall for the most part find it attended with considerable defects.

1. Such persons are very weak in faith. Their confidence arises rather from the lively impressions of joy within, than from a distinct and clear apprehension of the work of God in Christ. The comforts which are intended as *cordials* to animate them against the opposition of an unbelieving world, they mistake and rest in as the *proper evidences* of their hope. And hence it comes to pass, that when the Lord varies his dispensations, and hides his face, they are soon troubled and at their wit's end.

2. They who are in this state of their first love, are seldom free from something of a censorious spirit. They have not yet felt all the deceitfulness of their own hearts; they are not well acquainted with the devices or temptations of Satan; and therefore know not how to sympathise or make allowances, where allowances are necessary and due, and can hardly bear with any who do not discover the same earnestness as themselves.

3. They are likewise, more or less under the influence of self-righteousness and self-will. They mean well; but not being as yet well acquainted with the spiritual meaning and proper use of the law, nor established in the life of faith, a part (oftentimes a very considerable part) of their zeal spends itself in externals and non-essentials, prompts them to practise what is not commanded, to refrain from what is lawful, and to observe various and needless austerities and singularities, as their tempers and circumstances differ.

However, with all their faults, methinks there is something very beautiful and engaging in the honest vehemence of a young convert. Some cold and rigid judges are ready to reject these promising appearances on account of incidental blemishes. But would a gardener throw away a fine nectarine, because it is *green*, and has not yet attained all that beauty and flavour which a few more showers and suns will impart? Perhaps it will hold for the most part in grace as in nature (some exceptions there are), if there is not some *fire* in youth, we can hardly expect a proper warmth in old age.

But the great and good Husbandman watches over what his own hand has planted, and carries on his work by a variety of different and even contrary dispensations. While their mountain stands thus strong, they think they shall never be moved; but at length they find a change. Sometimes it comes on by insensible degrees. That part of their affection which was purely natural, will abate of course when the power of novelty ceases: they will begin, in some instances, to perceive their own indiscretions; and an endeavour to correct the excesses of an imprudent zeal will

often draw them towards the contrary extreme of remissness: the evils of their hearts, which, though overpowered, were not eradicated, will revive again: the enemy will watch his occasions to meet them with suitable temptations; and as it is the Lord's design that they should experimentally learn and feel their own weakness, he will in some instances be permitted to succeed. When guilt is thus brought upon the conscience, the heart grows hard, the hands feeble, and the knees weak; then confidence is shaken, the spirit of prayer interrupted, the armour gone, and thus things grow worse and worse, till the Lord is pleased to interpose: for though we can fall of ourselves, we cannot rise without his help. Indeed every sin, in its own nature, has a tendency towards a final apostasy; and there is a provision in the covenant of grace, and the Lord, in his own time, returns to convince, humble, pardon, comfort, and renew the soul. He touches the rock, and the waters flow. By repeated experiments and exercises of this sort (for this wisdom is seldom acquired by one or a few lessons), we begin at length to learn that we are nothing, have nothing, can do nothing but sin. And thus we are gradually prepared to live more out of ourselves, and to derive all our sufficiency of every kind from Jesus, the fountain of grace. We learn to tread more warily, to trust less to our own strength, to have lower thoughts of ourselves, and higher thoughts of *Him*: in which two last particulars, I apprehend what the Scripture means by a growth of grace does properly consist. Both are increasing in the lively Christian; — every day shows him more of his own heart, and more of the power, sufficiency, compassion, and grace of his adorable Redeemer; but neither will be complete till we get to heaven.

I apprehend, therefore, that though we find an abatement of that sensible warmth of affection which we felt at first setting out; — yet if our views are more evangelical, our judgement more ripened, our hearts more habitually humbled under a sense of inward depravity, our tempers more softened into sympathy and tenderness; if our prevailing desires are spiritual, and we practically esteem the precepts, ordinances, and people of God; we may warrantably conclude, that his good work of grace in us is, upon the whole, on an increase.

But still it is to be lamented, that an increase of knowledge and experience should be so generally attended with a decline of fervour. If it was not for what has passed in my own heart, I should be ready to think it impossible. But this very circumstance gives me a still more emphatical conviction of my own vileness and depravity. The want of humiliation humbles me, and my very indifference rouses and awakens me to earnestness. There are, however, seasons of refreshment, ineffable

glances of light and power upon the soul, which, as they are derived from clearer displays of divine grace, if not so tumultuous as the first joys, are more penetrating, transforming, and animating. A glance of these, when compared with our sluggish stupidity when they are withheld, weans the heart from this wretched state of sin and temptation, and makes the thoughts of death and eternity desirable. Then this conflict shall cease; — I shall sin and wander no more, see him as he is, and be like him for ever.

If the question is, How are these bright moments to be prolonged, renewed, or retrieved? we are directed to faith and diligence. A careful use of the appointed means of grace, a watchful endeavour to avoid the occasions and appearances of evil, and especially assiduity in secret prayer, will bring us as much of them as the Lord sees good for us. He knows best why we are not to be trusted with them continually. Here we are to walk by faith, to be exercised and tried; by and by we shall be crowned, and the desires he has given shall be abundantly satisfied.

Notes and Comments

Providential Frowns

Not everything that happens in connection with Papal visits abroad is reported by or commented on by the mass-media. For the most part they are very selective and certainly sparing in their reporting of anything that might have the effect of lowering the status of the one who claims to be the vicar of Christ. It had however to be conceded by them that the visit to the Netherlands earlier this year was not altogether a success. The crowds were not on the streets when their idol was to pass by nor in the public halls when he appeared to perform his usual act. The Utrecht City Council, we are informed by a Dutch friend, cancelled an official reception in deference, it would appear, to the earnest protest letters which local churches sent them. But even so, some of the God-fearing in Utrecht felt that even the very coming of the Pope to their city and the limited welcome he obtained brought chastisement. "The night after," our friend wrote, "there was a terrible hail-shower that shattered windows, damaged cars and crops and virtually roused the whole city. The amount of damage to crops alone was twice the sum of the cost of the Pope's visit. The event was played down in the media but many felt it was as significant as the fire in York Minster recently." The Pope's visit to Spain was marked by devastating floods. His visit to Britain of course

“coincided” with the Falklands war and the beginnings of the costly miners’ strike. When last August he visited northern Cameroon he arrived according to a “Daily Telegraph” report “under clear skies.” “About 100,000 people greeted him before an altar erected next to the Airport. But as the Mass got under way, heavy black storm clouds blew up from the south and seconds before the baptism ceremony a torrential downpour started . . .” The reason for reporting this seems to be that the Pope took the opportunity of “amusing local leaders as he grimaced about the rain.” It was a good time for yet another photograph!

Desegregation of R.C. Schools

Under the Education Act of 1918 all R.C. schools were transferred to the state for funding at the request of that church. Protective clauses were, however, included in the Act giving the church the right among other things to vet the character and religious beliefs of its teachers and also to retain the same amount of time for religious instruction in its schools as hitherto. The separate status accorded in law to R.C. schools contrasted sharply with non-denominational state schools where there was no control over the religious affiliation of teachers and where the mere continuance of religious instruction in school depended essentially on public opinion: it could be ended in any such school if in a local plebiscite the majority so elected.

Over the years within the R.C. church, especially its hierarchy, there has always been staunch opposition to any move as, for example, from Scotland’s largest teachers’ union, the E.I.S., for the desegregation of its schools. That policy, they claim, is rooted in the belief that the church has a bounden duty to teach Christianity according to its tradition and the schools are seen as the best way to do this. Calls for desegregation have invariably elicited such retorts as that “the once firmly defined calls such as Protestant ethos has dwindled almost to the point of extinction and has been replaced by a vaguely humanistic ‘comparative religion’ atmosphere with occasional Christian overtones” (to quote from a recent press article). Are they to expose themselves to a similar risk? The sad fact is that the appraisal quoted of the nature of religious education in many state schools may well be true.

While it is no doubt true that the R.C. hierarchy is still firmly entrenched in this stance, there is some evidence of a swing of opinion, at least among the R.C. laity, towards the complete integration with state schools. For obvious reasons such a change in outlook may not yet be publicly aired but, if one can judge by press comment, it appears to be

gathering momentum in private circles. The change, it is claimed, can be attributed to various causes: for example, the relaxation in some R.C. schools of the traditional very rigorous programme of religious teaching; the undeniable drift of young people away from the church; but, notably, the movement of Christian unity (ecumenism) enshrined in such developments as pulpit exchanges, shared churches, co-operation in charity appeals, joint media programmes etc. — all this (it is declared with great enthusiasm) being in accord with the Pope's dictum in Canterbury: "Going forward together on pilgrimage hand in hand." "(Roman) Catholic 'exclusiveness' will have to go," say those who regard integration as only a matter of time.

Before rushing to welcome the approaching possibility of the ending of the separate R.C. schools system, there are certain implications of such a development which should make us pause. It would be naive to imagine that the R.C. hierarch would not continue to safeguard jealously within the state schools system the well entrenched position held by it over the years outwith that system. We believe that from its new vantage point it would try to extend its influence and gain fresh ground. (As it is, it is represented on all bodies concerned with religious education in non-denominational schools in Scotland). With the replacement in many state schools of Religious Instruction, which in better days was essentially Bible-centred and Protestant in character, with the diet of what purports to be religious education which was referred to earlier, the opportunity for R.C. exploitation would be too tantalising for that church to ignore. In the light of such an eventuality, what need there is for prayerful vigilance, especially on the part of those with some interest in developments in the educational world.

— J. McA.

The B.B.C. and the I.R.A.

It came as a great relief, at least to some, when the Governors of the B.B.C. imposed a ban upon a projected TV programme dealing with political extremism in Northern Ireland. According to press reports the film, "At the edge of the Union," portrays the political divide in the Province through the lives of Mr Martin McGuinness, the alleged Chief-of-Staff of the Provisional I.R.A. and of Mr Gregory Campbell, a Democratic Unionist, Party Councillor and (so called) hard-line Protestant.

Whatever thinly veiled semblance of balanced presentation the two-sided character of the programme may suggest, the unpalatable fact is

that a leading representative of an organisation with an appalling record for acts of murder and violence committed against citizens of the U.K. (soldiers, policemen, and many other innocent persons) was to be given licence through the media to seek to vindicate the dastardly campaign of terror waged over the years by the I.R.A. Hardly a year has elapsed since a coldly calculated attempt was made by this nefarious body to wipe out the Prime Minister and her Cabinet met together in a Brighton hotel for the Conservative Party Conference.

To all right-minded citizens of this nation it must now come as a great shock to hear that the facility previously withheld is now to be granted. The programme, with a few slight amendments purporting to satisfy the governing body of the B.B.C., will be shown in late October. The Board of Governors, the final arbiters in these matters, has apparently yielded to pressure from the Board of Management, headed by Mr Alasdair Milne, the B.B.C. Director General, who with brazen effrontery arrogate to themselves the right to dictate what TV viewers should see. Further pressure also came from the National Union of Journalists who staged a one-day protest strike against the "censorship." It has also been suggested that the departure of Mr Leon Brittan from the Home Office and his replacement by the allegedly more liberal Mr Douglas Hurd may have helped to resolve the six week crisis. If so, this episode does not augur well for his incumbency in that highly important office. Knowing how the B.B.C. and indeed various other areas of government and administration are riddled with R.C. infiltration, we cannot dismiss the thought that Papist influence is at work here. Such a conclusion would be quite consistent with the Pope's outraged exclamation, "No, no, no!" when, on the occasion of his visit to the Irish Republic, he was asked if he would excommunicate the IRA murderers and men of violence.

— J. McA.

Condoning Sin

At the annual meeting of the Trades Union Congress at Blackpool overwhelming support came from delegates, with only one actively dissenting voice, for a motion calling upon all unions affiliated to the T.U.C. to campaign for legislation to protect lesbians and sodomites. This sad decision is in keeping with the calls which can be heard coming from other sectors of society for the removal of all disabilities in the social and professional lives that might accrue to such persons from their unbridled indulgence in the sins which brought fire and brimstone upon the Cities of the Plain. The condonement of these abhorrent sins

unequivocally condemned in God's Word is now receiving support even within so-called Christian churches. A further manifestation of the same misguided attitude is the demand from certain quarters that "married status" should be granted to such persons who choose to cohabit, with full entitlement to all the statutory benefits which legally married couples can claim. Thankfully an attempt made recently by two lesbians to test this infamous notion in the law courts failed outright. When we read of the growing menace posed to the health of our own and other nations by the killer disease AIDS which, on medical evidence, stems to a large extent from homosexual promiscuity, we must even more vehemently deplore the decision taken at Blackpool.

— J. McA.

Church Notes

Tribute to the late Reverend William MacLean

The Outer Isles Presbytery of the Free Perbyterian Church of Scotland, met at Stornoway, this 18th day of June, 1985, desires to place on record its sincere sense of sorrow and loss occasioned by the death of the Rev William MacLean, Ness.

Mr MacLean was born in Lochcarron in 1907. While yet a boy he heard the Rev Neil Cameron preach in the Lochcarron church and it seems the experience made a lasting impression upon his soul. Forty years later he was informed by the late Rev James MacLeod that Mr Cameron had spotted him on that occasion and had said to Mr MacLeod that he should keep his eye on that young man for he would yet be a minister in the Free Presbyterian Church. Such was Mr MacLean's regard for Mr Cameron that when the time came for him to leave school for university he chose Glasgow in order to have the privilege of attending upon his ministry at St Jude's.

Having graduated from Glasgow University with an Arts Degree he came to Ness first of all in 1929 to begin his career as a schoolteacher. After a few weeks in Stornoway he was assigned a permanent post in Lionel School. In 1938 he was accepted by the Ness Kirk Session as a member in full communion and in 1941, after the death of Mr Andrew Finlayson, he became a full time missionary at Ness. On 30th April, 1946 he was received by this Court as a student studying for the ministry and on the 18th August, 1948 he was ordained and inducted to the charge of the Ness congregation. In 1962 he was translated to Gisborne, New

Zealand, where he was to labour for 10 years before being translated to Grafton, Australia, from which place he accepted another call from the Ness congregation and was re-inducted in February, 1976. In Ness he continued to labour in the Gospel until his lamented death on the 1st day of June, 1985.

William MacLean was a brother beloved. An able minister of the New Testament, he, faithfully, skilfully, rightly divided the word of Truth as a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. Not shunning to declare all the counsel of God in the pulpit his walk and conversation out of it was consistent with what he taught. Of a loving, charitable disposition, his kindness, hospitality and generosity were traits of his character which were widely known. His pen was, throughout his ministry, active in defending the Truth against error and in regard to our Church's separate position and the stand made for the Truth in 1893 he was fully convinced that it was of the Lord. He often quoted the spiritual experiences of some of the godly living at the time and who had the mind of the Lord on the matter. He wrote and compiled pamphlets and tracts which continue to be widely distributed, some of them translated into foreign languages. Throughout his ministry he was a diligent pastor of souls willing to spend and be spent in his Master's service. He has now, we believe, received his commendation and reward: "Well done, good and faithful servant . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord".

The Presbytery are painfully conscious of the breach made and desire to look to the great Head of the Church to fill it. It is their conviction that a prince and a great man has fallen in Israel.

The Presbytery desire to express their sympathy with his surviving sisters and other relations.

Theological Conference 1985

This year's Conference will be held in Glasgow on 3rd and 4th December, God willing. As in past years all ministers, office-bearers and male communicants are eligible to attend the Conference. A detailed notice will appear in the November issue of this Magazine. (D.V.)

Rev D J MacDonald

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Outer Isles: At Stornoway on 3rd December at 12 noon.

Skye: At Portree on 29th October at 11 am.

Australia and New Zealand: At Auckland on 24th January, 1986, at 2.30 pm.

Resignation of the Reverend Angus MacKay, Tarbert

After 32 years as minister of our North Harris congregation, the Reverend Angus MacKay has, for health reasons, resigned from the charge. We hope Mr MacKay's health will improve and that he will be spared for many years yet to preach the Gospel as and when opportunities for doing so present themselves.

Theological Classes

The classes in Apologetics and Systematic Theology commenced in Glasgow on 10th September, 1985.

These classes are being taken by Mr Kenneth D. MacLeod, BSc, Student.

The prayers of the Lord's people are requested for both Tutor and students so that the blessing of the Lord may rest upon this work.

Acknowledgement of Donations

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

Ballifeary Home of Rest: £250 from the relatives of the late Miss Ann MacInnes, Broadford.
Dominions & Overseas Fund: Collection at Service in Calgary, 11/8/85, per Mrs Mary Kyhn, Canada, \$291.00

Trinitarian Bible Society: Two friends at North Tolsta, £10.

Wellington Church Building Fund: Anon., Wick, £20.

Chesley Building Appeal: Mr David Kuiper, Treasurer, acknowledges the following donations with sincere thanks — D. M. B., Farr, £20; South Harris Congregation, £250; North Harris Congregation, \$430.88; and the following per Rev. D. Campbell: Anon., Tolsta, \$17.20; Anon., \$32.00; Shieldaig Congregation, £50; Laide Congregation, £50; Anon., Shieldaig, £5; Anon., Shieldaig, £20; Anon., Shieldaig, £10; "In memory of beloved parents," J. and I. Livingstone, £100; "Thy kingdom come," £50; Anon., Inverness, £50; Anon., Stornoway, £20; Anon., Tolsta, £10.

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

Bracadale: Mrs F. A. B., £40 for Church Funds, M. S., £10 for Communion Expenses, both per R. M. K.; Campbell Bros. January to July, £50 for Sustentation Fund, per D. McL.
Dumbarton: I. C., £10 for Congregational Fund; A. M., £20 for Congregational Fund, in plate; Inverness Friends, £5 for Congregational Fund; Deeds of Covenant, £389.14 for Congregational Fund, per General Treasurer; Deeds of Covenant, £85.70 for Sustentation Fund, per General Treasurer; Deeds of Covenant, £37 for General Funds, per General Treasurer.

Fort William: Friend, Caol, £10 for Sustentation Fund; Mrs Begg, £10; A. McG, £5, all per Rev. J. A. Macdonald.

Greenock: Friend, Dumbarton, £10 for Congregational Funds; Friend Greenock, £10 for Congregational Funds; Friend, Uig, £10 where most needed, per Mrs L. MacLeod; Friend, Uig, £10 for Church Funds; Friend of the Cause, Skye, £30 for Church Funds; From

"Banacharaid," Wester Ross, £20 for Church Door Collection, all per Rev. L. MacLeod.
Laide: Friend, Laide, £30 for Sustentation Fund; Friend, Laide, £20 for Church and Manse Fund; Anon., Ullapool, £5 for Church Building Fund; In memory of loved ones, £10 for Church Building Fund; Laide, Friend, £5 for Church Building Fund; In collection plate at Laide Communion, £20 for Church Building Trust; In collection plate at Laide Communion, £10 for Church Buidling Trust; Anon., Ullapool, £10 for Church Building Trust; In memory of loved ones, £10 for Church Building Trust; Anon., Ullapool, £10 for Church Building Trust; Anon., Laide, £10 for Church Building Trust, per Mrs C. Ross; Anon., £30 for Laide Car Fund; Anon., £20 for Laide Car Fund.

Oban: Anon., £10 for Congregation Fund, per Rev. A. M.; A. MacDougall, Blane field, £60 for Congregation Fund, per A. M. P.; Anon., £20 for Sustentation Fund; £100 from the estate of the late Mrs Martin.

Perth: A. Matheson, Edinburgh, £5 for Communion Expenses, Mrs Townsley, Stirling, £10 for Communion Expenses, both per Rev. D. J. Macdonald; Harris Friend, £10 for Communion Expenses, envelope in church plate.

Raasay: Dingwall Postmark, Matt. 6: 10, £50 for Sustentation Fund, per J. M. MacLeod; Anon., Stornoway, £10 for Sustentation Fund, per Rev. J. Tallach; A Friend, Edinburgh, £10 for Church Door Collection, per Rev. J. Tallach; Friend, Raasay, £20 for Sustentation Fund; Friend, Ullapool, £15 for Sustentation Fund; Friend, Raasay, £20 for Foreign Mission, last three per Treasurer.

Shieldaig: Mr and Mrs N. MacCuish, £5 for Sustentation Fund, per D. M. C. Correction (August issue) — In grateful memory of a dear husband and father, £100 for Sustentation Fund.

Stirling: Mrs R. T., £20 for Minister's Petrol and Communion Expenses, per Rev. D. J. MacD.; A Friend, North Tolsta, £10 for Stirling Congregation, per Mrs J. Millar.

Thurso: Mrs Brochie, £10; Friends, £25; A Friend £20; Mrs Mackay and Norman, £10; Mr D. MacGregor, £3, all for Communion Expenses.