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Be ye Holy; for I am Holy

The whole revelation of the Old Testament Scriptures was fitted to teach those who lived in that dispensation that they had to do with a God of infinite holiness. The whole ritual of the Old Testament worship reinforced this view of the glory of God. In this respect there could be no confusion between the God of Israel and the gods which the heathen worshipped. He was holy but they were polluted. The nature of the worship of the living God was pure by reason of His holiness, while the nature of the heathen idolatry was impure and vile.

God revealed Himself to man as a holy God. None could deny this aspect of His character and glory. The song of Moses at the Red Sea declared: "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" At the burning bush Moses had already learned the lesson of the holiness of Jehovah when the Lord said to him: "Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." At Mount Sinai the people were warned not to go up into the mount, or touch the border of it when the Lord was to come down upon it in fire. Isaiah in his day had a revelation given to him of the holiness of Jehovah when he saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up and his train filling the temple. It was then that he heard the seraphims crying, one to another: "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory." Throughout all the pages of Scripture the same revelation is given of a God of holiness who as the infinitely holy One is the sin-hating and sin-avenging Jehovah. Because He is an infinitely holy God He is a consuming fire against sin. Before such a God sinners must tremble. In the light of such a revelation Job had to say: "Behold, I am vile," and Isaiah had to acknowledge: "Woe is me! for I

am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.”

Along with the revelation that God has given of Himself as the infinitely holy One, comes a call to men from God: “Be ye holy, for I am holy.” Under the ceremonial law a difference was made between what was clean and what was unclean, teaching the people of the separation there was between holiness and unholiness. “Ye shall be holy; for I am holy,” was the message of that dispensation and the message of the new dispensation was the same. “Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace?” the Apostle asked, and answered it with an unequivocal, “God forbid.” New Testament as well as Old Testament saints were called to a life of holiness or separation from sin. The very term “saints” implied that they were God’s holy ones. The Apostle Peter in reminding those to whom he is writing of the Old Testament injunction: “Be ye holy; for I am holy,” says to them: “As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.” They are a people then who are called to holiness of heart and life. In the epistle to the Hebrews the warning comes to all who profess His Name that “without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” The Lord’s people are bought with a price. They are not their own. Therefore they are to glorify God in their bodies and in their spirits which are His.

This call to holiness involves a putting off the old man and putting on the new, a crucifying of the flesh with its affections and lusts, a dying unto sin and a living unto righteousness. This cannot be achieved in carnal strength but only in the strength of grace received from above. The Lord alone can subdue our iniquities and enable us to live to His glory perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord. Let us then seek grace that we may serve the Lord acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

Synod Sermon

by Rev. S. Fraser Tallach, Retiring Moderator

“He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.” John 3: 29.

“Divide and conquer” is a strategy of simple, but well-proven success. Behind the rather indefinite statement of verse 25, that there arose a question between some of John’s disciples and the Jews about purifying, there lurks such an intention, as the sequel shows. Doubtless, the Jews

might have adopted an air of lofty principle when they raised this question. In all innocence, as it seemed they asked the question, "John, he baptises on one part of the Jordan; Jesus baptises on another part of the Jordan; which baptism truly purifies? Which has the stamp of divine authority?" The effect which they aimed at, and only too effectively achieved, was to nurse into an active flame the smouldering sense of grievance against Christ which John's disciples had begun to cherish.

They, in turn, resolved to open their Master's eyes to the hurt their cause was suffering. There, doubtless, was an element of frustration in the statement of the disciples. John was a simple man of the desert. He did not understand the ways of the world. Specifically he could not — ingenuous spirit that he was — recognise when another was supplanting his place.

It was a matter of particular discontent that it was to Jesus the disciples were departing. Time was when John's name as a preacher was not merely the foremost name. His was the only name worth mentioning. "Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan." Jesus, at that time, moved among the crowd, unnoticed. He even asked for baptism at John's hands. Now, Jesus had developed an independent cause. He had even adopted the characteristic hall-mark of John's ministry — that of baptism, (though, as the next chapter explains, it was the disciples of Jesus who baptised in His name). This baptism was practised, not on the Sea of Galilee, nor at the well of Sychar, nor in the pool of Siloam in Jerusalem, but right on the very river which John had made his own, the river Jordan.

John, of course, had made the matter worse by witnessing to Christ. Was it any wonder that men would leave him when he openly declared that he was not worthy to untie the shoe-latchet of Christ? The gifts which, until now, John had sacrificed with such self-denial in the cause of eternal truth, he must now use in his own interest. The loyalty of his own disciples must be appealed to. John's prestige was suffering. His influence was not what it once was. Indeed, his whole movement was running into a crisis of credibility. If he continued thus, his ministry would be remembered only as some nine-day wonder. He must act before it was too late.

Who had borne the burden and heat of the day? Who had won the hearts of the disciples by dint of toil and sweat? Who had courageously levelled the pride of the Pharisees, even when the temptation must have been strong to flatter them? Who had led a broad movement, spanning Jew and Gentile, publicans and religious leaders, soldiers and kings, pro-

claiming the tender mercy of our God and guiding their feet in the way of peace (Luke 1: 79)? Was John now to squander all?

There is no doubt that John's disciples did speak with a certain kind of realism. Their advice was true to the facts as they saw them. Nevertheless, this realism savoured not of the things that be of God but of the things that be of men. The disciples had not even begun to address themselves to the proper question as to whose cause they represented. "He that hath the bride", says John, "is the bridegroom". The bride is the Church. The bridegroom is Christ. There is only one bride. There is only one Bridegroom. He has an exclusive right to the bride.

"You say that before Christ's voice was heard on the banks of the Jordan, I was already there. If you wish to determine the question of priority, go back to the time before the mountains were settled. He, coming after me, was preferred before me, for He was before me. Even then He had his delights with the sons of men. In the light of the everlasting covenant, Christ can say of His bride, "Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me". Whoever might be the instrumental cause of drawing them, it is with Christ's everlasting love that they have been loved.

"You say that so far as labour is concerned I have prior right. I have often taxed my strength. I have sweat under the mid-day sun. You say that my labour has won my disciples. You know nothing of true sacrifice. It is when you see — God so loving the world that He gives His only-begotten Son, and Christ so loving the world that He gives Himself, that He might be able to say to the church: 'Thy Maker is thy Husband . . . thy Redeemer the holy One of Israel', that you will know the meaning of sacrifice. Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might 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.' Here is travailing, not just with the elements, but saying of death, 'I will be thy plagues', and of the grave, 'I will be thy destruction'. It is when you see that momentous, titanic labour of Christ in abolishing death and bringing life and immortality to light that you will know true labour. This is sweat of the soul, not merely of the body. Were any of you who were baptised by me washed, not only in symbolic fashion, but in truth? Did you take the prayer of David, "Me cleanse from sin and thoroughly wash from mine iniquity?" Then, you are not mine. The face you saw as you came out of the waters of baptism may have been mine, but it is HE who bought you by His own blood."

John's disciples might rejoin and claim that in terms of brotherly con-

cord he could claim them as his own. "Do you not remember how you expounded to this one and that about Elijah in whose spirit you yourself came; how you showed that the sacrifice of the Lamb of God would be a magnifying of the law and a making it honourable? How can you be indifferent to the breaking of the bonds of such warm and intimate fellowship?" Once again, John says, "You look on things from the outward appearance. I judge righteous judgment. What is it that truly binds both me and my disciples in fellowship to the Lamb of God? In Hosea, when Israel is restored, the Lord will say to them, 'I will betroth you unto Me in faithfulness, loving kindness and mercies, and you shall know the Lord.' In that day Israel will call the Lord, 'Ishi', that is, 'My Husband'." This is an exclusive right, not only in terms of the eternal covenant, not only in the terms of the purchase of Christ's blood, but also in terms of the call of Christ, whoever the preacher may be. It might be such a man as C. H. Spurgeon heard when he was in concern of soul. Preaching on the words, "Look unto Me and be ye saved", he exhausted all that he could think of saying on the text, and concluded with "Look, young man, look." Christ said these words. Christ called Spurgeon into living fellowship with Himself. So close, so intimate is this fellowship that it is likened to the union between the head and the members of the body. Every pain, right out of the extremities of the limbs is felt by the head. Conversely, every muscle, even the smallest, acts under command of the head.

Finally, he who has the bride in prospect is the bridegroom. Do we see Christ from a past eternity look forward to His entry into this world? Then, the moment He thinks of the horror of darkness of Gethsemane and Calvary, that moment He looks forward to the fruit of this travail of soul." The marriage of the Lamb is come, and the bride hath made herself ready." That day, as a fruit of all that He has done for her, she will be without spot, wrinkle or any such thing.

Christ came and joined the crowds who heard John at the Jordan. He was indistinguishable from any other. It was John's face that their eyes were riveted upon as he spoke to them. "There standeth One among you whom ye know not," said John. What a change there will be on that final day! "Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him." He shall be the centre. John might well say, "I will be swallowed up among the nations that keep the truth, who, together make up the bride. My voice will be swallowed up in the sound of that united chorus, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive honour, dominion and

power.' Why do you speak of any honour due to me? He must increase; I must decrease. You say of me that I am a burning and shining light, but a man can receive nothing except it be given him from above. As was true of the prophets in whom the Spirit of Christ testified, so it is true of Me. All I have, it is from heaven it comes."

As the rising sun picks out individual points and pinacles on the ridges of the Alps, these seem to shine with independent power and independent life. When the sun has actually risen, however, one realises that every shaft of light radiates out from the one centre: so will it be at that day. "The Lamb will be all the glory in Immanuel's land". Looking back from that day, we will see that of Him have been all things, through Him have been all things; to Him, to all eternity shall be all the glory. This is the doctrine that has been very dear to the Scottish Church, i.e. the sole headship of Christ over his church. How zealous the Reformers were that no vicar of Christ, such as the Pope, should come between Christ and His bride. Even as opposed to the admittedly Protestant Reformation in England, no "Defender of the Faith", such as King Henry VIII and his successors must be allowed to intrude. As Sir Henry Moncrieff says in his book, "The Free Church Principle", "There is no such head of the Church on earth — no power, either civil or ecclesiastical, that can interfere between my conscience and the mind of Christ, as I see it in his Word. Christ alone is the Head of the Church, so as to command my religious faith and conduct."

The devotion of the Church must go straight to Christ; "I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine". The Church's worship must go straight to Christ; "He is thy Lord and worship thou Him". The Church's conscience is subject to Him and to Him alone; "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren." Permit me to say in passing that we must watch when we speak in terms of "our people", "our loyal people", or "our faithful people", that we do not seem to cut the joints and bands that unite the Head of the Church directly with each member of the Church, and, if it is not too bold a term, by some kind of unholy surgery, that we seek to unite them to us as though with us is the fountain of life; as though in our light they will see light. Let us act in the spirit of Paul when he said, "I have espoused you, a chaste virgin to Christ". And when men come to us and say, "Be my conscience", whatever advice we see fit to render, we must respond as Eli did to Samuel and say "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." Even Paul, the apostle took it as no insult, but a sign of superior nobility when men searched the Scriptures to see if what he taught was indeed so. He did not claim dominion

over his disciples' faith. Christ alone had that privilege. Paul claimed only the position of "the helper of their joy".

That brings us to consider from this text what the function of the ministry is, though in many ways, John was unique and lived and served at a unique juncture in the history of salvation, in other ways John was no different in his central message from those who went before and came after him. Isaiah preached repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and every true gospel minister since that time has done the same. If Christ alone is Lord, what is the function of John? His disciples would make him a centre of influence which competed with Christ. John himself answers: "I am the friend of the Bridegroom. I have a mission, but that mission comes from Christ. I have authority and gifts, but these again come alone from Christ. I have an invitation to give to sinners, but that also comes from Christ." Eliezer, when he went out to gain a bride for Isaac was armed with a mission, authority, gifts, and invitation also. They all came from Abraham and Isaac. So we go with power delegated from God and His Christ. That is described by George Gillespie in terms of the gift of the keys. "There are four keys which the servants of Christ have to exercise. These are the keys of knowledge, of order and decency, the key of discipline and the key of ordination." Yet you will immediately see that it is as sanctioned by Christ we do these things. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given . . . the government shall be upon His shoulders." It is as we fulfil the directions of Christ; it is as we exercise a rule which, to quote the Claim, Declaration and Protest, is "not lordly, but ministerial, and to be exercised in accordance with the laws of Christ and the liberties of His people." It is as we exercise that rule directly under Christ, that we will truly fulfil our commission. Indeed, the Disruption gives an illustration of that. There is a power, the Disruption fathers taught, that goes directly from Christ to every member of the Church to appoint their own pastors. Not only may not pastors assume this right, but the courts of the church itself assert themselves properly (apart from judging whether any candidate is properly qualified or not) only when they safeguard this liberty. This is Christ directly calling His people to act according to His own mind and will. There are other cases, of course, in which the Church itself has to act in the place of Christ, as in ordination; but is it not evident, even in ordination itself that the government remains on Christ's shoulders? He is the one who has given gifts to the Church as the 4th chapter of Ephesians reminds us. He has given pastors, teachers, evangelists. It is as we act under His commission, not in a lordly way, hearing the voice of

Christ and fulfilling the will of Christ, that we will be acceptable. And hence, to quote from Cunningham's *Historical Theology* "The rights of conscience are secured within the Church itself by an honest and faithful adherence to the great Scriptural principle which, in the Church of Rome and in the canon law, is trampled under foot, viz., that Church power is not lordly, but only ministerial; that ecclesiastical office-bearers, even within their own province, have no right to be making laws or pronouncing decisions merely according to their own judgment and discretion, but that they should do nothing on these matters except what the Word of God requires them to do in the discharge of the necessary duties of their place, and are bound to do it all according to the standard which Christ has prescribed, their decisions being entitled to respect and obedience only if consonant to the word of God; and all men and rulers and private individuals, being not only entitled but bound to judge for themselves, with a view to the regulation of their own conduct, and upon their own responsibility, whether they are so or not."

We have been emphasising the caution that must be observed because the ministers of the church are not independent rulers, but are called, as friends, to communicate the mind of Christ. Yet, in another way, the whole power of the authority they exercise flows from this friendship. You will notice that when Gillespie details the keys given to the Church, he says the key of knowledge — not of legislation — was given to the Church. "There is one lawgiver, and one only who is able to save and to destroy." The key of knowledge given to the Church permits them to expound, not to change the lively oracles He gives them. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My word shall not pass away." When the Church is acting according to her proper role, then love and friendship is shown to Christ, not when she tampers and tinkers with that Word, but when she receives it in faith. She must, in reverence, take the shoes from off her feet, for the ground she stands on is holy ground. Even under the greatest pressure of temptation she must say, "Here I stand; I can do no other; so help me, God".

"John, what did they go out to see in you?" Did they go to see a reed shaken in the wind? There were many different kinds of doctrine current at that time. There were Scribes and Pharisees. There were Essenes and Sadducees. There were zealots and Herodians. The zealots sought by revolution to bring in a new age. The Sadducees sought by rationalistic means to remould Scripture. "What went ye out to see?" Was it a reed which, in order to gain cheap popularity would bend to every wind of doctrine? Far from it. John had received the lively oracles from God.

From that Word in the fortieth chapter of Isaiah, he had received his commission. Before the Word he stood and said to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God." Must we not be thankful that when, in the middle of the last century there came in under the influence of what Dr. Rainy called, in moving the motion to pass the Declaratory Act in 1892 "... a certain heave going on in the method of human thought, with reference to all subjects, and especially, I may say, to those subjects which are related to the highest interests and destiny of human beings," that those who formed our Church stood firm on this basic principle. Nearly all the cults which overspread the world at the present day originated then. There came in new sciences, such as psychology, which, whatever may be said of the rightful use of it, in the hands of men like Freud, was calculated to eliminate religion altogether as a mere neurosis. From the pen of Marx came views which said, "Have done with this opium of the people. Let us have social revolution, and religion will wither away of its own accord." Men like Darwin said, "We must remould Scripture. We must see it in an evolutionary context." Free Church professors like Henry Drummond were quick to oblige.

These pressures did not find those who were responsible for initiating the movement which led to the formation of our Church ready to bend. They felt responsible to a higher court than the court of public opinion. Christ had said, "The Scripture cannot be broken." As friends of the bridegroom, they adopted the same stance. It would seem, now that we stand a century from that time, that so far as this issue is concerned, they were in the right. What fools they were thought in their own day! In the 1894 Assembly, a year after the separation, a number of ministers spoke in a mocking, patronising way of the new movement. I give two illustrations, one from Dr. Rainy, and another from Dr. Balfour: "This declaratory Act had been with great activity brought before the minds of a jury in the North, a jury consisting in many districts of persons who spoke only the Gaelic language, who were not accessible to literature on the subject, and who could not read their debates, which was no fault of theirs. They were people, who were, some of them, earnest Christian people, and thus, at least, were disposed to take a lively interest in Church questions. (Laughter)."

"He did not know what they had done in Gaelic (laughter). People said things in Gaelic which he sometimes thought they did not well understand themselves (laughter). They must allow a great deal for that. They were a very generous, noble, and sound-principled people, very steadfast in defending their views of what they believed to be the truth."

Seldom has there been a more evident case of laughter turned into mourning. The Church of Scotland in due course adopted the same expedient as the Free Church as a means of easing consciences burdened with scruples. Hence, ministers were required only to subscribe to the substance of the Reformed Faith contained in the Confession. The fruit is evident in the following quotation from the Report of the Panel of Doctrine (1970): "The Presbytery of Glasgow has had under consideration a Petition from members of a kirk session within its bounds, expressing concern at the confusion and distress in the minds of many Church members arising from uncertainty about what the Church's official belief is, and asking that the Church should reaffirm in some prominent manner the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith, and impress upon the Church's ministers and teachers the obligation to maintain a consistent testimony thereanent."

There could be no more eloquent testimony to the fruit of the destruction of the foundations.

Let us pass on finally to consider what was the ambition of John. Was it merely that John might be able to say, "I have the truth", while others had departed from it either by addition or subtraction or by total rejection? "I have the truth". Does that not have a very dead sound to it? It sounds as though the truth hangs limply in our hands; as though we have the truth totally under our control. Where the truth is known in living power, it is not we who have the truth. The truth has us. It is not so much we who know God. We are known of God and this will always have the effect in some degree that the truth had on Jeremiah, "Thy word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forebearing, and I could not stay." John had, at least twice before, heard the voice of Christ speak through the truth. He had heard it so far as his own salvation was concerned. It would seem that he was sanctified from a very early period. He had heard it so far as his call to the ministry was concerned. He knew that he must go before the face of the Lord to prepare His way. Did John say "It is enough that I stand by this truth? We have this truth inscribed in scrolls of Scripture." No! John must hear the living voice of a living Christ. Only this can fulfil his joy since he realises only this can be the means of anointing the Church with the Holy Spirit, and with fire.

Let us set the same ambition before us. Let us not say, "We have the truth encapsulated in the tomes of our theology. We have maintained a consistent testimony to it." That may well be true. But let us go down on our knees and pray, "O Redeemer of the Church of the living God, come

Thou, and let us hear Thy voice as we speak the words of truth." It is of no value to have orthodoxy in itself. The Pharisees themselves had this. They sat in the seat of Moses, and Jesus counsels, "All, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do. . . ." We must hear the voice of a living Christ speaking through His word, bringing in sinners to be part of the bride of Christ. Why, even John himself, when he faced up to Herod with his wily heart, and Herodias with her vindictive heart, and Salome with her pleasure-loving heart, found his attempts to convict their consciences were in vain. But what were we singing in the 45th Psalm? "Thine arrows, O heavenly Bridegroom, shot from Thy throne of might, sharply pierce the hearts of the enemies of the King, and bring them into subjection to Thee". That is equally true so far as the Gospel is concerned. The fountain of grace is not with us, but "grace in Thy lips doth flow." We must hear that same voice as spoke out in Nazareth, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek". Hugh Millar said at one time — "Dead forms of truth cannot contend with living principles, be the principles as base or erroneous as they may. Living socialism (and we might add in our day, Islam, communism, humanism) is an overmatch for dead Christianity."

If Isaiah mourned in his day that there were none who stirred up themselves to lay hold on God, that He would come and that the mountains might flow down at His presence, let us in our day not be found wanting.

"John, do you want to be spoken for to the king or to the captain of the guard?" "No, I could have had that many a time. Herod would have decked me in fine raiment, and kept me as a toy in his palace." "Do you want your name to go down in the records of history?" "What I want is that when God Himself writes the people it will be said, "This and that one was born; I may have been the channel, but it is with Him that plenteous redemption is ever found. He it is who saves Israel from all their transgressions." Let us seek that same blessing.

John Livingston says, "There is sometimes somewhat in preaching that cannot be ascribed either to the matter or expression, and cannot be described what it is, or whence it cometh, but with a sweet violence it pierceth into the heart and affections, and cometh immediately from the Lord."

Again, David Brainard says, "When ministers feel these special gracious influences on their hearts, it wonderfully assists them to come at the consciences of men, and as it were to handle them. Whereas, without

them, whatever reason or oratory we make use of, we do but make use of stumps and not of hands.”

Let us, brethren, seek these gracious influences; whatever stands in the way of these blessings, let us ask that the Lord would so cleanse our hearts that we would be vessels meet for the Master's use.

The Personal Ministry of Christ

The main employment of Jesus consisted in preaching the gospel. To this His miracles were all subservient. It was most suitable that His public life should thus be spent; that as He had come into the world to die for sinners — as the preaching of His cross was to be the great means of salvation — He should usher in the proclamation of the joyful sound, and thus consecrate and dignify the ordinance of preaching, and give it perpetual efficacy.

And how otherwise indeed could fitting employment be found for the Son of God when for a time He had to appear publicly before the eyes of men? The Lord had “annointed Him to preach good tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that were bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord”; Is. 61: 1. and therefore He went about preaching the gospel of the kingdom in the synagogues, in the temple, in the villages, by the wayside, by the sea-shore, in the desert, on the mountain, or in the house and saying, “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear”. He addressed men as sinners, and setting death and life before them, commanded them to repent. He addressed them as children of Abraham after the flesh, warned them of the danger of trusting in outward privileges, and outward connection with God's church, and exhorted them to seek the “renewal of the Holy Ghost”. He proclaimed the will of God by direct authoratative announcement, by parable, by warning, by promise. He proclaimed it in its bearing on all the darkness and corruption of the heart, and on all the fears of the labouring and heavy laden. How precious is the gospel and the gospel ministry since the great work of the Son of God when on earth, thus consisted in preaching the gospel!

But who can suitably speak of the preaching of Christ — the matchless graces of the preacher, the celestial purity of His heart, the grandeur of those communications of the Father's will regarding the salvation of men which were made by His only-begotten Son? Who can think aright of the burning zeal, and the love of the Redeemer's heart while He fulfilled His

ministry, the consuming purity manifested in His denunciations of hypocrisy or the infinitude of the pity which wept over Jerusalem?

There was a time when the Son of God in human form, in very deed dwelt on our earth, a preacher of righteousness. A new experience was made on the character of the apostacy of man from God, and on its power of resistance. Holy prophets had appeared in preceding ages with unquestionable evidences of having been sent by God. They had called men to repentance, and had left in succession mournful complaints of the unsuccessfulness of this mission. Some were mocked, some stoned — most of them had to say “Who hath believed our report?” Is. 53: 1. But a greater than all had now appeared — One who not only proclaimed the truth, but Who was in His own person, a spotless reflection of it; One who not only spoke in the power of the Spirit, but to whom the Spirit had been given without measure; One of whom a devoted Enock, a holy Noah, a believing Abraham, a meek and faithful Moses, and a zealous Elijah would unite with John in saying “The latchet of His shoes I am not worthy to unloose.”

One not only free from all sinful weakness, but possessed of the uncreated excellence of Divinity, veiled and curtained indeed, that their dazzling splendour might not consume sinful men, but appearing in such measure in the human form as to stamp Divinity on Him who dwelt in it. Yes, the Creator and Lawgiver, appeared in the form of a man, outwardly mean and poor, yet exhibiting the moral beauties of our nature as they had not shone even in Paradise. And He preached peace, and besought men to be “reconciled to God”. He spoke plainly that the most unlearned might know His meaning; solemnly and with authority, that they might be impressed with the danger of refusing instruction, tenderly and affectionately, if so He might touch and melt their hearts. He spoke of God in His glory and justice as moral governor, and His excellence as the sin-pardoning God; of the soul in its worth, of sin in its vileness and deservings, of Satan in his power and malice and success in destroying souls; of hell in its horrors; of heaven in its glories. He spoke above all, of the mercy of God; and of Himself as the gift of this mercy — **THE BREAD of LIFE, THE FOUNTAIN of LIVING WATER, THE SON of MAN**, who had come “to seek and to save that which was lost”. He invited the lost children of men to come to Him. He addressed Himself to their understandings, their consciences, their hopes, fears and desires, in the way best fitted to instruct, to awaken, to reach the very depths of the soul, and its hidden springs of action. And He did this not for a Sabbath or a week but for years. He spent His

strength in the work, He sat down, so to speak, before the heart of man, and used the best possible means for bringing it to surrender to God. And what was the result? Did it yield? Did his hearers cast down the weapons of their rebellion? Did all people of the land turn to the Lord rending their hearts? Oh! how affecting the complaint of the Son of God. "All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people."

What is the application of this fact of the heart of man standing out against the Son of God? We answer. Contemplate the fact, and it will work its application in your soul; it will show you what kind of heart you have, it will lead you to wonder at the riches of redeeming love, and make you a willing debtor to great and sovereign mercy.

Learn also from this result of the preaching of the Son of God, that THE WORK of the HOLY SPIRIT to make Christ's death effectual, is a necessary and blessed part of the arrangements of the covenant of peace.

Fragment from: Charles Calder Mackintosh of Tain & Dunoon.

William Row — Covenanter

William Row was a son of Mr John Row, minister at Perth, who gave him a very liberal education under his own eye. The founder of this family was John Row, who in his earlier years was a staunch and zealous adherent of the Romish church. At the commencement of the Reformation in Scotland he was residing in Rome, where he had been for seven or eight years, and so great was the confidence reposed in him by the Pope and Cardinals, that on his proposing to return to his native country, he was invested with the character of Legate or Nuncio, and was instructed to inquire minutely into the nature and causes of the prevailing disaffection and report. As his son remarks however, he proved "a corbie messenger to his master" for not only did he not return to Rome, but he speedily embraced the great principles of the Reformation himself, and became one of the ablest and most strenuous supporters. He was one of the six ministers selected to draw up the Confession of Faith, and the First Book of Discipline; and for a period of twenty years, besides discharging his ordinary duties in Perth he took an active and prominent part in all the proceedings of the Church. At his death, 16th October, 1580, he left several children, five of whom afterwards became ministers.

William Row was settled minister at Forgandenny in Perthshire about the year 1600 and continued there for several years. He was one of those

ministers who refused to give public thanks for King James VI's deliverance from the danger in Gowrie's conspiracy, until the truth of that conspiracy was made to appear. This refusal brought upon him the king's displeasure. He was summoned to appear before the King and council at Stirling soon after. Two noblemen were sent, the one before the other to meet him on the road, and under the pretence of friendship, to inform him, that the council had a design upon his life, that he might be prevailed on to decline going up thither. The first met him near his own house, and the second a few miles from Stirling, but Row told them, that he would not by disobedience to the summons make himself justly liable to the pains of the law, and proceeded to Stirling, to the amazement of the king and his court. When challenged for disbelieving the Gowrie conspiracy he told them one reason of his hesitation was that Henderson, who was said to have confessed that Gowrie hired him to kill the king, and to have been found in his majesty's chamber for that purpose, was not only suffered to live, but rewarded. "Whereas" said he "if I had seen the king's life in hazard, and not ventured my life to rescue him, I should deserve not to live."

Being at Edinburgh before the Assembly at which the king desired to bring in some innovation, and meeting with James Melville, who was sent for by the king, Row accompanied him to Holyrood House. While Melville was with the king, Row stood behind a screen, and not getting an opportunity to go out with his brother he overheard the king say to some of his courtiers. "This is a good simple man; I have stroked cream on his mouth, and he will procure me a good number of voters." This said, Mr Row went off, and overtaking James Melville asked him what had passed. Melville said: "The king is well disposed to the church and intends to do her good." Row replied, "The king wants to use you as a coy-duck to draw in others," and told him what he had overheard. Mr Row offered to go with him and avouch it to the king's face. Accordingly they went back to the palace, and Melville seeing Row, so forward to go in, believed his report.

Row was put to the horn and was subjected to several other hardships during the remainder of his life, but maintained that steady faithfulness and courage in the discharge of his duty till the day of his death.

From: The Scots Worthies.

Piety shall have riches without rust, wealth without want, store without sore, beauty without blemish, mirth without mixture.

John Trapp.

A Noble Woman Martyr

A Striking Evidence of the Power of Divine Grace.

Her name was Prest; she dwelt near Launceston, and was the wife of a man in humble life. Her husband and children were greatly addicted to popery, and grieved and persecuted her; they drove her to mass, to confession, and to return thanks for the re-establishment of Antichrist's kingdom in our land, but after long trouble for conscience sake, and earnest prayer to God for help and direction, she was led to forsake all, and throw herself out of house and home, rather than dishonour the Lord by such idolatrous conformings. Accordingly she departed, taking nothing with her, but by labour and spinning earned enough to support herself, still openly declaring her mind where ever she could. At length she was accused of heresy, and cited before the Bishop of Exeter, who thus addressed her, "Thou foolish woman, I hear say that thou hast spoken certain words against the most blessed sacrament of the altar, the body of Christ. Fie! for shame! thou art an unlearned person, and a woman, and wilt thou meddle with such high matters which all the doctors in the world cannot define? Wilt thou talk of so high mysteries? Keep to thy work, and meddle with that thou hast to do. It is no woman's matter, at cards and tow to be spoken of; and if it be as I am informed thou art worthy to be burned." She replied that she was but a poor woman, earning a penny truly, and giving part of what she got to the poor. On being asked whether she had a husband, she replied she had a husband and children, and *had them not*. So long as she was at liberty, she refused neither husband nor children; "but now, standing here as I do, in the cause of Christ and his truth, where I must either forsake Christ or my husband, I am content to stick only to Christ, my heavenly Spouse, and renounce the other." Here she quoted the words, "He that leaveth not father and mother," etc., but the Bishop interrupted her, saying that Christ spake this of the holy martyrs who died because they would not sacrifice to false gods. "Surely, sir," she answered, "and I will rather die than do any worship to that foul idol which with your mass ye make a god." The bishop, in a rage, asked if she would so call the blessed sacrament of the altar? She replied, "Yea, truly, there never was such an idol as your sacrament is made of priests, and commanded to be worshipped of all men, with many fond fantasies, when Christ did command it to be eaten and drunk in remembrance of his most blessed passion for our redemption." After some railing from the bishop, she

asked leave to give a reason for refusing to worship the sacrament, and he replied, "Marry, say on; I am sure it will be a goodly gear." — "Truly, such gear as I will lose this poor life of mine for," said she. "Then you will be a martyr, good wife!" — "Indeed, if the denying to worship that *bread* be my martyrdom, I will suffer it with all my heart." The bishop desired her to say her mind, and after requesting him to bear with her as a poor, unlearned woman, she thus spoke — "I will demand of you whether you can deny your creed, which doth say that Christ doth perpetually sit at the right hand of His Father, both body and soul, until He come again, or whether He be there in heaven, our Advocate, and do make prayer for us unto God, his Father? If it be so, He is not here on the earth in a piece of bread. If He be not here, and if He do not dwell in temples made with hands, but in heaven, what, shall we seek Him here? If He did offer His body, once for all, why make you a new offering? If with once offering He made all perfect, why do you, with a false offering, make all unperfect? If He be to be worshipped in spirit and in truth, why do we worship a piece of bread? If He be eaten and drunk in faith and truth, why do you say you make His body and flesh? and say it is profitable for body and soul. Alas! I am but a poor woman, but rather than I would do as you, I would live no longer. I have said, sir." The only answer the bishop could give was, "I promise you, you are a jolly heretic. I pray you in what schools have you been brought up?" She replied, "I have upon the Sabbaths visited the sermons, and there have I learned such things as are so fixed in my breast that death itself shall not separate them." — "O foolish woman!" rejoined the bishop, "who will waste his breath upon thee, or such as thou art? but how chanceth it that thou went away from thy husband? If thou wert an honest woman thou wouldst not have left thy husband and children, and ran about the country like a fugitive." "Sir," she replied, "I laboured for my living, and as my Master, Christ, counselleth me, when I was persecuted in one place I fled into another." — "Who persecuted thee?" "My husband and children, for when I would have them to leave idolatry, he would not hear me, but he and my children rebuked me and troubled me, because I would be no partaker of that vain idol, the mass; and wheresoever I was, as oft as I could, upon Sundays and holy days, I made excuses not to go to the popish church." — "Belike then," said the bishop, "thou art a good housewife, to flee from your husband, and from the church." — "My housewifery is but small," answered the simple, faithful creature, "but God gave me grace to follow the true church!" — "The true church," repeated the bishop: "what dost thou mean?" — "Not your

popish church, full of idols and abominations; but where two or three are gathered together in the name of God, to *that* church will I go as long as I live." — "Belike then you have a church of your own," observed the bishop: "well, let this mad woman be put down to prison until we send for her husband." — "No," she replied, "I have but one Husband, who is here already in this city, and in prison with me; from whom I will never depart."

Blackstone, the Chancellor, with others, laboured to persuade the bishop that "the poor creature was crazed;" which was no strange thing, seeing how the wisdom of God appears foolishness to the carnal mind. They then agreed among themselves to let her have some liberty, and directed the keeper of the bishop's prison to give her employment in his house as a servant; this service she cheerfully performed, having leave to go out when she would, and finding many who delighted to talk with her. However, her bold speaking against mass-worship annoyed others and a party of priests took it in hand to persuade her from her heretical opinions, but without success. She told them the sacrament was nothing more than *very bread*, and *very wine*; that they might be ashamed to affirm that a morsel of bread should be turned by a man into the natural body of Christ; bread which doth corrupt, and mice oftentimes do eat it, and it doth mould, and is burned. "And," said she, "God's own body will not be so handled, nor kept in prison, or in boxes, and such-like. Let it be your god, it shall not be mine; for my Lord and Saviour sitteth on the right hand of God, and doth pray for me. And to make that *sacramental* or *significative* bread, instituted for a remembrance, the very body of Christ, and to worship it, is very foolishness and devilish deceit." They answering, said, "The devil had deceived her." "No," she replied, "I trust the living God hath opened mine eyes, and caused me to understand the right use of the blessed sacrament, which the true church doth use, but the false church abuse." Then stepped forth an old friar, asking her what she said of the holy pope? She answered, "I say that he is Antichrist," whereat they all laughed. "Nay," continued she, "ye have more need to weep than to laugh; and to be sorry that ever ye were born to be chaplains of that harlot of Babylon. I defy the pope and all his falsehood. And get you away from me; ye do but trouble my conscience. Ye would have me follow your doings: I will lose my life first. I pray you depart." — "Why, thou foolish woman," said they, "we come to thee for thy profit and soul's health." She asked what profit could arise by them who taught nothing but lies for truth; or how could they save souls who preached nothing but lies dangerous to destroy souls? "You teach

them to worship idols," she said, "the works of men's hands; and to adore a false god of your own making out of a piece of bread; and ye teach that the pope is God's vicar, and hath power to forgive sins; and that there is a purgatory after death, whereas God's Son hath purged all. You say you make God, and sacrifice him, whereas Christ's body was a sacrifice once for all. And do ye not teach the people to number their sins in your ears, and tell them they be damned if they confess not all? when God's holy word of truth saith, "Who can number his sins?" Do you not promise them trentals, and dirges, and masses for souls, and sell your prayers for money, and make them BUY PARDONS, and trust to foolish inventions of your own imaginations? Do ye not altogether against God? Do ye not make holy bread, and holy water to frighten devils? Do ye not a thousand more abominations? And yet ye say ye come for my profit, and to save my soul. No, no; *One* hath saved me. Farewell you, with your salvation." And no better entertainment could they get from this dauntless confessor of her unshaken faith. However, from this time she was laid fast in prison, and allowed no more indulgence. Many came to see her during her imprisonment, and all received instruction. To one who had been an earnest preacher in King Edward's days, but recanted through fear, she addressed strong and affectionate exhortations to be more bold and fearless in Christ's cause. Among others, came a wealthy and accomplished gentlewoman to visit her, favourably disposed towards the truth; to her Mrs Prest recited the creed, and on coming to the words "he ascended into heaven," she there paused, and bade the gentlewoman seek His body in heaven, not upon earth; telling her plainly that God dwelleth not in temples made with hands; and that the sacrament was for nothing else than to be a remembrance of the Lord's passion; whereas, as they used it, it was but an idol, and far wide of any remembrance of Christ's body, "broken for you" 1 Cor. 11: 24-26: "so take it, good mistress." The gentlewoman, on returning to her husband, said that she never heard a woman of such simplicity to behold, talk so godly, so perfectly, so sincerely, and so earnestly; adding, "insomuch, if God were not with her, she could not speak such things, to the which I am not able to answer her, who can read, and she cannot."

While the adversaries assailed the character and afflicted the body of this steadfast witness for the truth, the Lord mightily strengthened and aided her, giving proof to many who conversed with her of her great wisdom in spiritual things, and accurate knowledge of the scripture, though in other matters incompetent; and at last, tired of fruitless attempts to shake her faith, they brought against her a new charge, and

had her again before the bishop. She was sent from one prison to another, and being urged to make a submission, she answered, "With my death I am content to be a witness for Christ, and I pray you make no longer delay with me; my heart is fixed; I will never otherwise say, nor turn to your superstitious doings." Then the bishop observed, "the devil did lead her." — "No, my lord" quoth she, "it is the Spirit of God which leadeth me."

At last being willing to get rid of her, judgment was pronounced against her, and she was delivered up to the secular power. When the sentence was read, detailing the manner of her approaching death, the faithful martyr lifted up her voice, and praised God, saying, "I thank thee, my Lord, my God; this day have I found what I have long sought." Great mockings and jeerings then assailed her, which she meekly and patiently bore; then again they affirmed that if she would recant, her life should be spared. To this she replied, "No, that will I not: God forbid that I should lose the life eternal for this carnal and short life. I will never turn from my heavenly Husband to my earthly husband; from the fellowship of saints to mortal children; though if my husband and children be faithful, then am I theirs. God is my Father; — God is my Friend most faithful."

She was then delivered to the sheriff, and in the sight of a great concourse of people was led to execution without the walls of Exeter. Again the priests troubled her, but she desired to have no further conference with them, and went on, praying aloud, "God be merciful to me a sinner: God be merciful to me a sinner." Her cheeful countenance and lively manner shewed her as one prepared to attend the marriage-supper of the Lamb; and to Him she went, having long had sharp trial of cruel mockings and imprisonment, and afterwards of burning flames of fire; — but the Refiner sat by, to watch the precious metal, and secure it for himself. — *The Gospel Banner.*

The Doctrine of Inspiration in the Confession of Faith

by Rev. John Kennedy, D.D.

It has been taken for granted, to a very great extent, in some recent discussions that there is no explicit deliverance, on the subject of Inspiration, to be found in the Confession of Faith, and that owing to this those who have subscribed it are left free to hold almost any views on the sub-

ject, which consist with Scripture being to any extent regarded as an authoritative rule of faith.

This impression of Confessional doctrine, as to the Inspiration of Scripture, is utterly mistaken. True, there is no attempt made by the authors of the Confession to explain the mode or process of Inspiration. The Westminster divines were far too wise to make any such attempt. True also there is no definition, in express terms, of the kind or measure of inspiration ascribed to Scripture. It does not say whether it is plenary or partial. But there is a doctrine of inspiration in the Confession, and it is stated with sufficient fulness and explicitness. For,

1. It is expressly said that God is "the author" of Scripture. By this is not merely meant that the revelation, of which Scripture is the record, is of God, but that the writing is of God as well. "It pleased Him," it is said, "to commit the same wholly to writing." That was the work of God as surely as the revelation of what was written. True, He did not immediately write the Bible, as he wrote the Decalogue, on tables of stone — He employed men in writing. But these men were so controlled by Him, that He is the author of the writing, and so the author, that any charge of inaccuracy against the record or Scripture, as originally given, must be preferred against Him. That is the doctrine of the Confession in terms so plain that he may run that readeth it.

2. It is declared that such is the relation of God as its author to Scripture that He has committed Himself, as He is "the truth", by what is there written. "The authority of the holy Scripture," "dependeth" "wholly upon God (who is truth itself) the author thereof, and therefore it is to be received because it is the Word of God." *God, as He is "truth itself," guarantees the truth of what is written in His Word.* Such is the plain teaching of the Confession. Therefore there can be no error alleged to be in Holy Scripture, as originally given, without, according to the Confession, a charge being preferred against the God of truth. He, the Confession alleges, speaks in Scripture. If God speaks, then surely you have all the security of what God *is* for the perfectness of what is spoken by Him. It is impossible, therefore, according to the Confession, to allege that there were errors in the words in which God spake without blaspheming Him whose words they were. This too is abundantly plain.

3. It is said that "the old Testament in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek" were "immediately inspired by God." Now I at once allow that the word "immediately" does not describe the kind of inspiration — it refers only to the relation in which the original Scriptures stand to God, as compared to all translations. But at the same time it is said that

the Old Testament, *as in Hebrew*, and the New Testament, *as in Greek*, are inspired of God — that the language, as well as the revelation, is of God. It is only *the language* that could be said to be immediately inspired. A faithful translation brings one in contact with the revelation as certainly and as directly as the original does. This is proved by Christ's quotations from a translation of the Old Testament. But if it is declared that there is a version of the Scriptures immediately inspired, it must be meant that the language is inspired. The language is the thing of which it is predicated that it is immediate, but what is declared to be immediate is also declared to be inspired. The doctrine of the Confession, then, is that the inspiration of Scripture is *plenary* — is *verbal*. And how could it be otherwise if it accorded with Scripture? Were not the Apostles promised to be supplied with words as well as with thoughts, and the "holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

4. This inspiration is declared in the Confession to extend to all the books of the Canon, and to all parts of each of them, for it is said — "a Christian believeth to be true *whatsoever is revealed* in the Word, for the authority of God speaking therein." This authority covers all the facts as well as all the doctrines of the inspired record as originally given by God. No man, therefore, can hold that there were inaccuracies in the inspired record, as it came from God, without putting himself directly in collision with the Confession of Faith.

Plenary inspiration, making the presence of errors and inaccuracies in the record as originally furnished by God impossible, is the inspiration claimed for the Word of God in our Confession of Faith. Men may argue against such a doctrine of inspiration as this — they find it difficult, yea impossible, to receive it — they may think that they have succeeded in establishing objections against it — but if they have subscribed the Confession of Faith, they have avowed their belief in such a doctrine as this, and are pledged to maintain and defend it; and if they hold and teach views inconsistent with such a doctrine, they must either abandon the position secured by their subscription, or retract the opinions which the Confession condemns.

5. In the Confession it is said that "the Holy Spirit" is "speaking in the Scriptures," and that He beareth "witness by and with the Word in our hearts." Now what is meant by the Spirit "speaking in the Scriptures," except that the Spirit is *ever speaking in the unchanging written Word*? Not in the effect of that Word on the Christian consciousness, but in the sure words of the Book of God — the unchanging standard by which all opinions must be tried. The Confession does not teach that

there is no fixed objective standard of doctrine. Its teaching is to the effect that the written Word in which the Spirit speaks is the one authoritative and unchanging standard, and that the Spirit is the Supreme Judge, who delivers His verdicts in the words of Scripture.

And what is meant by the Spirit "bearing witness by and with the Word?" To bear witness *by* the Word is not the same as bearing witness *with* it. He has prepared the Word as a perfect medium or vehicle of His witnessing. It is by means of it He delivers His testimony, and the believer receives that as the word of God to him. True, he thus receives it in the exercise of a Spirit-given faith. But that faith realises God as speaking in the Word, and on that account, and on that account alone, receives the Word as true. The change effected by the Spirit in quickening the soul, and His gracious aid, as the Spirit of faith, account for this power to realise God as speaking in the Word. And what is the extent of this witnessing of the Spirit, and of the area on which the faith resulting operates? If all that is thus secured is the assurance of there being a divine revelation in Scripture, how can that meet the felt wants of an awakened sinner, and help him to put his trust in the Lord? An assurance of there being a divine scheme of mercy revealed in Scripture is not enough to him. He requires an explicit divine warrant to take advantage of that scheme. He must have words that are of God to guide his feet into the way of peace. He must realise that he has, in divine *words*, a divine *call* to come as he is to Christ. And how minute must the care of God have been in preparing words in season to meet the cases of anxious souls! How often, because of one word, has a verse been found to be a door of hope — yea, sometimes a syllable has been the only thing to interpose between a trembling sinner and despair. If that word, if that syllable had not been connected by his faith with God, and warrantably so, how could it avail as an encouragement to hope?

And what is meant by the Spirit's witnessing *with* the Word? There are some who mix up this with the other, and who regard both as referring to the work by which the Spirit gives assurance of there being a divine revelation in the Word, and by which He make one independent of the words of the writing. This operation of the Spirit is represented as required in order to faith because of some lack of perfectness in the record. The Spirit of faith is represented as coming to make up for the shortcoming of His work as the Spirit of inspiration! This witnessing is needed, not because of the unbelief of those to whom the Word is spoken, but because of the defectiveness of the words in which they are addressed! And owing to that defectiveness it is confined to the scheme of grace,

which, notwithstanding of that defectiveness, is revealed in Scripture. As if the Holy Spirit had left His work, in producing a record, so faulty that He must come to bring men over its defects to faith in its revelation of the scheme of grace. Faith is thus represented as an exercise in spite of a defective record, instead of being an exercise according to the warrant of a perfect record. True, the Spirit, besides bearing witness by the Word, bears witness also with it, giving a demonstration of the divinity and truth of the contents of Scripture by the discoveries He makes, and the experience He excites, and the effects which, by means of His Word, He by His work of grace produceth. But let not the witnessing of the Spirit be restricted and misplaced. Let it not be represented as limited to what He does with the Word, and let it not be represented as necessary because the Word is not such that He can witness by it.

There are some who, while professing to hold the doctrine of "a divine supernatural inspiration," give no explanatory statement of their views on this subject that is not inconsistent with the teaching of the Confession of Faith. They hold that there were inaccuracies introduced into Scripture during the very process by which it was originally produced — that these are in the Bible as inspired by God — that the men who wrote, under inspiration, the Holy Scriptures differed from other Christians only in the greater measure of their spirituality, and in their having the advantage of a first-hand acquaintance with the revelation given by God; that there was no care taken by God to prevent such mistakes as arise from defective information and lapse of memory; that the inspired writers impressed on Scriptures the effect of popular fallacies which existed in their own minds; and that they gave in their writings sometimes erroneous impressions of events. All this is directly opposed to the doctrine of the Confession. One must not judge from the aspect a thing wears, from his stand-point, how it appears to the eye of another who examines it from a different position. Those who hold such an opinion may think that their views are in harmony with the Confession. But how it is possible to have such a persuasion I cannot conceive, and it passes all power of conjecture to discover how any, who have studied and subscribed that standard, can imagine that this doctrine of inspiration is capable of being harmonised with that of the Confession.

This great divergence from Confession teaching regards a subject of primary importance. I can conceive of none of greater moment. It may be said that there are doctrines in scripture of far more importance than this about which these liberals differ from the Confession — such as that of the Trinity, of the Person of Christ, and of the Atonement. It may be

regarded as of far more importance to be sound as to these, than to have the Confession view of the doctrine of inspiration. But to have wrong views of the character of Scripture may involve an exclusion from the benefit of all its contents. It may be said that they hold as firmly as any one, that there is an authoratative and infallible revelation of the fundamental doctrines of grace in the Bible, and that they may reach these trustfully, and enjoy the benefit of their truth and power, notwithstanding of their laxer views as to the perfectness of the writing in which they are revealed. It is well for them if it is so. But what may be the effect of their teaching on the minds of others? If they accept their representation of the Bible as an imperfect record, may not this have the effect of inducing in their minds an utter contempt of all that it contains? I know of no more effective aid to unbelief than that which such teaching must yield. They may describe their erroneous doctrine as "an apologetic attempt," and they may declare that it enables some to accept the contents of Scripture with increased satisfaction. It will doubtless help to increase the satisfaction of some to be told that they are not required to receive the whole Word of God as true. On that account they may become more tolerant of Scripture than before. But whence arises their increased satisfaction, but from the effect of their being led to imagine that the Bible does not make so imperious a demand for faith, and is not so offensive to their pride of heart as they were accustomed to think. They now feel that they are at liberty to believe as much or as little as they please, and if they do not believe, they have a better excuse now than they were wont to find for their unbelief. This reconciles them more to the Bible, because it is transformed into accordance with their liking. They can take to do more freely in a speculative way with the contents of Scripture than before. But it is to rest in unbelief, not to rest through faith, that these have been helped by this misrepresentation of the Word of God. I can conceive of one, who is not in downright earnest, desiderating no more aid from Scripture than some help to hope because it contains a revelation of grace, and being quite content without connecting the words of Scripture with divine authority. Such a one cares not to have any personal dealing, through the words of Scripture, with Him in whose history the scheme of grace is unfolded, and in whose hand the provision of grace can alone be found. Any man who is satisfied with the hope of an alien will be quite content with an inaccurate Bible. So will the man, too, who is careful only so to conceive of Scripture as that he may be able to speculate and to discourse as to its contents without feeling himself open to challenge as one who acts ignorantly or foolishly. He is searching

Scripture for thought and not for salvation. But it is inconceivable how any one who, for his immortal and sinful soul, desiderates a warrant of hope, that shall be availing and secure, can be content with aught that is not stamped with "thus saith the Lord." That man who has passed over the edge of a great precipice, and who is kept by a single rope from being dashed on the rocks in the great gulph that yawns in the dark depths far down beneath him, is not likely to be trying experiments on that which upholds him by cutting through its strands that he may discover how little can suffice to sustain him. It is as he is assured that all its strands are sound and unbroken, that he can breathe freely in his perilous position. No more can I conceive of a man suspending himself over eternity on the Word of God, as the only warrant of his hope, being able to endure to think of it except as infallible divine speech in all its parts, by which God commits Himself, as He is the truth, to the salvation of all whose hope is in Him through His Word.

A phase of religious feeling, that is novel in the Free Church, and a cast of thought which indicates a marked change in the state of religious opinion, have recently appeared. To some minds this may seem to result from an accession of healthful vigour, causing a development which throws off the husk of traditionalism, by which the spiritual life of the Church had in time past been cramped. The new expansion is regarded by these as a healthful symptom. I am firmly persuaded that such an estimate is entirely wrong, and that nothing could be more disastrous than that it should determine the action of the Church. Of course, those who lead in this so-called advance, and those who follow are quite disposed to think that they are taking part in a reformation which should be hailed by the Church, and for which the plaudits of their generation are due to them. But if the spirit of this new movement be carefully examined there will be found no trace of hopefulness about it. It is just the pride of intellect and of learning, appearing, as it has often done, to pioneer the advance of scepticism. Look to the anxiety to appear advanced. Look to the ease with which difficulties are started. Look to the flourish with which they are paraded, as if there was pleasure found in the exhibition of them. Look to the care expended on making objections as strong as possible, while no effort is made to remove them. Look to the facility with which the feelings of those who have the fear of God in their hearts, though lacking the light of learning in their heads, can be lacerated. Look to the heedless broaching of opinions which tend to unsettle all the foundations of belief in the minds of those who wish to be free from all trammels of authority in their thinking, and from all the

fence of divine prescription in their practice. To offend the generation of the righteous is no matter of fear, but to appear behind any others in attainments is something at all risks to be shunned. Such is the spirit evinced by the new school which has lately appeared in our country, and of whom there are some specimens in our Church. It requires wisdom and faithfulness which He who hath "the Seven Spirits of God" alone can give to secure a right mode of dealing with this outbreak. To whatever extent the Church may be disposed to allow of new modes of presenting the great verities of her creed, and however much she may be disposed to welcome and avail herself of, all the aid which learning and science can yield for the defence of the truth, surely when the infallibility of Scripture is called in question, when one has to be dealt with who hesitates not to say that a faulty Bible came from the hand of God there should be no faltering in the action of the Church. "The Church of God" is pledged to regard it as her great function to be "the pillar and ground of the truth." How can she at all be so if she is not careful to defend the divine authority, and to maintain the perfectness, of the inspired record as it came originally from God, who is its Author? The Church that shrinks from this must cease to have a reason for existing. There can be no more objectless institution in the world than a Church that ceases to be a "pillar and ground of the truth" — that cares not to defend the oracles of God committed to her keeping.

Book Review

Fragments and Sermons by Rev. Malcolm Gillies. Paperback 127 pp. Price £4.65. Obtainable from Dr. Neil R. Gillies, "Moorings", 6 Newton Street, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis or from Church Bookroom.

This paperback containing a number of the sermons of Rev. Malcolm Gillies, also some fragments from him, will be welcomed by those who were privileged to hear his able discourses in days past. We trust that they will also be welcomed by those who did not have that privilege. A personal tribute to Mr Gillies by Rev. D. Beaton, which is contained in the book, states that Mr Gillies was especially gifted as an original and versatile Bible expositor and excelled in the uncommon gift of spiritualising in an edifying, instructive and eloquent manner Old Testament themes. This paperback will confirm that testimony to Mr Gillies' rare ability in this particular line, as well as in others also.

We are glad to recommend this paperback to all who are interested in reading solid and edifying discourses on the Word of God. **D.B.M.**

Notes and Comments

Ordination of Women in the Church of England

In July the Church of England Synod approved by a small majority the principle of the ordination of women to the priesthood though they will not be eligible as bishops. The legislation will return to the General Synod for final approval in 1991 or 1992. Provision is also made for compensation to be paid to those who resign because they cannot accept female priests. In moving the approval of the measure, Professor David McClean described it as a momentous change and said he believed it would serve both the mission of the Church and its unity. The Archbishop of Canterbury while alleging that there was a strong theological case for the ordination of women expressed his disquiet at the provisions protecting bishops from having to act contrary to their convictions. His view was that by the sole declaration of their bishop parishes and even whole dioceses might virtually become "no-go" areas so far as women priests were concerned. This would mean a questioning of their orders and in effect a restriction of communion within the diocese. The provisions for diocesan bishops also would be damaging to the unity of the Church as priests would be drawn to dioceses having bishops who held similar convictions to themselves in this matter. Mr John Gummer, Minister of Agriculture, who is a member of the Synod said that the proposals might not be contrary to Scripture, but no-one could say they were rooted or grounded in Scripture. He believed that they were legislating for schism. The communion service would become the focus of disunity. The Bishop of Winchester opposed the measure as contrary to the practice of Christianity for nearly 2000 years. Some would not be ready to receive the sacramental ministrations of female priests, while others would be uncertain about it.

The Church of Scotland has already taken the step over which the Church of England has been hesitating so long. Both churches have now accommodated themselves to the modern view of equality of opportunity to both sexes in all types of work and of professions. Scripture as the standard and rule of what is proper for the Church of God is set aside. Women must be admitted to office from which the Word of God excludes them. This is but another step in the downward course of both churches. In the Church of England, both high anglicans and evangelicals are opposed to this move but what action they will now take remains to be seen. They oppose it on very different grounds. The step now taken will raise a barrier to union with the Church of Rome, as

Rome has not so far made the concession that women can be ordained to the priesthood. What is needed in this dark day is that light would break upon the land in the love and kindness of the Lord so that there would be a return to the Word of God in its doctrine, worship and practice.

Religious Education

In the House of Lords attempts are being made to impose tighter controls on the teaching of religious education in schools. One amendment tabled to the Education Reform Bill required all state schools to hold acts of Christian worship at morning assembly. The Education Minister, Mr Baker, has conceded the demand by Lady Cox that R.E. should be written into the Bill as a basic subject. She also wants governors to have the right to bring clergymen into the classroom if teachers do not want or are not qualified to conduct Christian religious studies.

The deterioration in the teaching of R.E. in schools which set in a long time ago has raised great anxieties in the minds of Christian parents and it is a welcome sign that efforts are being made in this way to rectify matters to some extent in England and Wales. It will overcome to some extent the complaint that R.E. lessons have become a diluted mishmash of multi-faith generalities. Only a day of God's power in the nation will fully rectify matters and bring R.E. to be what it ought to be — the teaching of the basic truths or doctrines of Biblical Christianity.

I.R.A. Outrages

The murder of six soldiers in an I.R.A. bomb attack in Lisburn, Co. Antrim during a charitable event, along with the attack on children in a school bus, show the depths to which the I.R.A. are prepared to descend to try to gain their own ends. The Minister for Northern Ireland, Mr King, said in connection with the attack on the soldiers "that the I.R.A. have no depths to which they will not sink in their determination to kill, nor the slightest concern as to how many people of all ages, men women and children that they may murder and maim in their vile activities." The callousness of the I.R.A. murderers in their nefarious work reveals the satanic source from which they derive their motivation. That they should be aided and abetted in this work by a system claiming to be Christian, reveals the nature of that system as satanic and antichristian. We ought to pray for the day when Ireland will be freed from the anti-Christian system of Rome under whose power and influence so many of her people have been so long. The day of Ireland's deliverance from popery will also signal the day of her deliverance from the

murderous activities of the I.R.A. an organisation which that evil system has spawned. May that day be hastened in the mercy and kindness of the Lord.

Police and Freemasonry

A Labour M.P. was given leave to introduce a Bill to amend the form of declaration for a constable prescribed by the Police Act 1964. He said that he was not attacking the principles of Freemasonry but he believed that membership of a secret organisation was incompatible with the declaration of police officers made to serve the whole community impartially. It is thought that 33 out of 50 chief constables and as many as one in five police officers are Freemasons. In recent times the Churches have been concerned that some ministers and elders are members of the Masonic Lodge, so it is gratifying to see that there is a concern in Parliament relating to police officers being members of this secret organisation.

The New Face of Communism

The hope is expressed that the changes taking place in Russia under Mr Gorbachov may result in more religious freedom for believers in that land. It is clear, however, that there are still laws on the Statute Book restricting religious practices and until these are removed they may be re-enforced at any time. While any relaxation of religious persecution in Russia is to be welcomed, yet the State remains firmly attached to its atheistical principles. As in the political field, so in the religious sphere, observers must exercise great caution lest they hastily assume that there is a real change of heart in the Communist hierarchy. Even the limited permission, however, given for the Bible to be printed, may well herald the day when Russia will cast off both the shackles of atheism and of a degraded form of Christianity, and embrace in its fulness the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Church Notes

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Outer Isles: At Stornoway on 2nd August at 12 noon.

Western: At Laide on 30th August at 6 p.m.

Canadian: At Toronto on 8th September at 7 p.m.

Northern: At Dingwall on 13th September at 2 p.m.

Southern: At Glasgow on 20th September at 6 p.m.

Skye: At Portree on 27th September at 11 a.m.

Zimbabwe: At Bulawayo on 11th October at 2 p.m.

Australia and New Zealand: At Gisborne on 21st October at 2.30 p.m.

Leverburgh Home of Rest

There are still vacancies in the Home of Rest, Leverburgh, Isle of Harris and applications are invited for the remaining places. Applications should be addressed to the Clerk of the Leverburgh Home of Rest Committee, Mr Malcolm Gillies, 47 Matheson Road, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis.

(Rev.) J. MacLeod, Convener,
Leverburgh Home of Rest Committee

Visit to Eastern Europe

Last year a visit was arranged to Eastern Europe in order to meet Christians there and to give what necessary relief was possible. It is hoped that a similar project will be possible this year also. The people of the Church are well aware of the difficult circumstances in which Christians live behind the Iron Curtain. They know little of the freedom that we possess to worship God without molestation and to possess and read the Scriptures. We are encouraged in the Word of God to "remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body." We ought therefore to do what we can to encourage and support, as we are able, those who are living in trying and difficult circumstances. Anyone wishing to support this venture may send their contribution to the General Treasurer designating it for the visit to Eastern Europe.

Zimbabwe Mission

Dr Hak, the Dutch lady doctor, who offered her services for Mbumba Hospital went to Zimbabwe in June. She is presently working at Mpilo Hospital, Bulawayo, and expects to work at two other Government hospitals before proceeding to Mbumba Mission hospital in December (D.V.). Miss Marion Graham, Headmistress of the John Tallach Secondary School, who has been home on furlough, expects to leave for Zimbabwe on 6th September (D.V.). It is to be hoped that, in the Lord's kind providence, the work of the Mission may continue to be carried on in Zimbabwe and, above all, that the Gospel may be blessed to never-dying souls.

Acknowledgment of Donations

The General Treasurer, Room 7, Seafield House, Seafield Road, Inverness, IV1 1SJ, acknowledges the following donations with sincere thanks:—

Foreign Mission Fund: Per North Uist Treasurer, £17 for blind students; D.M.K., Portree, £5 for blind students; Anon., Canada, \$100 for famine relief; Anon., £10 in Greenock Collection plate; Anon., Inverness, £5, and acknowledgment in May issue should have read Acts 18: 26 and not Acts 18: 25; Van Saane family, Holland, £100; Two friends, Isle of Wight, £20; Miss B. Gunn, Edinburgh £10, all three per N. Murray for Binga trip; Friend, Leicestershire, £100.

Home of Rest, Harris: Friend, Stornoway, £10 per Rev. J. MacLeod, Three friends, Edinburgh, £40; Friends, Strond, £20.

Magazine Free Distribution: "J.A.F.," Larne £25 per Miss I.G.

Trinitarian Bible Society: Anon., £40, in Greenock Collection Plate.

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

Breasclete: Anon., £25 for Congregational purposes; Anon., £10 for Sustentation Fund and £10 for Church door collection.

Fort William: A. McG., £10 for any useful purpose, Psalm 133 per D. McN.; Mrs B., £10 for any useful purpose, Psalm 46 per D. McN.; Mrs MacC, £10 for any useful purpose, envelope in plate; Mrs B., £10 for any useful purpose, Psalm 46 per D. McN.

Gairloch: Lewis friend, £10 for Congregational purposes per Rev. A.E.W.M.; £100 for payment of hearing aid, W. McK., Gairloch.

Glendale: Friend of the Cause, £18 where most needed, per Rev. D. N.

Greenock: Anon., £50 per Rev. L. MacLeod. Omission from May Magazine: £30 for Congr. Purposes per Rev. A. MacPhail M.A.

Kames: Friends, Glasgow £10 for Communion expenses; Anon., Glasgow £50; Friend, Kyles of Bute, £20; "M&F" £15, last three for Church Funds.

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North Uist: Anon., £50 for Church repairs per Rev. A.M.; Friends, £60; D.A. MacD., Cross Rds, £50; Friends, £60, last three for Church repairs; Friend at Communion, £20; Friend, £10, last two for Communion Expenses; Mrs J. MacV., Claddach, £60, "where most need", From the Will of the late C. MacDonald, Dusary, £20; Miss MacD., Clarkston, £100; Mrs M. MacD., Middlequarter, £32; Anon., £300; MacD., Kyles, £50, last four for Manse repairs; Anon., envelope in plate, £10; C.M., £20 for Sustentation Fund per Rev. A. M.; Mrs Scott, Avonbridge, £20 for Sustentation Fund.

Oban: £20 for Sustentation Fund, envelope in plate; "In memory of loved ones", £10 for Congregational Fund, envelope in plate.

Portree: Friend, £5; Friends, £15, both for Sustentation Fund per Rev. F.M.; D.M. £5 for Tapes, envelope in plate; I.M., £10 for Church Funds, envelope in plate; "In memory of a dear husband and father", £20 for Home Mission Fund, envelope in plate.

Raasay: "In loving memory of dear ones", £200 for Sustentation Fund; Rachel & Sheila, Inverarish, £18 for Communion Expenses; A Friend £80 "to help sending bibles to foreign countries"; envelope in plate, £20, "for sending Bibles and Testaments abroad"; envelope in plate, £20, "for sending Bibles abroad", all per congregational treasurer.

Scourie: A.M., £20; Anon., £250 both for Church extension etc.

Shieldaig: Miss C. F., £10; Anon., £10, both for Communion Expenses; "In memory of a loving husband and father", £100 for Sustentation Fund.

Staffin: £200, per Treasurer, £100 per Rev. A.C. £10 per D.I. MacI., Anon., £10, all "where most needed".

Stornoway: "In appreciation", £100 for Sustentation Fund; Miss K. A. Macleod, The Cottage, Callanish, Isle of Lewis, £30 and £40 for Sustentation Fund, all per Rev. J.M.