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Chosen in Him

The true people of God belong to the election of grace. They were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. The doctrine of election is a great deep. It is utterly unfathomable to the mind of man, yet is a most glorious doctrine, for apart from it none of the lost race of Adam would ever have been saved. Many find fault with this doctrine because the electing love of God rested on some and not on all of Adam's fallen race. Yet the wonder of election is not that God loved some of our race but that He loved any of that race. What constitutes the wonder of election to every believing soul is that the Lord ever looked their way in His love. They have been taught by the Spirit of God that they have deserved nothing at God's hand but to be cast off for ever. What a deep, deep mystery it is to them therefore that the Lord did not cast them off for ever but looked upon them in His mercy and in His love. The wonder of God's electing love to His people will fill them with wonder, not only in time, but also throughout a never-ending eternity.

The election of Israel as a nation was a matter altogether wonderful. One nation was chosen out of all the nations of the world to be a people unto God. Moses said to them: "The Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all the people that are upon the face of the earth." But he also went on to tell them that the Lord did not set His love upon them, nor choose them, because they were more in number than any people; for they were the fewest of all people. The Lord loved them because He loved them. And so it is with His people in every age of time. He loved them because He loved them. In themselves there was nothing to commend them to God but only what would draw out His wrath. How unfathomable then must be the electing love of God that embraced such unworthy wretches, hell-deserving sinners of Adam's fallen race.

But the question must arise as to how the love of God could embrace

sinners who were in themselves objects of His divine wrath. The answer to this we have in the Scripture teaching that they were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. As the choice of the Father rested upon His people and He embraced them in His electing love, so the choice of the Father rested upon His beloved Son to be the Saviour and Redeemer of His people. Of Him the Father says: "Mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth." What love is revealed here in that the choice of the Father rested upon the Son of His love. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." His love to His people was such that He was not to withhold His Son, even His beloved Son. He was to give Him over to suffering and death to redeem a people from out of the fallen race of Adam.

In the light of the electing love of the Father, bound up as it was with the choice of Christ to be the Redeemer of His people, and in the light of the redeeming love of the Son, what can the believing soul say but "who is sufficient for these things?" Who can fathom the depths, yea, and the length and breadth and height of the love of God? So, too, in the scheme of redemption the children of God are faced with the love of God the Holy Ghost in the application of redemption. Thus while the salvation of the sinner has its beginning in the electing love of the Father, it also embraces the redeeming love of the Son and the sanctifying love of the Holy Spirit. The praises, therefore, of all God's redeemed ones will ascend throughout eternity to God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for delivering them from eternal death and saving them unto eternal life.

We are encouraged in God's Word to make our calling and election sure — and in that order — first, calling and then election. Have we been called by divine grace? Do we bear the marks of the children of God? Only by establishing our calling in this way may we come to know and be assured of our election — chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world.

The Fourth Commandment

*From a Lecture by Rev. J. Kennedy, D.D., delivered at Dingwall,
September 16, 1883*

"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor

thy stranger that is within thy gates; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it." — Exodus 20: 8-11.

... The action of the State, in relation to the Sabbath law, combines with that of the Churches to hasten Scotland's departure from "the old paths." All legislation in defence of the rest and sanctity of the Sabbath is refused, and almost all forms and measures of Sabbath desecration are tolerated.

... What infatuation the conduct of our aristocracy and of our rulers indicates when, by example of the former and the guilty indifferentism of the latter, the peasantry of this country are induced to treat with contempt the claims of the Fourth Commandment! The next commandment which follows is that which secures for them a right to be respected and obeyed, and in no measure can anyone be truly disposed to yield to them their due, who has ceased to pay respect to the claims of God. By refusing to follow and enforce the Sabbath law, they are doing what they can to secure a revolution in our native land. From the Sabbath-breaking masses will come the great danger of the future; for a people, trained to disregard the demand of God, that His Sabbath shall be hallowed, and whose grievances remain unredressed, shall soon cease to have any respect for those to whom, according to the law of God, they owe dutiful submission.

BUT HOW IS THE SABBATH OBSERVED AMONG AND BY OURSELVES? This is a question which each one of us is bound to consider, for on each of us rests an obligation to do what the Fourth Commandment requires. Of this obligation you cannot by any possibility get rid. And the obligation is divinely imposed. Some may imagine they are in a position up to which the claim of the Sabbath law does not rise — that it is something to which the vulgar alone are called to have respect. And the poor, amidst the pinching straits of their lot, may think that to them Sabbath-keeping is impossible, and is therefore not required of them. Others still, found among the highest and among the lowest in rank, may imagine that, by the aid of men of advanced opinions, they have reached a conclusion which entirely disposes of the Sabbath law, and relieves them of all responsibility in connection with it. And, besides all these, there are many who think that any seemly measure of outward respect for the Sabbath, is a full discharge of all that is dutiful: while there are some whose official work is such that they cannot refrain from seeming to respect it. But to each one of all these classes the question is

addressed, and to it an answer must be given, if not earlier, most certainly at the bar of the great court of assize at the last day.

How are you affected towards the Sabbath in your heart? Do you rejoice in prospect of it, not because its rest from toil is craved by your wearied body, and by your mind from worrying business, but because it is a day "holy to the Lord and honourable"? Are you on that account really disposed to call it a "delight"? Does the prospect of enjoying communion with the Lord, and enjoying "peace" in "His ways" give you gladness? Does your desire for this induce you to pray to God in prospect of the Sabbath for His presence and His blessing?

And when the Sabbath comes, how are you employed in your closet? Is there any true spiritual worship there? Do not imagine that there can be any genuine worship in public if there be no true worship in secret. If you seek God at all you will seek Him in your closet. True godliness is not a bit of gaudy patchwork for the eyes of men to observe, it is a spiritual living with God in secret prayer, in which there are wrestlings for His blessing, sighings under the hiding of His face, gladness in the hope of His favour, joy in meditation on His glory and His love as revealed through Jesus Christ, and glimpses by the eye of faith of the coming glory, and foretastes of it such as cause fervent longings for the time when that glory shall be reached. What know you of such exercises as these in your closet on the day of God?

And how is it as to family worship on Sabbath? Is there an altar to God in your household? Do you enjoy the service of compassing it? Do you in that work seek the face and strength of the Lord? O, how sad it is to think of families that never take part in any such service! And sad too is the case of heads of all households who regard family worship as an uninteresting routine, which, if they dared, they would altogether omit!

And how is it as to household duties on the Sabbath? Is unnecessary work avoided? Are such arrangements made and observed as will admit of as many members of the household as possible attending in the place of public worship? What is done by parents in the religious instruction of their children? This a duty binding on every parent, and it must fare ill with every community in which this is neglected. The home is the nursery of the church, and nothing else can supply the place of parental instruction of the young. The tendency in these days is to delegate the work to the teachers of our Sabbath schools. Many parents feel as if the opportunity of sending their children to be instructed elsewhere had relieved them of all responsibility in connection with their being taught at home. But this is an utter mistake, and is an evil in connection with our Sabbath

school system which ought to be carefully guarded against. True, there are parents who are both indisposed to be dutiful to their children, and quite incapable of rightly instructing them. Other instruction than that which their parents can give them is required by the children of such as these, but let that be given to them in their own homes, by office-bearers of the Church and Christian friends to whom such work would be a "labour of love." The parents might thus learn while their children were being taught, and might, by the blessing of God, be stirred up to, and fitted for, the discharge of their duty as instructors of their children.

Our Sabbath school system, in the measure in which it tends to separate parents and children, cannot but have an injurious effect. It causes a separation of them beyond what is immediate. The Sabbath school is becoming the children's church, as distinguished from the parent's church, and it is becoming a rarer thing than once it was to see the parents and children together in the house of God. In some places already the extreme has been reached, of the entire absence of children from the house of God, when the gospel is preached, and the proposal has been made and partially acted on of having a quite separate children's church. And with their work in the Sabbath school, which is naturally looked on as their only public worship on Sabbath, how apt are the children to associate what they have been accustomed to in their ordinary gatherings during the week! And how prejudicially this must tell on their respect for the day of the Lord! Sabbath-keeping cannot therefore be expected to be the fruit of large gatherings of children in Sabbath schools. And the habit of confining the religious teaching of the young to the Sabbath school tends, on the one hand, to make the parents utterly regardless as to their duty, and, on the other, to make the rising generation indifferent as to stated attendance in the house of God. I am afraid that neither Sabbath observance, nor regular Sabbath attendance in the place of worship, shall be found to be the fruit of our Sabbath schools. But they seem to be indispensable, and the Church's work should, in connection with them, be to do what is possible in order to secure that the children shall be taught at home by parents competent to instruct them, and that the children of undutiful and incompetent parents be taught in circulating little groups in the several households to which they belong.

And what is your Sabbath reading? There never was a time when so many books for Sabbath reading were issued from the press. Sunday — the heathenish name for the Lord's day — is put on the title-page of some of these, and this is almost all that is Sabbatic about them. Tales

and illustrations are mingled with singularly light religious pap, in order to gratify a taste that says of the Sabbath, "When will it be gone?" and to which searching the Scriptures is a weariness. There is nothing that ought to take the place of prayerful study of the Word of God; and let our other reading be confined to works which have been approved by the Church and blessed by the Lord.

And what is your public worship? How are you affected towards it? Are you truly conscious of your need of grace to prepare you for engaging in it in a spiritual frame of mind? Do you feel your need of receiving instruction, and are you "more ready to hear than to offer the sacrifices of fools?" Know you what it is to feel sad in His house when the Lord withholds His gracious presence? Has "a day in His courts" been to you, in your experience, "better than a thousand?" Or has your coming to the house of God been to you a mere matter of habit — a mere lifeless formality?

These are questions which demand the serious attention of each one of you. Dare not to make so light of the claims of God as not to care what answers to these questions you can honestly give.

I desire, before I close, to warn you, and especially the young, against examples and misrepresentations from which you may be in danger.

I should warn you against the example of Sabbath walking. Such an example is presented to you, though certainly not by any who, in their practice, are entitled to your respect. Still, the very habit of seeing others doing what, in your conscience, you cannot approve, may have an evil influence, and as the observed transgression of the law of God increases, in that measure is the volume of the current which endangers your steadfastness. I know few more excuseless things than this Sabbath walking. If the plea of health is used to justify it, how can men expect *that* to benefit their health which they dare not ask the Lord to bless! And if they can only plead that they do it for recreation because they feel the Sabbath to be dull, how can they dare to act in a way which so plainly indicates their dislike of the day and of the Word of God? And surely what ought chiefly to be sought on the Sabbath is what would be an eternal benefit to the soul; and, if so, what possible advantage, in order to the acquisition of this, can be found in the society or surroundings of those who go forth on His day, openly to exhibit their contempt of the Lord. This way of profaning the Sabbath has often been the beginning of a career of crime. Beware of it, my young friends.

Beware, too, of following the example of those who cannot dispense with having their letters and newspapers on Sabbath. No one can listen to

the plea of necessity in favour of sending for letters to the Post Office on Sabbath, or of requiring that these be delivered to them. Forsooth, *they* cannot dispense with them, though in London, the busiest and wealthiest city in the world, no letters are received on Sabbath. If the exigencies of business might be pled anywhere in behalf of a Sabbath delivery of letters, surely it is there. And in our paltry villages, petty businessmen must have their letters, to whatever extent this may involve a profanation of the day of rest! And some of our gentry, as if anxious that all should be informed of their contempt for what is sacred, will send their mounted couriers to the country offices, to which they laboured to secure that despatches should be carried. They need not be so careful to exhibit their disregard for the law of God, for the information, given in this pronounced form, was already in possession of the public. Men of graceless hearts and benighted minds were not suspected of being able to endure to lack of contents of letters and newspapers, the only kind of reading which they can appreciate, and by which they can be pleased. If they are determined to call the Sabbath a weariness, let them do so to their own eternal ruin; but by no law is a right given to them, by an ostentation of their ungodliness, to grieve the hearts of those who think that "the law of God is holy, and just, and good."

And be not cheated with infidel objections to careful Sabbath-keeping, however smartly and sneeringly these may be offered. As the tide of declension is moving on, an impression is produced in the hearts of those who are adrift that all things which they are leaving behind them are but relics of darker times. Adherence to what is antiquated is all that is implied, they say, in the conservatism that cleaves to "the old paths" and "the good way" in which our fathers walked. It is characteristic of young men that they do not like to appear to be behind the age. They must cast away the old clothes of traditionalism and must learn to sneer at the days and ways that are gone, that they may be like those who assume to be the leaders of thought — the advanced guard of the army of progress. They must neither think nor speak like the men of earlier, and therefore more benighted times! To minds of this cast, access is easy to the idea of the Sabbath and of Sabbath-keeping being things of the past, and therefore, not to be respected. But, my young friends, be not led away by this affectation of progress, with its contempt for what is past. There never was a time when in science there was more utterly baseless speculation, and in which more structures of lies were reared within the religious sphere than now. There never was an age of more hasty thinking and of more hazy utterance than the present in all things affecting

what is divine and spiritual. But God is unchanging. On that grand truth firmly plant your foot in faith. The law of God is unchanging. That truth is another strong foothold. On these be "steadfast and unmoveable" in the midst of all present unsettlement of thought and practice; and all the influence which may be brought to bear upon you will not suffice to cause you to regard Sabbath-keeping as a thing which any generation should leave behind it.

And careful Sabbath-keeping will be represented to you as a gloomy thing. And by whom? By those who always carefully refrained from trying what sort of thing it was. If you are, like them, not a lover of the Sabbath yourself, you are quite sure to be coward before a scaring bugbear such as this. You will find Sabbath-keeping gloomy, not because it is so, but because you decline to attempt it. Forsooth, there should not be a Sabbath because there are so many sinful men who do not like it! God must adapt His laws to the liking of His enemies! If you would wish to know whether Sabbath-keeping is gloomy work, ask those who have tried what it is. They will tell you that it is "a delight." They would not exchange one moment's gladness, such as they have enjoyed on the Lord's day in His fellowship and service, for all that the world could bestow of its dissipating pleasures. It is just in the measure in which they are unreserved in their devotion of the day of God that these, who alone are competent to pronounce a decision, find the Sabbath to be gloomy. The Sabbath requiring to borrow from the world in order that it may not be a gloomy thing to observe it! Can men talk more insanely than when they speak thus? A man happier because he forsakes "the Fountain of living waters" and betakes himself to "broken cisterns"! Men gloomy, whose joy is to be enlightened with the glory, and touched by the love of God, as compared with those who have no more to make them glad than what can be won in a service whose wages is death! Let neither the enemies of God nor your own evil heart give you your estimate of the Sabbath. Take that only from the Word of God, and seek from God a heart that will love what He commends, and move you to walk as He commands, and then certain I am that you will cease to regard the Sabbath as a weariness, or the keeping of it as a thing of gloom. Then will you find as much of gladness in Sabbath-keeping as will enable you to disregard the sneers of those who would fain mock you back from the ways of righteousness, and to despise the pleasures by which they would tempt you to desecrate the day of the Lord.

Christ and the Two Thieves

by Bishop J. C. Ryle

(Continued from page 40)

"And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.

"But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?

"And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds but this man hath done nothing amiss.

"And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy Kingdom.

"And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shall thou be with me in Paradise." Luke 23: 39-43.

III. The third lesson you are meant to learn from these verses is this, — *the Spirit always leads saved souls in one way.*

This is a point that deserves particular attention, and is often overlooked. Men look at the broad fact that the penitent thief was saved when he was dying, and they look no further.

They do not consider the evidences this thief left behind him. They do not observe the abundant proof he gave of the work of the Spirit in his heart. And these proofs I wish to trace out. I wish to show you that the Spirit always works in one way, and that whether He converts a man in an hour, as He did the penitent thief, — or whether by slow degrees, as he does others, the steps by which He leads souls to heaven are always the same.

Listen to me, reader, and I will try to make this clear to you. I want you to shake off the common notion that there is some easy royal road to heaven from a dying bed. I want you thoroughly to understand that every saved soul goes, through the same experience, and that the leading principles of the penitent thief's religion were just the same as those of the oldest saint that ever lived.

See then, for one thing, *how strong was the faith* of this man.

He called, Jesus, "Lord". He declared his belief that He would have a kingdom. He believed that He was able to give him eternal life and glory, and in this belief prayed to Him. He maintained His innocence of all the charges brought against Him. "This man," said he, "hath done nothing amiss." Others perhaps may have *thought* the Lord innocent, — none *said* so openly but this poor dying man.

And when did all this happen? It happened when the whole nation had denied Christ, — shouting, "Crucify Him: crucify Him. We have no

king but Caesar!" — when the chief priests and pharisees had condemned Him and found Him guilty of death, — when even His own disciples had forsaken Him and fled, — when He was hanging faint, bleeding and dying on the cross, numbered with transgressors, and accounted accursed. This was the hour when the thief believed in Christ, and prayed to Him. Surely such faith was never seen since the world began.*

The disciples had seen mighty signs and miracles. They had seen the dead raised with a word, — and lepers healed with a touch, — the blind receiving sight, — the dumb made to speak, — the lame made to walk. They had seen thousands fed with a few loaves and fishes. They had all of them their Master walking on the water as on dry land. They had all of them heard Him speak as no man ever spake, and hold out promises of good things yet to come. They had some of them had a foretaste of His glory in the mount of transfiguration. Doubtless their faith was the gift of God, but still they had much to help it.

The dying thief saw none of the things I have mentioned. He only saw our Lord in agony, and in weakness, in suffering, and in pain. He saw Him undergoing a dishonourable punishment; deserted, mocked, despised, blasphemed. He saw Him rejected by all the great, and wise, and noble of His own people, — His strength dried up like a potsherd, His life drawing nigh to the grave. (Psal. 22: 15; 88: 3.) He saw no sceptre, no royal crown, no outward dominion, no glory, no majesty, no power, no signs of might. And yet the dying thief believed, and looked forward to Christ's kingdom.

*"I know not that since the creation of the world there ever was a more remarkable and striking example of faith." — Calvin's Commentary on the Gospels.

"A great faith that can see the sun under so thick a cloud; that can discover a Christ, a Saviour, under such a poor, scorned, despised, crucified Jesus, and call Him Lord.

"A great faith that could see Christ's kingdom through His cross, and grave, and death, and when there was so little sign of a kingdom, and pray to be remembered in that kingdom." Lightfoot Sermon 1684.

"The penitent thief was the first confessor of Christ's heavenly kingdom, — the first martyr who bore testimony to the holiness of His sufferings, — and the first apologist for His oppressed innocence." — Quesnel of the Gospels.

"Probably there are few saints in glory who ever honoured Christ more illustriously than this dying sinner." — Doddridge.

"Is this the voice of a thief or a disciple? Give me leave, O Saviour, to borrow Thine own words. 'Verily I have not found so great faith, no yet in Israel.' He saw Thee hanging miserably by him, and yet styles Thee Lord. He saw Thee dying, and yet talks of Thy kingdom. He felt himself dying, yet talks of a future remembrance. O faith, stronger than death, which can look beyond the cross at a crown; — beyond dissolution at a remembrance of life and glory! Which of Thine eleven were heard to speak so gracious a word to Thee in these Thy last pangs?" — Bishop Hall.

Reader, would you know if you have the Spirit? Then mark the question I put to you this day. — Where is your faith in Christ?

See, for another thing, *what a right sense of sin* the thief had. He says to his companion, "We receive the due reward of our deeds." He acknowledges his own ungodliness, and the justice of his punishment. He makes no attempt to justify himself, or excuse his wickedness. He speaks like a man humbled and self-abased by the remembrance of past iniquities. This is what all God's children feel. They are ready to allow they are poor hell-deserving sinners. They can say with their hearts, as well as with their lips, "We have left undone the things that we ought to have done, and we have done those things that we ought not to have done, and there is no health in us."

Reader, would you know if you have the Spirit? Then mark my question. — Do you feel your sin?

See, for another thing, *what brotherly love* the thief showed to his companion. He tried to stop his railing and blaspheming, and bring him to a better mind. "Dost not thou fear God," he says, "seeing thou art in the same condemnation?" There is no surer mark of grace than this. Grace shakes a man out of his selfishness, and makes him feel for the souls of others. When the Samaritan woman was converted, she left her water-pot and ran to the city, saying, "Come, see a man that told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" When Saul was converted, immediately he went to the synagogue at Damascus, and testified to his brethren of Israel, that Jesus was the Christ.

Reader, would you know if you have the Spirit? Then where is your charity and love to souls?

In one word you see in the penitent thief a finished work of the Holy Ghost. Every part of the believer's character may be traced in him. Short as his life was after conversion, he found time to leave abundant evidence that he was a child of God. His faith, his prayer, his humility, his brotherly love, are unmistakable witnesses of the reality of his repentance. He was not a penitent in name only, but in deed and in truth.

Let no man therefore think because the penitent thief was saved, that men can be saved without leaving any evidence of the Spirit's work. Let such an one consider well what evidence this man left behind, and take care.

It is mournful to hear what people sometimes say about what they call death-bed evidences. It is perfectly fearful to observe how little satisfies some persons, and how easily they can persuade themselves that their friends are gone to heaven. They will tell you when their relation is dead

and gone, that "he made such a beautiful prayer one day, — or that he talked so well, — or that he was so sorry for his old ways, and intended to live so differently if he got better, — or that he craved nothing in this world, — or that he liked people to read to him, and pray with him." And because they have this to go upon, they seem to have a comfortable hope that he is saved. Christ may never have been named, — the way of salvation may never have been in the least mentioned. But it matters not; there was a little talk of religion, and so they are content.

Now I have no desire to hurt the feelings of any one who reads this paper, but I must and will speak plainly upon this subject.

Once for all, let me say, that as a general rule, nothing is so unsatisfactory as death-bed evidences. The things that men say, and the feelings they express when sick and frightened, are little to be depended on. Often, too often, they are the result of fear, and do not spring from the ground of the heart. Often, too often, they are things said by rote; caught from the lips of ministers and anxious friends, but evidently not felt. And nothing can prove all this more clearly, than the well-known fact, that the great majority of persons who make promises of amendment on a sick-bed, if they recover, go back to sin and the world.

When a man has lived a life of thoughtlessness and folly, I want something more than a few fair words and good wishes to satisfy me about his soul, when he comes to his death-bed. It is not enough for me that he will let me read the Bible to him, and pray by his bedside; that he says, "he has not thought so much as he ought of religion, and he thinks he should be a different man if he got better." All this does not content me, — it does not make me feel happy about his state. It is very well as far as it goes, but it is not conversion. It is very well in its way, but it is not faith in Christ. Until I see conversion, and faith in Christ, I cannot and dare not feel satisfied. Others may feel satisfied if they please, and after their friend's death say, they hope he is gone to heaven. For my part I would rather hold my tongue, and say nothing. I would be content with the least measure of repentance and faith in a dying man, even though it be no bigger than a grain of mustard seed; but to be content with anything less than repentance and faith, seems to me next door to infidelity.

Reader, what kind of evidence do you mean to leave behind as to the state of your soul? Take example by the penitent thief, and you will do well.

When we have carried you to your narrow bed, let us not have to hunt up stray words, and scraps of religion, in order to make out that you were a true believer. Let us not have to say in a hesitating way one to

another, "I trust he is happy: he talked so nicely one day, and he seemed so pleased with a chapter in the Bible on another occasion, and he liked such a person, who is a good man." Let us be able to speak decidedly as to your condition. Let us have some standing proof of your penitence, your faith, and your holiness, that none shall be able for a moment to question your state. Depend on it, without this, those you leave behind can feel no solid comfort about your soul. We may use the form of religion at your burial, and express charitable hopes. We may meet you at the churchyard gate, and say, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord." But this will not alter your condition. If you die without conversion to God, — without repentance, — and without faith, your funeral will only be the funeral of a lost soul.

The Divine Glory of Christ

by Rev. Charles J. Brown

(Continued from page 45)

3. But I have noted, in the title of this chapter, one other class of indirect testimonies to the Divine glory of Christ — *incidental Scripture references to his rank and place as in relation to the Father.*

i. In the fourteenth chapter of John's Gospel, there will be found a whole cluster of such references. Take verse 23, "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." *We, the Father and I*, Jesus says, will come unto him, and make *our* abode with him. Palpably he places himself there on a level with the eternal Father — "we"! Some madman perhaps would say of the sovereign of this country, "The Queen and I" — *we* will do this or that. Of him before whom all sovereigns, yea, all creatures in the universe, are less than nothing, and vanity, Jesus says, "we" — "my Father will love him, and *we* will come unto him, and make our abode with him".

Or compare the words of an earlier chapter. "Therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the Sabbath-day. But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, *and I work*"; or those words, "It is written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, *and* the Father that sent me beareth witness of me." "We will come unto him, and make our abode with him": a fine example, by the way, of that

quiet taking for granted of Christ's Divinity, in the Scriptures, of which I have repeatedly spoken; how, instead of its being taught only in some great and special places, it runs as a golden thread gloriously through the whole.

Or take verse 13 and 14, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." Here, with the like quiet majesty Jesus assumes (I say *assumes*, although it is an express declaration, because the thing more properly and formally declared and affirmed is the certainty in general of a gracious answer to prayer offered in the name of the Son; but he further assumes and declares, as it were in passing) this stupendous fact, that all and whatsoever things believers receive in answer to their prayers, are done for them, bestowed on them, by him, the Lord Jesus Christ — "whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, *that will I do*; if ye shall ask anything in my name, *I will do it*." Or take verse 7-9, "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also; and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the father?" Only let the reader glance back on the thoughts of the second chapter regarding the Unity of God, that infinite chasm which subsists between Jehovah and all creatures, the greatest and highest; and then let him read, "Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known *me*, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father, and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?"

Or, yet again in this chapter, verse 28, "Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father; for my Father is greater than I." The testimony is in these last words, "My Father is greater than I." For it is very easy to see, no doubt, how it should have been necessary for the Lord to remind the disciples, after all those previous claims to essential quality and oneness with the Father, that there was a very important respect in which the Father was greater than he, even his humanity, and whole mediatorial character and office. But, assuredly, *save for* such a presupposed, essential and everlasting, oneness and equality, on supposition that Jesus never had been anything more than a creature, and servant of the Father, it had been nothing else than blasphemous trifling with all sacred things, to tell the disciples coolly, that the adorable God

was "greater than he"! O, well might they in such a case have demanded, like their countrymen before, "Whom makest thou thyself?" "My Father is greater than I!"

ii. Leaving this noble chapter, let me, secondly, among incidental references to the Saviour's rank and place, invite attention to John 11: 4, "When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." Here, if I mistake not, there are *two* great and distinct testimonies to the Divinity of the Lord Jesus. For, first, it is a fundamental principle of Scripture, that all things are for the *glory* of God alone; many ways for the benefit of the creature, but for the glory, not of the creature, but only of him "of whom, and through whom, and *to* whom are all things." I go into no proof of this, but assume it as beyond question. Well; but if Jesus were not the eternal God, then does he simply mount here into his place and throne, trampling that grand principle in the dust. "This sickness," says he, "is not unto death, but for the glory of God, *that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.*" Compare those words of a previous chapter, "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and *manifested forth his glory*"; or those words of an after one, respecting the office of the Holy Ghost, "He shall *glorify me*; for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you"; or those of Paul in second Thessalonians, "When he shall come *to be glorified* in his saints, and *admired* in all them that believe." "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." But then, besides, be it observed how our Lord here quietly interchanges "God", and "the Son of God", — interchanges them as all one substantially, differing only in some particular respects. "This sickness", he says, "is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby," as if he had said, "for the glory of God," and *more specifically and immediately*, "that the Son of God might be glorified thereby."

iii. This last form of the double testimony in those words, which I have called the quiet interchanging of "God", and "the Son of God", runs into a whole series of examples of a like interchange, with a very few of which I bring to a close our indirect or incidental testimonies to the Divine Glory of Christ. Thus, Rom. 8: 35, 38, 39, "Who shall separate us from the *love of Christ*? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other

creature, shall be able to separate us from the *love of God*, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." It will at once be perceived that "the *love of Christ*" in the opening verse, and "the *love of God*" in the closing one, are used by the apostle as interchangeable terms, having substantially the same meaning. "Who shall separate us from the *love of Christ*?" is the question asked. The answer to it is, Nothing "shall be able to separate us from the *love of God* which is in Christ Jesus our Lord". Again, the ninth verse of the same chapter, "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." The *Spirit of God* and the *Spirit of Christ* are interchanged as being all one substantially. Or, Rom. 14: 10-12, "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of *Christ*. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to *God*. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." To bow before Christ, to bow before God, the judgment-seat of Christ, the judgment-seat of God, these are one. The terms are familiarly interchanged. One other instance, which requires no comment. Eph. 6: 5-9, "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, *as unto Christ*; not with eye-service, as men pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing *the will of God* from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men; knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. And ye masters, do the same things to them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your *Master* also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him."

Why did God permit Sin?

At the close of one of his services in Edinburgh, a young man asked to speak with him and was admitted to the side-room, where he was meeting with anxious inquirers. Addressing Mr North, he said, "I have heard your sermon, sir, and I have heard you preach often, now; and I neither care for you nor your preaching, unless you can tell me, why did God permit sin in the world?" "Then I'll tell you," the preacher at once replied: "God permitted sin, because He chose to do so." The man was taken aback by the ready retort, which threw no light on the subject of his question, and yet expressed all the conclusion which the deepest thinkers on that mysterious subject have been able to arrive at, referring

it as an unsolved enigma to the divine good pleasure, which permitted it for reasons altogether wise, but not revealed to us and to a large extent inscrutable. "Because He chose it," he repeated, as the objector stood speechless, and added, "If you continue to question and cavil at God's dealings, and vainly puffed up your carnal mind strive to be wise above what is written, I will tell you something more that God will choose to do. He will some day choose to put you into hell. It is vain, sir, for man to strive with his Maker; you cannot resist Him; and neither your opinion of His dealings, nor your blasphemous expression of them, will in least lessen damnation, which will most certainly be your portion if you go on in your present spirit. There were such questioners as you in Paul's time, and what the apostle said to them I say to you, "Nay, but, man, who art thou that repliest against God?" The young man interrupted him, and asked, "Is there such a text, sir, as that in the Bible?" "Yes, there is in the ninth chapter of Romans; and I recommend you to go home and read that chapter, and after you have read it, and learned from His own Word that God claims for Himself the right to do whatever He chooses and does not permit the thing formed to say unto Him that formed it, Why hast Thou made me thus? — to remember that, besides permitting sin, there is another thing God has chosen to do — *God chose to send Jesus?*

He then in a few words pointed out to him the way of salvation both from sin and wrath which God had prepared of His own free and sovereign will. The following Friday, the servant announced that a young man wanted to speak to him. On being shown upstairs, he asked Mr North if he remembered him, but he could not recall who he was. "Do you not remember the young man who on 'Sunday' night asked you to tell him why God permitted sin?" "Yes, perfectly." "Well, sir, I am that young man; and you said that God permitted sin because He chose it, and you told me to go home and read the ninth chapter of Romans, and you also told me that God chose to send Jesus to die for such sinners as I was, and I went home and did, sir, what you told me."

He said he had gone home, and after reading that chapter, which so many find a stumbling-block, he had pleaded for pardon in the name of Jesus, and for the gift of the Holy Spirit to be his Teacher, and was afterwards enabled to believe that he had been heard and forgiven, and now he said, "I am happy, oh, so happy, sir; and though the devil comes sometimes to tempt me with my old thoughts, and to ask me what reason I have to think God has forgiven me, I have always managed to get away by telling him that I do not want to judge things any longer by my own reason but by God's Word, and that the only reason why I know I am

forgiven is that, for Christ's sake, God chooses to pardon me." Mr North added that the changed expression of the young man's countenance was enough to account for his not knowing him again, as it was radiant with joy and peace." — *Life of Brownlow North* by Rev. K. Moody-Stuart, pp. 255-258.

The Discipline of the Church

By John Calvin

I.

1. The discipline of the Church, the consideration of which has been deferred till now, must be briefly explained, that we may be able to pass to other matters. Now discipline depends in a very great measure on the power of the keys and on spiritual jurisdiction. That this may be more easily understood, let us divide the Church into two principal classes — viz: clergy and people. The term clergy I use in the common acceptation for those who perform a public ministry in the Church. We shall speak first of the common discipline to which all ought to be subject and then proceed to the clergy, who have besides the common discipline one peculiar to themselves. But as some, from hatred of discipline, are averse to the very name, for their sake we observe, — no society, nay, no house with even a moderate family, can be kept in a right state without discipline, more necessary is it in the Church, whose state ought to be the best ordered possible. Hence as the saving doctrine of Christ is the life of the Church, so discipline is, as it were, its sinews; for to it it is owing that the members of the body adhere together, each in its own place. Wherefore, all who either wish that that discipline were abolished, or who impede the restoration of it, whether they do this of design or through thoughtlessness, certainly aim at the complete devastation of the Church. For what will be the result if every one is allowed to do as he pleases? But this must happen if to the preaching of the gospel are not added private admonition, correction, and similar methods of maintaining doctrine, and not allowing it to become lethargic. Discipline, therefore, is a kind of curb to restrain and tame those who war against the doctrine of Christ, or it is a kind of stimulus by which the indifferent are aroused; sometimes, also, it is a kind of fatherly rod, by which those who have made some more grievous lapse are chastised in mercy with the meekness of the spirit of Christ. Since, then, we already see some beginnings of a fearful devastation in the Church from the total want of

care and method in managing the people, necessity itself cries aloud that there is need of a remedy. Now the only remedy is this which Christ enjoins, and the pious always had in use.

2. The first foundation of discipline is to provide for private admonition; that is, if anyone does not do his duty, spontaneously, or behaves insolently, or lives not quite honestly, or commits something worthy of blame, he must allow himself to be admonished; and every one must study to admonish his brother when the case requires. Here especially is there occasion for the vigilance of pastors and presbyters, whose duty is not only to preach to the people, but to exhort and admonish them from house to house, whenever their hearers have not profited sufficiently by general teaching; as Paul shows, when he relates that he taught "publicly, and from house to house," and testifies that he is "pure from the blood of all men," because he had not shunned to declare "all the counsel of God" (Acts 20: 20, 26, 27). Then does doctrine obtain force and authority, not only when the minister publicly expounds to all what they owe to Christ, but has the right and means of exacting this from those whom he may observe to be sluggish or disobedient to his doctrine. Should anyone either perversely reject such admonitions, or by persisting in his faults, show that he condemns them, the injunction of Christ, is that after he has been a second time admonished before witnesses, he is to be summoned to the bar of the Church, which is the consistory of elders (i.e. Kirk-session), and there admonished more sharply, as by public authority, that if he reverence the church he may submit and obey (Matt. 18: 15, 17). If even in this way he is not subdued, but persists in his iniquity, he is then, as a despiser of the Church, to be debarred from the society of believers.

3. But as our Saviour is not there speaking of secret faults merely, we must attend to the distinction that some sins are private, others public or openly manifest. Of the former, Christ says to every private individual, "go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone" (Matt. 18: 15). Of open sins Paul says to Timothy: "Those that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear" (I Tim. 5: 20). Our Saviour had previously used the words: "If thy brother shall trespass against thee." This clause, unless you would be captious, you cannot understand otherwise than, if this happens *in a manner known to yourself*, others not being privy to it. The injunction which Paul gave to Timothy to rebuke those openly who sin openly, he himself followed with Peter (Gal. 2: 14). For when Peter sinned so as to give *public offence*, he did not admonish him apart, but brought him forward in the face of the Church. The legitimate course,

therefore, will be to proceed in correcting secret faults by the steps mentioned by Christ, and in open sins, accompanied with public scandal, to proceed at once to solemn correction by the Church.

4. Another distinction to be attended to is, that some sins are more delinquencies, others crimes and flagrant iniquities. In correcting the latter, it is necessary to employ not only admonition or rebuke but a sharper remedy, as Paul shows when he not only verbally rebukes the incestuous Corinthian, but punishes him with excommunication, as soon as he was informed of his crime (I Cor. 5: 4). Now then we begin better to perceive how the spiritual jurisdiction of the Church, which animadverts on sins according to the Word of the Lord, is at once the best help to sound doctrine, the best foundation of order, and the best bond of unity. Therefore, when the Church banishes from its fellowship open adulterers, fornicators, thieves, robbers, the seditious, the perjured, false witnesses, and others of that description; likewise the contumacious, who, when duly admonished for lighter faults, hold God and His tribunal in derision, instead of arrogating to itself anything that is unreasonable, it exercises a jurisdiction which it has received from the Lord. Moreover, lest anyone should despise the judgment of the Church or count it a small matter to be condemned by the suffrages of the faithful, the Lord has declared that it is nothing else than the promulgation of His own sentence, and that that which they do on earth is ratified in heaven. For they act by the Word of the Lord in taking the penitent back into favour (John 20: 23). Those, I say, who trust that churches can long stand without this bond of discipline are mistaken, unless, indeed, we can with impunity dispense with a help which the Lord foresaw would be necessary. And, indeed, the greatness of the necessity will be better perceived by its manifold uses.

5. There are three ends to which the Church has respect in thus correcting and excommunicating. The first is, that God may not be insulted by the name of Christians being given to those who lead shameful and flagitious lives, as if His holy Church were a combination of the wicked and abandoned. For seeing that the Church is the body of Christ, she cannot be defiled by such fetid and putrid members, without bringing some disgrace on her Head. Therefore, that there may be nothing in the Church to bring disgrace on His sacred name, those whose turpitude might throw infamy on the name must be expelled from His family. And here, also, regard must be had to the Lord's Supper, which might be profaned by a promiscuous admission. For it is most true, that he who is entrusted with the dispensation of it, if he knowingly and willingly

admits any unworthy person whom he ought and is able to repel, is as guilty of sacrilege as if he had cast the Lord's body to dogs. Wherefore, Chrysostom bitterly inveighs against priests, who, for fear of the great dare not keep anyone back. "Blood," says he, "will be required at your hands. If you fear man, he will mock you, but if you fear God, you will be respected also by men. Let us not tremble at fasces, purple or diadems; our power here is greater. Assuredly I will sooner give up my body to death, and allow my blood to be shed than be a partaker of that pollution." Therefore, lest this most sacred mystery should be exposed to ignominy, great selection is required in dispensing it, and this cannot be except by the jurisdiction of the Church. A second end of discipline is, that the good may not, as usually happens, be corrupted by constant communication with the wicked. For such is our proneness to go astray, that nothing is easier than to seduce us from the right course by bad example. To this use of discipline the Apostle referred when he commanded the Corinthians to discard the incestuous man from their society. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (I Cor. 5: 6). And so much danger did he foresee here, that he prohibited them from keeping company with such persons. "If any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one, no not to eat" (I Cor. 5: 11). A third end of discipline is, that the sinner may be ashamed, and begin to repent of his turpitude. Hence it is for their interest also that their iniquity should be chastised, that whereas they would have become more obstinate by indulgence, they may be aroused by the rod. This the Apostle intimates when he thus writes: "If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed" (II Thess. 3: 14). Again, when he says that he had delivered the Corinthian to Satan, "that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 5: 5); that is, as I interpret it, he gave him over to temporal condemnation, that he might be made safe for eternity. And he says that he gave him over to Satan because the devil is without the Church, as Christ is in the Church. Some interpret this of a certain infliction on the flesh, but this interpretation seems to me most improbable.

6. These being the ends proposed, it remains to see what way the Church is to execute this part of discipline, which consists in jurisdiction. And, first, let us remember the division above laid down, that some sins are public, others private or secret. Public are those which are done not before one or two witnesses, but openly, and to the offence of the whole Church. By secret, I mean not such as are altogether concealed from

men, such as those of hypocrites (for these fall not under the judgment of the Church) but those of an intermediate description, which are not without witnesses, and yet are not public. The former class requires not the different steps which Christ enumerates; but whenever anything of the kind occurs, the Church ought to do her duty by summoning the offender and correcting him according to his fault. In the second class, the matter comes not before the Church, unless there is contumacy, according to the rule of Christ. In taking cognisance of offences, it is necessary to attend to the distinction between delinquencies and flagrant iniquities. In lighter offences there is not so much occasion for severity, but verbal chastisement is sufficient, and that gentle and fatherly, so as not to exasperate or confound the offender, but to bring him back to himself, so that he may rather rejoice than be grieved at the correction. Flagrant iniquities require a sharper remedy. It is not sufficient verbally to rebuke him who, by some open act of evil example, has grievously offended the Church; but he ought for a time to be denied the communion of the Supper, until he gives proof of repentance. Paul does not merely administer a verbal rebuke to the Corinthian, but discards him from the Church, and reprimands the Corinthians for having borne with him so long (I Cor. 5: 5). This was the method observed by the ancient and purer Church, when legitimate government was in vigour. When anyone was guilty of some flagrant iniquity and thereby caused scandal, he was first ordered to abstain from participation in the sacred Supper, and thereafter to humble himself before God and testify his penitence before the Church. There were, moreover, solemn rites, which, as indications of repentance, were wont to be prescribed to those who had lapsed. When the penitent had thus made satisfaction to the Church, he was received into favour by the laying on of hands. This admission often receives the name of *peace* from Cyprian, who briefly describes the form. "They act as penitents for a certain time, next they come to confession, and receive the right of communion by the laying of hands of the bishop and clergy." Although the bishop with the clergy thus superintend the restoration of the penitent, the consent of the people was at the same time required, as he elsewhere explains.

(To be continued).

Book Reviews

John Owen on the Christian Life by Sinclair B. Ferguson. The Banner of Truth Trust. 297pp. £9.95.

In "A Funeral Sermon on the Much Lamented Death of the Late

Reverend and Learned Divine John Owen, D.D.” Owen’s assistant, David Clarkson, said of him that “it was his great delight to promote holiness in the life and exercise of it.” This tribute is amply vindicated throughout Owen’s voluminous writings. It is from the many treasure-laden volumes which contains Owen’s view of the Christian life that Dr. Ferguson has drawn the teachings which he expounds with admirable clarity within the compass of one volume.

Following a brief introduction, in which he describes his work as “something of a ‘Reader’s Guide to John Owen’ providing a framework to his works and a conducted tour of much of his teaching”, Dr. Ferguson gives his readers a concise but, nevertheless, comprehensive biographical sketch of John Owen. This is followed, in the course of ten chapters, by an exposition of Owen’s treatment of such themes as the plan of salvation, the reign of grace, fellowship with God, the assurance of salvation, conflict with sin, the fellowship of the saints, Scripture and the ministry, sacraments and prayer, apostasy and its prevention and perseverance and the goal.

Readers will find the footnotes, explanatory and referential, the Names and Subject Index and the Biblical References Index exceedingly useful.

This book can be read with profit by readers unacquainted with Owen’s works; it should also encourage such to venture into a study of the originals. In the words of the publishers, “Ministers, Christian Leaders, readers of Owen, and those who are daunted by the sheer voluminousness of his writings will find this book an ideal companion.”

A. G.

The Heavenly Footman by John Bunyan, Christian Focus Publications, Paperback, 64pp, £1.95.

This little work was originally preached as a sermon based on the words in 1st Corinthians 9: 24, “So run, that ye may obtain.” By way of introduction Bunyan solemnly warns and exhorts his readers in “An Epistle to all the Slothful and Careless People”. He then proceeds to open the doctrine of the text in these words: “They that will have Heaven must run for it.” In the sermon proper he explains what such running means, why running is essential, how one is to run and motives for running. He also warns with regard to the necessity not only of beginning the race, but also of persevering to the end. As one would expect, Bunyan is searching and earnest; his love for, and faithfulness to, the souls of his hearers is always evident.

This book cannot be too highly recommended.

Reprints: **Walking in the Way** by John Tallach. Paperback. 62pp £2.25.

Luther and his Katie by Dolina MacCuish. Paperback. 78pp. £2.50.
A. G.

Presbyterian Church Government by R. J. Breckinridge. Presbyterian Heritage Publications, P.O. Box 180922 Dallas, Texas. £1.30.

R. J. Breckinridge (1800-1871) was a minister of the American Presbyterian Church (Northern Assembly) and latterly Professor of Theology in a Seminary in Danville, Kentucky. The above booklet is a record of an address given before the Synod of Philadelphia, U.S.A. in 1843 during a controversy over the nature of the office eldership which troubled his denomination during the mid 1800's.

In 1843 the Assembly of his church adopted a resolution to the effect that "Any three ministers of a Presbytery being regularly convened are a quorum competent to the transaction of business — — — — —". Breckinridge held that this resolution was unpresbyterian and a step towards prelacy. He asserts in the above address that both teaching and ruling elders must be present to form a quorum, and that ministers are members of Church courts because they are elders and thus rulers. Teachers are no more rulers than other Presbyters, and gifts of ruling are as real and distinct as gifts of teaching. Ruling elders have no pretence of right to be public teachers. Further he goes on to claim that commissions of Church courts must include elders to be valid.

He points out that the above mentioned resolution of the Assembly was in contradiction of a finding of the same Assembly in 1837, when four Synods were declared illegally constituted because they had no elders present.

Breckinridge goes back in Scottish Church History to find support for his contention — to the letters of Robert Baillie and to the Acts of the Scottish Assembly of 1638 when the Acts of previous Assemblies were repealed for the same reason — among others — that no lawfully commissioned ruling elders were present.

A further matter challenged by Breckinridge in this speech was the right to sit on Presbyteries given to ministers without charge and to ministers who had forsaken their calling. There are interesting points in the Presbyterian Church government raised in this address, and one really needs to read further into the controversy to set the speech in its proper perspective. There are helpful footnotes in the booklet for this. A

point of note is that in this controversy Breckinridge's views were opposed by Charles Hodge.

R. K. M.

Hurt of Hearing Mass by John Bradford. Focus Christian Ministries Trust, 1989. Available from Free Presbyterian Bookroom. Paperback, 36pp. £1.25.

This treatise by the martyr John Bradford is already in print in the second volume of Bradford's works (Banner of Truth, 1979). Focus Christian Ministries are to be congratulated on making it readily available to the Christian public in such an attractive form. It has been divided into eight sections for greater clarification, the marginal texts (though not the footnotes nor marginal notes) have been incorporated in more detail into the body of the text and very occasional editing has made the subsections clearer. A more appropriate cover picture could have been chosen.

Bradford gives the reasons current in his day for the lawfulness of bodily attendance at the mass by one who abhors it in his spirit. Before answering these, he spends a few sections on the details of the mass. His reason for doing so is that while some "might know it is evil," he fears that few "consider how horrible and monstrous an evil it is." This he endeavours to show in sections on the Origin of Parts of the Mass and Argument against the Mass. "The mass is a most subtle and pernicious enemy against Christ, . . . against His priesthood and against His sacrifice." It is "also a destruction of the true worshipping of God" and it is "not only besides Christ's institution and ordinance, but it is utterly against it, and perverteth it horribly." In a section on Why it is Unlawful to be Present at Mass, he seeks to show that this breaks all ten of the commandments, but he labours mainly on the second and third commandments. "The mass is an outward idol, and the service of God there used is idolatry." To this argument he subjoins 39 short points for consideration as germane to the subject. Finally, in a section before a short conclusion, he answers the reasons previously given for going to Mass.

Throughout he brings various scriptures to bear upon his subject. He draws upon the principles and texts in I Corinthians 8 to 10 concerning idols and idolatry. It is a little surprising that he did not quote I Corinthians 10: 14 "Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry" when his whole treatise breathes this verse and indeed is encapsulated in it.

D. M. B.

Notes and Comments

Enmity to the Sabbath

The Scriptures tell us that "the carnal mind is enmity against God" and that "it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be". This is seen particularly in our day in relation to the Fourth Commandment as well as the other of the Commandments of God.

A Private Member's Bill before the House of Commons on 17th February for its second reading sought to exempt races, athletic sports and other sporting events from the "Sunday" Observance Act and to allow betting to take place at certain times on the Lord's Day. The Lord's Day Observance Society point out that this is the third attempt in just over a year to permit horse racing and the opening of betting shops on the Lord's Day.

The promoter of the Bill, Mr Andrew Mackay M.P. for Berkshire East who boasts a Scottish name ought to remember the warning of Scripture: "God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap."

Anti-Abortion Bill

An attempt was made in February to secure a proper hearing for the Abortion (Amendment) Bill. A Private Member's Motion was tabled to allow the Bill to be proceeded with until any hour on 3rd March when it is due to come up for its Second Reading. The opponents of the Bill by a procedural device were able virtually to talk out consideration of the Motion. This shows how determined the abortionists are to prevent any tightening of the present laws on abortion.

Whatever men may do in this way to preserve the inhuman legislation now on the Statute Book of our land, one thing is certain and that is that men will yet have to give in their account to God for any part they may have had in securing the destruction of human off-spring in the womb. It is also certain that the nation that permits such inhuman legislation to remain on its Statute Book cannot escape the just judgment of God.

Church Unity

Proposals have been drawn up for a new body to replace the Scottish Churches Council. If they are accepted a new Action of Churches Together (ACTS) will be formed to promote ecumenical activities at local church level. Ten denominations support the move including the Church of Scotland and Roman Catholic Church. It is alleged that Scotland is ahead of other countries in the promotion of church unity through ecumenical projects. These latest proposals should give

ecumenism in Scotland a further boost. How blinded Church leaders must be to think that ecumenical sharing of worship and of other projects can ever lead to that unity of the Spirit which the truth requires. It only reveals that they are blind leaders of the blind. This road can only lead to Rome and that is the intention of the Church of Rome when it takes part in it. If the Church of Rome secures the end it has in view what a dark night would fall upon Scotland. The true face of Roman Catholicism would then be seen in its persecution of the true Church of God. May the Lord be pleased to open the eyes of the people in Scotland before it is too late.

Church Notes

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Zimbabwe: At Bulawayo on 14th March at 2 p.m.

Western: At Laide on 14th March at 6 p.m.

Canadian: At Vancouver on 17th March at 10 a.m.

Skye: At Portree on 11th April at 11 a.m.

Committee Meetings (D.V.)

The following Committees will meet at Inverness Church:

Tuesday 21st March

9.00 a.m. - 10.00 a.m.	Church Centenary Committee
10.00 a.m. - 11.00 a.m.	Training of Ministry
11.00 a.m. - 12 noon	Church Magazines
12 noon - 1.00 p.m.	Publications
2.00 p.m. - 3.00 p.m.	Welfare of Youth
2.00 p.m. - 4.30 p.m.	Finance
3.00 p.m. - 4.00 p.m.	Sabbath Observance
4.30 p.m. - 5.30 p.m.	Dominions and Overseas
4.30 p.m. - 5.30 p.m.	Religion and Morals
7.00 p.m. - 9.00 p.m.	Foreign Mission

Zimbabwe Mission

The Foreign Mission Committee wish it to be known that there is still a shortage of staff at the John Tallach Secondary School at Ingwenya. Any person with a University Degree although not necessarily possessing Teacher Training, would be welcome there and would be acceptable to the Department of Education in Zimbabwe.

At Mbumba Mission Hospital there are vacancies for nursing staff and the Committee would be glad to hear from suitably qualified persons

who have a heart interest in the Mission Work of the Church.

Readers should continue to bear the needs of the mission-field to Throne of Grace continually. Anyone who is interested in giving a period of service to the Mission as outlined above should contact the Clerk of the Foreign Missions Committee, F.P. Manse, Saval Road, Lairg, IV27 4EH.

Ingwenya Mission

Miss K. M. MacAulay, Breasclete, arrived home from Zimbabwe at the end of the year on leave from the Mission. The Church owes much to the European staff on the Mission who bear heavy responsibilities in connection with the educational and medical work carried on there. They are due a well-earned rest when they return to this country for a period, and we trust that this will be true in connection with Miss MacAulay. A visit to Africa quickly reveals with what devotion the European staff attend to their duties on the Mission field.

Notice to Conveners/Clerks of Standing Committees

The Conveners/Clerks of all standing Committees should note that all Committees Reports must be in the hands of the Clerk of Synod by Thursday, 23rd March, 1989, for printing purposes (D.V.). These reports should contain information of the Work of the Committees during the year. Recommendations and proposals should be sent up as separate items for the Synod Agenda.

(Rev.) Donald MacLean,
Clerk of Synod.

Notice re Synod Agenda

Clerks of Presbyteries, Conveners/Clerks of Committees, and all other interested parties, should note that all items of business intended to be placed on the Synod Agenda must be in the hands of the Clerk of Synod by Tuesday, 4th April, 1989 (D.V.).

(Rev.) Donald MacLean,
Clerk of Synod.

African Relief Appeal

In July 1987 there was an appeal in our magazine for clothing and money to relieve the needs of the destitute in some African countries. There has been a generous response from many within our church, and also from other denominations. The two collection points were Inverness and Laide, and a considerable amount of organising preceded the final despatch of clothing to Africa. Of the money collected, much had to be used for the transporting of clothing. It was much appreciated when one

haulage company, Gairloch Transport, took clothing free of charge, on two occasions, from Laide to Inverness.

The clothing sent from Inverness to Malawi, could not for a time be located. However Rev. D. B. MacLeod and Mr D. Vermeulen when in Malawi, investigated the matter, and the clothing was found in a Customs store and released on payment of storage charges. Rev. D. B. MacLeod said in a letter dated 4th November, 1988: "We were also able to get authority to distribute the clothes ourselves and have been doing this through the congregations. The people have been very appreciative as they are generally very poor." Clothing previously sent was distributed under the supervision of Mr Neil MacDougall (formerly an elder in the Stornoway congregation). Mr MacDougall has sent photos of distribution centres and of refugees from Mozambique, who look extremely destitute. In expressing his deep gratitude to all who in any way gave for the relief of the poor, he said "We assure your people that the clothing was much appreciated, and has been put to good use." Also money has been forwarded to Mr MacDougall for the purchase of blankets, who replies: "It just arrived in time, as it is very cold here in the evenings and early mornings."

The Foreign Mission Committee have for the meantime decided not to send more clothing because of Malawian government restrictions which at present prevent clothing getting into Malawi. Several attempts have been made to get clothing into Kenya, but the government says that until such times as a mission centre is established and registered, clothing will not be allowed into the country.

Rev. D. B. MacLeod has now returned from Malawi, Kenya and Zimbabwe while Mr Dick Vermeulen continues working there. We trust their most useful work will prove to be yet another significant step forward in the work already begun in Malawi and Kenya. We have cause for much thankfulness that there are some who have a mind to go to these new fields. For a time there was concern when nobody was coming forward, but to our relief Rev. D. B. MacLeod agreed to go for four months and Mr D. Vermeulen for a longer period.

While caring for the poor is our christian duty, yet the great emphasis by Christ is on preaching the everlasting Gospel. Our chief purpose then in these parts, is to spread the Gospel of the grace of God. Indeed, this is what motivates us as a church to enter Malawi and Kenya. May the Lord in His sovereign mercy bless our weak endeavours there and make our giving to the poor not only beneficial to their bodies, but an hand-maid to the gospel.

D.A.R.

CONGREGATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS SENT TO GENERAL TREASURER — 1988

Places	Sustentation Fund	Home Mission Fund	Jewish and Foreign Mission Fund	Aged and Infirm Ministers', etc., Fund	College, Library and Bookroom Fund	Organisation Fund	General Building Fund	Dominions and Overseas Fund	Outreach Fund	Publications Fund	TOTAL
NORTHERN PRESBYTERY											
Aberdeen	£6724	£174	£121	£6	£26	£46	£57	£31	£62	£15	£7262
Bonar Bridge	1200	100	110		20		30	15	33	20	1528
Lairg	547	70	49		20		7	20	33	6	752
Dornoch	258	115	73	27	21		26	35	36	36	627
Rogart	687	145	176		40		68	55	45	30	1246
Beauly	2900	250	300		85		120	120	65	100	3940
Dingwall	4500	370	460	6	176	6	150	224	150	186	6228
Fearn	3750	150	150		70		60	70		40	4290
Tain	2750	204	158		25		25	25		25	3237
Halkirk	622	108	115	4	20	25	29	44		25	992
Strathg	210	365	241				61	70		51	998
Thurso	700	40	35							10	785
Inverness	18000	2000	2500	50	650	50	550	550	700	600	25650
Kinlochbervie	1503	277	312	25	43		60	52	85	50	2407
Scourie	476	116	110	15	24		45	52	66	25	929
Daviot, etc.	3398	482	495	2	11	2	169	238	140	125	5062
Wick	4000	479	878		187		172	153	130	145	6144
	£52225	£5445	£6283	£135	£1418	£129	£1629	£1754	£1570	£1489	£72077
SOUTHERN PRESBYTERY											
Dumbarton	£3995	£248	£404		£138	£3	£124	£137	£123	£103	£5275
Edinburgh	6400	441	650		126		156	233	159	119	8284
Fort William	2800	187	241	4	57	4	69	71	75	71	3579
Glasgow, St. Jude's	13624	1953	3174	79	807	194	1346	853	944	727	23701
Dunoon	279										279
Greenock	3002	188	364		26		49	91	60	53	3833
Kames	605	154	103						63		925
London	3796	291	724		154		155	159	95	110	5484
Oban	2171	215	321	6	110	6	107	121	86	77	3220
Stirling	1031	204	289		87	16	34	53	32	37	1783
Perth	440	70	42		42		11	28	55	8	696
Dundee	680		50				40	5	20	5	800
Barnoldswick	1102	131	92	60	39	39	51	53		29	1596
Larne	2500	100	200					60	25	55	2940
	£42425	£4182	£6654	£149	£1586	£262	£2142	£1864	£1737	£1394	£62395
OUTER ISLES PRESBYTERY											
Achmore	£1150	£62	£69		£20		£23	£28	£23	£20	£1395
Stornoway	13000	850	1000		320		350	400	410	340	16670
North Uist	2835	374	421		87			70	65	75	3927
Breasclete	679	138	133				72	78	60	54	1214

North Tolsta	6610	519	558		241		238	248	254	242	8910
North Harris	3952	430	230	1	122	121	1	105		89	5051
South Harris	6355	728	444		147		155	179	120	148	8276
Ness	2396	157	181		34		48	40	67	33	2956
Uig	3000	100	200	40	50		130		80	50	3650
	£39977	£3358	£3236	£41	£1021	£121	£1017	£1148	£1079	1051	£52049
WESTERN PRESBYTERY											
Applecross	£2932	£247	£286	£4	£10	£4	£116	£114	£101	£69	£3883
Gairloch	6290	422	394		164	142	162	148		131	7853
Laide	4038	322	328	8	127	11	171	286	128	117	5536
Kyle of Lochalsh	1325	184	108		44		56	56	47	54	1874
Plockton	142	17	10		7		6	8	12	6	208
Lochbroom	5000	422	524	7		7	194	191	151	151	6647
Lochcarron	3085	260	355		75	11	114	90	106	77	4173
Lochinver	2800	307	540		100		106	131	140	100	4224
Stoer & Drumbeg	2271	688	728		103	3	118	113	120	110	4254
Shieldaig	2550	120	181		35		42	40	28	35	3031
	£30433	£2989	£3454	£19	£665	£178	£1085	£1177	£833	£850	£41683
SKYE PRESBYTERY											
Bracadale	£1519	£147	£127		£40	£5	£68	£60	£59	£58	£2083
Strath	2552	174	303		31		34	49	37	33	3213
Flashadder	450	154	150					55		41	850
Glendale	2554	160	173		20		68	66	52	66	3159
Vatten	2384	151	165		5	5	50	57	29	49	2895
Watnish	180	40	50	30	25	33	30	33		27	448
Portree	11001	2009	1374	259	410	10	252	365	410	250	16340
Raasay	5500	371	344	1	101	1	116	129	106	90	6759
Staffin	2997	229	296		92		83	103	104	96	4000
	£29137	£3435	£2982	£290	£724	£54	£701	£917	£797	£710	£39747
AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND PRESBYTERY											
Gisborne		£706			£191			£214		£220	£1331
Wellington		35		35	35			73			178
Auckland		487						454			941
Grafton		281						139			420
Sydney		46		11	46		23	92		12	230
		£1556		£46	£272		£23	£972		£232	£3100
CANADIAN PRESBYTERY											
Vancouver				£90				£245			£335
Toronto					462			391			1394
Chesley		541									
		£541		£90	£462			£636			£1729
SUMMARY											
Northern Presbytery	£52225	£5445	£6283	£135	£1418	£129	£1629	£1754	£1570	£1489	£72077
Southern Presbytery	42425	4182	6654	149	1586	262	2142	1864	1737	1394	62395
Outer Isles Presbytery	39977	3358	3236	41	1021	121	1017	1148	1079	1051	52049
Western Presbytery	30433	2989	3454	19	665	178	1085	1177	833	850	41683
Skye Presbytery	29137	3435	2982	290	724	54	701	917	797	710	39747
Australia/N.Z. Presbytery			1555	46	272		23	972		232	3100
Man Presbytery			541	90	462			636			1729
	£194197	£19409	£24705	£770	£6148	£744	£6597	£8468	£6016	£5726	£272780

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: Wm. Connelly, Belfast, £100; D.F.G. Moore, £20; Binga Mission, £100; Famine Relief in Zimbabwe, £50; and £10 all per Stornoway Treasurer; A. M., Tarbert, Harris, £100; Anon., £100 for famine relief; Stornoway Sabbath School, £50 for blind students.

Dominions and Overseas Fund: Tain Congregation, £60; Shieldaig Congregation, £70, both for work in Communist lands; Anon., Edinburgh, £20; Anon., Glasgow, £69, both for Bibles for Eastern Europe and per Rev. D. A. Ross.

Home of Rest, Inverness: Friend, Raasay, per Rev. J. Tallach, £20.

Magazine Free Distribution Fund: Acts 2: 45, £4; Anon., £10.

Trinitarian Bible Society: Staffin Congregation, £155.

The Treasurers of the following Congregations acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:-

Aberdeen: From A. MacL., 14 Colbost, Dunvegan, Skye, £20 for the Aberdeen Congregation.

Dingwall: Friend, Skye £50; Mrs M. C., Invergordon, £25 in memory of a loving husband and father; Mrs C., Dingwall £40 all for Church Funds.

Flashadder: A Friend £20 for Church Building Fund per D. M. MacKay.

Fort William: Mr and Mrs K. £5 (envelope in plate); A. MacG. £10 for any needful fund per F. R. MacN.

Glendale: From the Estate of the late Mrs Marion MacKenzie £200 for general purposes of Congregation per MacLeod and MacCallum, Solicitors.

Greenock: Anon., £50 per Rev. L. MacLeod; the late A. Y. Cameron £500 as required.

Laide: J. & K. MacK., Aultbae £30 for Church Building Fund.

Portree: Friend £8; Two Friends £25; Friends £20, all for Sust. Fund; Tolsta Friend £10 where most needed; A.C. £80; Friend £7, both for Sust. Fund, all per F.M.; Anon., £5 for Trinitarian Bible Society (envelope in plate).

Raasay: Envelope in plate £50 for Trinitarian Bible Society; From Friends £14 for Tapes per M. Tallach; Friend of the Cause £100 for Car Fund.

Stirling: Mrs D. M. Thornhill, £20 for Church Funds per Rev. D. J. M.

Stornoway: Envelope in plate £5, where most needed; Friend, £60 for Congr. Fund per Rev. J. MacLeod.