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# THE CHURCH THE WORLD NEEDS.

## PROLOGUE

THIS article, it may be as well to say at the outset, is, in substance, the address given by the author, in his capacity of Moderator of the Free Church of Scotland, on May 21st of this year. It was not written with a view to publication in *The Evangelical Quarterly*, but, after a summary of it appeared in the local press, some friends, in the value of whose judgment he has great confidence, urged him to give the address publicity through the pages of this Review. To this pressure he has yielded, it is hoped wisely. It appears best to publish the address with that local colouring which marked it at the first. Wise readers will take the genesis of the article into account, and will not, so he trusts, find this circumstance of colouring a ground of complaint.

## THE IMMEDIATE THEME.

It is writ large upon the face of passing events that this is to prove a memorable year in the ecclesiastical history of Scotland. We cannot help being conscious of the near presence of strong forces that are active, and are in process, for good or for ill, of altering considerably, so far as the professing Church of Christ is concerned, the face of the country. I am not of course to touch on the merits of a practical question that is outside of our province: but, as a body of Christians that claim to be supremely interested in the spiritual welfare of our native land, we cannot be indifferent to questions that more or less consciously force themselves at such a time as this upon all seriously minded persons. I have thought in these circumstances, that it would not be amiss if I opened the deliberations of this Assembly with a discussion of the topic :

## THE CHURCH THAT SCOTLAND NEEDS.

I am not to offer you what might be described as impressions of the moment. Rather would I venture to submit to you what I may now speak of as life-long convictions, that being the best contribution I am able to make towards the solution of questions that may bear upon present duty.

## A

I say then, to begin with, that Scotland needs supremely a Church sound in the faith, according to the standards adopted by historic, evangelical, Christendom.

I know that for putting it thus I shall be regarded by some as guilty of a wrong emphasis. Love and not faith, practice and not doctrine, should, it is averred, be regarded by Christians as the primaries. Now I am not disposed to make a separation betwixt faith and love, doctrine and practice, feeling assured that only the faith that works by love saves, and that men will be judged according to the fruit they yield. Nevertheless, I submit that in the order of nature, as of historical development, the question, Whom say ye that I am ? takes precedence of the question, Lovest thou Me ? Thus it is, also, in Paul's Epistles ; first doctrine, and then practice. Belief in doctrine is belief in a message direct from God, and such a belief has been the characteristic of all the preachers that by their preaching have moved the world.

There is nothing wrong then, I submit, in this emphasis upon soundness in the faith, but the themes that might find a place under this head are so many in number and so vast in compass that one is obliged, within the bounds of a single address, to make a selection. In present circumstances, I think it wise to take my cue from that man whom I have long regarded as, with the possible exception of John Knox, the greatest leader whom Christ raised up for the good of His Church in this country, I mean Alexander Henderson, who, on a memorable occasion, stated his own conviction and sense of duty thus : "The Lord requireth of each of us, according to our place and calling, that we confess and give our testimony unto such truths as are mostly called in question."

(a) First, then, the primary reason for the existence of the Church as an organised body is that through her that Gospel of which the Lord Jesus is the heart of hearts should be fully known. It is, therefore, imperative that the Church should teach the truth, the whole truth, concerning His Person and natures, and states and offices. The doctrine which in this reference we must assert, maintain, and defend is, that in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, "the Eternal Son of God became man, and so was, and continueth to be God and man, in two distinct natures and one Person forever." That is a statement of doctrine which the exactest exegesis must admit to be in harmony with all that the New

Testament says of our Lord. I am convinced that if this doctrine had been clearly apprehended, and the principle, that no point of view that cast a shadow of doubt upon the Catechism doctrine of our Lord's Person could be tolerated, had been closely applied, we should have been saved a world of trouble in Scotland for the last forty years.

Nowadays some theologians who, like the Rev. Dr. J. M. Wilson (see his contribution to a collective work entitled, *Evolution in the Light of Modern Knowledge*), are thoroughgoing evolutionists, and are so bound to maintain that the continuity between the lowest and the highest form of life that has appeared on this earth must by no means be broken, frankly teach that Jesus did not claim for Himself a Sonship higher than He claimed for all mankind. But the proposition is so plainly contrary to obvious fact that it scarcely calls for refutation.

Others, who would not adopt the language of Dr. Wilson, but who, while seeking to do justice to the uniqueness of Jesus, are not prepared to accept His evaluations in every instance, particularly in the instance of the Divine authorship of the Old Testament Scriptures, take refuge in a doctrine of Kenosis, which has little or nothing but the sound whereupon to base itself in the New Testament. Others still make a phrase of rare occurrence in the New Testament—God was in Christ—serve the purpose of a camouflage, for while they seem to speak with the utmost reverence, they do leave one in doubt as to whether they mean that God was in Christ after a manner that is essentially different from that in which God may be said to be in His people, or only different in degree, but in nature not essentially different: or is it a modern instance of Patripassianism, the *prius* of which is Sabellianism? As a matter of fact, in the phrase in question, God even the Judge of all, is distinct from Christ, and stands in a certain antithesis to Christ, the Mediator. The phrase is not intended as a description of the Person of Christ. For a description of that kind we have to fall back upon such expressions as, "The Word became flesh," or, "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son—evidently His pre-existent Son—made of a woman." Augustine sums up for us the New Testament teaching on this high theme in his usual happy way: "He became flesh that He might become a man outwardly, while He remained God inwardly." And one of the latest and ripest of living New Testament Scholars gives the teaching of

Paul on the Person of Christ this happy expression ; " The actual deity of Christ is combined with His actual humanity in one Person. All the attributes of God dwell in the Son of God, who is also the Son of man." Thus only, I submit, can the Church defend the doctrine of the true incarnation of that Son of God who is " the brightness of God's glory and the impressed image of His substance, who held up all things by the word of His power." With the Incarnation intact there will be little temptation to capitulate to unbelief on doctrines which lie most closely to the heart of the Gospel—such as the Virgin birth, the sinless life, the vicarious death, the bodily resurrection, ascension, and session of our Lord at God's right hand, and His coming in bodily form in glory at the end of the world. These are truths that ought to be emblazoned on the Church's banner all the time. The vision of the Eternal Son of God as One who took up our nature into His own Person, who came under the law that we broke, who bore the death that we deserved, who abolished death for Himself and brought life and immortality to light for us, alone enables us, with Cæsar Malan, to say, as Christians ought to say :

Death discrowned can ne'er appal us,  
From the grave He will recall us ;

and thus enables us, in the profoundest sense, to serve as comforters to those that mourn. I know that, over against this confidence, we are passing through a period in which the Church is being mocked with the query : " Where is the promise of His coming ? " May I, in a passing reference, draw attention to some data that, in the face of a perplexing question, we should ever keep before our minds ? (1) There are certainly in the New Testament passages that, taken singly, would give the impression that the second advent was then regarded as near at hand. But this attitude may largely have been due to the fact that the Church then vividly realised that their salvation would not be complete in all its parts until Christ came the second time in glory. (2) That attitude must be regarded as consistent with other passages that would lead the reader to regard the second advent as a far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves. (3) The second advent is ever presented as something very mysterious, something which, as to its hour of fulfilment, lies hidden in the mind of the Father, and, therefore, as something likely in the end to test severely the Church's faith

and patience. Knowing all this, let us not cast away our confidence in this regard, for our patience will be crowned with a great recompense of reward.

The Church that Scotland needs is a Church sound in the faith respecting the Person of the Redeemer.

(b) The transition from the theme of the Word Incarnate, to which I have devoted the preceding paragraphs, to that of the word of inspiration, to which I must now address myself, is natural and easy. There can be no question that historic reformed Protestantism, while not disparaging the general revelation which God gives of Himself to mankind through the starry heavens above and through man's own conscience from within, regards the Scriptures as the source and norm of all that we should believe concerning God, and of what our conception of duty Godward should be. Historic Protestantism has held that not only is the Bible, broadly speaking, a record of a gracious revelation of God, but that that record of that glorious revelation is itself also divine, and, because divine, historically trustworthy. The Church that Scotland needs is one that thus honours the Scriptures. And here we are up against a situation that to-day means a difference through which Protestantism is threatened with a cleavage that, lying horizontally, covers almost the whole world. Certain "advanced" scholars, of whom Inge and Oman may be taken as examples, would wish to give the world the impression that it is not possible in our own time for a scholarly person, who is determined to follow truth at whatever cost, to maintain what I may call the historic reformed doctrine concerning the absolute trustworthiness of the Scriptures. Faith resting on Biblical authority is thus discredited; we are advised to speak out of experience, and to make Vision our guide. So seriously is the correctness of this point of view regarded that at the moment there is a widely spread movement among a certain school of distinguished theological writers, with a view to the bringing out of a library of what is called constructive theology, with experience and not the Bible as its basis. The idea is that under the fire of criticism the old foundation of an infallible Bible has broken down, and that naturally the system of doctrine that had the Bible as its foundation has crumbled with the foundation. The attempt is therefore being made to shift the theological structure to a new and better basis, that is, to experience, and to reconstruct a theological system on the basis of experience.

On the other hand, those of us who are advocates of the historic Christian view respecting the infallibility of the Scriptures and their adequacy to be the *principum* of theology, are confident that with us, more than with those others, reason is being put to its right use, that we speak out of an experience more catholic than theirs, that Vision, deserving of that name, is ever our lodestar, that we follow the deductive or *a priori* method only where that method ought to be used, and, finally, that archæology, within the last comparatively few years, has spoken in support of the correctness of the historic Christian view of the Scriptures, and of their historical trustworthiness, after a manner that is simply astonishing. I ask you to bear with me while I attempt to develop the contents of these several propositions.

(1) As to reason being put to its right use, we start with a correct scientific method. For with regard to the general argument—to use a phrase of B. B. Warfield—for the uniqueness of the Scriptures, we point to facts that ought to be patent to all, and from these we infer a conclusion that does not go beyond our premiss, and that surely is in keeping with the justly lauded inductive method of science. Here I can only touch on the salient points—(a) No one will question at this time of day that what we call the Bible was in process of formation from at least as early a date as that of Moses down to near the end of the first Christian century, and that from Moses down to the present hour these writings have been under the close observation and care of what we call Israel, that is, to begin with, Israel in the narrower Old Testament sense, and, after that, Israel in the broader sense of the New Testament Church. The Church was ever there as a guild to guard the Scriptures. That is very important. (b) The Bible, although a library of over sixty books, is still a unit, and what more than aught else makes it a unit is the presence in it of an incomparable Deliverer, first, in the form of a promise, and, then, under the form of a fulfilment. That points to something superhuman in the formation of the Bible. (c) These Scriptures make high claims for themselves; they always speak with absolute authority—it would be difficult to find a statement made with hesitation throughout their length or breadth—and very often what is uttered is set forth under the formula, Thus saith the Lord, or expressions equivalent thereto. Can the claim be a false one? (d) The Scriptures constitute a volume that has proved of incomparable vitality, and of

beneficence towards mankind. At this very day, in spite of what sword or pen could do to destroy them, they are found, in whole or in part, in nearly 900 languages, and wheresoever they have gone they have turned men to God from idols, in order to serve the living and the true God. (e) In the face of all the evidence we conclude, in regard to the Scriptures, that not only is there reason to reckon them as historically trustworthy documents, but that further, the human authors that contributed to the making of the volume, were really the organs of the Holy Ghost. To put it thus is not to put more into our conclusion than is in our premiss.

(2) But, speaking now of experience, we claim that the extraordinary preciousness in which the Church of God has held the Scriptures is rooted in the deepest, the most revolutionary, the most beneficent, of all the experiences that visit the human spirit on earth. I might appeal to Christian biography in the widest sense in proof of my thesis. But under present limitations I prefer to illustrate what I mean from a single classical instance, in respect of which I claim that while such an experience can never be reckoned as a commonplace thing, neither ought it to be regarded as singular, but rather as the possession, in some more, in others less, consciously apprehended, of the Church of God. Here is the instance: the one instance which speaks for many. John Foxe (iv. 638) has preserved for us a letter which Master Thomas Bilney, martyr, addressed to the then Bishop of London. In it, Bilney tells us how he came to regard the Scriptures as a lamp to his feet, and as a light to his path. That really was the culmination of his conversion to God. He speaks of his coming to realise that he himself was a sinner in the sight of God, and how little help the parish priests, whom he often and for long resorted to, brought him. He goes on to say: "But at last I heard speak of Jesus, even then when the Greek New Testament was first set forth by Erasmus, and I bought it, and, upon the first reading, I chanced upon this sentence, 'It is a true saying, and worthy of all to be embraced, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief and principal.' This one sentence, through God's instruction and inward working, did so exhilarate my heart, being before wounded with the guilt of my sins, that even immediately I seemed to myself inwardly to feel a marvellous comfort and quietness, insomuch that my bruised bones leaped for joy. After



this the Scripture began to be more pleasant unto me than the honey, or the honeycomb." Now what I say is this: It is out of experiences analogous to those of Thomas Bilney that the Church of God has as an historically verifiable fact come to cherish that incomparable regard for the Scriptures which some of her critics would put down as Bibliolatry. Taking a broad view of the situation, the answer of history is, that the clearer the conversion, the more disposed the converted were to make the Bible authoritative on questions of faith.

(3) I go on to speak of Vision. The antithesis between Vision and Authority which it is the fashion to set up nowadays does not seem to thorough-going evangelicals to be a real antithesis—the Vision that they prize and the Authority that they regard run into one. To make my meaning plain, I shall again fall back on what is a classical instance of true spiritual Vision, submitting at the same time that it is in virtue of something analogous that the historic Reformed Church has found the religion of Vision to be the religion of Authority, and has therefore refused to budge from an attitude that maintains that Theology is a science, and that of that science the Scripture is the *principium*. Who has not heard of the conversion of Augustine, of which I am now, for illustrative purposes, making use? Lovers of Augustine know every step of the process. "He had left," he tells us in his Confessions, "his friend Alypius, afterwards Bishop of Thagaste, under the shadow of a fig tree. Then, while at no great distance from his friend, he flung himself down upon the ground, when he poured out those sorrowful cries, How long? how long? Why not now? Then he seemed to hear the voice as of a boy or girl—'take up and read; take up and read.' He was then led to return to his friend Alypius, near whom there lay on the ground what he calls the volume of the Apostles. On taking up the volume his eyes fell on the words: 'Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying, but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.'" "Instantly," he goes on to say, "as the sentence ended—by a light as it were of security infused into my heart—all the gloom of doubt vanished away." It was for Augustine a vision of God. He, in principle, in a moment overcame his delight in what he calls trifles, and, in their stead, there did enter into his experience "God Himself—sweeter

than all pleasure, brighter than all light, more exalted than all honour." Now I submit that to the Church thus favoured, God Himself becomes the essentiating fountain of theology and the Scriptures become as the medium through which the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ is seen, just as in nature we see the natural sun only in virtue of the rays that emanate from the sun itself. This is what I mean by Vision, and, in this region, Vision and Authority are one.

(4) I am thus led to speak of the Scriptures as being not merely in a general broad sense inspired of God, and as leading to God, but as being through and through of divine authorship, and therefore infallible. But here we make use not any longer of the inductive but of the deductive method. We reach a point at which it is more in accordance with right reason to use the *a priori* method rather than the *a posteriori* method. We know from whom we have learned our doctrine. Paul urges Timothy to follow the *a priori* method when he exhorts him to abide in the things which he had learned and of which he had been assured, and gives this as the reason why he should thus abide, that he knew of whom he had learned them. So is it with us when we are occupied with the highest reaches of our doctrine of inspiration, in the form of inerrancy. It is to begin with, I acknowledge, an exegetical question. What, according to Christ's teaching, is the nature of those Scriptures that evidently in the broad sense are inspired of the Spirit of God? His whole attitude is summed up for us in that oracle that issued out of His mouth: "The Scripture cannot be broken." He taught us the doctrine, not only of inspiration, but of inerrancy. I believe that is the interpretation that the ablest and most unbiassed exegetes put upon our Lord's words here, and in other cognate passages. It is sheer faith in the absolute reliability of Christ that leads us to say that the Scriptures are infallible, and not the confidence we have that we can, on the lines of ordinary induction, prove the accuracy of every statement that has been, or may in the future be, challenged. In asserting inerrancy, our divines, be it observed, have carefully distinguished between the Scriptures as originally committed to writing, where the supernatural is the predominant element, and the text of Scripture as transmitted through the ages, where the remarkable results are explained in terms of God's special Providence about His own.

(5) But if the affirmation—the Scriptures are infallible or inerrant—is made from faith and in faith, it remains to be said that the confirmations, that have issued out of investigations that are undertaken in the interests of pure science, that have come to us in support of the absolute reliability of the Scriptures in our own time are unparalleled in brilliancy. It is a striking circumstance that it is just those parts of the Scriptures that might be thought to have the least spiritual value that at the moment, under the conduct, as I may say, of archæologists, lend the greatest support to the absolute truth of the Bible. The tide may be said to have set in in our favour from this direction when Sir William M. Ramsay discovered that, as Luke virtually says, Iconium was not in the region of Lycaonia, while he found the German Tübingen School, who had put Luke's statement down as a plain instance of anachronism, in error. The issues of that archæological confirmation of Luke's correctness are for New Testament studies incalculable. And now—for I am not going over the whole, but merely touching on what is most recent—quite a little army of archæologists are daily throwing up proofs bearing upon Old Testament history, showing that here also the Church did not act rashly in taking Christ's word for it that what the Scripture says God says. For example, does Scripture say that Hazor was burnt in the time of Joshua? Then Archæology to-day surprisingly confirms the truth of that statement. Does Scripture say that Jericho was destroyed at the same period? Then the spade makes bare its truth. The Scriptures represent the Anakim as a people who were a source of terror to Israel for a long time. Unbelief, in the name of scholarship, had long taught that the Anakim were a pure myth. Archæology has established not merely that the Scriptures are here in the broad sense right, but that in such an apparently unimportant detail as that the division of the Anakim was into three families, they speak true to actual fact. Does the Bible say that the armour of Saul was put in the house of the Astaroth in Beth-shan? Then the spade of the archæologist throws up the evidence that such a house was in Beth-shan at that very time. Thus, wherever the Biblical statements about matters that might seem to be trivial are tested, they are found to be absolutely reliable. They are events that occurred 3,000 years ago, but the proof of the correctness of the record is only forthcoming in this very year of grace. Thus pure science is

being brought round to the conviction that the Biblical data may be taken as exact instruments of discovery. The Old Testament records are found to be either contemporary with the events they record, or they have been most carefully constructed from such records. It is becoming a moral certainty in the minds of our most distinguished archæologists that Wellhausen's account of the Old Testament cannot be true.

And Archæology has come to our aid on another line. For out of it has arisen a knowledge of ancient languages, as the Sumerian and the Hittite languages, such as scholars of fifty years ago were utter strangers to. Yea, also, the knowledge of the Egyptian, Assyrian, and Aramaic languages is incomparably more advanced to-day than at the time German scholarship first sought to discredit the Church's faith in the historicity of the Scriptures. But with what results? The truth of the Scriptures is confirmed. It is now found that just as there are embedded in a modern English book words that were borrowed from almost every language under the sun, so there are embedded in the Hebrew Old Testament words borrowed from all those Oriental languages I have mentioned. The remarkable thing is that Sumerian elements are found only in the beginning of Genesis, Egyptian in the remainder of the Pentateuch, Hittite words belonging to the time of Solomon, and so on for the other languages just as we would expect, if the Biblical records are at bottom contemporaneous with the events, but not otherwise. The Scripture watermark may now be read in the light of research, and is discovered absolutely correct. Professor R. Dick Wilson deserves the highest praise in this particular field.

(c) Next in order after the doctrine of the Person of the Word Incarnate, and that of the infallibility of the word of inspiration, I mention the truth of man's creation in the image of God, as one to which the ideal Church will continue to bear consistent testimony. The Biblical doctrine of man's creation is tersely defined in words that have been familiar to us from our childhood: "God created man, male and female, after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the creatures." That doctrine is the presupposition of our belief in the natural immortality of the human soul, and is presupposed in the Christian doctrine of the Fall. The foe of the Biblical doctrine of man's origin is, at the moment, the theory of Evolution. The term Evolution is used with a great variety of

references, and may be used quite innocuously. Thus, we speak of the evolution of the motor car, but we do not imagine that any improvements that mark the car now, as compared with what it was in its more primitive form, can be wholly explained in terms of forces that were from the beginning resident in the car itself. No; the presiding genius of man has to be reckoned with in the development. But the term is not generally used in that innocent sense. For the evolutionary theory regards matter as eternal, and undertakes to account for all else from the hyssop that springeth out of the wall to King Solomon himself, without a single reference to the Eternal God. I am aware of the existence of a hybrid that goes by the name of Theistic Evolution. I am not aware of an authoritative exposition of this theory, but so far as I have seen what professed to be expositions of it, I did think them deserving of Mr. Philip Mauro's caustic criticism: "They just allow so much theism as seems necessary to help Evolution over the hard places." But we are concerned with the genuine article, as given us in the expositions of men of the calibre of Charles Darwin and Arthur Keith. I do not, of course, profess to speak as an expert, either in physics or in physiology, but speaking as a member of a large jury, bound without prejudice to give an opinion according to all the evidence submitted, and having regard to Evolution as a complex of science and philosophy, I do say that in comparison with the grand old doctrine of Creation it offers but a shallow proposition. It offers us not a single clear instance of transformation of species, or, if it does offer to lift the veil in this connection, it works in regions where the light is very dim, and not in the clear light where the truth of confident assertions can be tested. The theory runs full tilt against the best established truths of science: as, that life is derived only from life; and that the reaping must be as the sowing. Its account of instinct in insects, and of a reason in man, is in the highest degree unconvincing. It is no friend of the Christian ethic, it is the utter foe of belief in the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, and indeed of historic Christianity. But I have the most absolute conviction that, to adopt a phrase of John Duncan, "the teeth of the monster will at length be broken on the Deity of our Lord."

And here, too, just as in the case of the Bible, the tide is turning strongly in favour of the historic Christian faith. Profound misgivings about the value of Evolution, in the sense of

Darwin, are associated with these great names in science—Bateson, Berg, and latterly, Osborne. And now Professor Austin H. Clark, one of America's best-known biologists, is heard declaring that "so far as concerns the major groups of animals, the creationists seem to have the better of the argument. There is not the slightest evidence that any one of the major groups arose from any other. Each is a special animal-complex, related more or less closely to all the rest, and appearing, therefore, as a special and distinct creation."<sup>1</sup>

Finally, in this connection, if Naturalism were true the history of religion could be told in terms of Animism, Polytheism, Henotheism, and Monotheism. But the science which is concerned with facts, and not with fancies, is to-day in process of accumulating evidence in the sense that, as historians, we must start from Monotheism. "In my opinion," says Professor S. Langdon of Oxford, one of England's greatest archæologists, "the history of the oldest religion of man is a rapid decline from Monotheism to extreme Polytheism. It is, in a very true sense, the history of the fall of man."<sup>2</sup> Now, primitive Monotheism and God's image in man are cognates.

## B

This theme of doctrinal soundness as a quality of the Church that Scotland needs, cannot now be followed out at greater length, and so I pass on to emphasise a new aspect of the ideal Church. All Christian teaching comes under one or other of the two rubrics, Faith and Love. Hitherto I have been occupied with the thesis that the Church Scotland needs is a Church sound in the faith. I hasten to say that the ideal Church will not be hardened against the claims of love. And the two dispositions commended are perfectly compatible, the one with the other. The Apostle Paul says of himself that he had fought a good fight. He was, in the best sense, a fighter. Not only had he shown himself prepared to endure the great fatigue that his missionary journeys necessarily entailed upon him, and to risk his natural life in his encounters with both Jews and Gentiles who set themselves in opposition to him; he had to carry on a warfare by means of his pen also. He thus stoutly opposed

<sup>1</sup> *The Quarterly Review of Biology*, Baltimore, Dec., 1928, p. 539.

<sup>2</sup> Pictographic Inscriptions from Jemdet Nash, p. vii.

those that questioned the resurrection of the human body in Corinth; he refuted incipient Gnosticism in Colosse; he would give no quarters to those in the Churches of Galatia who would mingle human merit with the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ as the meritorious ground of our justification. One has no hesitation in concluding that Paul would have been with Luther, as he would have strongly antagonised the theologians of Trent, when the great debate of the sixteenth century was about Justification by Faith. Yet, although Paul was a good fighter, no one says more than he in the interests of love and peace and unity. And, following Paul, the best theologians have sought to avoid at once heresy and schism, while they did at the same time maintain that heresy carried with it schism.

There are elements in the situation which make the problem a difficult one, but the following propositions seem to me to be true and frankly stated, and the inferences, in so far as inferences are drawn, to be fair.

(1) The law of God lays us under an obligation to be lovers and well-wishers of all mankind.

(2) Nevertheless there are degrees in love, even if that love dwell in the heart of those in whom the Spirit of God, who is love, has taken up a permanent abode. The true members of Christ's mystical body cannot but cherish a peculiar love to one another, in so far as they realise that they are all united in one adorable Head, are animated by one Holy Spirit, and, by an instinct of a new nature, all make their requests known unto the One God and Father, in heaven. It is a love that surmounts ecclesiastical barriers.

(3) Inward attachment in the Church of God, as elsewhere, naturally desires to give itself outward expression and to make itself visible.

Much, I think, of what the Scriptures enjoin respecting the unity of the Lord's people has in view the duty of giving visible expression to what ought to be an inward affection, and has plainly, in some instances, in view the idea and duty of ecclesiastical unity.

(4) The fact, however, that the Christian world is divided in judgment as to which form of government—the Congregationalist, or the Presbyterian, or the Episcopalian—is the best, seems, even if there were no other barrier, to make it hopeless

to expect, as long as those differing convictions are held, that the followers of Christ, even in Great Britain, should be outwardly one, in the sense of being amenable to the one supreme court, or seat of government.

(5) Most of us in Scotland are Presbyterians. Now there was a time when Presbyterianism was commended on this among other grounds that with the least risk of tyranny to the rank and file of the congregations it lent itself, with its gradation of Courts—Kirk-Sessions, Presbyteries, Synods, and General Assemblies, with the possibility of an Ecumenical Council—towards the easy expression of the outward and visible unity of those who made a serious profession of being believers in the Eternal Sonship, the Messiahship, the Saviourship, of Jesus Christ. There can be no question that our Presbyterian forefathers longed for visible unity among Protestants. But for that longing on their part we should probably have had no Westminster Confession of Faith. It was their longing for visible unity that caused our Presbyterian forefathers to stress so much the duty of examination, not so much of others, as of oneself—let a man examine himself, says our Shorter Catechism—and to build so much upon men's solemn profession, and that made them speak so much of "saints by profession." See how eagerly George Gillespie strives to remove prejudices that might prove obstacles to union among those who were one in their confession. "It is neither necessary nor possible," says he, "that we have a certain and infallible knowledge of true saintship and regeneration of those particular persons whom we love under the notion of brethren and saints. . . . To require a certain knowledge of the saintship of others before we can say we love the brethren doth not only strike at the mark of love, but at the duty of love, and makes the yoke of Christ heavy, yea, unsupportable, and the very evangelical commandment of love to be most grievous, yea, impossible."

(6) There was a time when it might with truth be said that "circumstances connected with the terms of union between Church and State"—I use the late Dr. Crawford's phrase—"and with the statutory mode of appointing ministers to vacant benefices" was the main cause of divisions in Presbyterian Scotland. I would not, personally, be disposed to stress that element as one causing trouble any longer. But causes of division of a more serious nature than what concerns the relation of



Church and State have unhappily overtaken us now, and perhaps I should not be exaggerating if I should say that the heart of these latter causes is to be recognised in different estimates of the Bible as absolutely trustworthy in all its utterances. The Church must give no uncertain sound as to its theological *principium*. But I do humbly submit that there is not in Scotland that visible unity that ought to exist between all those Presbyterians who hold to the one infallible Bible and to the same Reformed system of doctrine, and who are at one as to the relation that ought to exist between Church and State.

(7) Different interpretations have been put upon the words of our Lord—"that they all might be one"—as to whether or not He in that petition contemplates ultimate visible unity on earth among all His followers, but I prefer to put the matter thus: I cannot understand how any person sympathising with Paul in the joy that was his when he fully realised that the middle wall of partition between believing Jews and believing Gentiles was now completely broken down, or in the broken-heartedness that was his as he saw how the Judaizing party were seeking to make visible unity between Jew and Gentile an impossibility, can regard visible unity as between believing Gentiles themselves a matter of very little consequence. This, I say, while I hold that not for the sake of visible unity would Paul sacrifice a firm unmistakable public testimony for the fundamental doctrines of what we now call the historic Christian faith.

## C

I have said that the Church that Scotland needs is a Church sound in the faith, and a Church not indifferent to the claims of love. I should like to say this before I close. The ideal Church is one that with might and main will labour for the conversion of sinners as though the salvation of the world depended upon her efforts, and yet at the same time goes forth with the most absolute sense of dependence upon the grace of God, knowing that the faith that saves is a faith that is given, ever laying to heart that "except the Lord build the house they labour in vain that build it," and is therefore disposed to give the whole glory of the world's salvation to One God, in three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. In other words, it is a Church that wrestles with God in prayer for His benediction.

I have ventured to address you on the theme : The Church that Scotland needs. But there is nothing singular in the present regard about Scotland. The Church that Scotland needs is :

THE CHURCH THE WORLD NEEDS.

D

If we say that the Church the world needs is a Church ready to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints, a Church ever mindful of the claims of Christian love, a Church at once alive to the claims of Jesus Christ to our service and alive to a sense of dependence for success upon the grace of God, and if we, all the time, live up to our profession, evidently we have our tasks laid out for us. Let us, therefore, if we would do the duty that lies to our hand as men who have a lively sense of what must be expected of us, in our own persons and service, illustrate and exemplify the kind of Church the world needs.

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