The Holy Roman Emperor at Canossa
The Bulwark
Magazine of the Scottish Reformation Society
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(a) Propagate the Evangelical Protestant Faith and those principles held in common by those Churches and Organisations adhering to the Reformation;
(b) Diffuse sound and Scriptural teaching on the distinctive tenets of Protestantism and Roman Catholicism;
(c) Carry on missionary work among adherents of the latter faith with a view to winning them to the doctrines of grace and to the fellowship of the true Gospel;
(d) To produce and distribute evangelistic, religious and other literature in connection with the promotion of the Protestant religion;
(e) To promote the associating together of men and women, and especially young people, for systematic Bible Study and holding of meetings for the above specified purposes.

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In pursuance of its objects, the Society may co-operate with Churches and with other Societies whose objects are in harmony with its own.

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The Anniversary of the Scottish Reformation

The year 2010 marks the 450th anniversary of the Scottish Reformation of 1560. The Treaty of Edinburgh, by which the French army promised to withdraw, was signed on 6th July, and the Reformation Parliament began to sit in August. The Scottish Confession of Faith, drawn up by John Knox and others, was ratified on 17th August, and the Papal authority in Scotland was abolished and the Mass proscribed on 24th August. This is one of the most significant dates in the history of Scotland and it is an event for which we should be thankful to God continually.

The cover illustration, taken from Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, shows why the Reformation was necessary. The picture is of the Holy Roman Emperor, Henry IV, standing in the snow at Canossa for three days in 1077, doing penance. The Pope, Gregory VII, can be seen in the window at the top right. Whether this picture is fair to Gregory VII we rather doubt, but it is certainly fair to the Church of Rome in Scotland at the time of the Reformation. In his account of the assassination of Cardinal Beaton in 1546, John Knox mentions that the Cardinal's mistress, Marion Ogilvie, 'was espied to depart from him by the privy postern' of St Andrews Castle that morning, shortly before the assassins entered the Castle.

One of the fundamental realisations of the Reformers was that the pride, tyranny, and corruption of Rome stem from her false doctrine, and are therefore beyond reform. Rome is the Antichrist of Scripture because of her soul-destroying doctrine, and she is not going to get any better. The only thing to be done is to separate from her, and this is what Luther did in Germany and what Knox did in Scotland.

In May 1860, Rev James Wright, a minister in Edinburgh who had formerly belonged to the Original Secession, inveighed in his publication *The Ark* against the observation of the 300th anniversary of the Reformation, regarding such celebrations as a modern innovation of dangerous tendency. The editor rather sympathises with that position (but out of deference to his brethren is not pushing his opinion). But it is not because they object to anniversary celebrations that the Scottish Parliament and the Church of Scotland have largely ignored 1560.¹ It is because the leading figures in

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¹ On 15th April a thin Scottish Parliament debated the following extremely weak motion: 'Parliament welcomes the World Reformed Fellowship conference in Edinburgh; notes that 2010 marks the 450th anniversary of the reformation in Scotland; considers that the reformers' passion for opening up the
both bodies are deeply hostile to the principles of the Reformation, and to the Word of God, and to Christ himself. They regret that Christ came to Scotland in a day of his power in 1560, and as far as they are concerned, the sooner he removes all traces of his Law and Gospel and leaves them, like Sodom, to their unbridled affluence the better. They choose to forget that Sodom was not affluent for long and that God, as James Durham puts it, soon turned the city of the Sodomites ‘into a stinking loch’.

But Christ has not taken his Law and Gospel away from Scotland yet, and as long as they remain, Satan’s kingdom is vulnerable, as he well knows. The remembrance of the Reformation should make us bolder, more zealous, more prayerful, more dependent on God and more confident in the power of Christ. ‘We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old...Through thee will we push down our enemies: through thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us’ (Ps 44:1, 5).

Roman Catholicism and Justification

Rev Maurice Roberts

This is the final article in a series on the subject Sola Fide, ‘faith alone’.

In recent years there have been attempts by some evangelicals to find a pattern of words which will reconcile Roman Catholicism and Evangelical Protestantism. Such attempts have come as a result of the Ecumenical Movement and the desire to try to mend the rift between these two expressions of Christianity which took place at the Protestant Reformation. Perhaps the most notable attempt to bridge the gap between Reformation teaching and the RC Church is that known as “Evangelicals and Catholics Together” (ECT). This movement began in 1992 when a number of scholars got together to attempt to find a way to bring the two theological positions of Romanism and Protestantism together.

scriptures to all Scots led to a drive towards improved literacy and that within one hundred years schools were established in parishes across Scotland; further considers that the reformers’ emphasis on free thinking and an individual’s relationship with God arguably helped pave the way for the enquiry, investigation and freedom of conscience associated with the Scottish enlightenment, and therefore pays tribute to the men and women of the reformation for their contribution in laying the foundations of modern Scottish society.’
Ecumenical efforts

This is one of the latest of a long line of attempts to try to unite Christianity, both Catholic and Protestant into one movement. One of the landmarks of this Ecumenical Movement was the World Missionary Conference of 1910 held in Edinburgh. From this Conference have come a number of other movements over the intervening years. Among these were the Faith and Order Movement and the Life and Work Movement, both of which were seeking to promote ecumenism worldwide in the early part of the twentieth century. The Second World War interrupted plans to form a worldwide organisation but in 1948 the World Council of Churches (WCC) was formed. As many as 147 churches from 44 countries met at Amsterdam in that year to bring this about. However at that stage the Roman Catholic Church was not represented. The ambition was not to become a political force but to pursue this end: “The manifestation of the One Holy Church”.

The World Council

During the second half of the twentieth century the WCC took steps to hold conferences and other meetings worldwide to promote its aims of a world church. In the early days the evangelicals were suspicious of the ecumenical movement and the WCC as they believed that the doctrines of grace and the definition of the gospel were not sound in the WCC documents. However a change in the thinking of many evangelicals came about after the 1974 International Congress of World Evangelism held in Lausanne. From this date there was an increasing degree of sympathy on the part of evangelicals to seek to discover a form of words which might help evangelicals and Catholics to get together in a common expression of the Christian faith.

Evangelical participation

Among the evangelicals who took this view were Bill Bright, Os Guinness, J I Packer, and Pat Robertson. In was in the aftermath of this general alteration of feeling among some evangelicals that the 1992 movement known as Evangelicals and Catholics Together, mentioned above, came into existence.
The problem of Justification

As might be expected, one of the greatest problems which the members of the ECT movement have had to face is that of the doctrine of Justification. There are, of course, other problems also. But this is probably the most serious of all the difficulties which RCs and Evangelicals have had to face in an attempt to find a pattern of words acceptable to both sides. This is a matter of the utmost importance and the uttermost seriousness. After all, the doctrine of Justification is central to the very gospel of salvation. To go wrong on this point is to risk losing our own soul. To define the gospel incorrectly at this point is to be in danger of incurring the wrath of God. It is imperative therefore that we in our day should be clear as to what the issues are which need to be faced in this modern attempt by some evangelicals to cooperate with Rome on this article of faith.

The teaching of Rome on Justification

The official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church on the doctrine of Justification is to be found in its formulation laid down at the time of the Reformation by the Council of Trent (1545 - 63). This Council was set up by the Church of Rome specifically to counter the teachings of the Protestant Reformers. On no point of doctrine was it more emphatically opposed to the Reformers' teaching than on the matter of Justification. The official RC teaching which it laid down at that date has continued to be the official doctrine of the RC Church ever since. If any should doubt whether this is so they need to remember that the modern Catechism of the Catholic Church drawn up in recent years appeals to the teaching of Trent as proof of its teaching on this point of theology, namely Justification.

The teaching of this Council of Trent is defined at some length, but the character of their teaching is clearly visible in these words quoted from the Canons on Justification: “If anyone saith, that men are justified, either by the sole imputation of the justice of Christ, or by the sole remission of sins, to the exclusion of the grace and the charity which is poured forth in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, and is inherent in them; or even that the grace whereby we are justified, is only the favour of God: let him be accursed” (Canon 11). And again: “If anyone saith, that justifying faith is nothing else but confidence in the divine mercy which remits sins for Christ’s sake; or that, this confidence alone is that whereby we are justified: let him be anathema” (Canon 12).
The present-day view of Rome on Justification

That this incorrect view of Justification is still the official teaching of Rome is all too evident from their recent “Catechism of the Catholic Church”, published in 1994. One of the answers to the questions about Justification reads as follows: “Justification has been merited for us by the Passion of Christ who offered himself on the cross as a living victim, holy and pleasing to God, and whose blood has become the instrument of atonement for the sins of all men. Justification is conferred in Baptism, the sacrament of faith. It conforms us to the righteousness of God, who makes us inwardly just by the power of his mercy. Its purpose is the glory of God and of Christ, and the gift of eternal life” (Answer 1992).

The issues here which are especially to be noticed are the following. First, note the concept of Justification as “conferred”. This is a very different thing from the biblical view that the righteousness of Christ is imputed. Then note that Justification is said to be conferred in Baptism. This is nowhere said in scripture, but is the typical view of sacramentarianism. Then we notice that there is a confusion between Justification and Sanctification in that the former is said to “conform us to the righteousness of God” and to “make us inwardly just”. The forensic view which is that of Holy Scripture is here greatly obscured by the language used. In a word, the biblical doctrine of Justification is not that which the Church of Rome teaches today, any more than it did in the days of the Council of Trent, over four hundred years ago. Whatever concessions have been made by her to ecumenism, these are not reflected in her most modern authoritative statements on the vital doctrine of Justification.

Two fatal errors of Rome on Justification

Tragically, this RC doctrine of the Church of Rome is wrong on at least two vital points:

(1) It denies that the righteousness of Christ alone is sufficient for justification;

(2) it denies that men are justified solely by the imputation of Christ’s righteousness.

At the time when the Council of Trent met, the doctrine of Justification was not correctly understood. It was confused by theologians of the Roman Catholic Church and that in at least two ways. There was sometimes confusion with Regeneration or the New Birth; on other occasions there was confusion with Sanctification.
Thomas Aquinas had taught in the Middle Ages that the first element in Justification is the infusion of grace, and that this is the basis on which the second element is given by God to the sinner, namely forgiveness of sins. This led to the view that Justification is received by the sinner in baptism. As time went on, this was developed to mean that the Justification received in baptism can be increased or lost, depending on how a person lives. It was but a short step from there to the RC view expressed at the Council of Trent that Justification depends at least in part on man’s own personal merit. That Justification was also wrongly thought to be a process is clear from the Council of Trent’s definition. Here Justification is looked upon not as an act but as a progressive work.

But this is not the theology of the Holy Scriptures. Justification must not be confused with either Regeneration or Sanctification. Regeneration, or the New Birth, is an act of God preceding Justification. Moreover, it is an act of God in which man does not cooperate. However Justification is an act in which man does cooperate. The sinner is justified by faith alone in Christ. And the faith by which he is justified is the faith which he himself exercises as a consequence of his being born again of God’s Holy Spirit. Also, whereas Sanctification is a progressive, life-long work of God in man by which He renews us more and more in holiness and righteousness, Justification is an unrepeatable, once-for-all act of God which is complete and perfect instantaneously.

**What is Justification?**

These are the elements in Justification as we find it taught in the Word of God. It is first of all an act and not a process. It belongs to the sphere of our legal relationship to God as our Judge. In other words, it puts us right in our relationship to God’s holy and perfect moral law. It is a pronouncement by God upon the individual sinner who believes in Christ that that sinner is now and forevermore forgiven all his sins. It is not reversible. The basis upon which God can justify sinners is the finished work of Jesus Christ alone. The whole righteousness of Christ is imputed to the sinner in the moment in which he believes in Christ. This fact is perfectly illustrated in the famous narrative of the thief on the cross, who, on placing his faith in Jesus, heard these exquisitely comforting words from our Lord: “Today shalt thou be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43). But this man had no time in which to be baptized, or to do good works of any sort. Neither had he
a record of personal holiness, but, on the contrary, was self-confessedly a
great sinner. This he admits in the words, “We receive the due reward of
our deeds” (Luke 23:41).

Personal merit or demerit has absolutely no place in a sinner’s Justification.
Moreover, once a sinner is justified he is on the certain road to glorification
and eternal life with God in Christ forever. Christ’s perfect merit, procured
by His obedient life and atoning death, is what God imputes to the sinner
in the moment in which he believes in Christ. No other merit whatsoever
is in view when God pronounces a man justified. It is altogether of grace
and not at all of human works.

Sadly, this is radically different from the theology of the Church of Rome in
her official teachings at the Council of Trent. Although the Church of Rome
has softened her voice since the advent of the Ecumenical Movement, she
has not removed her false definition of Justification, nor is she likely to do.
That this is so is confirmed by her most recent Catechism, in which, as we
have shown above, the teaching of the Council of Trent is still upheld and
affirmed at this point.

It is for these reasons that evangelicals must not think of uniting with the
Church of Rome. To depart from the biblical gospel to any other, as the
Apostle Paul warns us all, is to fall under the judgement and anathema of
God: “But though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel
unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed”
(Galatians 1:8).

It is because of the extreme seriousness of this subject that we must
keep ever to the sound teaching of the New Testament: “Therefore
being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus
Christ” (Romans 5:1). To be right in our doctrine of Justification is to be
in possession of the true gospel. To go wrong on Justification is to lose
our souls eternally. No wonder Luther called Justification “the article of a
standing or a falling church”!

Roman Catholicism and Justification 7
The ‘Gude and Godlie Ballatis’ date from the years before the Reformation. They were intended to popularize Protestant doctrine among ‘young persons and sik as ar nocht excersit in the scripturs’. One cannot help contrasting the spiritual wisdom evident in this version of the Ten Commandments with the ignorance that currently prevails in Scotland, even within the professing Church.

Moses upon the mount Sinai,
With the great God spake face for face,
Fasting and praying but delay,
The time of forty dayis space.

And God gave him these ten Commands,
To teach to mankind every one,
And wrote them with his awin hands,
Twice on two tables made of stone.

I am thy God allenarly [alone],
Serve me in fear and faith therefore,
Worship na kind of Imagerie,
And give na creature my gloir.

Take not the Name of God in vain,
But let your talk be nay and yea,
Except ane Judge do you constrain
To testify the verity.

Work na evil work on Holy day,
Flee from all sinful lust and sloth,
Walk and be sober, fast and pray,
Hear him that preach[es] the word of truth.

Honour thy Elders and them supply
Give that their need of thee require,
Obey all Judges in their degree
Ordained o’er thee to have impyre [rule].
Thou shalt not slay in na kin wise [any way],
In counsel, thought, nor outward deed,
Be thou ane Judge or on assize,
In judgment orderly proceed.

Commit no kind of lechery,
But live ane chaste and sober life:
Want thou the gift of chastity,
Burn not in lust but wed a wife.

Commit no theft, no man thou reive [rob],
Live on thy wage, thy rent or work:
Hold no man's gear, let none thee crave,
Beg not and [if] thou be hale and stark [strong].

Bear na witness with false report,
In contrair just and righteous men:
Defame na man in any sort,
Suppose his fault or vice thou ken.

Thy neighbour's wife, house, heritage,
Thou covet not to thee, nor wish
His horse, his ox, his maid, nor page,
Nor any gudis that is his.

Our poisoned nature (alas therefore)
Can never more this Law fulfil,
But grieving God ay more and more,
And cannot work his godly will.

Then why gave God to us this Law;
The which by no way we can keep?
That we by it our sin should know,
Repent and mend and for it weep.

True faith in Christ working by love,
Shall save us from the fire of hell:
Though God's angel would us reprove,
As false and cursed ye him expel.
Historical Note regarding the Presbytery Exercise

Rev David Campbell

This article gives an account of the relation between the Presbyteries, which were introduced in 1581, and the meetings called ‘the Exercise’ which dated back to the Reformation.

Presbyteries were not erected in Scotland until 1581, twenty years after the establishment of the Reformation in Scotland. While ‘conciliar’ government was adopted from the very beginning, with a system of graded courts in which authority resided, the original courts were only Kirk Sessions, Provincial Synods and the General Assembly. The use of superintendents and commissioners of Assembly to visit provinces, while often confused with episcopacy, was expressly at variance with the principles of episcopacy, with each such superintendent being obliged to submit to the authority of the eldership which made up the separate courts.

The deliberate purpose of the Second Book of Discipline (1578) to eliminate diocesan episcopacy was a direct promotion of conciliar government by the eldership. This tendency was also to be found at the same period in England among adherents of the anti-episcopal movement. There the use of the word ‘Presbytery’ was advocated to define the meetings which had existed in Scotland from 1559 and on the continent from an even earlier date. In Scotland the congregational Eldership, meeting as a district court (the Classis on the continent) was already in full operation. While the word ‘presbytery’ was used in Scotland as a synonym for ‘eldership’ before the Presbyterian court of that name was erected, the form which the court was to take already had its basis in the Kirk Sessions of larger burghs. The Second Book of Discipline called for smaller congregations to share a common eldership and it was the implementing of this proposal that led to the construction of the Presbytery as a separate court in 1581.

The General Assembly required the erection of Presbyteries in thirteen initial centres. This was in response to a petition from the Synod of Lothian that “a general order to be taken for erecting of Presbyteries in places where Public Exercise is used,” and the Assembly finally determined in 1579 that “the Exercise may be judged a presbytery.” Thus it is clear that the formation of the court which is now called ‘the Presbytery’ was on the foundation of what had long been practised as ‘the Exercise.’ James 10
Kirk, the eminent Scottish Church historian, explains that “the Exercise, which met in the burghs and market towns where ministers from the rural hinterland were expected to resort for scriptural exegesis, became the embryonic Presbytery; and such an arrangement for linking the Exercise with the disciplinary functions of the eldership proved a convenient enough device since the Exercise already assumed the role of an executive organ of administration from at least the early 1570s.” Kirk continues, “Nevertheless, as an institution the Exercise was by no means in universal operation throughout the country” and the erection of Presbyteries in 1581 was expressly to address this failing in a more systematic manner.

No attempt was made, when erecting Presbyteries, to merge the work of existing Kirk Sessions with the newly established courts. The thirteen model Presbyteries were to serve as “exemplars to the rest” and proved a success within the already ‘Presbyterian’ structure. The records of the first meeting of one of the thirteen model Presbyteries (Stirling) still exist. They reveal many interesting facets of early Presbyterianism. One early record shows that the members from Dunblane appealed to the Assembly against being amalgamated with this new Stirling Presbytery. They resisted the absorption unsuccessfully, but were keen to claim that they already fulfilled all the duties of the new Presbytery in their own established Exercise, which went back as far as the Reformation days.

This mistaking an Exercise for a Presbytery demonstrates the central place given to the Exercise when Presbyteries were established. Once established, Presbyteries simply absorbed the functions of the Exercise. At its inaugural meeting, the Stirling Presbytery made due provision for holding the Exercise for scriptural exegesis as a regular and integral part of its proceedings. After electing the Reader of the Kirk in Stirling for its Clerk and voting by a majority to appoint Patrick Gillespie as the Moderator until the next Synod, the following is recorded in the minute of the 8th of August 1581:

“Quhat hour the exercise sall begin: The brethrein ordains the exercis to be kepit ilk Tysday at ix houris and the bell to rigne befoir the hour ane rasonable spacie.”

Presumably this became the regular time of the Presbytery meeting in Stirling each week and attendance was required by commission from the Sessions of two or three elders from each congregation. It seems, too, that, initially at least, this Exercise was for the benefit of the public as well as for the members of the Presbytery.

*Historical Note regarding the Presbytery Exercise* 11
The legal sanction for Presbyteries was not given until 1592 but from an early date their authority in areas of present-day presbyterial jurisdiction was recognised. One of the Stirling Presbytery's founding members – Robert Montgomery – refused the Presbytery's authority from the outset and after a long process was eventually deposed and excommunicated. From their beginning Presbyteries also had candidates for the ministry examined and their abilities, character and gifts formally attested before ordination. Such examinations took place at the Exercise and usually included the leading of the Exercise by the candidate. Kirk comments that “the tendency for candidates to undergo examination at the Exercise had already emerged before the erection of Presbyteries, so that the assumption of this power by Presbyteries from 1581 was achieved with little dislocation.” The actual appointment of candidates to the ministry in particular charges was, from 1576, carried out by Visitors commissioned by the Assembly in association with the Exercise and the Synod. This function only became the express duty of the Presbytery after 1592. The Exercise thus played a prominent part in the functions now belonging to the Presbytery even while Presbyteries existed and before their status was formally ratified by the civil magistrate.

The Presbytery Exercise was a weekly occurrence and at each diet a minister was expected to preach on an assigned text and another minister was required to make some practical observations on the first speaker’s exposition. A schedule was prepared for this purpose so that details were known by all beforehand. Such was the benefit felt to be derived from the Exercise that the Stirling Presbytery in December 1581 ordered the schoolmaster and reader at Dunblane to attend the Exercise at Stirling. The same Presbytery in 1582 agreed to impose a fine on absent members to ensure regular attendances.

Interestingly, the names of ruling elders do not appear with the other members (ministers, readers and schoolmasters) at the Exercise while they do appear in the list which made up the sederunt of the business meetings. Schoolmasters who were also elders were distinguished in minutes from other elders as “ane brothur of exercis,” and were treated much as a doctor or theology would be in the terms of the Second Book of Discipline. When the Exercise was over, the Presbytery was formally constituted in a separate part of the church and took up, with the ruling elders now present, the business of governing the constituent parishes under its jurisdiction.
Absence from the Exercise eventually became a problem in the Presbytery of Stirling and on 14th March 1582 the Presbytery enacted that such as were absent and who used their duties in their parishes as an excuse were to be prohibited from any such duty and make it their business to attend. The terms are clear and express:

“An act anent absentis the day of exerceis: The brethren persaving sindrie ministeris within the boundis of this presbytery to be oft absent fra the exerceis and sessioun excusand their absence sumtyme be baptezen of bairnis and examining of their congregatioun befoir the ministratioun of the Lordis Supper, thairfor it is statute and ordeinit be universall consent of the brethren that na minister fra this furth upon the ordinar day of exerceis, viz., ilk Twysday ministrant baptisme, marriage nor exame ony of his congregatioun nor use na uthir kind of exerceis that day, that may withhauld him fra the exerceis under the paine of [blank].”

What the penalty was is possibly disclosed later when several of the rules and enactments made by the Presbytery, which had fallen into misuse or had been neglected altogether, were re-affirmed. This was done on the 19th of July 1586 and among them there appear several references to the exercise:

“Item, ane act made on the ix day of Januar 1581 contenand penalteis to be payit be the brethren that faillis to mak and ad in the exerceis quhen it fallis thame in the cathalog. Item, ane act made on the xvj day of Januar 1581 contenand ane penaltie to be payit be ilk brother that repairs nocht to be exerceis ilk day appointit to the maiking thairof … Item, ane act made the samin day (16th March 1582) forbidding all ministeris to ministrant baptisme, marriage nor exame nane of his congregatioun nor use na uthir charge on the Twysday that may withhauld thame frome the exerceis undir the paine of suspentione.”

Thus it appears that the Exercise was considered of very great importance and not to be neglected or excused from on account of what today would be viewed as considerably higher obligations and duties. Suspension as a punishment for neglect is a clear indication of the central place which the early Scottish Reformed Church gave to the Exercise of the brethren at the meetings of Presbytery. The Exercise moreover was founded on a system and practice which had its commencement at the Reformation itself.

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*Historical Note regarding the Presbytery Exercise*
1. **Reason.** God has given you a mind but because of sin your thoughts are often opposed to God’s Word (Isaiah 55:8). There is a right way to use reason; it is not to limit faith but to be used by faith in assisting our understanding and our choices/decisions. God’s Word will not limit your reason but expand it. God Himself is not opposed to right reason but is not subject to human reason.

2. **Feelings.** Often we have to choose between what we feel and what God says. We have to learn to subject our feelings to the Truth, and not vice-versa. Emotion is a good servant but a bad master. Feelings are not constant; they produce only temporary states (see the Parable of the Sower). We are to walk by faith, not by feelings. While it is often said that ‘we cannot live without feelings’, faith can and sometimes has to!

3. **The Devil.** Satan is not only God’s enemy but ours. He is opposed to what God says (Gen. 3) and seeks to undermine our confidence in Him (Matt. 4). He is called the Liar, the false Accuser. He is a murderer (John 8) and kills by lies, blinding people to the Truth. The believer does not escape his attention and we are not to be ignorant of his strategies. Whom do you believe?

4. **Circumstances.** These can often be difficult, complicated, and incomprehensible. The ‘faith’ of many is based on the happiness of their situation and when the one changes, so does the other. Our faith must be based on Rock, not shifting sands – “It is written.” We must oppose being ruled by circumstances and submit in trust to God’s Word.

Finally, the ‘inner witness’ of the Spirit is never opposed to the Word of the Spirit. The Spirit never ‘moves’ anyone to contradict Himself. His will is revealed in Scripture. We must pray for conformity to the image of Christ.
The Modern ‘Downgrade’

Rev James Clark

120 years ago C H Spurgeon ‘contested earnestly for the faith’ on the principle that to hide the Truth is as much unorthodoxy as to deny it. In addition, many were using orthodox terms such as ‘grace’, ‘atonement’ and ‘sovereignty’, but either refused to define them or blurred them vaguely so that heretics were not offended. It was an age when ‘good men’ were tolerant men and only extremists were dogmatic in their pronouncements. Reformed preachers are again living in such an age. It is again unfashionable to criticize ‘good men’ for supporting anti-Scriptural corruptions in their denominations and refusing to separate themselves (by more than using words). Such continue to accrue ‘guilt by association’ with evil (2 John 10, 11). We disagree that we are ‘one in Christ’ with them if they are wilfully disobedient to the revealed Truths in Scripture. Rhetoric is not synonymous with faithfulness. Those who submit to the authority of God’s Word will not tolerate teaching which is contrary to it. Compromise is to be condemned and neutrals ought not to receive comfort. “Who is on the Lord’s side?”

As Spurgeon said in the April 1887 Sword and Trowel, “It is exceedingly difficult in these times to preserve one’s fidelity before God and one’s fraternity among men.” Many sermons nowadays studiously avoid mentioning the essential work of the Spirit and the words ‘sin’ and ‘repentance’ are carefully avoided. The ecclesiastical status quo is a lack of commitment to doctrinal reading, devotional meetings and an increasing commitment to the things of the world. “Laxity of doctrine”, said Spurgeon, “is the parent of worldliness...There must come with decision for Truth a corresponding protest against error...Fellowship with known and vital error is participation in sin.”

Revelation 18:4 is a clear call: ‘And I heard another voice from heaven saying, Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.’
The Authors of ‘The Sum of Saving Knowledge’

Matthew Vogan

The previous article in this series looked at ‘The Sum of Saving Knowledge’. This article looks at the authors and composition of ‘The Sum’.

It is a measure of the degree to which they believed in the necessity of catechising and the need for instruction in the principal parts of saving knowledge that David Dickson (1589-1662) and James Durham (1622-1658), both professors of divinity and highly esteemed authors and preachers, composed The Sum of Saving Knowledge. This document sets out the chief points of saving knowledge and the practical use of saving knowledge which was to be made of them. In some ways this document compensated for an intended portion of the Directory of Publick Worship, ultimately not included, which would have dealt with catechising. This was discussed in Session 342 of the Westminster Assembly.

Dickson and Durham were great friends ever since Dickson had encouraged Durham to the ministry. While he was serving as a captain in the covenanting army during the civil war Dickson overheard Durham exhorting his soldiers concerning their souls. Recognising his ministerial gifts Dickson told him, ‘Go home, Sir, for you seem to be called to another work than this!’ Durham entered the University of Glasgow about 1645 and studied divinity under Dickson himself who was professor. Durham displayed such outstanding proficiency that his course of study was shorter than the norm and he was ordained to Blackfriars in Glasgow in 1647.

In 1650 Dickson was translated to the chair of divinity at Edinburgh and appointed to the second charge of St Giles. Durham was called to replace Dickson in the chair of divinity at the University of Glasgow, but was prevented from taking up this charge when he was appointed one of the king’s chaplains. Robert Wodrow informs us that The Sum of Saving Knowledge came together after several conversations between Dickson and Durham about how to construct such a document in a way that would make it most useful to capacities of the weakest. Wodrow says that ‘they thought the Catechism too large and dark’ for such. The conversations took place in the afternoons as they walked in the Craigs area of Glasgow, now known as the Necropolis.
It is said to have been dictated by both men to another minister, Patrick Simson (George Gillespie’s cousin), during the year 1650. John Macleod comments in his Scottish Theology: ‘This solid and valuable piece is an expansion of some sermons preached by Dickson at Inveraray when he was the Duke of Argyll’s guest there’. Presumably this refers to ‘The Practical Use of Saving Knowledge’, ‘Warrants to Believe’ and ‘The Evidences of True Faith’ which make up the bulk of The Sum of Saving Knowledge and are in effect brief expositions of portions of Scripture, resembling the headings of sermons. These headings would have been doctrines extracted from the text and the uses or applications of the doctrines.

The style of The Sum is markedly similar to that of Dickson’s other writings, as seen in the communion sermons published by the Free Church of Scotland in 1845 with the title Select Practical Writings. Dickson was adept in expounding a text by means of a number of doctrinal inferences. Robert Wodrow tells us that these sermons are ‘full of solid substantial matter, very Scriptural, and in a very familiar style, not low but exceedingly strong, plain and affecting. It is somewhat akin to Mr Rutherford’s in his admirable letters. I have been told by some old ministers that scarce anybody of that time came so near Mr Dickson’s style and method as the Rev. Mr William Guthrie, minister of Fenwick, who equalled, if not exceeded him there’.

The comparison with William Guthrie is interesting in view of Guthrie’s valuable little book The Christian’s Great Interest whose theme is so similar to that of The Sum of Saving Knowledge. Though Dickson was well learned and able to teach theology in the university, it is remarkable that he retained the pastoral concern which bred the simple Sum of Saving Knowledge. Wodrow records that he previously wrote Precepts for a Daily Direction of a Christian’s Conversation – The Grounds of the true Christian Religion, a catechism for his congregation of Irvine. The emphasis upon the covenants in The Sum is similar to that of David Dickson’s Therapeutica Sacra [Sacred Healing]: Shewing briefly the method of healing the diseases of the Conscience, concerning Regeneration (Edinburgh, 1664). In this treatise Dickson attempts to briefly show ‘the method of healing the diseases of the conscience concerning regeneration’. A large section of the book is devoted to an explanation of the covenants ‘because the healing of the sickness of the conscience cometh by a right application of the covenants about our salvation’.

Dickson’s preaching was said to have an ‘apostolic brevity and simplicity in preaching’. In his preaching he sought ‘to lead people to throw all their

The Authors of ‘The Sum of Saving Knowledge’
trust and dependence upon Christ’s imputed righteousness, and not to rest upon anything of their own’. This was Dickson’s only refuge for himself. On his deathbed in December 1662 he said, ‘I have taken all my good deeds, and all my bad deeds, and cast them through each other in a heap before the Lord, and fled from both, and betaken myself to the Lord Jesus Christ, and in him I have sweet peace’. Wodrow wrote of Dickson that ‘if ever a Scots Biography and the lives of our eminent ministers and Christians be published, he will shine there as a star of the first magnitude’.

James Durham was known as ‘a very candid and searching preacher who in an instant was in the utmost corners of your bosoms, though with the utmost caution and meekness, without giving any of his hearers the smallest ground to fret and repine at his freedom in dealing with them.’ In September 1651 he moved to Glasgow High Church, St Mungo’s west quarter. This congregation numbered around 1500. He regularly preached three times a week, lectured before his sermons, visited the sick, catechised from house to house, met with his session weekly. In addition he gave daily public lectures every fifth week, undertook daily catechising before communion seasons, and spent a considerable part of every day in private devotion, prayer, and study.

He was known for his moderation during the Protester-Resolutioner controversy which split the Church of Scotland in the 1650s, and made constant attempts to mediate personally. His *Treatise on Scandal* represented his continuing attempts during his dying days to achieve a reconciliation, and when published in 1659 it was entitled *A Dying Man’s Testament to the Church of Scotland*. He died at the age of thirty-six.
John Calvin: His Life and Influence, Robert L Reymond, Christian Focus, 2004, 152 pages

This brief study of Calvin’s life is a compilation of four popular lectures given to an American audience by the author in 2002. It includes three useful appendices, one on various biographers of Calvin, one on the influence of Calvinism on Western history and one listing some Calvin biographies as recommended further reading. There are extensive footnotes throughout which enhance the publication.

Robert L Reymond is a well-known systematic theologian who has written several books, including Paul – Missionary Theologian and Jesus, Divine Messiah.

The four chapters cover the life of the great Reformer comprehensively and deal with various issues arising from the historical evidence and from subsequent comment on his work. The first lecture highlights the providence which equipped Calvin for the work that God had for him to do. This theme is sustained throughout the book and is a welcome reminder that the Reformation of the 16th century was a great work of God employing men only as instruments.

The second lecture, entitled, ‘The Young Reformer and His Institutes’ opens with an interesting discussion of Calvin’s conversion. Reference is made to his reply to a letter by Cardinal Sadolet in which the writer finds evidence of his spiritual experience. The context in which the 1536 edition of the Institutes appeared is also highlighted. A useful summary is then given of this first edition. The aim of Calvin in producing the Institutes was pastoral and apologetic, and this practical purpose is not lost in further editions. Reymond’s discussion and summary should whet the appetite of those who have not read Calvin’s great work.

The third lecture takes up the life of Calvin from the time of his short ministry in Strasbourg after his expulsion from Geneva. In going on to assess his second Genevan ministry it surveys his work as a “Mature Reformer”. This chapter looks at Calvin’s literary output and gives a larger sketch of the later and more complete editions of his Institutes. It also discusses the question of whether Calvin was a “covenant theologian”. The author acknowledges that there was a difference between Calvin and his successors on this point, but asserts that this was “one only of degree and not one of kind” (p. 97).

Reymond’s fourth and final lecture
deals with the controversial subject of the burning of Michael Servetus, the Spanish heretic, by the Genevan authorities in October 1553. William Cunningham lists “five considerations that ameliorate to some degree Calvin’s involvement in Servetus’ execution”, and Reymond adds to these his own eight points to consider in coming to a fair conclusion on the subject. Those who are troubled by this oft-cited blot on Calvin’s reputation will find much wise and balanced comment in these pages. A brief summary of Calvin’s last days brings this interesting and varied study to a close. We recommend it for its brevity and comprehensiveness but particularly for its helpful discussion of some perplexing questions and its condensed analysis of Calvin’s thought. David Campbell


This little biography of just over 100 pages is part of the Calvin 500 series of books intended to commemorate Calvin’s birth on the 9th of July 1509. David W Hall is the general editor of the series. The biography is a succinct but complete survey of Calvin’s life, possibly intended for those with little or no knowledge of the great Reformer and his work.

It opens with an interesting list of ‘Ten Ways Modern Culture is Different because of John Calvin’, before dealing in the second section, running to about 40 pages, with his life, his friendships and his death. The closing section, entitled ‘Tributes: Measuring a Man after Many Generations’, is less successful than the other parts of the book.

This little book would be useful for giving to friends who may harbour some unwarranted prejudice against John Calvin. It will also be helpful as an introduction to the man and his great work in Reforming the Church for those entirely new to the subject. It includes brief footnotes throughout, the first of which lists classic biographies for those who might wish to pursue this important life. David Campbell


The declared intention of this biography of Calvin is to give “an introduction to the life and thought of John Calvin”. Further, it “aims at communicating Calvin’s passion and faith through extensive quotations from his works so that something of the force and eloquence of his
language can be experienced by the reader”. The book is generally successful in this worthy endeavour in the view of this reviewer. After a brief introduction showing “the importance of Calvin”, the book is divided into two main sections. Section one under the heading ‘Pilgrim’, from chapter 1 to 4, takes the reader to the end of Calvin’s Strasbourg ministry. Section two under the title ‘Pastor’ and running from chapter 5 to 11, covers the second Genevan ministry and assesses issues including worship, the Sacraments, predestination and, of course, the Institutes.

The author seeks at various points to analyse the character and spirit of Calvin and draws attention to what he considers evidence of character flaws, while bearing in mind the age in which he lived. That the Reformer was a man “subject to like passions” as we are cannot be disputed, but it is questionable if it is accurate or fair to present him as having a serious difficulty controlling anger. There is much evidence to suggest that Calvin was a very meek man in his own defence. A hearty and spirited aggression in defence of the truth may have evinced itself in ways troubling to milder souls, but we should shrink from categorising this as a sign of weakness.

Considerable and compelling evidence is produced in the first chapter to build up a picture of Calvin’s conversion experience. Drawing from the well-known, if limited, comments in his preface to his Commentary on The Psalms, in which he speaks of his experience, the author also makes deductions from other works. A chapter on The Church and Worship highlights well Calvin’s firm position on authority for worship. Nothing less than the express warrant of scripture was required. Calvin’s position was exactly in line with the later Puritan Regulative Principle so highly esteemed and preserved in Scotland but now so universally despised. Other chapters deal frankly with Calvin’s position relating to Servetus and also his involvement in the reformation of the French Churches. Calvin is quoted extensively and this greatly adds to the value of this book for those who may never have read any of his works. The Institutes are given considerable attention and Calvin’s theology in important areas is handled in a simple and accessible manner.

Readers should expect to be encouraged and prompted to read more widely from the great reformer himself. We hope that this will prove to be the case. David Campbell
Battle for the Soul of Scotland

D.R. Morrison

This is the Scottish Reformation Society Magdalen Chapel Prize Essay for 2009.

John Knox and Mary Queen of Scots. The two names conjure images of contrast and conflict. John Knox was a sombre, grey-bearded older man. Mary, on the other hand, was a frivolous young woman. But by far their largest difference lay in their religion. Whereas Knox was a symbol of the Reformation, Mary was a staunch Roman Catholic. Conflict was bound to arise, and that conflict can be shown in their four meetings.

In August 1561, Mary Queen of Scots arrived in Leith to a tumultuous welcome. However, one of her first acts was to attend a Roman Catholic Mass in her private chambers. When John Knox heard about this breach of Scottish law, he preached a fiery sermon, in which he said that “One Mass is more fearful to me, than if 10000 enemies were landed in any part of the realm, of the purpose to suppress the whole religion”. Angry at this criticism, she summoned him, and accused him of teaching the people to disobey their princes. Knox responded in a typically forthright manner, telling her that she had no authority in matter of religion over the people. Furious, she sent him away, him not one jot moved by her.

The second meeting resulted from a sumptuous ball Mary held for her foreign servants and dignitaries on December 13th 1562. Knox spoke out against this behaviour in his pulpit, and was promptly summoned to appear before her majesty. Knox, in his defence, claimed he had been misinterpreted, and to prove it, he preached the sermon in its entirety to her. After he had finished, she asked him to come directly to her with any complaints he might have, instead of lambasting her from the pulpit. He refused, perhaps realizing that this would curtail his freedom to speak his mind.

During the spring of 1563, another meeting between these two adversaries took place. The cause of their meeting was thus: two Catholic priests had been apprehended by Protestant townsfolk while saying a Mass. Mary called Knox to ask him to use his influence to promote religious toleration.
As well as refusing, Knox defended the men, saying that if she, Mary, did not uphold the laws of the land, others would. The meeting concluded with Mary, much to Knox’s surprise, agreeing that the men be brought to justice.

Knox and Mary’s last meeting was to take place on June 24th, 1563. It was possibly the stormiest of all their meetings. Knox had been preaching against Mary’s proposed marriage to Don Carlos, the son of the Roman Catholic king of Spain, Philip II. Mary, when she had summoned Knox, berated him for interfering in matters in which he had no business. He replied that he had a right to interfere in matters of state, as he was a “subject born in the same”. Going on, he said that, though not noble, he had a duty to point out dangers to the commonwealth. Incandescent with rage, she ordered him out of the room, never to meet with him again.

The conflict between them came to a head when, in October 1563, Mary accused Knox of treason. He was acquitted of this crime, and lived on to a ripe old age. Mary, on the other hand, was imprisoned, and after being imprisoned in various places for twenty years, she was executed in England on 8 February 1587. How different the end of their lives were, but how very different their eternal destination.

‘Whereas the Bishop of Rome hath erected for himself a temporal monarchy in the Christian world, and usurping a sovereign authority and lordship over all churches and pastors, doth exalt himself to that degree of insolence as to be called God...we, therefore, believe and maintain that he is truly and properly the Antichrist, the Son of Perdition, predicted by the holy prophets, that Great Whore clothed with scarlet, sitting upon seven mountains in that great city, which had dominion over the kings of the earth; and we hope and wait that the Lord, according to his promise, and as he hath already begun, will confound him by the Spirit of his mouth, and destroy him finally by the brightness of his coming’ (31st Article of the French Confession, added by the National Synod of Gap in 1603).
The annual meeting at **Dunnottar Castle** is to be held on Saturday 29th May at 3pm (DV). The speaker is Rev Maurice Roberts. Those wishing to attend should assemble at the top of the steps down to the Castle at 2.30pm.

The closing date for the **2010 Essay Competition** is the 31st May. Details of the Competition, and application forms, are available on the Society’s website http://www.scottishreformationsociety.org.uk

The **2010 Annual General Meeting** of the Society is to be held in Edinburgh on Saturday 9th October. Revs David Silversides and Wayne Pearce have agreed to speak. Further details will be announced in due course (DV).

At its meeting in January, the Committee agreed that the Society would start publishing an historical journal, to be called **The Scottish Reformation Society Historical Journal**. This is to consist of ‘original, scholarly articles, written from an evangelical perspective, on subjects related to Scottish Church history’. The aim will be to publish approximately annually, with the first issue to appear this December (DV). Details about subscription will be given later.

A service of thanksgiving has been arranged in the Magdalen Chapel, Edinburgh, at 7pm on Tuesday 24th August, the anniversary of the abolition of Papal authority and the proscription of the Mass in Scotland. The preacher will be Rev Hugh Cartwright (DV).
Preacher to the Remnant: the Story of James Renwick.
By Maurice Grant
Scottish Reformation Society-2009
hardcover, dustjacket, 288pp+16pp of photographs price £17.95

At last the long awaited volume in Grant’s trilogy of Covenanters martyrs. Following on from his acclaimed biographies of Donald Cargill & Richard Cameron, Mr Grant has given us a detailed in depth study of this remarkable martyr preacher, whose revolutionary stand was embraced by the whole island just two years after his untimely death at the scaffold when only 26 years old. An inspiring volume of the highest scholarly standard. Be sure to own a copy of what will be a classic.

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“Prepared as he was to to resist unto blood in contending for the right of Christ to reign in His own Church, his love for God his Saviour overflowed in love to his fellows...he was most at home in preaching Christ to sinners and saints.”
From the foreword by Rev. Hugh M. Cartwright.

You can order by email: info@scottishreformationsociety.org.uk by telephone to our distributors 01236827978 or by post to the SRS office [see inside front cover of this Bulwark.]
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