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A Thought for Each Day

Sabbath, October 24. Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Psalm 100:2.

Self-sacrifice is so commonly looked upon as a species of surgery. The word has gathered round about it all the gloom of an operating chamber. It is quite other than this. Self-sacrifice enshrines the principle of vitality, and not only vitalizes others, but vitalizes self. It is active and reactive.—J. H. Jowett.

Monday, October 25. Woe unto the world because of offences! . . . Woe to that man by whom the offence cometh! Matthew 18:7.

No doubt it is wrong for a weak brother to be weak, no doubt it is wrong for his conscience to be so easily defiled or his moral equilibrium to be so easily upset: but if I contribute to his upsetting I am responsible.

—J. Russell Howden.

Tuesday, October 26. With long life will I satisfy him! Psalm 91:16.

Life is sweet. I never liked death: I like life. It would be a pretty dark world if death were eternal, and when our loved ones die we were to be eternally separated from them. Thank God, it is not so! We shall be reunited. It is just moving out of this house into a better one: stepping up higher and living on and on forever and ever.—D. L. Moody.

WITH WHAT MIND SHOULD WE GIVE?

God does not want what we would rather keep than give to Him. He is more sensitive to the loyalty of His people than we are inclined to think. He withdraws His appeal from him who would give grudgingly. In his farewell to the Elders of Ephesus, Paul said: "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'." We have no idea on what occasion Jesus said that; but we know that it was like Jesus to say it. What He had in mind was that a quick, willing, happy response to God's expressed desire makes a happy Christian. The widow with her two mites evidently felt that way about it when she approached the sacred chest on the memorable day. Barnabas understood the mind of the Master, when he laid the proceeds from the sale of his farm at the feet of the disciples.

It is a worthy motive that makes our giving worth while. The Bible impresses upon us the need of that motive. The Kingdom will not be advanced by mechanical schemes for raising funds or by such solicitations as evidences coercion from a reluctant people. With passion gone, Christian benevolence loses its power. Without a willing heart, there is not much to it, either for the cause or for ourselves.

Of every man that giveth it willingly . . . ye shall take. Ex. 25:2.

—Dr. Wm. Crowe, St. Louis, Mo.

The Scotch Confession of Faith

By Rev. Walter L. Lingle, D. D., LL. D.

A friend of mine down in Texas who is a Scotsman has a way of sending me an occasional copy of the "Aberdeen Journal," for which I am very grateful. In a recent copy there is an article by Dr. G. D. Henderson, professor of Church History in the University of Aberdeen, concerning the Gifford lectures, which were delivered this year by Dr. Karl Barth, the distinguished German theologian, who is now living in Switzerland because his religious views do not meet with Hitler's approval.

When Lord Gifford, of Edinburgh, died in 1887 he left an endowment of eighty thousand pounds, nearly four hundred thousand dollars, to establish a lectureship in the universities of Scotland on the subject of religion. Some of the most distinguished scholars in Christendom have delivered lectures on this foundation, and the Gifford lectures have become noted throughout the English-speaking world.

It is interesting to note that Karl Barth chose for the subject of his Gifford lectures the Scotch Confession. John Knox, the leader of the Scotch Reformation, got most of his Calvinism in Geneva, sitting at the feet of John Calvin. Now after nearly four hundred years Karl Barth, a Neo-Calvinist, comes from Switzerland to Scotland to expound John Knox's Confession of Faith to the Scotch people.

Did you see the moving picture, "Mary, Queen of Scotland?" It is a remarkable picture, but its representation of John Knox was a travesty. I sometimes wonder what moving pictures are going to do to history. They often distort historical facts and characters in an outrageous manner.

John Knox was born in Scotland somewhere between 1505 and 1515. The exact date is not known. He was brought up in the Roman Catholic faith. Scotland at that time was almost solidly Roman Catholic. While he was still a young man echoes of the Protestant Reformation in Germany, under the leadership of Martin Luther, began to be heard in Scotland. John Knox and a number of other young men in Scotland were attracted to the Protestant doctrines. In one of the first glimpses that we have of Knox we see him standing with a sword keeping the mob off of George Wishart while he preached the doctrines of Protestantism. But in spite of Knox's sword George Wishart was ultimately burned at the stake for preaching these doctrines.

After the death of Wishart, Knox and his friends took refuge in St. Andrews castle. However, the castle was soon captured by his enemies and he was placed in chains on a French galley ship for a little more than a year and a half. When he was released from the galley ship he went to England where he became one of the court preachers for King Edward VI. When Mary Tudor, known as "Bloody Mary," came to the throne of England, John Knox, the Protestant, fled for his life to Geneva where he was intimately associated with John Calvin for several years. The French

that he had learned on the galley ship served him in good stead as he conversed with French-speaking John Calvin.

In 1559 John Knox returned to his native Scotland to lead the Protestant Reformation. Under his leadership it was not long until the majority of the Scotch people embraced Protestantism. When the Parliament of Scotland met on August 1, 1560, the subject of religion was very much to the fore. There was a strong demand that Roman Catholicism should be renounced as the State religion and that Presbyterianism should become the religion of the State. John Knox and five other ministers were directed to prepare a Confession of Faith. John was the Christian name of each of the other five. They were John Row, John Willock, John Wynram, John Spottiswood, and John Douglas.

Within four days these six Johns prepared a complete Presbyterian Confession of Faith for Scotland. About eighty-five years later it took the Westminster Assembly, consisting of about one hundred and fifty men, about four years to prepare the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms. Of course, John Knox did most of the work on the Scotch Confession. He was no novice in such matters. It is stated on good authority that he had had a part in the preparation of the Thirty-Nine Articles for the Church of England while he was court preacher for Edward VI. He had also helped to prepare a Confession of Faith for the English-speaking church in Geneva, of which he was pastor for several years. Best of all, he had sat for several years at the feet of John Calvin, that prince of theologians, and had thus learned his Calvinism in a first-hand way.

The Parliament promptly adopted the Confession which was prepared by the six Johns and thus Presbyterianism became the State religion of Scotland and has continued so until this day. Randolph, the English envoy to Scotland, wrote to Cécil two days afterwards, as follows: "I never heard matters of so great importance neither sooner dispatched, nor with greater will agreed unto."

Now that is the old Scotch Confession that Karl Barth has been talking about in the Gifford lectures. I shall certainly look forward with interest to seeing these lectures in book form. But let us take a glance at the old Confession itself. It lies open before me as I write. There are twenty-five chapters, or paragraphs in it, setting forth the twenty-five articles of faith which the Scotch Presbyterians of that day believed to be the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. The first article is concerning God, and the last concerning the Church. The entire Confession would cover about twenty-five pages of an ordinary book. It is not as long as the Westminster Confession. The language is the quaint Scotch of three hundred and seventy-five years ago.

Dr. William Curtis, professor of Theology in the University of Aberdeen, writing twenty-five

years ago, had this to say of the Scotch Confession: "It is the national and native Confession of Scotland exhaling the spirit of the thrilling times that brought it into being. It is practical rather than theological in its terms and purpose, keenly alive to the needs of the hour—persuasion rather than controversy. If the language of the preface is stern and harsh toward Romanism, it is never mere abuse or caricature. It is the plain and truthful speech of men who had seen and who had suffered, whose revered friends and teachers had been torn from their side and murdered for the truth."

Edward Irving, the brilliant Scotsman of a century ago, who was a friend of Thomas Carlyle, and who was none too orthodox from the Presbyterian point of view, wrote thus of the old Scotch Confession: "The Scottish Confession was the banner of the Church in all her wrestlings and conflicts, the Westminster Confession but as the camp-colors which she hath used during her days of peace—the one for battle, the other for fair appearance and good order. This document is written in a most honest, straightforward, manly style, without compliment or flattery, without affectation of logical precision and learned accuracy, as if it came fresh from the heart of laborious workmen, all the day long busy with the preaching of the truth, and sitting down at night to embody the heads of what was continually taught. There is a freshness of life about it which no frequency of reading wears off." It is interesting to note that Edward Irving read this old Confession aloud to his congregation twice a year.

This paragraph from the preface gives some indication of what John Knox and his co-laborers thought of the Confession which they had made: "If any man will note in this our Confession any article or sentence repugnant to God's Holy Word, that it would please him of his gentleness and for Christian charity's sake to admonish us of the same in writing, and we, of our honor and fidelity, do promise unto him satisfaction from the mouth of God (that is, from the Holy Scriptures) or else reformation of that which he shall prove to be amiss." In other words, they believed that their Confession was based upon the Holy Scriptures. They did not believe that it was infallible. They were willing to change any article or sentence if any one could show that it was not in line with the Holy Scriptures.

This old Scotch Confession was prepared by John Knox and the other five Johns in 1560 and promptly adopted by the Parliament of Scotland. For eighty-seven years it remained the great Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland without a rival. It must have grown more precious with the passing years. In a sense, John Knox was the patron saint of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and it was John Knox's Confession. It would seem like sacrilege to touch it.

But after the Scotch Presbyterians had clung tenaciously to this old Confession for eighty-seven years something very remarkable happened—in fact, so far as I can discover, the most remarkable thing that ever happened to any Calvinistic

or Presbyterian creed. On August 27, 1647, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland laid their old Scotch Confession on the shelf and adopted a brand new Confession of Faith which had been prepared in England and not in Scotland—the Westminster Confession. Why did they do it? That is a long story. They probably thought the Westminster Confession was a better Confession than the old Scotch one. But a more compelling motive was church unity. They hoped that by adopting the Confession prepared by the Westminster divines they would help to unify the Calvinists of England and Scotland. The General Assembly of the Scotch Church, to use their own language, in speaking of the Westminster Confession, rejoiced "in that so excellent a Confession of Faith is prepared, and thus far agreed upon in both Kingdoms."

I wonder whether Presbyterians of today could learn anything from those old Scotch Presbyterians and their Confession of Faith.—*Reprinted from The Christian Observer.*

COVENANTER LOYALTY

As it was provided at last Synod that the "Confession of Sin" be placed in convenient form in the hands of every member, and kept before the Church until we perform our duty to God more perfectly (Minutes, 1936, p. 82); your Committee recommends the following as a method of carrying out this arrangement:

1. That the Draft of Confession as submitted be referred to a commission of Synod consisting of nine members whose work concerns its revising and publication as a booklet, to be distributed as soon as possible among the members of the Church; that pastors be advised to preach throughout the year on the subject of "Covenant Loyalty"; and that a series of articles be prepared and published in the *Covenanter Witness*.

2. That during the month preceding each of our Communion services this next year, pastors and sessions arrange for weekly studies in the Confession of Sin, with prayerful self-examination and faithful application to our present needs; and that the Committees having in charge the selection of topics for mid-week and young people's topics for next year have this in mind in the selections made.

4. To secure as much unity as possible in our spiritual experiences during the coming year, the last Sabbath of April be suggested as Universal Communion Sabbath in our congregations and mission fields; and at the usual Sabbath afternoon meeting at next Synod the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper be observed, the daily devotional exercises leading up to that as preparatory.

3. As we are approaching a great Centennial Anniversary of one of our Church Covenants, it is agreed that the time between now and next Synod be recognized in all our Churches and mission fields as "Covenant Loyalty Year"; that in addition to the foregoing studies, Presbyteries be urged to hold at least one conference on this subject; that each congregation, and wherever