



The Master's Trumpet

The Spiritual Heritage of the Free Church of Scotland

The Free Church of Scotland is a presbyterian church adhering in its worship and doctrine to the position adopted by the Church of Scotland at the Reformation. At the Disruption of the Church of Scotland in 1843, the Free Church carried forward the spiritual identity and succession of the Reformation in Scotland.

At the heart of the Free Church heritage is the gospel of Jehovah's love in saving fallen creatures from their sin—a salvation arising from God's eternal election of a particular people, and pursued through redemption purchased by Christ alone and applied only at divine initiative, so that all the praise for the sinner's deliverance is reserved for the originating, procuring and efficacious love of God.

This salvation is publicly offered to the world through the commission which Christ has given to his church to preach the gospel to every creature. Every one who embraces the Lord's invitation to receive his freely-bestowed salvation, by placing his confidence in Christ as Mediator, will enter into reconciliation and everlasting communion with his Maker and Judge.

The institution of the church has as its first concern the worship of God. The Lord in his Word has explicitly reserved to himself the prerogative to determine the form of action to be used in his worship. Our faith and obedience towards him are to be visibly expressed by observing the worship forms he has sanctioned. The Lord has given us the canonical text of Scripture for public reading and for singing his praise, and has appointed the symbolic actions of baptism and the Lord's Supper, always to be accompanied by a verbal proclamation of the gospel

through the exposition of Scripture. The prayer of faith is to underlie every act of worship. In the simplicity of these ordinances, the worshipper is to look by faith to the ascended Savior, the glory of whose priesthood lies not in the outward pomp of the Old Testament temple, but in the efficacy of his once-for-all sacrifice to take away our sin and to bring us into the kingdom of heaven.

The believer's experience of salvation is more than a mere acceptance of biblical doctrine. The Reformation age was marked by entire societies committed to a Christian view of the world and life. But the Reformers knew that this intellectual and cultural posture was no indication that the multitudes had experienced the new birth, or found personal contrition for sin or fled to the Savior for deliverance. It is not enough that children be raised in the church or be educated in biblical principles. Preaching to the Congregation must show the way to Christ, discriminate between the converted and the unconverted, fence the Lord's table against the admission of all who are in scandalous sin, and warn professing Christians of the danger of eternal destruction if they are not in saving union with Christ. Preaching should delineate from the Scriptures what it means to experience the power of the truth, providing guidance to the believer for his self-examination, mortification of sin, pursuit of full assurance, patient submission to trouble, and fervent love to Christ.

The foundation for activity in every department of man's life is to be the acknowledgment of God's glory and the recognition of that true religion revealed in the Scriptures. Civil government and the social life of the nation are no exception to this universal obligation. Not only in the individual conscience of the believer, but also in the constitution and public policy of our corporate existence as a society, there must be commitment to the honor and authority of the true God. It belongs exclusively to the church to preach and administer the ordinances of worship and discipline. But in the civil ruler's administration of specifically civil matters, it is incumbent on him to recognize and promote the true religion. The departure of modern nations from this Reformation principle is the consequence of Enlightenment philosophy, as well as of fear among evangelicals that the privileges of an established religion would be abused and the spirituality of the church compromised. Two hundred years later, the consequences are manifest in the moral and spiritual waywardness of societies whose original populations were

personally committed to biblical principles but who devised civil constitutions that eschewed commitment to biblical religion.

In every age the doctrines and practices known and loved by the parents must be taught to a new generation. There is no way around this necessity to train the successors, giving them a thorough grounding in the biblical truth and godly living which captured the hearts of a previous generation. Will we hold these things fast and learn to love them as dearly in our generation?

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