



Where We Stand

The Theology of the Free Presbyterian Church

*“But speak thou the things which
become sound doctrine.”*

Titus 2:1

*“...set forth in order a declaration of
those things which are most surely
believed among us.”*

Luke 1:1

Some great truths have been most surely believed among us from our inception as a church some fifty years ago, and they remain to this day foundational truths in our ministry. We should never be afraid of the word *doctrine*. It is a most scriptural and necessary word. In this ecumenical age many decry the need for a sound biblical creed and seek after a false unity at the expense of truth. Such was not the case in the New Testament church. The book of Titus refers often to sound faith and to sound doctrine (Titus 1:9, 13; 2:1, 7, 8, 10). Sound doctrine was a feature of a biblically constituted church in the New Testament and it remains so today. We cannot cover everything in this article, but we will look at the key foundational truths that formulate our faith and that have weathered the storm during these fifty years. To these truths we reaffirm our total commitment.

The Sole Authority of the Word of God

The Free Presbyterian Church believes the Bible. That is the secret of her survival in these days of declension and apostasy from the truth. William Chillingworth (1602-1644, *The Religion of Protestants a Safe Way to Salvation*) said, “The Bible, the Bible only is the religion of Protestantism.” The Bible is likewise the religion of the unashamedly Protestant Free Presbyterian Church.

Our first Article of Faith states, “We believe in the Absolute Authority and Divine Verbal Inspiration of the Old and New Testaments as the Word of God.” The doctrine of divine inspiration is a very important truth to those who will maintain a sound faith.

The Holy Scriptures are “God breathed” (2 Tim. 3:16; 1 Peter 1:28). This is the basic meaning of the word *inspiration* in the Bible. The Scriptures have the life-giving breath of God within them.

But what is the extent of this inspiration? First, *it is a verbal inspiration*. God gave, not only the thoughts to the writers, but the words with which to express those thoughts: “I have put my words in thy mouth” (Jeremiah 1:9). He also gave the words in such a fashion as not to encroach upon the style of the particular writer whom He inspired. You cannot have inspired thoughts without having inspired words to preserve them so. So Dean Burgon, the great Bible scholar, declared, “As for thoughts being inspired apart from the words which give them expression you might as well talk of a tune without notes.”

Secondly, *it is a plenary inspiration*. By this we mean that the Bible in its entirety is inspired. This rejects the heretical theory that parts of the Bible are divinely inspired and other parts are not. All is equally and completely inspired and comes from the mouth of Him who cannot lie. Thus a true understanding of the doctrine of inspiration leads us to accept the infallibility and the inerrancy of Holy Scripture.

The word of God then remains the only rule of faith and practise for our church.

The Supreme Majesty of the Son of God

All sound biblical doctrine leads us unmistakably to our Lord Jesus Christ in all the excellencies of His blessed person and work. Christ is the Sun of Righteousness around which all the planets of sound doctrine revolve. The doctrine of the Bible and of our denomination is Christ-centred.

C. H. Spurgeon once said, “I delight to preach unto you all the doctrines which I find in God’s Word but I desire to preach the Person of Christ above the doctrine. The doctrine is but the chair in which Christ sits as the prophet to instruct.” At the very heart of every Bible truth we have the Lord Jesus Christ enshrined and enthroned in all His glorious majesty. The acid test of a true biblical orthodoxy is found in the question put by our Lord in Matthew 22:42— “What think ye of Christ, whose son is he?” As a church we must give a very clear response to this question: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Our church has always held the most exalted views of Jesus Christ. That is why over the last fifty years we have been in the forefront of those who have defended the glory of His Name against all the satanic attacks that have been hurled against it. We believe Christ is the only head of the church as our *Confession of Faith* indicates:

“There is no other head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ: nor can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof; but is that antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalted himself in the church against Christ, and all that is called God.”

We believe in the Lord Jesus Christ’s eternal sonship, His absolute deity, His virgin birth and incarnation, His impeccable humanity, His full atonement and particular redemption, His bodily resurrection, His glorious ascension, His session at God’s right hand as the great high priest, and His coming again in power and great glory.

The Singular Sufficiency of the Lamb of God

In the last point we looked at the Head of the church; now we touch its heart. The Free Presbyterian Church stands unapologetically for the doctrine of the precious blood. At the very centre of the mysteries of our faith stands the cross of Christ. H. D. Brown, a faithful defender of the faith, made these words the keynote of

his ministry: “The Blood must stand out in solitary splendour.” May this be the keynote of our future ministry as it has always been in the past.

We should note two things about the sufficiency of the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. First, *it is a singular sacrifice* (Hebrews 10:12). It is a once-for-all-never-to-be-repeated sacrifice. We assert with the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, “The Popish sacrifice of the mass, as they call it, is most abominably injurious to Christ’s one only sacrifice, the alone propitiation for all the sins of the elect.”

Second, *it is a satisfactory sacrifice*. In His sufferings and death Christ made satisfaction to the just demands of God’s law and justice. Having been satisfied, God “will not payment twice demand, first at my bleeding surety’s hand and then again at mine.”

The Sovereign Mystery of the Grace of God

How can a guilty sinner be saved and accepted as righteous in the sight of a holy God? The answer to that question leads us unmistakably to the saving, sovereign grace of God (Eph. 2:8). The Free Church is a debtor to the grace of God. If sinners have been saved over the fifty years of our witness, it must be attributed to the free and sovereign mercy and grace of God: the grace of God in election (Eph. 1:4-5), in redemption (Eph. 5:25), in regeneration (Titus 3:5), in conversion through justifying faith and evangelical repentance (Eph. 2:8; Acts 5:31), in adoption (Gal. 4:5-6), in sanctification (2 Thess. 2:13), and in glorification (Rom. 8:30).

This is the faith for which we have earnestly contended. May God give us grace in future days to remain faithful to our calling as we stand and witness for God. ■

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