

The Free Presbyterian Magazine

**Issued by the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland
Reformed in Doctrine, Worship and Practice**

“Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth” Psalm 60:4

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January: First Sabbath: Nkayi; **Fourth:** Auckland, Inverness, New Canaan.

February: First Sabbath: Broadstairs; **Second:** Dingwall; **Third:** Stornoway; **Fourth:** Larne, North Uist, Zenka.

March: First Sabbath: Sydney, Ullapool; **Second:** Ness, Portree, Tarbert; **Third:** Halkirk, Kyle of Lochalsh; **Fourth:** Barnoldswick; **Fifth:** Ingwenya, North Tolsta.

April: Second Sabbath: Leverburgh, Maware, Staffin; **Third:** Gisborne, Chesley, Laide; **Fourth:** Glasgow, Mbuma.

May: First Sabbath: Aberdeen, Grafton, London; **Second:** Achmore, Donsa, Scourie; **Third:** Edinburgh; **Fourth:** Chiedza.

June: First Sabbath: Farr, Perth; **Second:** Nkayi, Santa Fe, Shiedaig; **Third:** Lochcarron, Uig; **Fourth:** Gairloch, Raasay; **Fifth:** Bulawayo, Inverness.

July: First Sabbath: Beauly; **Second:** Bonar Bridge, Staffin; **Third:** Applecross, Auckland, Fort William; **Fourth:** Cameron, Struan.

August: First Sabbath: Dingwall; **Second:** Leverburgh, New Canaan, Somakantana; **Third:** Laide; **Fourth:** Vatten; **Fifth:** Stornoway, Tomatin, Zenka.

September: First Sabbath: Chesley, Larne, Sydney, Ullapool; **Second:** Halkirk, Munaka, Portree; **Third:** Tarbert; **Fourth:** Aberdeen, Barnoldswick, Ingwenya, North Uist.

October: First Sabbath: Dornoch, Grafton, Lochcarron, North Tolsta; **Second:** Gairloch, Ness; **Third:** London; **Fourth:** Edinburgh, Gisborne, Uig, Mbuma.

November: Second Sabbath: Glasgow; **Third:** Wellington; **Fifth:** Chiedza.

December: First Sabbath: Singapore; **Third:** Bulawayo, Santa Fe, Tauranga.

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The Twilight of Christianity?

At the Reformation in Scotland, John Knox (probably born 500 years ago, in 1514) noted “how potently God hath performed . . . the promises made to the servants of God by the Prophet Esaias, ‘They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint’ (Is 40:31). What was our force? What was our number? What wisdom or worldly policy was in us, to have brought to a good end so great an enterprise? Our very enemies can bear witness. Yet in how great purity did God establish among us His true religion, as well in doctrine as in ceremonies!” In the spirit of worship, Knox wished that “all praise” would be “to God alone” and acknowledged that their strength had come from God.¹

The year 1560 was a high point in the work of God in Scotland. Yet we certainly should not look back on the past through rose-tinted spectacles. Even during the 12 further years for which Knox was to be spared, he had to endure many disappointments as forces opposed to a scriptural Church pushed back against the gains that had been made. Many have been the ups and downs in Scottish Church history since that time, but it is impossible to ignore the evidence that true religion in Scotland today is at a very low ebb – as it is in England and many other countries which, in other ages, saw God work powerfully and on a large scale.

One is tempted to describe our generation as experiencing the twilight of Christianity. Church attendance is declining; the influence of the Church on society is weakening; ignorance of the Bible and its teachings is increasing; less and less attention is being paid to God’s law. This last point is perhaps most vividly illustrated when parliaments alter a principle which is as old as the earth: that marriage is between a man and a woman (see Gen 2:24). UK Culture Secretary Maria Miller, among others, even called legalising same-sex marriage “the right thing to do”; she must entirely have lost sight of the fact that one’s sense of right and wrong needs a foundation, and that the true foundation is the will of God as revealed in Scripture. At the same time, the

¹ John Knox, *The Reformation in Scotland*, Banner of Truth, 1982 reprint, p 261-2.

larger Churches are giving a very unsatisfactory lead. The Episcopal Church in the United States of America has, since at least 2003, been willing to ordain practising homosexuals to the ministry, and the Church of Scotland has travelled a long way down the same ungodly road.

Most serious of all, Christ Himself seems to be withdrawing from Scotland – from the professing Church and from the country as a whole – as is the case elsewhere also. Few, it appears, are being regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit and beginning to follow the Saviour. And among those who profess conversion, there often appears to be little difference between their lifestyle and that of the world.

It was “toward evening” – it was perhaps already twilight – when the two disciples reached Emmaus, and their conversation with Jesus was likely to be interrupted. They felt something precious in His words, although they still did not understand who it was that had joined them on the way and had made their hearts burn within them as He spoke to them, opening up the Scriptures. And if we are forced to conclude that Christ is no longer showing His presence and power in the way that once He did – if the Sun of righteousness is not shining on His Church as He did in times past – we may describe such a time as the twilight of Christianity. No, He has not altogether withdrawn as yet; the Sun of righteousness still shines, but dimly. But we should be concerned that this trend will continue into the future, that He will abandon Scotland, and other countries, to total spiritual darkness.

What should those do who are concerned about the situation? Just what the two disciples did on their way to Emmaus: call to the One who had joined them: “Abide with us” (Lk 24:29). We must pray that the great Head of the Church would show His power by changing the entire spiritual situation in Scotland and everywhere else. What should we pray for in particular? Perhaps first of all, that the Lord would, for Christ’s sake, send the Holy Spirit to bless the Bible to those who read it and to apply sound preaching wherever God-sent messengers are making known the counsel of God. Well might we take up the petition of David: “Let the whole earth be filled with His glory” (Ps 72:19).

If Christ were to return (in the sense of reversing His withdrawal, rather than coming for the second time at the end of this world) then we would look for a greater degree of conviction of sin, through the Holy Spirit applying that law to sinners. Then such people would recognise that God really does exist, that He does have absolute authority over them, and that His law, which they have so often and so seriously broken, condemns them to a lost eternity. We would expect to see them seeking the Lord with a real sense of urgency, making serious use of the means of grace that are available to them.

We would also expect to see the Spirit working faith and repentance in people's hearts, and this repentance would result in a change of lifestyle: godliness would replace worldliness; a sense of the authority of God's Word would replace submission to the world, the flesh and the devil; a feeling of the preciousness of having the Scriptures opened up would replace the neglect of these Scriptures. And the Spirit would continue His work in the hearts of those who are already believers, enabling them to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, so that some at least would be *manifestly* godly in their lives. A further evidence of Christ's return would be to see Him sending out many ambassadors, men who would speak in His name and with His authority, proclaiming law and gospel – indeed the whole counsel of God.

God hears prayer. Christ responded to the disciples' request that He would abide with them; "He went in to tarry with them". This indicates a continuing willingness to respond to the cry of those who are conscious of spiritual desolation. That was true of Daniel; how earnestly he confessed sin: "We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from Thy precepts and from Thy judgements" (Dan 9:5). So we, in pleading for the return of Christ and an outpouring of the Holy Spirit must confess, not only the sin of the professing Church at large and of the nation, but also our own personal sin.

And Daniel cried, "O my God, incline Thine ear, and hear; open Thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by Thy name: for we do not present our supplications before Thee for our righteousnesses, but for Thy great mercies. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for Thine own sake, O my God: for Thy city and Thy people are called by Thy name" (9:18,19). There is earnestness here, and dependence on God's work, not on human endeavour – a sentiment which is reflected in Knox's acknowledgement that the strength for the work of the Reformation came from God alone. Those who thus pray, notes Matthew Henry, know that God's "reasons of mercy are fetched from within Himself, and therefore from Him we must borrow all our pleas for mercy, and so give honour to Him when we are suing for grace and mercy from Him".

Our generation may be experiencing the twilight of Christianity, but true religion will never dwindle into complete darkness. In answer to prayer – and we do well to remember that prayer is a grace that God gives – He may be pleased quickly to turn the deepening darkness into the bright sunshine of a new day, even in 2014. But whether God's answer comes quickly or otherwise, we are to pray expectantly for a time when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Is 11:9).

God's Power in Conversion¹

A Sermon by *J W Alexander*

Luke 18:27. *The things which are impossible with men, are possible with God.*

These words follow Christ's memorable saying of the camel and the needle's eye. Various attempts have been made to escape the harshness of the declaration. Men have read *cable* for *camel*, as if it were easier for a cable to thread the narrow opening; and some have talked of a little gate, named the "needle's eye". But, after all, the impossibility remains an impossibility. Such was the intention of our great Teacher; and such was the understanding of the apostles, who did not say, How hard for a rich man to be saved! but, "Who then can be saved?" – in other words, it is impossible.

And to this conclusion, the words before us were addressed: You say it is impossible for anyone to be saved; remember that the things which are impossible with men are possible with God. The plain meaning is that, apart from God's effective power, it is impossible for the worldly man to be saved; indeed, the same is true of every unconverted man apart from supernatural power. Though the hindrance is of that particular sort which belongs to things moral, and so is different from material obstacles or difficulties, it is an absolute hindrance, and only God can take the impossibility out of the way. The proposition of the text, of which this is a special case, is general, and implies that God is able to do what is impossible to man, particularly in the way of saving the soul.

1. Human power is very limited. The things which are "impossible with men" are innumerable. All human power is derived, and is granted in small proportions, and for a very narrow circle of effects. Especially is this power scanty and utterly insufficient in the spiritual world. That strength which the first Adam had has been diminished since the fall; in consequence a reflecting man nowhere feels his impotence more than in changing his moral resolutions, dispositions, or character – in others or in himself. Here the things which are impossible with men meet us at every turn.

In the instance of the ruler who came to Jesus, it is perfectly plain to any unbiased mind that the power in question is the power to save a soul; that is, to convert it, to remove the insuperable moral obstacle out of the way. That obstacle is the love of wealth. Here is a most amiable and exemplary young ruler; he is grieved at the necessity to sell all that he had and casts many a longing look behind, but he refuses to follow Christ and goes away. For all this a reason is given: "He was very rich". That settled the question. He trusted in riches; he gave his heart and love to riches. This constituted the impossi-

¹Taken, with editing, from *Faith*, a volume of sermons by Alexander (1804-59).

bility. This led to Christ's terrible utterance, which ought to ring in the ears of the rich, as long as there remains a wealthy sinner on earth.

Now the problem is how to break this influence – to neutralise this attraction, to turn this perverse and idolatrous heart – for till this is done, salvation is impossible. And, if there is any thing intelligible in language, the Saviour teaches that no human power is competent to work this revolution. In the matter of converting a soul to God, all human power is reduced to zero. This is true of the ability to convert a fellow creature, and of the sinner's ability to convert himself.

(1.) There is no power in man *to convert another man*. They are most aware of this who have made the most frequent and strenuous efforts to remove the leopard's spots or change the hue of the Ethiopian. We may argue; we may adduce motives; we may persuade; we may coerce or bribe people to make some external performance; but convert them we cannot.

(2.) There is no power in man *to convert himself*. The text, if it has any meaning at all, has this in it. I know very well how much this differs from the philosophy of our age, and the dictates of proud human nature. It is not the doctrine of Pelagius² merely, but of the natural heart, that a man is able to convert himself at any moment. The doctrine of the text, and of all the Scriptures, is that he has no such ability.

You may call this inability *moral*, and it certainly concerns moral subjects, and so differs from the inability to create or to annihilate a world. But by using such a description you do not bring the effect sought any closer. No one feels himself any nearer to conversion after hearing such a distinction. You say it is a *culpable* inability, and we agree with you; but this does not lessen it. Joseph's brethren hated him and could not speak peaceably unto him; the greater their hatred, the more their guilt – but, at the same time, the more their inability. Theorists on the side of human power sometimes plead for a human ability which nevertheless leaves the sinner utterly indisposed to holy acts. If an ability does not make one able to carry out the action, it is fit only for derision. If, overleaping distinctions, you argue for a complete ability to change the heart, you are clearly at issue with the Word of God, which declares it to be impossible. It is impossible for the camel to pass the needle's eye; it is impossible for the unregenerate sinner to regenerate himself; it is impossible with men.

After reflecting a little on what goes on inside us, it becomes apparent that the human soul has no power to change its own nature. To change one's nature, or even one's dispositions, is not a direct object of human power. The power of the will does not reach it. By a mere act of will, we cannot change

²A fourth/fifth-century monk who rejected original sin and predestination.

hatred to love, or love to hatred. The feelings direct the will, rather than the will the feelings. But we make a violent supposition when we allow, even for a moment, that the sinner wills in the right direction. The very thing he needs is something which shall make him will rightly. Everyone wills according to his disposition and nature. The good tree brings forth good fruit, and the evil tree evil fruit. Make the tree good, and the fruit will be good. But the depraved soul has no power of transporting itself, as it were, against the force of gravity, up beyond the atmosphere of sinning. Such is the humbling truth pronounced by Scripture and confirmed by the experience of every soundly-converted person.

2. What is impossible with men is possible with God. Especially it is possible for Him to change the heart, to save the soul and to rescue even the slave and worshipper of mammon. But it is like causing the camel to march through the eye of a needle. The fair construction of the passage leads us to look upon the salvation of the sinner as a work which requires omnipotence. So in a parallel place we find: "With God all things are possible".

It is good for us often to be contemplating God as almighty. He always accomplishes all that He wills. What are described as natural impossibilities, are not objects of power, and commonly involve absurdity or self-contradiction in their very statement. Moral impossibilities, or such things as would involve God in denying Himself, are equally excluded from the scope of omnipotence. But there remains an infinite range for the sweep of this divine perfection. The work is immediate; He wills and it is done. We readily open our minds to the belief of this power, when exercised on the material universe; but equally it operates in the vaster world of mind. He that could create the soul can recreate it. And we do not find any class of divine operations more frequently mentioned in Scripture than those by which He moulds and changes the spiritual nature, producing new directions of human thought and feeling, and new determinations of the human will – all in perfect accordance with that constitution of moral freedom which He has Himself ordained.

Here Pelagian error, among its many forms, springs up in a shape suited to the prepossessions of our age. Pelagians tell us that God Himself cannot act as a cause upon the will; that it is of the very nature of will to act without a cause, in a self-determining manner. To render this more plausible, a specious distinction is devised between things natural, proceeding according to the sequence of cause and effect, and powers supernatural – namely, moral or free – with which cause and effect have nothing to do. Hence every man is a god unto himself, in all that he wills; and not even the Almighty can cause him to will or do anything, by any influence other than by presenting motives. God Himself, they say, cannot operate as a cause upon the soul of

a sinner. To work upon an ungodly will, is not among the objects of power. Pelagius taught the same in a cruder form.

Suppose we should allow this boastful distinction; suppose we should remove all that concerns the will, all that is moral, from the cycle and system of cause and effect; we should only be allowing Pelagius to beg the question in debate. That question is whether God can operate directly upon the soul to produce holy acts, or to infuse a holy principle.

If with these errorists we say, No, we fly in the face of Scripture, and yield all that is worth retaining in the system of grace. For what is grace, but God communicating to the soul of man, effecting that good action which is beyond the power of unaided nature. Just put the proud assumption into plain language: God Himself cannot cause holy sentiments in any creature. For the moment (say they) you introduce the relation of cause, you expel the notion of freedom; thus they invent a condition of freedom which philosophy does not accept and which would make religion impossible. As if He who made the soul, and made it free, could not so act upon it as to render its holiness certain and yet leave its freedom untouched! To will is in its very nature free. But God works in us both to will and do of His good pleasure. Therefore it is possible for God to act causatively upon the will, without destroying its freedom.

They talk of moral suasion (as if there was any other sort of persuasion); they condescend to admit that God can persuade; He converts the soul by arguing, and He is the greatest persuader because He is the best reasoner. But as to any proper effectiveness on the souls of sinners to turn them to God – No, away with it, they say; it violates liberty; it brings natural laws into the domain of the supernatural; in a word, it is impossible with God. With such a belief, one must read the whole Bible backwards and make conversion by God a fable. What an irrelevance does the reply of Jesus become!

They were considering the case of a sinner whose conversion, on any human principles, is out of the question. Jesus replies: It is possible with God. How so? How is it possible with God, if God cannot put forth a single influence which shall act upon the will of that sinner – if that will is the mountainous obstacle in the way? If everything depends on the self-determination of the sinner, with which God cannot interfere without destroying liberty, obligation and morals, then we ought to invert the text, and read, That which is impossible with God is possible with man.

Solemnly pondered, this one verse, without any other, is enough to establish the doctrine of God's power over the soul. For what does it declare that God is able to do? You answer at once, To secure the sinner's salvation; that is, to convert his soul; that is, to change his purposes. And let it be observed that

liberty must be equally endangered – in the view of those who dread any such action of God as must always end with what He has appointed – whether this is done directly or indirectly, by one act or by a series of acts terminating in the sinner being turned to Christ.

When the text teaches that it is possible for God to convert the most hopeless sinner, it is declaring that conversion is a work of power. God does not say in His counsels, I will throw in light; I will offer motives; I will outbid the world; I will try persuading that wealthy foe – not, however, meddling with the sacredness of his inviolable will. No, He says, I will convert that Pharisee; I will envelop that soul in a cloud of overpowering glory; I will act upon the very seat and source of all choices; I will renew that persecutor's nature and bring him to My feet.

Now I put it to every unprejudiced and simple mind, Is this not the very impression which is derived from reading the Scriptures for a course of years? Do we not find them everywhere referring regeneration and conversion to the power of God – a power operating directly on the human will? And is the opposite doctrine not constructed by inferences from foregone conclusions in philosophy? The truth is: philosophers themselves have not been at one on this point; a large proportion of them, including some of the ablest, have maintained that divine activity and human liberty are perfectly consistent. We argue purely in ignorance when we object that, if God operates as a cause upon the will, He impairs or destroys moral freedom. This is not a truth of intuition, to be assumed without proof; nor can it be demonstrated.

From the very nature of the case, we cannot be conscious of whether a higher power is acting on us or not. We are indeed conscious that we act freely, and this is a truth which we cheerfully avow. But we possess no such certainty on the other side, as could justify the contempt which some people cast on Scripture's teaching about God's real, gracious influence on the soul. To say that, in turning unto God, we act without spiritual influence, is to say more than we know, or can know, without revelation. But all the teaching of revelation is so clearly the other way that the greatest ingenuity is needed to explain away its language. The convert knows, by his consciousness, that he acts, that he acts from motives, that he never acted more freely in his life. But he cannot know from consciousness that God acts. Of this, God must testify, which He does when He assures us by His servant Paul that it is God who works in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure. It is therefore possible with God!

Age after age this doctrine has been a target for assailants, while it has been precious in the esteem of true believers. The controversy first took a definite shape in the days when Augustine in Africa and Jerome in Palestine

raised the standard against Pelagius and his followers. The writings of Augustine in particular have been the arsenal of theologians in this warfare; and for many years they succeeded in keeping the decisions of the so-called Catholic Church on the right side on this issue. But the mystery of iniquity was continually, though secretly, working against grace. Various schools of error within the Church, but especially the Franciscans, and above all the Jesuits, laboured for a scheme favourable to human nature till it was clear that the body of Popish scholars had become radically corrupt.

We also find the doctrine of our text prominent at the Reformation. It had been taught by Wycliffe and Hus, and Luther championed it in his controversy with Erasmus. In this matter there was no division among the Reformers. Down to our own day, pure evangelical piety is uniformly found associated with high views of God's spiritual power and direct effectiveness, in the conversion of the sinner. On the other hand, wherever we observe a breaking of the Protestant and Puritan line, a retreat from Reformation ground and the confessions of the Reformed Churches, and a desertion of the ranks for liberalism and the Socinian heresy, we find a corresponding and proportional disposition to fritter away the meaning of Scripture declarations concerning man's helplessness and the power of the Holy Spirit. And these two antagonist systems will not end their great campaign till truth shall sound her trumpet in ultimate victory.

If then there is any creed which can truly be called Catholic, as having commanded the support of the best Christians, in all generations of the Church, it is this: conversion by any human agent is impossible; God converts the sinner; His act in regeneration and conversion is an act of power; such agency does not overbear or obliterate human freedom; and the power of God in this field of grace is infinite.

Application. 1. We must all admit that there is much in this *to humble and alarm the impenitent sinner*, and this may account for some of the opposition which the doctrine has encountered. No one likes to hear that he is poor and miserable and blind and naked. To be dependent on someone else is humiliating, if not galling. Human greatness, by puffing up the depraved dispositions, indisposes men to submit to God's method of saving sinners.

The doctrine of the text and its context shows no complacency towards ungodly wealth. It announces the infinite peril of setting the heart on earthly good. The great danger is that every hearer will be thinking of someone wealthier than himself. We have no reason to think that the young ruler was a millionaire, or that Jesus directed the never-to-be-forgotten needle's eye only to those who possessed hundreds of thousands. The arrow of conviction flies clear over your head, while you whisper, Who is this rich man? It is that

eminent banker or successful merchant or happy heir; it is not I! And a second says, It is not I! And others add the echo, It is not I!

Yes, it is you and you and you! Do not look around you; look no further. It is you who have already been kept away from Christ by the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches. The group has vanished. Jesus and that kneeling, sorrowing, departing young ruler have long since passed in body from this earth. But in reality, each of you passes before Jesus; each of you hears His proposal; each of you has rejected it. Your condition is fearful. Each of you is in the hands of an offended God. But for His sovereign power, your salvation is impossible.

2. Believers *ascribe their conversion to the power of God*. It was impossible with men. Grace wrought it, by the same mighty power which raised Jesus from the dead. Does it seem mysterious that Omnipotence should move the human will at regeneration? Scripture does not relieve the mystery. "The wind bloweth . . . so is every one . . . born of the Spirit." Those who are so renewed, are "born, not . . . of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God". Paul confirms this: "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy". All the saints in heaven agree in ascribing the original action to God and not to themselves, and in owning that, if He had not first sought them, they never would have sought Him. The very disposition towards being saved is from His free love: "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God".

The difficulty of selecting passages from Scripture on this subject is great, because of their large number. Better than single proof texts is the whole tenor of the New Testament, which ascribes the new nature and all holy thoughts, feelings and choices, to the power of God. It is hardly possible for any man, whatever his theory may be, to fall down on his knees and refer to his own conversion, without using expressions which indicate that the effectiveness was from God, and that His grace operated upon the creature as a real cause. This is implied in all our thanksgivings and all our confessions. This is that heavenly effectual calling, about which the apostles express themselves so strongly, and which is everywhere referred to God's sovereign pleasure. Nor is there any temper of soul more congenial to true piety than that in which the believer says, "We are the clay, and Thou our Potter".

3. The doctrine which we have been studying gives the greatest possible *encouragement to prayer for the unconverted*. Prayers of this kind have of late besieged heaven – going up in squadrons and mighty armies. All in vain, if God exercises no power antecedent to the sinner's consent. We have those who are dear to us as life, and for whom we intercede; perhaps they are beside us now; perhaps they are where no power but that of the Almighty

can reach them. But it does not matter whether God reaches them or not, if He is at the mercy of their stubborn hearts, and if His omnipotence cannot sway their will. If Jehovah can put forth no causation in regard to human choices, then He cannot secure the holiness of those for whom we plead. It is not God, but they, who hold the power to decide.

To pray to them might be reasonable, but not to pray to God. For what can God do, unless they consent to act first? Let the impiety be with such as have broached and trumpeted the unscriptural tenet! No, it is our comfort, and it encourages us to lift up our head in prayer to God, that He is able to influence the unregenerate soul with direct rays of converting power. The things which are impossible with men, are possible with God.

He can breathe on the swollen tide of unholy thoughts flowing along its rocky channel and instantaneously turn back the free yet mighty river, so that it now flows as sweetly heavenward as its flow was turbulently towards the lake of fire. Unless then we mock heaven when we ask God to convert the rebel, we mean more than this: that He should do so if the rebel agrees to convert himself. And our hope of the eventual illumination of the world, the future perseverance of holy angels, and the everlasting fidelity of ransomed saints, resides wholly in the power of God being exerted to keep them from falling.

This earth of ours, ever since it was blessed with the gospel, has seen comparatively little of the omnipotence of grace. She has not seen the knowledge of God inundating her populations "as the waters cover the sea". She has not seen nations born at once. She has not seen Israel restored, idolatry abolished, and all men knowing the Lord. But she shall see this, and more. She shall see it in answer to prayer. She shall see it as the consequence of God's irresistible and gracious influence on each individual soul. It is the glory of the Holy Ghost thus to work on the corrupt mass of humanity. These are supernatural influences, and without them religion degenerates into a poor form of rationalism. Here we fix ourselves; on this we hang for ourselves and for others – for the beginnings of our new life, for its consummation, for regeneration, for sanctification and for glory. "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgements, and His ways past finding out. For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen" (Rom 11:33,36).

Faith works by love but natural conscience works by fear.

God will rule by the sceptre of love. God would have His people a willing people.

Every natural man is an inward atheist.

Reason is the great enemy of faith, and when it is sanctified it is the great servant of faith.

Thomas Manton

The Covenant of Grace¹

1. The Grace of the Covenant

Rev Roderick Macleod

The *Shorter Catechism* states, “The decrees of God are His eternal purpose, according to the counsel of His will, whereby, for His own glory, He hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass” (Ans 7). One important aspect of the eternal decree is the divine purpose to save some of the fallen race of Adam from ruin. The fact that God saves any sinner is a matter of pure grace, or unmerited kindness. The fact that He decrees to save one and not another is divine sovereignty. The arrangement by which elect sinners are saved is called the *covenant of grace*. It is like a jewel with many facets. No earthly prince could ever have admired his priceless jewels with such delight as the believer may admire that priceless arrangement we call the covenant of grace.

A covenant is a formal legal agreement or contract involving two or more parties about a matter that they each have an interest in. In it, one or more of the parties bind themselves to obligations. In this paper, the covenant discussed is that eternal arrangement between the Father, representing the glorious Trinity, and the Lord Jesus Christ as the “last Adam”, representing His people. This covenant is concerned with the salvation of God’s elect. *The Shorter Catechism* says, “God having, out of His mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer” (Ans 20).

Grace. The word has various uses in common English. Even in the Bible it has more than one meaning. We are at present concentrating on *grace* as a divine attribute. It is the attribute of divine goodness, viewed in a particular light; it is God’s boundless, timeless and changeless goodness viewed in a unique way. When infinite goodness freely bestows salvation, or any aspect of it, on one who in himself is viewed as unworthy, God’s goodness is called “grace”. It will help us form a clearer idea of what grace is if we view it by way of contrast. It is not merit which we have accrued by works of righteousness. When the Word of God speaks of grace in the context of the salvation of sinners, it is opposed to merit and works.

In Romans 4:4 Paul states, “Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness”. In 2 Timothy he says that God “hath saved us, and called us with an holy call-

¹The first section of a paper presented at last year’s Theological Conference.

ing, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began”.

Paul makes plain that the salvation of the elect, based on free, sovereign grace, is irreconcilably opposed to the idea of salvation or election, based on merit accrued by works. He states, “And if it is by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work” (Rom 11:6). Paul insists that election is based on God’s sovereign and gracious will, decreeing that some shall be saved; it is not based on God looking to see who will be worthy to be elected. He will not allow us to think that these two, grace and human merit, can be mixed. This verse teaches that if we add one drop of works to grace, then grace ceases to be grace.

Paul compares what God decreed about the two brothers, Jacob and Esau. His argument shows that election is God in His grace sovereignly choosing a people from eternity: “For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth” (Rom 9:11).

Paul sees that the idea that merit is accrued by “works of righteousness” has great credit among men, and he labours to move them off it. He never says anything against good works, but he abhors the idea of self-righteousness, or merit accrued by sinners through their good works. He condemns the attitude of mind which imagines that we put God in debt to us by what we do for Him, or that God owes us salvation for our (poor) obedience to His law. Paul would put this counterfeit religion out of the Church because by it God is dishonoured and Christ’s righteousness is despised; it will keep those who trust in it out of heaven.

Human merit cannot justify a sinner. What use is it to trust in something that cannot justify? “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law” (Gal 2:16). “That no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith” (Gal 3:11). What use is it to trust in something that cannot remove the curse of the broken law? “For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them (Gal 3:10).

Let us take heed to the warnings against trusting in human merit. It manifests a mind blind to our own sinfulness. Our words and thoughts are stained with sin. Behind every sinful thought or word, and every sinful feeling, there is a sinful nature defiling our moral character, making certain that everything proceeding out of our hearts will be sinful. To trust in human merit betrays ignorance about the Fall and its sad effects on us personally.

It manifests blindness to the spiritual depth and breadth of the law. It also manifests blindness of mind to the demands of the strict justice of God. It betrays a soul-ruining ignorance of the sweet reign of grace. This mercenary kind of religion is the ruin of thousands in the anti-Christian religion – a counterfeit Christianity and another gospel.

Grace can accomplish what the merit accrued by our righteousness (so-called) cannot. By this blessed attribute of divine grace, God gives help and mercy: “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb 4:16).

By grace alone sinners are accepted: “To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved” (Eph 1:6).

Grace purchased redemption and gives forgiveness: “In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace” (Eph 1:7).

By grace the spiritually dead are made alive: God, “even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)” (Eph 2:5).

The Almighty God justifies the ungodly. Because grace reigns in His Kingdom, God justifies sinners without reference to their moral character: “Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom 3:24).

By grace sinners are effectually called. Paul affirmed that this calling was by free, sovereign grace: “God, who . . . called me by His grace” (Gal 1:15).

By grace they are adopted: “Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will” (Eph 1:5).

By grace they are sanctified: “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh” (Ezek 36:26).

By grace they persevere unto the end: “I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from Me” (Jer 32:40).

By grace they are brought to eternal glory: “For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly” (Ps 84:11).

Let us drive counterfeit works out of our hearts and lives, finish with the covenant of works and our own righteousness, and fall down at the feet of the sovereign God of all grace, saying,

“Remember me, Lord, with that love which Thou to Thine dost bear;
with Thy salvation, O my God, to visit me draw near:

That I Thy chosen's good may see, and in their joy rejoice;
And may with Thine inheritance triumph with cheerful voice".

(Ps 106:4, metrical).

It is a Covenant of Grace because God is Gracious. As was affirmed already, grace is a divine attribute. It resides in the heart of the Father: He is the "God of all grace". It resides in the heart of the Son: it is "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ". It is the leading governing principle in all that Christ did and continues to do for the redemption of His people. The Lord Jesus Christ is "full of grace and truth" – that is, He is exceedingly gracious and is therefore infinitely bounteous to all who ask to be made rich by Him according to the terms of the covenant of grace. Grace resides in the heart of the Holy Spirit: He is "the Spirit of grace".

God has erected a throne, to which sinners may come, and it is characterised by grace. There grace dispenses the benefits of redemption "without money and without price", to condemned sinners who make use of this blessed provision. Grace is compared to a sovereign invested with royal power and authority. "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom 5:21). Grace, viewed as a divine attribute revealed in Christ, is adorned with both the beauty of holiness and the tenderest compassion and applied with irresistible power.

Grace is infinite kindness and is accompanied with infinite authority to dispense all good things from His banqueting house to the greatest sinner under the gospel, if he will have them. Grace delivers guilty sinners from the jaws of destruction. Grace bestows gifts liberally on men who in themselves are unworthy through sin, but it absolutely refuses to meet with sinners on any terms but its own, which are absolutely gracious. Neither will grace conduct the affairs of the covenant with the self-righteous, but only with self-condemned sinners. When grace wounds the self-righteous, proud sinner, it is like a surgeon wounding in order to heal.

An old writer summed up the freeness of salvation by the covenant of grace in these words: "Entirely detached from every supposition of human worth and operating independently of all conditions performed by man, it rises superior to human guilt and superabounds over human unworthiness". This is the grace that characterises the covenant.

If the Son of God experienced a storm, His people cannot plead exemption. But they have ground to pray for a prosperous voyage and reason to expect that providence will give it, if divine wisdom has no purpose to serve by a tempest.

The very opposition made to the kingdom of Christ is a part of the plan of divine wisdom.

Alexander Carson

Peter Maclean¹

Neil Dewar

Peter Maclean was born in May 1800 in the parish of Uig, in the Isle of Lewis. He was educated in the parish school, but with no thought of the ministry. He began a business and was very successful, but that was not to be his life work. The Lord had bestowed on him qualities of both head and heart which were well fitted, in His providence, to succeed in business, but He had a use for those gifts in the highest work in which a man can labour, and they were consecrated to that work when the time came.

A remarkable spiritual awakening began in Lewis in 1823. Alexander Macleod was minister of Uig, and his parish received a great blessing. In November 1825 Peter Maclean came under the power of the truth. One evening, he had, for the first time, to conduct family worship at home. The part of Scripture he began to read was Hosea 6. He had only read a sentence or two when he was arrested by the arrow of conviction in his soul. At the end of the second verse he had to pause and go back to the beginning, but sobs made him unable to proceed. His convictions were deep and thorough.

Yet, in the midst of his own alarm and anguish, he thought of the souls of others, and that very night he went to his neighbours and called on them to rise from their beds and seek God's mercy. The people were awestruck. Some rose and began to pray; and at least one gave sufficient evidence in after life that his arousing that night resulted in a saving change. Having found rest in the Saviour, Maclean was possessed with an ardent desire for the conversion of others. To the last, this was one of the most prominent features of his character. After a time, he lost all heart for the work he was doing; he decided to give up his business and pursue his education with a view to the ministry, should the Lord be pleased to make his call clear. In winding up his affairs he gave a clear proof of his love to the brethren by blotting out of his books all the money they owed him.

After a short time at Aberdeen Grammar School, he entered King's College, also in Aberdeen, in 1828. The following session he went to Edinburgh, where he completed his arts and theological courses. In 1832 he became a missionary among Highlanders, especially non-churchgoers, in Edinburgh and Leith. He visited them during the week and addressed meetings on Sabbath evenings. He became deeply interested in this work, and the Lord blessed it. It was therefore very reluctantly that, later that year, he went to take charge of the parish school in Uig.

¹Abridged from *Disruption Worthies of the Highlands*. The writer was a nineteenth-century Free Church minister of Kingussie, Inverness-shire.

In 1836 he was licensed. Soon afterwards a call was sent to him from Highland settlers in Cape Breton, Canada, some of whom had known him before they emigrated. He felt it his duty to accept it and he was ordained to the mission in 1837. After arriving, he threw himself into his work in this extensive field with characteristic zeal and thoroughness. He made his headquarters at Whycomah and laboured throughout the island, preaching almost daily. From the outset, the people had a thirst for the Word and crowds came to hear him.

In 1839, it was seen that the Spirit of the Lord was at work; many had been brought under concern for their salvation. He had seen the first drops of a shower. A deep, widespread awakening soon followed. To all Maclean's other labours – of preaching, promoting schools, distributing books, selling Bibles – there was now added the welcome task of visiting, or meeting at his house, multitudes of anxious inquirers. When visiting the settlement many years afterwards, his former elders told him that all those whom he and they had believed were truly converted were continuing consistently in their Christian profession. This is a striking testimony to the reality of the work, as well as to the soundness of his discernment.

Maclean often suffered from the exposure and fatigue of long journeys through the settlement. He might say that he was “in journeyings often, in perils of waters . . . in perils in the wilderness . . . in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often”. Once, returning home by night across a frozen lake, after having become hot while preaching, a dangerous illness seized him and people despaired of his life. Another time, while far from home, a raging storm overtook him at night and he was glad to pass the night in a log cabin, sharing the accommodation – 10 feet by 12 – with children, parents, grandparents, and a black cow! On another occasion, hurrying to a Presbytery meeting, he had to urge his horse through a forest on fire, while burning branches fell all round. But as long as his strength held out and his Master's work was prospering, he was happy, and thought little of the toil and hardship. But after labouring in the colony for five years, his strength gave way completely, and in 1842 he had to return to Scotland. His health was so poor that his friends scarcely expected him to get better.

After a short period of rest, he recovered a good measure of strength and he felt it a sin to be idle. The Disruption was now imminent and he resolved to preach the gospel in those parts of the West Highlands and Islands where the need was greatest as a result of the blighting reign of Moderatism. His fame as a powerful preacher soon spread far and near, and immense crowds flocked over moors and seas to hear him. The effects were remarkable: often large gatherings seemed powerfully moved as one man, numbers being

unable to refrain from expressing their feelings aloud. The fruit is never so abundant as the blossom; this is true in the spiritual world as in the physical. But genuine fruit did follow, much of which has been harvested, while some remains to this day.

Maclean was in Edinburgh on the day of the Disruption and he rejoiced that so many were ready to sacrifice their earthly all for Christ's crown and the liberties of His people. He accepted a call from the Free Church congregation of Tobermory, on the Isle of Mull, and was inducted there in August 1843. Soon afterwards, he married a godly lady who proved a true helpmeet. He applied himself energetically to his work in this new sphere. He made frequent preaching journeys to Ardnamurchan and Morven as well as to various places in Mull. The Lord continued to bless his labours. While his great aim was to be an instrument in bringing souls to Christ, he was a formidable champion of Free Church principles.

In 1853 Maclean visited Canada as a deputy from the Free Church. One of his first duties was to dispense the Lord's Supper at Whycocomah. It was a profoundly stirring, but solemn, scene. "I may truly say", he writes, "that I never witnessed a more solemn and interesting communion season." Such a large gathering, estimated at 10 000 had never been seen in those parts. We may get some idea of size of the congregation from the 200 boats moored in the bay and the 500 horses tied up in the woods. During this visit of some months, Maclean scarcely rested a single day; he travelled 7289 miles, and preached 91 times, besides prayer-meetings and other addresses.

During his pastorate at Tobermory he refused proposed calls from various congregations at home and in the colonies. No minister could be more revered by his people than he was. But circumstances tended gradually to raise the question of a change of sphere. He lost fully half of his congregation, by emigration or by moving to the mainland. This was the result of the destitution which followed the failure of the potato crop.

Thus when a call from the Free Church congregation of Stornoway came to him in 1855, he was inclined to consider it, though it was only after much conflict and earnest prayer for light that he saw that it was his duty to accept it. He was inducted in Stornoway in June. His labours in this large congregation were very demanding: preaching three times every Sabbath, conducting two or three meetings during the week, along with other pastoral duties. Though here he met with a good deal to discourage him, he also had tokens of the presence of the Master. In 1859 especially, there was a time of revival in his congregation and in others on the island. The people had a great thirst for the means of grace, so that weekday services had to be multiplied, and an assistant appointed for a time. Not a few were added to the Church.

In 1861 Maclean's health broke down again completely and he was laid aside from active work for two years. This was a great trial to him, not only because of his physical suffering, but chiefly because, to use his own words, "the Lord has been pleased to deprive me of the one thing that I had asked, that I might be engaged in preaching the gospel. My highest ambition on earth was to preach Christ crucified to poor sinners, and to enjoy fellowship with Himself and His saints in His house." When his health did not improve under medical treatment, a sea voyage was recommended, and the liberality of his people supplied the means. He sailed to Boston, in the United States, but returned by the same ship. While on the passage, laid low by his trouble, he wrote in his diary: "Here I resolved and promised the Lord that, should He spare me and give me strength, I would cross the same sea again to America to preach the everlasting gospel". It was not till the spring of 1863 that, still somewhat unwell but with unabated zeal, he was able to resume work.

After another visit to Cape Breton in 1866, he resumed his duties in Stornoway, often expressing a hope that the Lord would visit the congregation with times of refreshing. But his work was done. That winter, while returning from the communion at Uig, he got wet and caught a severe cold accompanied by a cough which developed into bronchitis. For 15 months he suffered much, and for eight of these he was confined to bed. Except for one short interval, his mind was always clear and his soul in perfect peace. More than once he was heard saying, "I have served a good Master, a good Master". The good Master came at last, and removed him from his sufferings to rest and reward on 28 March 1868.

Peter Maclean possessed great force of character, and no one could know him without being struck with how entirely he was devoted to his Master's work. Manly, straightforward and conscientious, he disdained ignoble ends and motives and carnal policy. This purity was as conspicuous as the strength of his character. He was most uncompromising and faithful in maintaining what he believed to be Bible truth and Bible principle, and in reproving error and sin. He did not fear the face of man or shrink from reproving and exhorting, in private as well as from the pulpit. As a preacher, he was forcible and effective. Possessing a vigorous mind, a ready memory and a warm heart, he grasped his subject vividly, and could expound clearly and illustrate graphically. He had an earnest and impressive manner – sometimes vehement, then tender.

The last day will declare his success in the ministry. On this subject he was extremely reserved; he never spoke of what he had done. Once his wife referred to a paragraph in a Canadian paper, in which he was spoken of as the spiritual father of thousands. She asked him if it was true that his labours

had been so greatly blessed. He answered, "It would have been better if the writer of that notice had used the word 'hundreds'; yes, I think he might have said 'hundreds'". That was the only reference he ever made to the matter. We cannot, however, doubt that he was instrumental in turning many unto righteousness, and that he has no obscure place among those who shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever.

Prayer¹

3. What is Necessary for Acceptable Prayer

Charles Hodge

(1.) *Sincerity*. For prayer to be acceptable, there must most obviously be sincerity. God is a Spirit. He searches the heart. He is not satisfied with words or with external homage. He cannot be deceived and He will not be mocked. It is therefore a great sin in His sight when our hearts do not join in the words we utter before Him. We sin against Him when we pray and do not have any corresponding feelings of reverence – although angels would veil their faces in these circumstances. We also sin when we use forms of thanksgiving without gratitude, or those of humility and confession without any due sense of our unworthiness, or make petitions without any desire for the blessings we ask. Even sincere Christians must acknowledge that this evil often affects their prayers, and when, in places of public worship, multitudes repeat solemn forms of devotion – or profess to unite with those who utter them – without the corresponding emotions, the service is little better than mockery.

(2.) *Reverence*. God is infinitely exalted: infinite in His holiness as well as in knowledge and power. He is to be revered by all who are round about Him. He declares that this holy fear must be the first element in all true religion. His people are described as those who fear His name. We must serve Him with reverence and godly fear. And when heaven is revealed to us in Scripture, its inhabitants are seen bowing before the throne. So we offend God when we address Him as we would a fellow creature, or with undue familiarity. The prayers recorded in the Bible are pervaded with reverence. Every Psalm is a prayer, whether of worship, of thanksgiving, of confession or of supplication. In many cases all these elements are intermingled. They relate to all circumstances in the inward and outward life of those who wrote them. They recognise God's control over all events and

¹Taken, with editing, from Hodge's *Systematic Theology*, vol 3. Last month's article was subtitled: "The Object of Prayer".

over the hearts of men. They assume that He is ever near and ever watchful, sustaining the relation of a loving Father to His people. But, with all this, His infinite majesty is never forgotten.

(3.) *Humility*. This includes (1) a due sense of our insignificance as creatures and (2) a proper grasp of our ill-deservedness and uncleanness in the sight of God as sinners. It is the opposite of self-righteousness, self-complacency and self-confidence. It is the spirit shown by Job when he placed his hand on his mouth and his mouth in the dust and said, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes". It is the spirit shown by Isaiah when he said, "Woe is me . . . because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips". And it was shown by the publican, who "would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner". Such language is often regarded as exaggerated or hypocritical. It is, however, appropriate. It expresses the state of mind which must be produced by a proper sense of our character as sinners in the sight of a just and holy God. Indeed no language can give adequate expression to that rational sense of sin which the people of God often experience.

(4.) *Importunity*. This is so important that, on three different occasions, Jesus impressed its necessity on His disciples. This was one evident purpose of the account of the Syrophenician woman, who could not be prevented from crying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou son of David" (Mt 15:22); and also of the parable of the unjust judge, who said, "Because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily" (Lk 18:5-8). Again, in Luke 11:5-8, we read of the man who refused to give his friend bread, of whom Christ said, "Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many [loaves] as he needeth".

God deals with us as a wise benefactor. He requires that we should appreciate the value of the blessings for which we ask, and that we should show proper earnestness. If a man begs for his own life or for the life of someone dear to him, his importunity cannot be repressed; he will not take a refusal. If the life of the body is thus earnestly sought, can we expect that the life of the soul will be granted to those who do not seek it with importunate earnestness?

(5.) *Submission*. Everyone who duly appreciates his relation to God will, no matter what his request, be disposed to say, "Lord, not my will, but Thine

be done". Even a child feels that it is appropriate to subject his will to his earthly father in all his requests. How much more should believers submit to the will of their Father in heaven. He alone knows what is best; granting their request might, in many cases, be their destruction. The Lord Jesus, in the garden of Gethsemane, set us an example in this matter that should never be forgotten.

6. *Faith.* We must believe: (1) that God is; (2) that He is able to hear and answer our prayers; (3) that He is disposed to answer them; (4) that He certainly will answer them, if it is consistent with His own wise purposes and with our best good.

For this faith we have the most express assurances in the Bible. It is not only said, "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek and ye shall find," but the Lord Jesus says explicitly, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do" (Jn 14:13). And again, "If two of you shall agree on earth, as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven" (Mt 18:19). All the promises of God are conditional. The condition, if not expressed, is implied. It cannot be supposed that, in governing the world or dispensing His gifts, God has subjected Himself to the short-sighted wisdom of men by promising, without condition, to do whatever they ask. No rational man could wish this to be the case. He would of his own accord supply the condition which must be understood from the nature of the case and from the Scriptures themselves. In 1 Jn 5:14, the condition elsewhere implied is expressed: "This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us".

The promise, however, gives the assurance that all prayers will be answered that are offered in faith, for things according to the will of God. The answer may indeed be given in a way we do not expect – as in the case of Paul when he prayed to be delivered from the thorn in the flesh. But the answer will be such as we would ourselves desire, if we were duly enlightened. More than this we need not wish. Lack of confidence in these precious promises of God and lack of faith in His readiness to hear are the greatest and commonest defects in the prayers of Christians. Every father desires the confidence of his children and is grieved by any evidence of distrust; and God as Father demands from His children the feelings which children ought to have to their earthly parents.

(7.) *Prayers must be offered in the name of Christ.* He said to His disciples: "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name: ask, and ye shall receive" (Jn 16:24). "I have chosen you . . . that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it you" (15:16). "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do" (14:13).

By the *name of God* is meant God Himself, and God as manifested in His relation to us. Both ideas are usually united. Thus to believe "in the name of the only begotten Son of God" is to believe that Christ is the Son of God and that, as such, He is manifested as the only Saviour of men. To act in the name of anyone often means to act by his authority and in the exercise of his power. Thus our Lord speaks of the works which He did in His "Father's name": that is, by the Father's authority and in the exercise of His power. And it is often said that the Apostles wrought miracles in the name of Christ, meaning that the miracles were wrought by His authority and power.

But when someone asks a favour in the name of another, the simple meaning is *for his sake*. Regard for the person in whose name the favour is requested is relied on as the ground on which it is to be granted. Therefore when we are told to pray in the name of Christ, we are required to urge what Christ is and what He has done as the reason why we should be heard. We are not to trust to our own merits, or our own character, or even simply to God's mercy; we are to plead the merits and worth of Christ. It is only in Him, in virtue of His mediation and worth, that, according to the gospel, any blessing is conferred on the apostate children of men.

Learning from God's Holiness¹

Thomas Boston

1. See the great evil of sin. Sin strikes against God's holiness, which is His special glory; so it is not only contrary to our own interest but to the very nature of God. All sin aims at the being of God in general, but especially at the holiness of His being. Some sins strike more directly against one divine perfection and some against another; but all sins agree in their enmity against the holiness of God. Hence, when Sennacherib's sin is emphasised, the Holy Spirit begins at this perfection: "Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? And against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? Even against the Holy One of Israel" (2 Ki 19:22). God cannot but hate that which is directly opposite to the glory of His nature, and the lustre of all His other perfections. Now what an horrid evil must that be which is so contrary to the holy nature of God, and which He infinitely abhors!

2. See the excellence of true gospel holiness. Holiness is the glory and beauty of God, and the glory of the heavenly angels; and therefore it must be the glory of men and women, that which makes them truly glorious. In

¹Taken, with editing, from *An Illustration of the Doctrines of the Christian Religion*, which is based on *The Shorter Catechism*. This extract comes from Boston's *Works*, vol 1.

this respect the King's daughter is said to be all glorious within. The Church is glorious, because it is holy. Hence Christ sanctifies and cleanses it, that He may present it to Himself a glorious Church (Eph 5:25,26). Holiness in the rational creature is the image of God. The more holy one is, the more he is like God. This is our chief excellence. Man's original glory and happiness consisted in this, and the excellence of angels above devils lies in this. Holiness has a self-evidencing excellence in it. There is such a beauty and majesty in it as commands an acknowledgment of it from the consciences of all sorts of knowing men.

3. God can have no gracious communion with unholy sinners, "for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Cor 6:14). It is simply impossible for an infinitely holy God to embrace vile, polluted sinners who are not washed from their filthiness. They can have no fellowship with Him here or hereafter. God will not give impure sinners one good look, for He is "of purer eyes than to behold evil", and cannot "look on iniquity" (Hab 1:13).

All communion is founded on union, and union upon likeness. But what likeness is there between a holy God and vile polluted creatures? Therefore they can never expect to have any communion with Him, unless they are made clean. Hence, that they may have communion with God, they are directed to this: "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double minded" (Jas 4:8). "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor 6:17,18).

4. The best of saints – who have attained the highest degrees, and made the greatest improvements, in holiness and purity – may be ashamed in the presence of an infinitely holy God, for they are far short of that holiness which God requires, and all the purity they have attained is sadly tinged with impurity. It had this effect on the Prophet, when he had a vision of the holy God: "Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (Is 6:5).

5. Despisers of holiness are despisers of God. For holiness is the glory of God; it is what He delights in above all things. Therefore for men to despise holiness in the saints, and to mock their holy lives and practices, is high contempt of the holy God, who will highly resent such a great indignity.

6. There is no access to God without a Mediator. "Our God is a consuming fire" (Heb 12:29), and our sin has made us as stubble fully dry. He is infinitely pure and holy, and we are vile, filthy creatures; so it is quite impos-

ible for us to have any access to Him, or communion with Him, on our own account. We all have reason to cry out: "Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?" (1 Sam 6:20). There is no standing before Him without a Mediator. The spots and blemishes in our best duties cannot be hidden from His holy eyes. He cannot accept a righteousness lower than that which is in some way suited to the holiness of His nature, but even our highest obedience and best righteousness do not in any degree suit God's holiness. Therefore they cannot claim any acceptance with Him. The righteousness of Christ – being the righteousness of God, a perfect and unspotted righteousness – is the only righteousness in which the holiness of God can acquiesce. It is the foundation of all access to God and communion with Him.

7. Is God infinitely and necessarily holy, so that He must hate sin? Then how admirable is His patience towards this land and the generation in which we live? How greatly sin and wickedness abound among us? All kinds of sin prevail woefully among all ranks of persons: high and low, rich and poor, noble and ignoble; all have corrupted their way. Sins of a heinous nature, such as defy God, are to be found among us: horrid blasphemies, hideous oaths, vile adulteries, cruel oppressions, contempt of religion, and gross profanation of the Lord's day. Add to all these the ingratitude, worldliness, pride, and self-conceit among those who are more eminent for profession of religion.

All these are committed under a clear gospel light, after great mercies and deliverances, against the most solemn covenant engagements, personal and national, and against manifold rebukes and warnings from the Word and providence of God. And how these sins are increased and multiplied! Who can number the sins of which one profane wretch is guilty? But what are these to the sins of a whole city? And what are the sins of a whole city to the sins of the whole nation? Who can number the sins which Scotland is guilty of in one day? But what are these to the sins which have been committed for a great many years past? Ah, we are a people deeply laden with iniquity. O what matter of admiration is here, that God bears so long with us! His holiness and purity renders His patience more astonishing. O the riches of His forbearance towards us! Admire it and adore it, and praise and bless Him for it. And beware of abusing it by taking liberty to go on in sin, because of His forbearance. Such amazing patience, if abused, will render our judgement the more severe.

8. Be exhorted to profit suitably from the holiness of God. Flee to Jesus Christ, whose perfect righteousness alone can make you acceptable to God, and whose Spirit can sanctify and cleanse you. And give thanks at the remembrance of God's holiness, by proclaiming its glory and by learning to be holy in your whole manner of life.

Book Review

Our Southern Zion, Old Columbia Seminary (1828-1927), by David B Calhoun, published by the Banner of Truth Trust, hardback, 402 pages, £16.00, obtainable from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom.

The author has previously written two highly-interesting volumes on Princeton Theological Seminary, from its inception in 1812 until it was transformed into a more liberal institution in 1929. He has now turned his attention to a smaller, but still significant, seminary, which for almost all the period described in this book was located in South Carolina. “The title, *Our Southern Zion*,” the author explains, “is an expression used by Presbyterians in the Old South for their church and its institutions, including Columbia Seminary” (p xv) – as in: “Remember Thy congregation . . . this mount Zion” (Ps 74:2).

Among the prominent names associated with the Seminary were the theological giants: J H Thornwell, B M Palmer and J L Girardeau; they all have at least one chapter to themselves. Thornwell became professor of theology in the Seminary in 1856. The following year he commented that those who are training students are aiming “to prepare a ministry for the whole Church and for a dying world . . . until the whole body of Christ shall be gathered and the bride be adorned to receive her Husband at His second coming in glory and majesty and power”. “Who is sufficient for this work?” he asked. And he answered his own question: “With profound impression of the truth I say it, Not I! And like Moses, as I buckle on the armour of a graver warfare than I ever waged before, I utter from the heart the prayer of conscious weakness: If Thy Spirit go not with me, carry me not up hence” (p 103).

It is worth quoting too Thornwell’s words after he returned from his mother’s funeral to find that his nine-year-old son also had succumbed to typhoid fever: “Although I have suffered. . . as I hope never to suffer again, yet I can truly say that I was not conscious . . . of rebellion against the providence of God. I could trust Him in the deepest darkness which surrounded me. The gospel which I have long believed, and preached because I believe, was a very present help in time of trouble. I felt its truths, and was strengthened by its grace” (p 104). The author notes that “Thornwell believed that his little son gave evidence that he understood and accepted the gospel”.

One student reported that Thornwell’s “lectures on theology were always delivered with the utmost solemnity, reverence and earnestness. They were like sermons from the pulpit, and the students felt their solemnising, worshipful power as they heard him” (p 115). Thornwell may have been the ablest and best-known of the Seminary’s professors, but there were others who taught effectively, to the glory of God.

We are told that, from 1876 till he retired in 1895, J L Girardeau “was the greatest influence at the Seminary”. Even at the time of his ordination, he declared in a sermon: “Looking unto Jesus . . . is the grand secret both of freedom from wrath and holiness of life” (p 223). A student expressed his appreciation of how Girardeau helped him “by his gift of analysis and of clarifying things by making distinctions”. Girardeau had strong views on the regulative principle, leading him to write the book, *Instrumental Music in the Public Worship of the Church*. Preaching at his Church’s General Assembly, he declared, “We have the principle tinctured with the blood of our Puritan, Covenanter and Huguenot forefathers – that what is not commanded, either explicitly or implicitly in the Scriptures, is prohibited to the Church,” for “the Scriptures, as the Word of Christ, are the complete and ultimate rule of faith and duty” (p 236).

Probably the most serious event in the early history of the Seminary was the controversy over evolution, which lasted for at least 10 years, from around 1882. James Woodrow, an uncle of the First World War President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson, was Professor of Natural Science in Connection with Revelation, at the Seminary. He argued that the Bible does not say whether God created “a finished world of sea and land”, or whether He used “nebulous matter which He endowed with properties such that it would pass through successive changes until it reached the condition in which we now see it” (p 266) – leaving plenty of room for an evolutionary viewpoint. In the end Woodrow resigned, but the Seminary was seriously weakened by the controversy between, on the one hand, him and his supporters and, on the other hand, those, such as Girardeau, who took a more scriptural view of the matter. Indeed the Seminary had to close in 1886 and, when it re-opened a year later, there were only 14 students.

The professors who moved on with the Seminary to Decatur, Georgia, in 1927, “kept alive the old teachings”, we are told, “for another 50 years, but gradually the seminary’s interests and emphasis shifted to more modern views” (p 365). This is what had happened in Princeton also, but probably more quickly.

In this volume we have an account of the provision that was made, in God’s providence, for the training of young men in an area where, in the nineteenth century in particular, there was a great deal of devotion to scriptural truth. The author may not be able to maintain quite the degree of interest that pervades his earlier work on Princeton Seminary; the main reason is that there seems, in later years, to have been some difficulty in retaining staff in Columbia Seminary, and many professors flit in and out of the later pages of the book.

The training of students for the ministry is a work of great importance. In our generation, liberalism has made further strides towards destroying the Church. Accordingly we should pray that the Lord would continue to make provision for the training of the ministry, in all parts of the Church, that would be to His glory and consistently in line with revealed truth.

Protestant View

Stepanic the Criminal to Be Made a Saint

The Vatican's intention to make Aloysius Stepanic of Croatia a saint will revive painful memories among the Serbian people. His murderous activities in the early 1940s are well documented. As Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Church in Croatia, he collaborated with the Ustashi in the killing of more than 500 000 Serbs, plus Jews and Gypsies. He also oversaw the forced conversion to Roman Catholicism of 244 000 Serbs.

The Ustashi – a fanatically Roman Catholic, Fascist and terrorist organisation, founded by Ante Pavelitch – had Stepanic as its “supreme military apostolic vicar”, and even had Roman Catholic priests among its officers. In a pastoral letter in 1942, Stepanic said that what was happening in Croatia was “the Lord's work”. However, he was found guilty in 1946 of high treason and war crimes and sentenced to 16 years in prison. The Vatican, on the other hand, made him a cardinal in 1952.

Those horrendous events in Croatia confirm the old saying that “Rome in the minority is a lamb, Rome as an equal is a fox, Rome in the majority is a tiger”. Behind its present benign facade, generated by the geniality and apparent humility of the present Pope, Rome has not abandoned its centuries-old policy of intolerantly extending its power worldwide, and depriving Protestants of their religious liberty.

That Rome is still intolerant, especially where it is ascendant, is seen in a Christian Solidarity Worldwide report in February: “Twenty-five Protestant families in Unión Juárez, a town of 14 000 in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas, had their electricity and water disconnected after they refused to contribute to a Catholic religious festival.”

Protestants are deluded if they do not realise that Rome's calls to Protestants for unity are based on Rome being in the driving seat. The Pope's recent statement, “I am yearning that this separation comes to an end And let us pray to the Lord that He unites us all,” sounds good to many, but the reality is, as the French Roman Catholic writer, Louis Veuillot, an ardent champion of papal supremacy, frankly said to Protestants, “When you

are in a majority we ask for religious liberty in the name of your principles. When we are in a majority we refuse it to you in the name of ours.” “The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going” (Prov 14:15). *NMR*

Notes and Comments

Senility

It is natural to ask why God has made things as they are. And one question that arises in the Western world, with its aging population, is why God has ordained that a considerable number of people should live out a proportion of their lives, sometimes a substantial proportion, in a state of senility. It is distressing for their families when their dear one is alive and yet “absent”, and when they can no longer communicate interesting things to them and enjoy their company and comments.

Yet the Lord has purposes in this affliction, and one purpose undoubtedly is that such people should be a living reminder to the rest of us of the vanity of this world. They were once as we are, and we must soon follow them, perhaps into weakness and senility, and after that into death. How trifling many of the pleasures, cares, and concerns of the world appear in the light of old age and of death. How forcibly we are reminded that we should be labouring, not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto sinners (Jn 6:27).

It is this reminder, as much as the burden that the senile place upon resources, that is the driving force behind euthanasia. Men do not like to be reminded of the vanity of human life. They think of their plans and activities as immensely important and they do not like the silent condemnation of those who are alive as they are, yet have no interest in these things. The poor senile form, dumped in front of the television, and gazing vacantly at the Olympic Games, is an eloquent comment on the folly of it all. The world has no answer to their silent indifference. What is the point of life, or rather, of life without Christ? The world’s only answer is to put them out of sight and to continue the vanities without them. If they were dead, it says, so much the better.

Christians struggle with this subject, too, but they find the answer in the gracious work of the Spirit of Christ in the heart of God’s people. This is the only thing in human life that is of eternal value, and there is as much scope for it in the Dementia Unit as anywhere else in the world. A senile person may be trusting and rejoicing in Christ – much as John the Baptist leapt with an infant’s joy in his mother’s womb – and so too may those nursing them

and those visiting them. If Christ cares for the dead bodies of his people, and will raise them up again, how much more does He care for them while they are still alive, though the mind and the memory may have gone. So far from repining at the burden of senile relatives, those who have this burden should adore God's wisdom and providence in the dispensation, and willingly and thankfully embrace the needful lesson that He is teaching them. *DWBS*

The Sabbath

When the rulers of this world appoint a public holiday, they expect the people to observe it. An employer who disregarded the holiday and forced his employees to work would be snubbing the rulers and breaking the law and might be liable to its penalties. God is the most compassionate of all rulers and He has appointed a weekly holiday – the Sabbath day, or first day of the week – which is to be observed by all mankind. “The Sabbath was made for man” (Mk 2:27). It is to be a day of holiness and rejoicing: “call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord” (Is 58:13). For the people of God, it should be a foretaste of heaven.

We are certainly not to work on the Sabbath day, except for works of necessity and mercy, nor should we in any way be complicit in the unlawful work of others. People who are running public transport for profit on the Sabbath are despising God's holy day, and we should not be giving them our money and joining with them, on that day, in their sin. If people would stop using their transport then they would stop running it because it would not be profitable. Equally we should not be using restaurants and take-aways on the Sabbath. How are the poor staff going to keep the Sabbath? How will the proximity of worldly people with their vain example and conversation help us to “delight in the Lord”? We heard recently of a Presbyterian congregation where an elder took a take-away order after the evening service. Such unthinking conduct can only hinder the Kingdom of God. “My brethren, these things ought not so to be” (Jas 3:10). *DWBS*

State Guardians for Children in Scotland

On February 19, the SNP Government at Holyrood passed the Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill. While there may be much that is good in this Bill, other areas are causing concern to many parents, especially Part 4, which legalises the appointment of a state guardian for all children and young adults from birth to 18. The proposal is that the NHS will appoint a health worker to act as a “named person” for every child under the age of five. Local councils will then take on the responsibility, and the role is expected to be taken on by teachers.

There is no doubt that the Children's Minister, Aileen Campbell, who led this Bill, is concerned about child safety, especially in the wake of high-profile child-abuse cases, such as four-year-old Daniel Pelka who was brutally beaten to death by his mother and stepfather. The seeming inability of social workers, health professionals and the police to intervene in such cases has certainly encouraged the formulation of this new law. The Minister, and the Scottish Government as a whole, feel that placing the duty of care on a single named person will be a more effective way of addressing the problem and she appears perplexed by critics who see a more sinister side to the legislation.

In reality, as a result of this change, the state will have greater powers over the child's life; indeed the state, through the named guardian, will be able to override the wishes of the parent. This may be good news in child-abuse cases, though there were already sufficient legal powers, if used appropriately, to deal with such incidents. The vast majority of families will have no need of intervention and indeed will be alarmed at this state intrusion into their lives. Christian families will have their parental rights eroded by a secular state. The state claims to know what is good for their child and may dictate to the parent as to what is best for the child's welfare. Before this law was passed, parents would have to give consent if information about their child was to be shared with a public body, except in cases where there was danger of real harm. Now, under the new law, there is wide scope for the named person to share information with a range of public bodies, without any parental knowledge, if the guardian considers it is in the child's best interests, irrespective of what the parents think.

There will now be greater room for the increasingly-insidious culture of "children's rights". God-fearing parents take vows to bring their children up in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord", but the child may decide that this path is too strict. He or she may demand rights to go to a football match on the Sabbath Day. A girl may wish to gain information on contraception. A boy may want to explore his "sexual orientation" in this immoral climate. There are many situations which should be under the parents' control and discipline, but the child will now be able to complain to his/her guardian, who may well have different moral values and override the parent's wishes. Nick Pickles of a group called *Big Brother Watch* states the view of many: "This whole scheme is an unprecedented attack on the privacy of families and the civil liberties of law-abiding parents and children".

The Christian Institute feels so strongly that this is an attack on the family that they are proposing a judicial review. They are using the advice of leading human-rights lawyer Aidan O'Neill QC, who claims that "the scheme

may not be compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights, which says the state should respect private and family life". He adds, "It is startling that the proposal appears to be predicated on the idea that the proper primary relationship that children will have for their well-being and development, nurturing and education, is with the state rather than with their families and parents".

In a day when family life is becoming more fragmented, should the state not be using all means to encourage, and not to override, the relationship between parents and children? We should seek that God would pour out His Holy Spirit upon our families so that we may get back to that relationship which He commands in His Word, and have it deepened by His grace. He is the God of the family and says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph 6:1-4). *KHM*

Church Information

Free Presbyterian Publications

Further to last month's announcement, Ebenezer Erskine's *Works*, in three volumes, are expected to be again available about the time this Magazine appears. Also expected to be again available at the same time are volume 3 of *The Free Presbyterian Magazine*, and Robert Gordon's excellent four-volume set, *Christ in the Old Testament* – which was very highly regarded by Rev Alexander McPherson. Copies may be ordered from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom.

General Building Fund

By appointment of Synod, this year's special collection on behalf of the General Building Fund is due to be taken in congregations during April.

W Campbell, General Treasurer

Acknowledgement of Donations

Congregational Treasurers acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:

Dingwall/Beaully: *Communion Expenses:* Anon, £40, £40. *Sustentation Fund:* Mrs Buchanan, £40 per Rev NMR.

Glasgow: *Bus Fund:* Anon, £20, £20, £20. *Eastern Europe Fund:* Anon, £10, £80, £10. *TBS:* Anon, £20.

Greenock: *Jewish & Foreign Missions Fund:* Anon, £10, £60. *TBS:* Anon, £10.

FREE PRESBYTERIAN PLACES OF WORSHIP

Scotland

- Aberdeen:** 2 Alford Place, AB10 1YD, Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Tuesday, 7.15 pm. Rev D W B Somerset BSc DPhil, 18 Carlton Place, Aberdeen, AB15 4BQ; tel: 01224 645250.
- Bracadale:** **Struan:** Sabbath 12 noon; Wednesday 7 pm (fortnightly). Contact Rev J B Jardine; tel: 01859 502253.
- Dingwall:** Church, Hill Street: Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. **Beauly** (Balblair): Sabbath 6.30 pm, Thursday 7.30 pm. Rev Neil M Ross BA, 10 Achany Rd, Dingwall, IV15 9JB; tel/fax: 01349 864351, e-mail: nmross2001@yahoo.co.uk.
- Dornoch:** 11.30 am. Manse tel: 01862 810615. **Bonar:** Sabbath 6 pm, Wednesday 7.30 pm (alternately in Dornoch and Bonar). **Lairg:** Church and Manse; **Rogart:** Church; no F P services. Contact Rev G G Hutton; tel: 01463 712872.
- Dundee:** Manse. No F P Church services.
- Edinburgh:** 63 Gilmore Place, Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Thursday 7.30 pm. Rev D Campbell, 35B Barnton Avenue West, Edinburgh EH4 6DF; tel: 0131 312 8227.
- Farr** (by Daviot); Sabbath 12 noon. **Tomatin:** Sabbath 12 noon. **Stratherrick:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm. (Each of these services is held once in three weeks as intimated). **Farr:** Thursday 7.30 pm (weekly). Contact Rev G G Hutton; tel: 01463 712872.
- Fort William:** Monzie Square, Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm as intimated. Manse: 15 Perth Place, PH33 6UL; tel: 01397 708553. Contact Mr D A McKinnon. Tel: 01397 702597.
- Gairloch** (Ross-shire): Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm. Prayer meeting in **Strath**, Thursday 7.30 pm. Rev A E W MacDonald MA, F P Manse, Gairloch, Ross-shire, IV21 2BS; tel: 01445 712247.
- Glasgow:** St Jude's Church, 137 Woodlands Road, G3 6LE. Sabbath 11 am and 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Rev Roderick MacLeod BA, 4 Laurel Park Close, Glasgow, G13 1RD; tel: 0141 954 3759.
- Greenock:** 40 East Hamilton Street, Sabbath 2.30 pm.
- Halkirk:** Sabbath 11.30 am, 5 pm; Thursday 7 pm. Manse tel: 01847 831758. **Wick:** Church; **Thurso:** Church; **Strathly:** Church; no F P Church services.
- Harris (North):** **Tarbert:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Thursday 7 pm. **Stockinish:** Tuesday 7 pm. Rev J B Jardine BD, F P Manse, Tarbert, Isle of Harris, HS3 3DF; tel: 01859 502253, e-mail: northharris.fpc@btopenworld.com.
- Harris (South):** **Leverburgh:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm. **Sheilebost:** Sabbath 12 noon (as intimated). Prayer meetings in **Leverburgh**, **Sheilebost**, **Strond** and **Geocrab** as intimated. Rev K D Macleod BSc, F P Manse, Leverburgh, HS5 3UA; tel: 01859 520271.
- Inverness:** Chapel Street, Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Rev G G Hutton BA, 11 Auldcastle Road, Inverness, IV2 3PZ; tel: 01463 712872.
- Kinlochbervie:** Sabbath 11.30 am; Tuesday 7.30 pm. Manse tel: 01971 521268. **Scourie:** Sabbath 6 pm.
- Kyle of Lochalsh:** Sabbath 6 pm. Manse tel: 01599 534933. Contact Rev D A Ross; tel: 01445 731340.
- Laide** (Ross-shire): Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Rev D A Ross. F P Manse, Laide, IV22 2NB; tel: 01445 731340.
- Lochcarron:** Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Manse.
- Lochinver:** Sabbath 12 noon. Manse tel: 01571 844484.
- Ness:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Rev A W MacColl MA PhD, F P Manse, Swainbost, HS2 0TA; tel: 01851 810228.
- North Tolsta:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Thursday 7 pm; 1st Monday of month 7 pm. Manse tel: 01851 890325. Contact Rev J R Tallach; tel: 01851 702501.
- North Uist:** **Bayhead:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm (fortnightly). **Sollas:** Wednesday 7.30 pm (fortnightly). Rev D Macdonald BA, F P Manse, Bayhead, North Uist, HS6 5DS; tel: 01876 510233.
- Oban:** Church and Manse. No F P services at present.
- Perth:** Pomarium, off Leonard Street. Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Contact Mr A MacPherson; tel: 01569 760370.
- Portree:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Contact Rev W A Weale; tel: 01470 562243.
- Raasay:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Saturday 7 pm. Contact Rev W A Weale; tel: 01470 562243.
- Shieldaig:** Sabbath 11 am; **Applecross:** Sabbath 6 pm. Tuesday 7 pm (alternately in Shieldaig and Applecross). Shieldaig manse tel: 01520 755259, Applecross manse tel: 01520 744411. Contact Rev D A Ross; tel: 01445 731340.
- Staffin:** Sabbath 12 noon, 5 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Rev W A Weale, F P Manse, Staffin, IV51 9HY; tel: 01470 562243.
- Stornoway:** Matheson Road, Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Thursday 7.30 pm. **Achmore:** Sabbath 12 noon; Tuesday 7 pm. Rev J R Tallach MB ChB, 2 Fleming Place, Stornoway, HS1 2NH; tel: 01851 702501.
- Tain:** Church and Manse. **Fearn:** Church. No F P services. See Dornoch and Bonar.
- Uig (Lewis) Mlvaig:** Sabbath 12 noon Gaelic, 6 pm English; Wednesday 7 pm. Manse tel: 01851 672251. Contact Rev J R Tallach; tel: 01851 702501.
- Ullapool:** Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Manse: Quay Street, IV26 2UE; tel: 01854 612449.
- Vatten:** Sabbath 6 pm; Wednesday 7 pm (fortnightly). **Glendale, Waternish:** As intimated. Contact Rev J B Jardine; tel: 01859 502253.

England

- Barnoldswick:** Kelbrook Road, Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Friday 7.30 pm; Wednesday 8 pm, alternately in Sandbach and Gatley. **South Manchester:** Sabbath 6.00 pm, in Trinity Church, Massie Street, Cheadle (entry at rear of building). Rev K M Watkins, 1 North Street, Barnoldswick, BB18 5PE; tel: 01282 850296.
- Broadstairs:** Sabbath 11 am, 5 pm at Portland Centre, Hopeville Ave, St Peter's; Tuesday 7 pm at Friends' Meeting House, St Peter's Park Rd. Contact Dr T Martin; tel: 01843 866369.
- London:** Zoar Chapel, Varden St, E1. Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Rev J MacLeod MA, 6 Church Ave, Sidcup, Kent, DA14 6BU; tel: 0208 309 1623.

Northern Ireland

- Larne:** Station Road. Sabbath 11.30 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Rev J L Goldby MA, 23 Upper Cairncastle Road, Larne, BT40 2EF; tel: 02828 274865.

Canada

Chesley, Ontario: Church and Manse, 40 Fourth Street SW. Sabbath 10.30 am, 7 pm; Wednesday 8 pm. Contact: Mr David Kuiper; tel: 519 363 0367. Manse tel: 519 363 2502.

Toronto, Ontario: Church and Manse. No F P Church services at present.

Vancouver, British Columbia: Contact: Mr John MacLeod, 202-815 4th Avenue, New Westminster, V3M 1S8; tel: 604-516-8648.

USA

Santa Fe, Texas: Church and Manse, 4031 Jackson St 77517. Sabbath 10.30 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Contact Mr Joseph Smith, 5222 Kendal Glen Court, Rosharon, Texas 77583; tel: 409 927 1564.

Australia

Grafton, NSW: 172 Fitzroy Street. Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Contact Rev G B Macdonald; tel: 02 9627 3408.

Sydney, NSW: Corner of Oxford and Regent Streets, Riverstone. Sabbath 10.30 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Rev G B Macdonald BSc, 60 Hamilton St, Riverstone, NSW 2765; tel: 02 9627 3408; e-mail:sydneypchurch@aapt.net.au.

New Zealand

Auckland: 45 Church Street, Otahuhu, Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Rev J D Smith, 9 Pedlar Place, Conifer Grove, Auckland; tel: 09 282 4195.

Gisborne: 463a Childers Road. Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Contact: Dr G Cramp; tel: 02 7454 2722.

Tauranga: Girl Guide Hall, 17th Avenue, Sabbath 11 am, 7 pm; Thursday 7 pm. Contact: Mr Dick Vermeulen; tel: 075443677.

Wellington: 4 Rewa Terrace, Tawa. Sabbath 11 am, 4 pm; 3rd Wednesday of the month (not secondary school holidays) 7.30 pm. Contact: Mr Hank Optland, P O Box 150, Carterton, 5743; tel: 02 7432 5625.

Singapore

Singapore: Sabbath: 9.30am and 5.30 pm; Beacons International College campus, 1A Short Street, Level 2, Room L2---A, Singapore 188210; Wednesday: 7.45 pm, #03-04A, SCN Industrial Building, 11 Sims Drive, Singapore 387385. Contact: Mr Bernard Yong, 4 Chuan Place, Singapore 554822; tel: (65) 6383 4466, fax: 6383 4477, e-mail: byong1@singnet.com.sg.

Ukraine

Odessa: F P Mission Station, 3 Pestelya Street, 65031. Contact Mr I Zadorozhniyy, P O Box 100, Odessa-91, 65091; e-mail: antipa@eurocom.od.ua; or Mr D Levytskyy; tel:00 38 048 785 19 24; e-mail: dlevytskyy@gmail.com.

Zimbabwe

Bulawayo: Lobengula Township, PO Magwegwe, Bulawayo. Rev S Khumalo, F P Manse, Stand No 56004, Mazwi Road, Lobengula, PO Magwegwe, Bulawayo; tel: 00263 9407131, e-mail: skhumalo.byo@gmail.com.

Ingwanya: Church and Secondary School. Rev A B MacLean. Postal Address: Ingwenya Mission, Private Bag T5445, Bulawayo.

Mbumba: Church and Hospital. Rev N Sibanda. Postal Address: Mbumba Mission Hospital, Private Bag T5406, Bulawayo.

New Canaan: Church.

Zenka: Church. Rev M Mloyi. Postal Address: Private Bag T5398, Bulawayo; cell phone: 0026311 765032.

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