

# 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*

## Contents

<b>Preaching and Sin</b> .....	193
<b>The Triumphant Persuasion</b>	
A Sermon by R M M'Cheyne .....	197
<b>The Covenant of Grace</b>	
<b>4. What Is Involved in the Covenant? (2)</b>	
Rev Roderick Macleod.....	203
<b>Satan Assaulting the Christian's Faith</b>	
Ralph Erskine .....	207
<b>Cain</b>	
Henry Law .....	209
<b>Causes of the Scottish Reformation (2)</b>	
D Hay Fleming .....	215
<b>Book Review</b>	
<i>Catechizing Our Children</i> by Terry L. Johnson.....	219
<b>Notes and Comments</b> .....	219
<b>Church Information</b> .....	224

***July 2014***

***Vol 119 • No 7***

## The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland

**Moderator of Synod:** Rev D Macdonald BA, F P Manse, Bayhead, North Uist, HS6 5DS.

**Clerk of Synod:** Rev J MacLeod MA, 6 Church Avenue, Sidcup, Kent, DA14 6BU; tel: 0208 309 1623, e-mail: JMacL265@aol.com.

**Assistant Clerk:** Rev J R Tallach MB ChB, 2 Fleming Place, Stornoway, HS1 2NH; tel: 01851 702501.

**General Treasurer:** Mr W Campbell, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LE; tel: 0141 332 9283, fax 0141 332 4271, e-mail: wc.fpchurch@btconnect.com.

**Law Agents:** Brodies LLP, 15 Atholl Crescent, Edinburgh, EH3 8AH; tel: 0131 228 3777.

### Clerks to Presbyteries:

**Northern:** Rev G G Hutton BA, 11 Auldcastle Road, Inverness, IV2 3PZ; tel: 01463 712872.

**Southern:** Rev R MacLeod BA, 4 Laurel Park Close, Glasgow, G13 1RD; tel: 0141 954 3759.

**Western:** Rev A E W MacDonald MA, F P Manse, Gairloch, Ross-shire, IV21 2BS; tel: 01445 712247.

**Outer Isles:** Rev K D Macleod BSc, F P Manse, Ferry Road, Leverburgh, Isle of Harris, HS5 3UA; tel: 01859 520271.

**Australia and New Zealand:** Rev G B Macdonald BSc, 60 Hamilton St, Riverstone, NSW 2765; tel: 02 9627 3408.

**Zimbabwe:** Rev S Khumalo, Stand No 56004, Mazwi Road, Lobengula, PO Magwegwe, Bulawayo; tel: 00263 9407131.

**Zimbabwe Mission Office:** 9 Robertson Street, Parkview, Bulawayo; tel: 002639 62636, fax: 002639 61902, e-mail: fpchurch@gmail.com.

### Residential Care Homes:

Ballfeary House, 14 Ness Walk, Inverness, IV3 5SQ; tel: 01463 234679.

Leverburgh Residential Care Home, Ferry Road, Leverburgh, Isle of Harris, HS5 3UA; tel: 01859 520296.

**Website of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland:** [www.fpchurch.org.uk](http://www.fpchurch.org.uk).

## The Free Presbyterian Magazine

**Published by** The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland (Scottish Charity Number SC003545). Subscriptions and changes of address to be sent to the General Treasurer, Mr W Campbell, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LE; tel: 0141 332 9283. The subscription year begins in January. Prices are on back cover. One month's notice is required for change of address. Queries about delivery of the magazines should be sent to the General Treasurer, not the printer.

**Editor:** Rev K D Macleod BSc, F P Manse, Ferry Road, Leverburgh, Isle of Harris, HS5 3UA. Tel: 01859 520271; e-mail: kdmacleod@gmail.com. Unsigned articles are by the Editor.

**Editorial Board:** The Editor, Rev N M Ross, Rev D W B Somerset, Mr K H Munro.

**Deadline for sending material to the Editor:** The beginning of the month previous to publication.

**The Gaelic Supplement** (quarterly): Editor: Rev A W MacColl MA PhD, F P Manse, Swainbost, Isle of Lewis, HS2 0TA. Available free on request.

**Youth Magazine:** *The Young People's Magazine*. Editor: Rev K D Macleod BSc.

## Communions

**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, Shieldaig; **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:** Tomatin, Vatten; **Fifth:** Stornoway, 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.

# The Free Presbyterian Magazine

Volume 119

July 2014

Number 7

## Preaching and Sin

“In very many evangelical and confessionally Reformed churches these days, sin is a rare topic.” This is the conclusion of Dr Cornelius Plantinga,<sup>1</sup> an American academic. Indeed, we are told that “he sees ‘less and less’ sin-related material every year”. Even if these statements do not come as a real surprise, they ought to be matter of serious concern. The idea of sin is by no means a side issue in the Bible. The actual word *sin* is used 448 times, and if we include variants such as *sinned*, the figure rises to 833. If we were to add on the usage of words such as *iniquity* and *transgression*, the number would be significantly higher.

Besides, if the idea of sin is neglected in public worship, much that God has revealed about Himself will of necessity be neglected. He describes Himself as “the high and lofty One . . . whose name is *Holy*” (Is 57:15), and holiness is a total contrast to sin. And Habakkuk, an inspired prophet, thus addressed the Lord: “Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity” (1:13). Habakkuk recognised God’s perfect purity, so that He could not look on – or, have regard to – iniquity. Now, it is obvious that human behaviour and attitudes are out of line with God’s purity; in other words, human behaviour and attitudes are sinful. Preachers are seriously neglecting their duty when they do not set before their hearers both the holiness of God and the seriousness and the danger of sin.

God is our Creator and so He has a right to our entire obedience; He has a right to expect from us perfect obedience to every detail of His law – and His law reflects the holiness of His nature. He is God, the supreme Being, and we are to honour Him by seeking to keep all His commandments. Every departure that we make, even from the least detail of these commands, is sin. One of Solomon’s Proverbs tells us that “the thought of foolishness is sin” (24:9) – every foolish thought, every thought that does not fully reflect the infinite wisdom of God revealed in Scripture, is sinful. What a sense we would have of the seriousness of sin if we had even a small insight into the infinite holiness of the great and glorious Being who made us!

<sup>1</sup>Reported in an article in *Christian Post* and reproduced on the Banner of Truth website.

Dr Plantinga examined the content of contemporary songs used in public worship and noted that there are “very few penitential songs”. He concluded that the “biblical tradition of lament, which is all through the prophets and the Psalms is gone, just not there”. But clearly, if present-day churches were to confine themselves to the use of Psalms in their worship – and scriptural principles indicate that they ought to – they would be much less likely to drift away so drastically from a biblical stance in other parts of their services. How deficient public praise must be where Psalm 51, for instance, is never sung!

In view of what he has said, it is not surprising that Dr Platinga believes that “the Apostle Paul would not feel welcome in many Evangelical churches today”. Paul would have too much to say about sin for such churches to receive his teaching warmly; it would leave congregations feeling thoroughly uncomfortable – unless the Holy Spirit was to apply, with remarkable power, the truth Paul proclaimed, convicting them of the sinfulness of their hearts and lives.

How would people in the average Evangelical congregation today react to Paul emphasising, as in Romans 3: “We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin”? How would they react to him going on to give a sustained series of Old Testament quotations on the subject of sin: “There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. . . . And the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes”? Paul, was not merely giving a description of other people; he very much included himself – calling himself elsewhere the “chief” of sinners (1 Tim 1:15). Nor was it merely a theoretical discussion; it had a practical aim: he was anxious that people would realise something of the serious effects of sin and its eternal consequences and so would seek the salvation that God has provided in Christ.

Perhaps no other generation of preachers has been so inclined to hold back on the doctrine of sin as ours. Dr Platinga believes that sin is so much neglected because Evangelical churches “avoid topics that may turn off non-Christians or new Christians”. This sounds like an unfaithful willingness to give in to desires similar to those expressed in Isaiah’s time: “Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits” (Is 30:10). They wanted to hear things which were smooth and left them feeling comfortable in their sins, even although these prophecies would be deceitful and false – and dangerous.

If people are turned off by confession of sin in prayer or by teaching about

it in a sermon, Paul would not recognise them as true Christians, nor would the pure eye of the all-knowing God, who searches the heart. Non-Christians too need to hear about sin; they need to believe that “it is an evil thing and bitter” to sin against God; otherwise they will never feel their need of Christ; they will never flee to Him; and they will never be saved. What did Paul tell his non-Christians hearers in Athens? He declared pointedly: God “now commandeth all men every where to repent [from sin]: because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness” (Acts 17: 30,31). True, not many believed; “some mocked” and others, unbelievably, said they would hear Paul on another occasion. But some did believe, and one thing should be obvious: had they not heard about sin and the divine call to repent, no one in Athens would have found salvation.

Perhaps it does not need to be pointed out that John Calvin too preached plainly the doctrine of sin. Yet let us hear him, as he expounds 1 Timothy 1:15. “Although men be ignorant,” he insists, “yet have they for all that no excuse before God but . . . their sin and iniquity is so horrible that they must needs confess that He might justly cast out His lightnings against them”.<sup>2</sup>

For another example, let us take Charles H Spurgeon. Preaching on Luke 7:42, in a sermon entitled, “Bankrupt Sinners Discharged”, he declared, “We have left undone the things we ought to have done, and we have done the things we ought not to have done, and . . . we now stand liable to penalty, yea, we are condemned already. There is due to us from God, in vindication of His broken law, both suffering and death; and in the Word of God we find that the righteous penalty for sin is something utterly overwhelming.”

Again, a little later in the same sermon: “When I think of my life it seems to be like the sea, made up of innumerable waves of sin; or like the seashore, constituted of sands that cannot be weighed nor counted. My faults are utterly innumerable, and each one deserving death eternal. Our sins, our heavy sins, sins against light and knowledge, our foul sins, our repeated sins, our aggravated sins, our sins against our parents, our sins against all our relationships, our sins against our God, our sins with the body, our sins with the mind, our sins of forgetfulness, our sins of thought, our sins of imagination – who can reckon them up in order unto God?”<sup>3</sup>

We may be told that men like Paul and Calvin and Spurgeon, and many others that could be quoted, who laid such unwelcome emphasis on sin, belong to the distant past while we live in another age. But the fundamental fact is, as the Psalmist expressed it to God: “Thy word is true from the begin-

<sup>2</sup>John Calvin's *Sermons on Timothy and Titus*, Banner of Truth reprint, 1983, p 82.

<sup>3</sup>C H Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, Banner of Truth reprint, 1971, vol 29, pp 495,6.

ning: and every one of Thy righteous judgements endureth for ever” (Ps 119:160); so, in particular, all God’s pronouncements about sin will endure for ever; they are as true and as relevant today as they have ever been. God has not changed; His justice has not changed; He will, and must, punish sin. We ought to take these facts seriously.

God, in His kindness, is also making known to us the way of deliverance – through Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who died for sinners and, in dying, bore away their guilt. We should react to a Scripture verse, or a sermon, about sin much as we would expect people to react to the realisation that they have a serious illness: they should face up to the fact and seek a cure immediately, if that is available. And, as just stated, there is a cure for sin, through Christ Jesus.

The Bible tells us: “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 Jn 1:8,9). So, recognising the evil of our sin and its consequences, we are to confess it to God – at the same time looking for deliverance to Christ Jesus, as the one Saviour whom God has appointed. Christ gave the assurance: “Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out” (Jn 6:37).

Thus Samuel Miller, one of the first professors in Princeton Seminary, was on a solid scriptural footing when he spoke as follows to what was presumably a group of preachers: “Be not afraid to tell men, with all plainness, of their total depravity by nature and of that state of condemnation and wrath under which they lie while strangers to the grace of Christ. Be not afraid to sound in their ears the thunders of Sinai, as well as the still small voice of Calvary. Be not backward to proclaim the humbling and self-denying, but most glorious, doctrines of free and sovereign grace, however unpalatable they may be to some, or whatever your fidelity may cost you. Warn men boldly of every danger. Strive to bring them off from every false foundation. Give them no rest till they are brought humbled and trembling to the foot of the cross; and then, and not till then, pour into their bleeding wounds the oil of consolation, the balm of heavenly grace.”<sup>4</sup>

This is the kind of preaching that every congregation needs if the Church is not to degenerate everywhere into an institution where everyone is encouraged to feel good about themselves regardless of the lost eternity to which all unrepentant sinners are going. May God grant that such preaching would again become widespread and that the Holy Spirit would apply it to the conviction and conversion of multitudes of sinners!

<sup>4</sup>Quoted in James M Garretson, *An Able and Faithful Ministry: Samuel Miller and the Pastoral Office*, Reformation Heritage Books, 2014, p 34.

# The Triumphant Persuasion<sup>1</sup>

A Sermon by R M M'Cheyne

Romans 8:38,39. *For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

The comforting and invigorating doctrine of this precious passage is that **T**a soul in Christ cannot be separated from the love of God.

**1. All Christless persons are by nature out of the love of God.** God has no love of complacency towards unconverted souls. He sees nothing amiable in them; He sees nothing for which He can possibly love them. "What is man that he should be clean; and he that is born of a woman that he should be righteous? Behold He putteth no trust in His saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in His sight. How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?" "The righteous God loveth righteousness." It is His very nature to do so; He cannot but love it wherever He sees it. But there is no righteousness in Christless persons; there is not so much as one clean white spot in their whole garments. By nature "we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags". Therefore it is impossible that God can love the unconverted with the love of complacency. He must change His nature and become another God before He can cherish the least spark of esteem for an unconverted soul.

But it may be objected: Did not God so love the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, and did not Christ show great tenderness to sinners when He was on earth? Yes, we readily admit it, for it is quite true that God looks on Christless persons with infinite pity. If you saw a man lying wounded, bleeding and dying, your heart would flow out with compassion all at once. The benevolence of your nature being appealed to, you would love him with the love of pity. But if you found out that he was a wicked, abandoned man, you could not esteem him; your love of pity would continue; indeed it would be greater than before, but you could not have any love of esteem for him. As a sinner, he would be an object of pity but not of complacency.

Just so it is with God. He saw the whole world lying in wickedness and every imagination of man's heart only evil continually, and His gracious heart flowed out in pity towards the children of men. He "will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth". "I have no pleasure", He says, "in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." Ah, see what a large heart of pity God had! It embraced the whole

<sup>1</sup>Another sermon taken, with editing, from *Revival Truth*.

world; and, therefore, He provided an infinite and all-sufficient ransom to which all are invited – to which all may come. Jesus, as One who speaks for the Father’s heart, says, “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”.

But does God esteem Christless souls? No! God would require to change His essential nature and become a wicked God before He could love unconverted, Christless men with a love of esteem. If He were a wicked God, then He could love wicked men. But so long as He is the pure-eyed God, He cannot have a spark of esteem for sinners, however much they may esteem themselves or be esteemed by their fellow-sinners in the world.

*Not only does God not see anything to love in Christless persons, but He sees much to hate.* In Psalm 7 it is written: “God is *angry* with the wicked every day”. Again, in Psalm 11, it is written: “The wicked and him that loveth violence His soul *hateth*”. And again, in Psalm 34: “The face of the Lord is *against* them that do evil”. “He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but *the wrath of God* abideth on him.” “*Cursed* is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.” “Because of these things cometh *the wrath of God* upon the children of disobedience.” It is part of the nature of God to love holiness, and to hate wickedness wherever He sees it. In whatever heart He discovers it, He cannot but hate it. God must cease to be God before He ceases to hate the wickedness of the wicked.

But an objector may say, If God hates Christless persons on account of their sins, then He can have no pity for them. But why not? He is infinitely just, but He is infinite in compassion too. He must cease to be God before He can cease to be compassionate. “He delighteth in mercy.” The more He is angry with a soul, the more He pities that soul, for its case is all the more deplorable; it has rendered itself exposed to His holy displeasure. When Christ was on earth, it is said, “He looked round with anger” on some sinners, “being grieved at the hardness of their hearts”. Here is the very thing you say is impossible. Here is anger and pity in the same breast. The lightning of just anger, and the tear of compassion were in His eye at the same moment. This is the very “image of the invisible God”.

Again: “When He came near and beheld the city [Jerusalem], He wept over it,” and yet said, “The things which belong unto thy peace . . . are hid from thine eyes”. Here the Saviour gave it over to perdition with tears in His eyes and words of sadness on His lips. This was infinite compassion, yet infinite indignation. This is the express image of God’s person. “In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” If God were in human nature, He would weep at the very time He pronounced the holy sentence of wrath.

Let me here speak affectionately and faithfully to all who are Christless. I would implore you from this to learn exactly where you stand with regard to God. Let it sink deep into your ears and hearts that He has no love of esteem for you; He never had, and He never will have, until He sees you in Christ. You see many things in yourselves that you admire, and you foolishly think that God also will admire them. Perhaps you pray a little in secret and read the Word. Perhaps you feel some glowing of emotion in hearing the preaching of the gospel, and you think all the time that God will look on it and approve it and, as a necessary consequence, esteem you on account of it. But learn here that God sees nothing good in it, nothing worthy of His love. If you are out of Christ, you are altogether loathsome in the sight of the holy God; even your very "righteousnesses are as filthy rags".

Perhaps you are amiable, good-natured, kind, hospitable; your friends love and admire you, and you think God also must admire you. But learn plainly that God sees nothing to admire in you. He knows you are "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked". None of all the deeds that you fancy are meritorious are done out of regard for Him, and He will regard nothing with complacency unless it is done with an eye to His glory. And being out of His love, you are under His wrath. There is no alternative. If you are out of His love, you must be under His wrath. He has created you and, as you are a moral agent, God cannot be indifferent to you or to your actions. God is angry with you every day.

The wrath of God abides upon you at all times! If you go on a journey, the wrath of God hangs over you all the way. If you go out to work, the wrath of God is hanging round your neck. If you sit down to your daily meals, the wrath of God is close by! If you sleep, it rests over you all the night long. At any moment it may crush you into hell; it may be today or tomorrow or some day next week. The time is uncertain, but the thing is sure. Whenever God cuts the thread of life, the wrath that is against you will do its work. O dear souls, how can you remain in this fearful and perilous condition? Be persuaded now to believe in Jesus and thereby escape the "wrath to come".

Your case is very melancholy, but it is not hopeless. God has infinite pity for you. His pity is as infinite as His wrath. He has no pleasure in your dying; He pleads with you to turn and live. He has provided blood enough in Christ to blot out all your sins, and raiment enough to cover your nakedness. The more He is angry with you on account of your sinfulness, the more He pities you. Christ strives most after the salvation of Jerusalem sinners. The more you have provoked Him, the more ready He is to cover you under His wings. Turn, sinner, turn. God will not always wait. He has said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man". "Give glory to the Lord your God before He

cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and while ye look for light He turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness.”

**2. All who are in Christ are in the love of God.** When any sinner is made willing to close with Jesus Christ as a Surety, then it is a righteous thing with God to love that soul with the love of esteem. He sees nothing now to hate in that soul. He sees no iniquity in Jacob, and no perverseness in Israel. When any sinner is persuaded to embrace the Lord Jesus as his Surety, the sufferings of Christ are counted his; and so, in Christ, he has suffered for all his sins already. When the sinner stood before God in himself, God could not but loathe him; but when the sinner stands before God, not in himself but in Christ, the Son of His love, then God sees no iniquity in him; his sins have been carried away into a land of forgetfulness, and cast “into the depths of the sea”. These sins were once like scarlet; they are now “white as snow”; and the sinner begins to sing, “O Lord, I will praise Thee; though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away and Thou comfortedst me”. “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.”

Anxious sinner, close quickly with Christ. Come out of darkness into “marvellous light”. God is angry with you every day, so long as you remain out of Christ, but His anger will be all turned away the moment you consent to be found in the Lord Jesus.

*God sees something to love in the soul that is in Christ.* When a sinner accepts Christ as his Surety, he accepts not only Christ’s sufferings but His obedience too – His infinitely pure and lovely obedience. This is all put upon the believing sinner. This is the clothing of “wrought gold”; this is the “raiment of needlework”. Where God sees that upon the soul of the sinner, He cannot but love him with a love of infinite esteem and divine complacency. “This is my Beloved Son,” He says, “in whom I am well pleased.”

Just as when the sweet-smelling garments of Esau were put on Jacob, they drew out all the affection of Isaac’s heart, and he said, “The smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed”; so do the sweet-smelling garments of Christ draw out the infinite affection of God’s heart toward the sinner who is “accepted in the Beloved” – for “all [His] garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces”. Then comes to pass the saying which is written: “He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing”; and again, “The Father Himself loveth you”.

Anxious sinner, close with the Lord Jesus and you shall be in the love of God. There is nothing happier for a soul than to be loved. To be loved even by an affectionate dog is pleasant. To be loved by a little child is sweeter. To

be loved by wise and good men, that is sweeter still. But to be loved with the infinite heart of God, that is best of all. O to feel that "God is love"! Sinner, you have seen the midday sun pouring its rays onto a calm sea – an unceasing shower of golden rays – till the sea becomes a sheet of living gold, sparkling with heaven's light. Such is the love of God to the soul of a sinner in Christ – an unceasing, infinite shower of love. O taste and see that the Lord is gracious. Close with Christ and you will cry out, God is love! God is love!

**3. Nothing can separate the soul in Christ from the love of God.** Once Christ's, always Christ's: whom He loves, He loves to the end. No one can ever be separated from the love of God who once comes into it. There is no quality more precious than permanence. Most of the joys in the world do not last. The flowering of the apple tree is lovely when, in early summer, it comes out with its ten thousand blushing promises; but its blossoms soon fade and fall off the tree. Jonah's gourd was pleasant while it lasted, but he was soon separated from it. It came up in a night and perished in a night. The sweetest friends are united only to be separated. One may almost see the shroud beneath the wedding garment.

The love of the creature is not an enduring substance. Sometimes the kindest friends change; they cease to love us – or they die – and we are separated. But how different the love of God! It is an enduring good. It is a flame that is never extinguished, the good part that cannot be taken away. "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." This sublime chapter opens with a strong declaration of no condemnation in Christ Jesus; it is appropriate that it should close with a declaration equally strong of no separation from Christ Jesus. It is with a delightful and animating theme that the chapter terminates. The last object it presents to the eye is Jesus. The last sound that lingers on the ear is the love of Jesus.

*Death cannot separate from the love of God.* Death separates very friends. Death separates husband and wife, soul and body. Death separates those who, for a lifetime, have shared one another's thoughts and cares. It takes us away from their love. We do not feel that the dead love us; we do not meet with their smile. But death cannot separate us from the love of God; it only brings us to the full enjoyment of it. Are you in Christ? Do not be afraid to die, for death will only bring you into the presence of your God, and you shall be a pillar in the house of your God and go no more out. Death cannot separate us from the love of God.

*Life cannot.* I remember reading about one of Brainerd's converts who,

when brought to a full sense of the love of God, cried out, “O blessed Lord, take me away; do let me die and go to Jesus Christ. I am afraid if I live I shall sin again.” She feared that life would separate her from the love of God. But no, life cannot: “neither death, nor life”. Are you in Christ? Do not be afraid to live. The love of God will still be poured into your heart, and the Spirit of God will be given to you. “I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou wouldest keep them from the evil.” Neither death nor life can separate us from the love of God.

*Nor angels.* Good angels cannot, even if they would. But they are all for God’s children. When a soul is joined to Christ, there is joy in heaven among the angels of God; they rejoice that another poor sinner is brought into the love of God, and they would not have us separated. But even if they were against us, our Righteousness is above their reach, for the Lord of angels is “The Lord Our Righteousness”. Evil angels cannot. The devil has great power, but he cannot separate a branch of Christ from the love of God. You remember how he tried to separate Peter and Job from Him, and failed. Christ has overcome. If he could cast Christ down from the right hand of God, then he would separate us from the love of God; but as long as Christ is there, we are safe. Are you in Christ? “Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” He and all his legions cannot separate you from “the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord”.

*Nor principalities, nor powers.* Persecution has often tried to tear the believer from the love of God – but in vain. It has often torn him from the love of father and mother and relations (Mt 10:21,22) – but it cannot separate us from God and from His love to us in Christ Jesus. Dear friend, are you in Christ? O make sure, for there may be suffering days yet in which you will be tried. Be rooted and grounded in Him, and the blasts of persecution will only make the roots of your faith take firmer hold – God will love us in the fires. I believe the love of God has often taken away the pains of martyrdom.

*Nor things present.* Of things present to the Christians of the apostolic age, some were good and some were evil, some joyous, others sorrowful – just as it is now among ourselves. Both prosperity and adversity are calculated to draw the soul away from God, but they shall never succeed. Riches, cares, business, houses, lands cannot separate us from the love of God. These are even more dangerous than persecutions. But are you united to Christ? Then they shall not prevail; they cannot come between you and God, so as to separate you from His love. Only abide in Christ, and the love of God shall abide in your soul. These things cannot separate you. Indwelling sin, temporary trial, occasional temptations, the momentary suspension of realising God’s love – none of these, or anything else present, shall separate us from Christ.

---

*Nor things to come.* They cannot separate us. What lies before us? Who can tell what is “to come”? Shakings among the nations and in the Church: sickness, bereavement, temptation, the valley of the shadow of death – all these are things to come. But in Christ we are safe for ever; they shall not be able to separate us from the love of God.

“Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

---

## The Covenant of Grace<sup>1</sup>

### 4. What Is Involved in the Covenant? (2)

*Rev Roderick Macleod*

**3.** *Conditions.* In a covenant there is often a conditional element. Something has to be done by one or all parties, or the thing proposed cannot be realised. Having discussed the thing proposed and consented to, we see that the performance of the Surety was the condition of the covenant of grace. The salvation of those whom God loved with an electing love can be brought about only if the Son of God meets all their obligations to the law and, as their Surety, meets all their liabilities to offended holiness.

The condition of the covenant required of the Son of God, as the last Adam, is satisfied by the holiness of His human nature, the righteousness of His life and the accomplishments of His death and resurrection. He was to take their law place, to be arrested by justice and pay the penalty due to their sins. This mysterious arrangement further requires that Christ be the Trustee, Testator and Executor of the Covenant. He is the *Trustee* in the sense that in Him all the riches of the grace of God are laid up, as the storehouse of the blessings of the Covenant; it is He who has the authority to distribute them. He is the *Testator* because the blood-bought riches of the covenant of grace were in His hand to give as a legacy to His people. Paul calls Him the Testator in Hebrews 9:16,17. The Old and New Testaments are the sacred record of the beloved Testator’s will and testament, which He has sworn to be true. There we read, in a solemn, inviolable bequeathing, what arrangements He has put in place for His people. He is the *Executor* of His own will and testament because, though He was dead, He is alive for evermore. Christ’s principal work as Trustee and Executor of His own testament is (1) prophetic: revealing and teaching by His Word and Spirit the grace of God for our

<sup>1</sup>Last month’s section of this Theological Conference paper began to compare the covenant of grace with some general features of covenant agreements, beginning with (1) the parties involved and (2) the proposal. This final article continues the points of comparison.

salvation; (2) priestly: making intercession in heaven, on the basis of His sacrifice of Himself; (3) princely: defending His people and bestowing the blessings of His kingdom as King.

4. *Promises*. In a covenant something is promised. In the Bible we read of promises made by the Father to the Surety. We have already mentioned Hebrews 10:5, where the Surety acknowledges that His human nature was prepared by the Father in accordance with a covenant promise made to Him in eternity. We can also mention the promise that His soul would be filled with the Holy Ghost, without measure and without intermission: “And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord” (Is 11:2). Jehovah the Son would become Jesus.

The name Jesus translates “Jehovah Saviour”: “Thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins” (Mt 1:21). The divine Surety would take the nature that was “doomed to die”. Several places in Scripture indicate that He would perform the work of suretyship with a sense of the weakness of the human nature. The powers and prerogatives of His own deity would not be laid aside, but they would remain in silent personal union with His sinless but frail humanity. He would not draw on the boundless, timeless, changeless perfections of His deity but would trust with a perfect faith in the promises made to Him, personally, in the covenant of grace.

In Isaiah 50, He who is described as giving His “back to the smiters” (that is Jesus, the blessed Surety) is represented as trusting, with a perfect trust, the promises made to Himself personally, in the eternal council of peace. He says, “For the Lord God will help Me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. He is near that justifieth Me; who will contend with me? Let us stand together: who is Mine adversary? Let him come near to Me. Behold, the Lord God will help Me; who is he that shall condemn Me? Lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up” (vv 7-9).

This dependence on covenant promises, along with a sense of the sinless weakness of His human nature, is felt throughout the first 21 verses of Psalm 22. Verse 19 of this Psalm is a most affecting appeal to heaven by the Lord Jesus Christ, while trusting in the eternal promises of upholding: “But be not Thou far from me, O Lord: O My strength, haste Thee to help Me”. Every word of this verse, and of this whole Psalm, is heavy with glorious grace.

Psalm 110 contains several promises of glorious rewards for the God-man Surety on completion of His suretyship. He is promised a perfect vindication of His Suretyship before the rational universe, and of His absolute dominion over the created universe. This will be for the good of His people and will

result in the destruction of their enemies: “The Lord said unto My Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool; the Lord shall send the rod of Thy strength out of Zion: rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: Thou hast the dew of thy youth. The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. The Lord at Thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of His wrath. He shall judge among the heathen, He shall fill the places with the dead bodies; He shall wound the heads over many countries. He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall He lift up the head.”

We find the same kind of conditional promise in Isaiah 53:10-12: “Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief: when Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied: by His knowledge shall My righteous servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He hath poured out His soul unto death: and He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.” These promises are made to Him on condition of finishing the proposed work of suretyship.

Promises are made to Him for the salvation of His people. Eternal life will be theirs, if He fulfils the necessary conditions. Some make our acting faith the condition of the covenant. Yet, while there is no salvation without faith and repentance, neither of them can be considered proper conditions of the covenant, to be performed by us, which God will reward by giving us salvation. (1.) Nothing we do can answer the demands of outraged justice and offended holiness. (2.) If the salvation of His people was promised to Christ before the world began, it must hang on what He will do, not on something we do. (3.) Faith is promised in the Covenant and therefore cannot, without confusion, be spoken of as a condition of the covenant.

What is the relation of the believer's faith to the covenant? It is wrought by the Holy Spirit in the hearts of those for whom Christ died, on the basis of His finished work. Believing that they are guilty and condemned, they believe also that there is sufficient in the gospel feast for them as sinners – in the surety-righteousness and surety-suffering of Christ. They believe that the feast is perfectly adapted to their need as perishing sinners. They believe that they, as sinners, on the basis of the Scripture invitations to sinners, have a warrant to come and dine. This faith is the gift of God and by it they are united to Christ and have a right to all the saving blessings described in the

promises. In union to the first Adam, the promise of eternal life was “yea” and then “nay”. By union to the last Adam, this promise is yea and amen; “for all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him amen, unto the glory of God” (2 Cor 1:20). “All things are now ready.” “They shall come and shall declare His truth and righteousness and that He hath done this” (Ps 22:31).

*Conclusion.* Here are great riches for broken men. It is a most blessed and mysterious feast prepared at great cost, purchased by the blood of a glorious Person to meet the needs of worthless sinners. David marvelled at it and said that God “remembered us in our low estate: for His mercy endureth for ever”. According to Richard Alleine, in *Heaven Opened*, his book on the covenant of grace, there are such true riches here that earthly riches do not deserve to be called riches in the same day. “Good news from heaven,” he says, “the dayspring from on high hath visited this undone world. After the deluge of sin and misery, behold the bow in the cloud! The Lord God hath made and established a new covenant, and this is it that hath cast the first beam on the dark state of lost and fallen man, and hath brought immortality to light. This is the covenant of hope for sinners; the riches of saints; the Magna Carta of the city of God; the renewal of the forfeited lease of eternity; God’s deed of gift wherein He hath, on fair conditions, granted sinners their lives and settled upon His saints an everlasting inheritance.”

Let us come to the throne where grace reigns and ask for the blessings of the covenant bequeathed by the Testator (who was dead and is alive again); stored up by the faithful Trustee and freely dispensed by the generous and large-hearted Executor of the covenant of grace. Come and taste of justification, adoption, sanctification, assurance of God’s love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Spirit, increase of grace and perseverance therein to the never-ending ages of everlasting glory. “Come for all things are now ready.”

Some are greatly tempted that the doctrine of election, which is at the very heart of this covenant of free and sovereign grace, stands between them and the universal, indiscriminate invitations to sinners to partake of the covenant provision. But these invitations, as we saw at the beginning of this paper, are at the very forefront of this covenant. It is important to remember that the predestination of sinners to salvation belongs to the secret things of the Lord. Having believed that doctrine, we have no further responsibility in that area. Our responsibility is, in the light of this gracious covenant, summed up in Mark 1:15, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel”.

The Holy Spirit has composed a prayer for our use which gives glory to a sovereign God and at the same time pleads for covenant mercies in the full glare of divine predestination, in Psalm 106:4,5:

---

“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”.  
“Come, for all things are now ready.”

---

## Satan Assaulting the Christian's Faith<sup>1</sup>

*Ralph Erskine*

**Q**uestion. Why does Satan most fiercely assault the faith of a Christian?  
**A**nswer 1. Because there is more of the power of God laid out on this grace than on almost anything else.

2. Satan knows that it is the Spirit of God that works this faith in us; he therefore envies it and opposes the work of the Spirit.

3. He knows that God is most delighted with this grace, and glorified by it. Without this grace it is impossible to please Him, and He is still pleased when it is exercised.

4. Satan knows that, of all other graces, faith is the strongest to overcome him; therefore we are exhorted to be, “above all, taking the shield of faith” (Eph 6:16). And it is said: “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (1 Jn 5:4).

On the contrary, no sin damages the soul more than unbelief. By our unbelief we blaspheme God and make Him a liar. He has said that He has magnified His Word above all His name (Ps 138:2), but unbelief discredits His Word. Unbelief is the greatest sin, because it is the mother of all sins: “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God” (Heb 3:12). When once we turn from God, then we lie open to all sin. Therefore Satan envies our faith above all graces.

5. Faith is the most uniting grace. It unites the soul to God in Christ, whereas unbelief divides the soul from God.

6. As faith furthers good things to us, unbelief keeps outward good things from us. So the lord on whose hand the king leaned, who would not believe, had no benefit by the plenty in Samaria (2 Ki 7). It was unbelief that hindered Moses from entering the land of Canaan. Therefore Satan sets himself most against our faith. And because Satan sets himself so much against our faith, Christ takes care of our faith most of all. The whole Word of God is written to encourage and strengthen our faith: “These things are written, that ye might

<sup>1</sup>An extract from *The Works of Ralph Erskine*, vol 3. The six-volume set of Ralph Erskine's *Works* is again available from Free Presbyterian Publications.

believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His name” (Jn 20:31).

Hence, whatever objection is made against believing in the Son of God, there is an antidote somewhere in Scripture to refute these objections. Again we may find that, by the very ways Satan takes to weaken our faith, the Lord Jesus Christ strengthens it. For example, Christ strengthens our faith by these temptations, by which Satan plans to overcome us (2 Cor 12:7-9). So, as we shall one day see, we could not have done without them. Again Satan plans to hurt us by exposing us in the world; therefore Christ does us good by these oppositions.

Hence learn the excellence of faith, although it seems the poorest and weakest grace, the most beggarly of all the graces. Love brings ointment to Christ’s head, and repentance brings tears to wash His feet, but faith gives nothing and brings nothing to Christ. Yet it is intended to occupy a higher office than any other grace: it is the hand that receives Christ and receives all from Him. What cannot be said of any other grace can be said of faith. As faith justifies, the same thing may be said of it as of Christ. It is Christ that justifies and Christ that saves; yet we are said to be justified by faith and saved by faith – but not in opposition to Christ. But to live by faith is to live by Christ; to be saved by faith is to be saved only by Christ. Again, in the matter of justification, faith is alone; no other grace is said to justify.

Further, observe these six particular points concerning it:

1. Faith is that grace by which we have access to God. Many times a poor soul is as a ship that is tossed in a furious tempest and cannot see land. Faith is like someone getting to the top of the mast and telling that he has seen the haven. It brings Christ and the soul together.

2. As faith is the grace that brings us to Christ, so it is the grace that keeps Christ and the soul together, that preserves the soul in Christ; you “are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation”.

3. Faith is the grace that presents us to God spotless and blameless. Faith receives the righteousness in which we appear spotless before God, saying, “In the Lord have I righteousness”.

4. Faith is the leading and commanding grace. It leads forth all the other graces that are in us. It is the holy centurion that says to someone: “Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh,” for the working of all the graces is according to the measure of faith.

5. Faith is the binding and uniting grace. Love also unites the soul to Christ; yet, though it is a uniting grace, the union that love makes is only a moral union, as one heart in two bodies. But the union that faith makes is a mystical union; it makes us spiritually and mystically one with Christ.

6. The excellence of faith lies in this: it is the one grace that Christ specially enquires after. “Where is your faith?” is the great question. When a storm seems to drive hope and courage and all else away, the question is, “Where is your faith?” “If thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God.” “If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.” There are two things our Lord is said to wonder at: one is that He wondered at the people’s unbelief, “He marvelled because of their unbelief” (Mk 6:6). Another is that He marvelled at the centurion’s faith. So it appears that faith is the only grace that Christ enquires after and is careful about; therefore it must be a grace that excels all the other graces.

On the other hand, we may hence see the vileness of the sin of unbelief. As faith is the most excellent grace, so unbelief is the most abominable sin.

1. Unbelief is seated in the most noble part of the soul: in the understanding it is darkness; in the will it is rebellion and opposition to God.

2. Unbelief is a seminary of all kinds of evil; it lets out the heart to all manner of sin. It is the unbelieving sinner that despises heaven and mocks at hell.

3. Unbelief is spiritual self-murder. It shuts out the soul from mercy, by rejecting the kindness of God and the Christ of God.

4. See what God says of it: “He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar” (1 Jn 5:10), as if no notice was to be given to what God speaks, no regard to what He says. Hence Christ’s greatest care is to have unbelief dashed and faith furthered: “I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not”.

It is due to the mediation and intercession of Christ that, though the faith of disciples may fearfully languish, it shall not utterly fail. If you are left to yourself, believer, you will fall, especially in a day of temptation, in a winnowing and sifting time; but you are to expect keeping, by the power of God and the prayer of Christ. The prayer of Christ is not only general – for all believers – but for particular believers: “I have prayed for *thee*”. This is an encouragement for us to pray for ourselves and an obligation to pray for others.

## Cain<sup>1</sup>

*Henry Law*

Genesis 4:8. *Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.*

**W**hen evil fills the heart, evil effects will soon appear. From tainted sources tainted waters flow. The bramble must be clothed with thorns. The tree proclaims the qualities of its root. When poison permeates the veins, the whole body sickens. The plague begun spreads in an infecting course.

<sup>1</sup>Taken, with editing, from Law’s *Beacons of the Bible*.

When Adam fell, the inner man became entirely corrupt. Corruption cannot but propagate corruption. The parent reproduces his own likeness. Hence every child is born in sin. No cradle holds an innocent child. Each offspring of the human family steps upon earth dead towards God, corrupt in inward bias, prone to iniquity. He brings no eye to see God's will, no ear to hear His voice, no feet to climb the heavenly hill. He is an alien from righteousness, a willing slave of Satan, blinded in intellect, a pilgrim towards a lost land, a vessel fitted for destruction, a current strongly rushing downwards. His heart has many tenants, but God is no longer there. The palace once so fair is overrun with weeds. Like Babylon in ruins, wild beasts of the desert lie there, and the houses are full of doleful creatures (Is 13:21).

This surely is your birth state. Have you realised the awful truth? Do you abhor natural self? Has the life-giving Spirit quickened you with renovating might? Are you a new creation in Christ Jesus? If so, while in these pages you contemplate Cain, surely you will bless the rescuing grace. If otherwise, may his dark picture scare you from delusion's dream! Would you be saved? You must be born again. Would you see heaven? You must be translated into the second Adam's kingdom.

Let now man's firstborn be surveyed. Ponder his course. His deeds will show the disposition of his mind. The story will endorse this view of the human fall and prove that no abyss can be deeper.

The early annals of the world do not feed mere curiosity. Superfluous statement finds no place. Thus we read briefly that the first family commenced in Cain and was increased by Abel. The birth of the elder seemingly was hailed with rapturous delight. The mother in her joy exclaimed, "I have gotten a man from the Lord" (Gen 4:1). The younger received the name of Abel, which is vanity. Is not this a token that he was comparatively disesteemed? If so, the lesson meets us: how man miscalculates and human expectations err. Blessings reflect a sovereign will. True good descends in channels marked by wise decrees. Heaven's arrangements are deeper than earth's hopes or wishes. Not man's desire, but God's purpose, rules events.

Of the childhood of these brothers we have no mention: a veil conceals their early training. The history only states that their professions were the peaceful work of pastoral life. They laboured under heaven's own canopy. Abel kept sheep; Cain tilled the ground. One watched the flock; the other sowed the seed and reaped the grain

But surely it is not vain to surmise that they shared the same instruction from their parents' lips. Thought may listen to the converse of the household. Doubtless these sons would often be riveted by what they were told about the garden-home – the lovely beauty of each scene, the blessedness of God

at all times near – heard in each sound, seen in each object, adored in every movement of the mind. Would they not hear too of the tempter’s sly approach, his daring lie, the ear too easily beguiled, the lingering look, the rising doubt, the new-born lust, the fatal touch, the instant midnight of the soul, the wreck of godliness and peace, the downcast shame, the trembling fear, the inward horror, and all the terrible realities of a sinful state?

Would they not then be told how grace illuminated this dismal gloom, how mercy winged her way to promise recovery through the woman’s seed? Would they not hear of coming redemption and purposed salvation through One whose death would utterly annihilate the devil’s triumph and whose life would bring in everlasting righteousness? Next they would see the rite of sacrifice. Every bleeding victim would proclaim sin’s awful penalty. This ordinance would portray atonement through another’s blood. The skins too of these slaughtered beasts, supplying raiment for the body, would fitly show the obedience of the dying Saviour as the soul’s justifying robe.

These lessons are the full gospel in microscopic form. All saving truth is here embodied. And who can doubt that Cain and Abel were thus taught alike the outlines of the scheme of salvation? They had their Bible in their parents’ teaching. Human malady and heavenly cure, the peril and the refuge, the ruin and the rescue, their state as Adam’s sons, hope through grace – these would be their earliest instruction.

Is the effect on them the same? Are their minds brought to the same holy faith? Far otherwise. The sun, which melts the snow, congeals the clay. While outward lessons are the same to both, one heart is savingly impressed, but the other waxes harder. Great differences would hence pervade their total character. But they come most vividly to view in their approach to God.

Behold the worshippers. First mark Cain. He feels that homage is the great Creator’s due. Therefore he makes an offering. But he consults with blinded reason. He listens to his wayward will and so infers that the produce of his own toil is sacrifice most meet. He brings “of the fruit of the ground”. In this appears at once the working of self-righteous pride. He worships as a vain free-thinker. Here is no confession of his guilty need. Here is no faith in the revealed atonement. Here is no acceptance of the way of grace. Here is no delight in reconciling blood. God’s mode of access is rejected. Self-will rebelliously concludes, I stand bold in uprightness, free to commune with God! Why should I humbly plead another’s death? Why should I trust another’s power to save? I pay the fruit of my own labour. Sufficient is this allegiance to my Maker. This only I present. Such is the constant voice of nature. Such is the vanity of unregenerate man. Inflated by high thoughts of self, he tramples grace beneath disdainful feet.

Now turn to Abel. He likewise comes to worship. But the contrast is great, as light from darkness. He brings the firstlings of his flock. He raises an altar. On it he lays a dying victim. The Spirit testifies of the principle which moves this act. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain" (Heb 11:4). His conduct sweetly shows soul-humbleness, consciousness of nature's ruin, confession of extremest need, acknowledgment of life's forfeiture, reliance only on the atoning Lamb. A voice from Abel's altar cries, My eyes are to the coming Saviour. I joy in Him, as all my hope, desire, pardon, life.

You see the amazing difference. How is it so? The answer is near and sure. Grace visited one; the other was passed by. To Cain all pious precepts were as water cast upon a rock. To Abel they came as good seed falling on good ground. It was so because some mighty power touched the younger, while the elder remained in nature's hardness, ignorance, conceit. This power was from heaven.

Thus Adam's children show that only grace can convert. Parents, guardians, teachers, pastors, friends must use every effort and must strain each nerve. But vain is every zealous toil, except the Spirit come to help. Without light from the Holy Ghost, sin can never be felt, and Jesus can never be seen, sought, loved. Souls quickened from on high, and they alone, hasten to the ark for safety.

You who, Abel-like, present a stricken Saviour in your arms, be conscious that you are monuments of mercy, own your vast debt, give thanks, adore. "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph 2:8). You are followers of "righteous Abel". "Their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord" (Is 54:17). Can faith thus worship and receive no smile? This story replies that heaven rejoices when gracious souls plead dying merit. God looks with favour upon Abel and testifies approval. "The Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering."

Believer, take all the joy of this grand truth. If you glory in the cross, if your whole trust is in the God-man's work, your prayers are heard; your worship gladdens the bright courts above; God hearkens to your imploring soul and tokens will descend to prove your acceptance. It was so to Abel. It is so now. All who walk in the same faith find like approval.

How different is the case of unbelief! Formalists may present long trains of man-made observances. The service is self-will, not faith. It is a skeleton with no warm breath. It is but splendid sin. There is no note to reach the ears of God. It is abomination in His sight. "Unto Cain and to his offering He had not respect."

Cain quickly felt that Abel basked beneath approving smiles, while dark-

ness was his doom. Abel's happiness, reflecting heavenly rays, pierces him to the quick. The scum of his iniquities soon rises to the surface. The fiends brooding within rush into action. "He was very wroth, and his countenance fell." Envy, malice, rage fret as a swelling tide. They sweep all barriers away. God in forbearance checks and remonstrates. But divine patience only irritates him more. Passion takes the helm. The presence of his righteous brother becomes a maddening goad. Earth is misery to him while Abel treads it. Thus a murderous thought enters his breast; a murderous scheme is formed. For a while dissimulation hides it. The usual relationships are maintained and, as in other days, they walk together to the fields.

But now what scene occurs? Surely the very earth will quake; the universe will groan; each leaf will hang its head in sorrow, and the sun hide its startled rays. Cain looks upon his mother's son. But no relentings stir. No pity spares. His arm is raised. The blow is aimed. The wound is given. Abel falls a murdered corpse.

There is nothing too bad for sin to do. There are no depths of crime, from which it shrinks. It trembles not to break a parent's heart, or take a brother's life. It scoffs at fear of man. It braves the vengeance of the Lord. If its impious hands could scale the heaven of heavens, it would do violence to all within those blest abodes. All this is sounded in those fearful words: "Cain rose up against Abel his brother and slew him".

The annals of succeeding crime do not show iniquity more vile. There have been awful deeds, but where a deed like this? Thus Adam's firstborn exhibits evil in its largest stature. Let us not dream that sin came upon earth a little seed and rose by gradual growth into its full enormities. Here it stands at once gigantic in every proportion. It does not need a long course of time to mature it. Behold again that bleeding one. It is "righteous Abel". The first who lived by faith first dies a martyr's death.

Let none then fondly dream that piety wins love, or faith conciliates the world's favour. If now there be no open outrage, it is because restraints confine the arm. Earth would be drunk with gore, if hatred to Christ could work its will. Brother is slain by brother. Earth's closest bonds are weak to hold back unbelieving enmity.

Behold, the deed is done. Blood stains Cain's hands. Now the ocean, with all its waves, cannot wash out that dye. Rolling ages cannot sweep it away. Agonies of remorse cannot recall it. No angel's efforts can remove the weight of guilt. The sin is sinned. Account must now be given. The murderer hears the searching question, for God will speak: "Where is Abel, thy brother? . . . What hast thou done?" But the hardened heart breaks not. The sullen lips pour forth no cry for pardon. No contrition asks for mercy. He

stands an icy pillar of despair. Hope tenders no support. No prospect brings a ray to cheer. He knows not how to bear his being. But forth he must go to reap the harvest sown by sin.

Here the curtain falls. But Cain still lives, and must for ever live. But where? What is his present state? What will be his everlasting doom? He was of the “wicked one”, and with the wicked one must pass to his own place. The race of Cain still pollutes our earth. It is a faithful admonition: “Woe unto them, for they have gone in the way of Cain” (Jude 11). That way is still a common bypath. The sons of nature crowd it. Grace only can call from it.

In this history some of its downward stages are depicted. Pride takes the first step. The sinner, satisfied with self, sneers at the thought of being fallen, vile, lost. His blinded solace is: “I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing” (Rev 3:17). Self-righteous, he perceives no beauty in the glorious cross. Unconscious of filth, he seeks no cleansing. Ignorant of guilt, he laughs at pardon. Christ is despised. The gospel is rejected, as an old wives’ tale. No grace bars the heart’s door. Therefore the whole legion of hell’s passions find admission. They enter and fix their foul abode. Outward warnings are not heard. Frightful lusts are wantonly indulged. A mad career is madly run. Human laws may check overt acts. Cain’s enormity may not be perpetrated in very deed, but Cain’s depravity dwells within. Then comes the end which has no end: no peace to soothe a dying bed, the dread account before the great white throne, the sure rejection, the awful “Depart from Me”, and lastly the never-ending prison of anguish and despair.

Do not let Cain thus warn in vain. May good spring to you from this awful life! Let his example search your inmost soul. Is there one particle of self-justifying pride within? If so, spare it not. Drag it to the cross and slay it there. Open your eyes to solemn truth. In you, that is in your flesh, there dwelleth no good thing (Rom 7:18). Your best deserves hell’s depths. There is no moment of your life unstained by sin. No thought of your mind could reach the law’s high standard. Away then with all self-confidence. You have no penitence, no tears, no prayers, no services which do not need Christ’s atoning blood. Flee then from self to Christ. No pardon, cleansing, righteousness are found apart from Him. Listen to Cain’s wail. Escape the wrath to come. Rush not to a place of torment.

You yet live. Christ is near with open arms. Hasten as the neediest of sinners to Him, the sinners’ Friend. You will find Him willing, able to give uttermost salvation. None perish with their face towards Jesus.

Spirit of the living God, Thou who didst visit Abel, in mercy visit all who read these pages. Call many by them from Cain’s graceless course to Abel’s faith and heaven’s eternal glory!

## Causes of the Scottish Reformation (2)<sup>1</sup>

*D Hay Fleming*

Among her Reformers, Scotland had no one who, for sheer intellect, could be compared with Calvin, nor, for commanding power, with Luther. But among them were able and scholarly men, many of intense devotion and zeal, and at least one born leader. These men were instruments or agents rather than causes of the Reformation; but that Reformation was a work, and the Reformers were prime factors in the work; the truths they held and taught were its first and real cause. It is therefore necessary to consider their teaching and its effects.

Patrick Hamilton, unlike some of the nobles of the following generation, had no sinister object in view, no hope of aggrandisement, in his opposition to a Church which was hopelessly corrupt. His thirst for knowledge is demonstrated by the fact that he had studied at Paris and Louvain before he began attending St Andrews University in June 1523. He must have spoken with considerable freedom, for early in 1527 James Beaton, then Archbishop of St Andrews, discovered that he was infected with heresy and decreed that he should be summoned and accused.

To what extent he had at that time adopted the principles of the Reformation is not known but, after fleeing to the Continent, he set forth at Marburg University a series of Latin theses which he supported with great learning and earnestness. These theses are believed to have been the original form of Hamilton's little treatise, known in John Frith's translation as *Patrick's Places*. In Frith's opinion,<sup>2</sup> it contains "the pith of all divinity". It is of special interest as the earliest doctrinal production of the Scottish Reformation, and as Hamilton's "doctrinal manifesto". It overflows with earnest piety and with evident desire to bring others to the feet of the Master. It is also valuable for the unconscious revelation the writer gives of his own disposition and personal faith. Here are some of his sentences:

"The faith of Christ is to believe in Him; that is, to believe His Word, and believe that He will help thee in all thy need, and deliver thee from all evil."

"Faith maketh a man a member of Christ; incredulity [unbelief] maketh him a member of the devil."

"Faith cometh of the Word of God; hope cometh of faith; and charity springeth of them both."

<sup>1</sup>Another edited extract from Fleming's *The Reformation in Scotland*. The first article focused on the corruption and ignorance of the Roman Church and also the influence of books and pamphlets.

<sup>2</sup>Frith himself was to become a martyr for the faith in England.

“Faith receiveth God; hope receiveth His reward; charity loveth her neighbour with a glad heart and that without any respect of reward.”

“Whosoever believeth or thinketh to be saved by his works denieth that Christ is his Saviour, that Christ died for him, and that all things pertain to Christ. For how is He thy Saviour, if thou mightest save thyself by thy works, or whereto should He die for thee, if any works might have saved thee?”

“I condemn not good deeds, but I condemn the false trust in any works; for all the works wherein a man putteth any confidence are therewith poisoned, and become evil. Wherefore thou must do good works, but beware thou do them not to deserve any good through them.”

When Patrick Hamilton, imbued with such principles and impelled by loving zeal, returned to Scotland in the late autumn of 1527 his preaching made many converts. In the words of Archbishop Spottiswoode, “At his return, wheresoever he came, he spared not to lay open the corruptions of the Roman Church, and to show the errors crept into the Christian religion, whereunto many gave ear, and a great following he had both for his learning and courteous behaviour to all sorts of people.”

The cruel death to which he was subjected – for he was roasted rather than burned alive – and the way in which he met it, also had a great influence for good. People could hardly help being angry and horrified at seeing a young man of blameless life so treated, while so many of the clergy, including some of those who sat in judgement on him, were allowed to live abandoned lives without punishment. “The grave testimony of his blood,” says Foxe, “left the verity and truth of God more fixed and confirmed in the hearts of many than ever could after be plucked away.” And Knox tells that, not only in St Andrews, where the martyrdom had taken place on 29 February 1528, but throughout almost the whole of Scotland, when men heard of his condemnation and death they began to inquire why he was burned, and to question the justice of his sentence.

It was when a proposal was made that several others should be burned, of the more outspoken preachers against the abuses of the Church, that a close friend of the Archbishop gave him this advice: “My lord, if you burn any more, except you follow my counsel, you will utterly destroy yourselves. If you will burn them, let them be burnt in deep cellars; for the smoke of Master Patrick Hamilton has infected as many as it blew upon.”

The influence in Scotland of Patrick Hamilton’s teaching and death was not limited to widespread doubting of the justice of his condemnation, or even to the doubting of doctrines previously held as sure truths. Not a few accepted his teaching. Some of these proved capable defenders of it; some died for it.

One of his first converts, and one of the first to suffer for his principles, was Alexander Alane, a canon of the Augustinian Priory of St Andrews. He had tried hard, but unsuccessfully, to win Hamilton back to Romanism. Their discussions opened Alane's eyes and shook his confidence. While his judgement wavered, he would neither approve of the proceedings against the martyr nor condemn his doctrine. Having been appointed to preach before a synod, a reference he ventured to make to debauched priests roused the ire of his prior, the dissolute Patrick Hepburn, who soon found a pretext for throwing him into a foul prison, where his health gave way. At last, through the help of his fellow-canons, he managed to escape and, after wandering in Denmark, France, Belgium and Germany, he arrived at Wittenberg about the close of 1531. Thereafter he was known, not as Alane, but as Alesius – that is, the fugitive or wanderer. Though he never returned to Scotland, he laboured to secure for his countrymen the inestimable privilege of reading the Word of God in their own tongue.

Alexander Campbell, the Prior of the Black Friars in St Andrews, had conversed secretly with Patrick Hamilton and confessed that he agreed with him in almost everything. Yet he harassed Hamilton at the stake, persistently crying to him while in bodily agony, "Convert, heretic; call upon our Lady; say, 'Hail, the Queen'". When he would not cease, Hamilton reminded him of what he had once said, and appealed to the judgement seat of Christ. Before long, Campbell died and was succeeded as prior by Alexander Seaton, the King's confessor, a fearless preacher who, during the whole period of Lent, taught the commandments of God only, ever beating into the hearers' ears that God's law had been obscured by the traditions of men. His usual propositions were that Christ is the end and perfection of the law, that there is no sin where God's law is not violated, and that it is not in man's power to satisfy for sin, but that remission comes by unfeigned repentance and by faith apprehending God the Father, who is merciful in Christ Jesus His Son. This rousing preacher had to flee to escape persecution.

James Melville, or Melvin, an Observant Friar, had in 1526 boldly summoned the Bishop of Moray to the court of the Archbishop of St Andrews. When he was admonished to desist, he appealed to the Pope without submitting to his superiors. He fixed his appeal on the doors of the churches of St Andrews, and left Scotland by ship. To escape punishment he had, it was alleged, left the order and joined the Conventual Friars. However, he apparently returned to Scotland, for in April 1527 Clement VII revoked a letter he had written in Melville's favour, and asked that he might be sent to prison or banished from Scotland, until he obtained licence from the Pope to return. In March 1535 the King, at the request of the Observant Friars, begged Paul

III not to restore Melville to their order, as he had returned from Germany infected with Lutheranism, which he was attempting to spread among the ignorant people.

For affirming that Patrick Hamilton's doctrines were true and that he was a martyr, Henry Forrest, who was in minor orders, was thrown into the sea-tower of St Andrews Castle and afterwards committed to the flames, which he endured with great patience. He is supposed to have been the Henry Forrest who was a student at St Leonard's College in 1526, and therefore, in all probability, witnessed Hamilton's martyrdom.

Among the Protestants summoned to appear at Holyrood in August 1534 were James and Catharine Hamilton, the brother and sister of the martyr. It seems that James, the Sheriff of Linlithgow, had been previously dealt with and had abjured his heresies; on being now summoned, he fled. He was condemned in his absence, and his goods were confiscated, except for his wife's dowry. He was excommunicated as a relapsed heretic and a protector of heretics, and for possessing forbidden books, denying purgatory, invocation of saints etc, and using the Lord's Prayer publicly in his own language. Catharine faced the tribunal, but the King, who was present, induced her to recant. The conduct of the three Hamiltons was typical of others. Patrick was followed to the stake or the scaffold by 20 or so of his countrymen but, like James, many fled; and, like Catharine, not a few recanted.

The better known of these martyrs are Thomas Forret, George Wishart and Walter Mill. The others are less famous. David Straton and Norman Gourlay suffered near Edinburgh in August 1534, being, says Knox, "both hanged and burnt according to the mercy of the Papisticall Kirk". Duncan Simpson, a chaplain, two Black Friars, named Keillor and Beverage, and Robert Forrester were burned on the Castlehill of Edinburgh with Thomas Forret, on 1 March 1539. It was apparently in the following summer that Jerome Russell, a Cordelier Friar, and Kennedy, a youth of "excellent ability in Scottish poetry", were sent to the stake in the diocese of Glasgow. In January 1544 Robert Lamb, William Anderson, James Hunter, James Ronaldson, and Ronaldson's wife, Helen Stark, suffered martyrdom at Perth. About the same time John Roger, a Black Friar, was secretly murdered in the sea-tower of St Andrews Castle. And in the summer of 1550 Adam Wallace was burned on the Castlehill of Edinburgh.

Of some of these witnesses for the truth very little is known. In none of the contemporary histories is Andrew Alexanderson mentioned. From an entry in the *Lord Treasurer's Accounts* and another in the *Register of Privy Seal*, it is learned that he was convicted of heresy, and sentenced to death before 23 August 1538. And the *Lord Treasurer's Accounts* make an inciden-

---

tal reference to a martyrdom in Cupar in May 1539 – “the time that the man was burnt for heresy in Cupar” – though the martyr’s name is not given.

---

## Book Review

*Catechizing Our Children, The Whys and Hows of Teaching the Shorter Catechism Today*, by Terry L Johnson, published by the Banner of Truth Trust, paperback, 101 pages, £5.50.

The Introduction and first chapter of this book discuss the importance of passing on true religion to children within the church and the family. Historical examples are cited where the means used were blessed. The second chapter gives a brief history of catechising, and is followed by one on the strengths of *The Shorter Catechism* – including its comprehensiveness, its logical order and its biblical nature. A longer chapter describes its structure; there is much here that is helpful but not all of it is quite convincing. The last chapter presents a possible programme for teaching the *Catechism*.

There is much in the book that is helpful for parents, but it is rather disturbing to find the author describing as legalists those who “categorically forbid”, among other things, dance and movies. That was not the view of the Westminster divines, who included dancing in the *Larger Catechism* list of sins forbidden in the Seventh Commandment (Ans 139); and as “stage plays” also appears in the list, one would certainly expect them to have also included movies, if technology had been a few centuries more advanced. And for the author to have used the Authorised Version would have been more in keeping with the spirit of the Westminster divines.

---

## Notes and Comments

### Church of Scotland General Assembly

A review of newspaper articles on the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland makes sad reading. The opinions of religious liberals and of secularists jostle with one another, but the voice of Christ speaking in His Word is scarcely heard. The Assembly decided by 369 votes to 189 to proceed to the next step in ordaining openly-homosexual ministers. The legislation to this effect was transmitted to the Presbyteries for their approval. It is something to see such a degree of opposition, even when so many professing Evangelicals have already left the Church of Scotland.

A former moderator (male) caused a stir by reviling the congregations in

the Skye and Lochcarron Presbytery which had refused to allow last year's Moderator (female) to visit them. Apparently only 30 parishes out of 1400 do not now have female elders, but even these few witnesses are enough to trouble the consciences of those who are going against the Bible.

The most interesting report was of a minister who was about to resign because the Church "was not following Biblical teachings". The report condemned his lack of ability "to effectively lead, manage, and encourage" parishioners, and found that his preaching was "repetitive, negative, uninspiring, and failed to express the joy of the New Testament". Probably it was the gospel that was actually being characterised in this way. The New Testament message which the General Assembly, and the secular journalists who commented on it, need to hear is the warning that Christ addressed to the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees: "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Mt 23:33). "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Mt 18:6).

*DWBS*

### **The Third Way**

A new website called "The Third Way" has been set up by a number of prominent scientists dissatisfied with Neo-Darwinism. The blurb states: "The vast majority of people believe that there are only two alternative ways to explain the origins of biological diversity. One way is Creationism, that depends upon supernatural intervention by a divine Creator. The other way is Neo-Darwinism, which has elevated Natural Selection into a unique creative force that solves all the difficult evolutionary problems. Both views are inconsistent with significant bodies of empirical evidence and have evolved into hard-line ideologies. There is a need for a more open 'third way' of discussing evolutionary change based on empirical observations."

A pro-Evolution website comments: "The folks at The Third Way are correct that thought about evolution is in a state of high ferment. That is the great forbidden fact that popular science reporting and commentary conceal from the public. Scientists increasingly sense the inadequacy of Darwinian theory and are looking for a replacement. This ferment is by no means driven by religious fervour, but instead by the recognition of "significant bodies of empirical evidence" at odds with neo-Darwinism."

It is interesting to see these open admissions that Neo-Darwinism is in deep trouble as a scientific theory. In its place comes this unknown "third way", as unbelieving scientists search desperately for some alternative to the biblical teaching of Creationism.

*DWBS*

## Retirement of Free Church Minister

The Free Church website carries some reflections of Rev Alex MacDonald, Buccleuch and Greyfriars, Edinburgh, who is retiring after more than 40 years in the ministry. Mr MacDonald recalls some of the significant changes in the Church in which he has had a major hand; for example, the introduction of the NIV in meetings of the Glasgow Presbytery in the 1970s, and the introduction of hymns and musical instruments in public worship in 2010. When Mr MacDonald applied for the ministry he appeared, by his own description, as “a long-haired hippy . . . in a lime-green shirt” before a committee of “sombrely clad men”.

On several subsequent occasions he was unexpectedly shielded from criticism or discipline by conservative ministers in the Church. Such men should have been wiser, and realised the changes that men like Mr MacDonald were likely to bring in. “Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?” (1 Cor 5:6). DWBS

## Nationalism and Faith

Political nationalism in Scotland has coincided with increasing secularisation and the legacy of the social revolutions of the 1960s. It is no surprise therefore that the independent Scotland dreamt of under the current leadership is almost uncompromisingly secularist. Yet man is a religious creature by nature and replaces belief in God with faith in something else. In the case of the independence movement there is a strong belief in national separation that often appears to reject all facts to the contrary. The case presented would seem to require a large degree of blind faith as well as emotion, simply on the basis that much of the real detail is entirely lacking or unclear.

Writers such as Tom Gallagher argue that the SNP “sees nationalism in highly emotional and messianic terms and seeks to revamp society to make it more responsive to its vision for Scotland” (*The Illusion of Freedom: Scotland Under Nationalism*). One only has to listen to the number of times that the SNP urge the verb *believe* upon us. In a recent conference speech, Nicola Sturgeon hailed with mystical awe “a common belief in independence. Not for its own sake – but because of what it will enable us to do. It is a belief founded on democracy.”

The dark side of that dream is the inevitable tension and division introduced into the social fabric of our family of nations by this aggressively secularist belief system. “A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends” (Prov 16:28). Enough has also been witnessed in recent months of Scottish politicians crusading in the redefinition of marriage with a religious zeal that would accommodate no dissent, in order to make one truly

fearful of the further outworking of the secularist dream of independence. It is a determination to ridicule and alienate those that uphold biblical morality. This is the spirit of those who wish to shape an independent Scotland for the rising generation.

In his days at the Royal Bank of Scotland, Alex Salmond adorned the wall of his office with a quote from the Marxist Tom Nairn, to the effect that Scotland would only be free when the last Presbyterian minister was strangled with the last copy of the *Sunday Post*. For all its malicious humour, this reveals something of the “freedom” sought in the substitute-religion of the independence movement. “Lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord; and what wisdom is in them?” (Jer 8:9). MV

### **Islamic Sharia Law**

Starting in June, the Law Society of Great Britain is running a series of training seminars in Islamic Sharia law. It has already published guidance on Sharia trusts and wills, for solicitors with Muslim clients. These trusts and wills invariably discriminate against women and certainly against non-Muslims. This new course will further inform mainstream lawyers as to how Islam legislates for its own people but also, crucially, for those who are not its people. The Society states, “Our guidance is intended to help our members better serve their clients’ lawful instructions on the distribution of assets, including those who may adopt Sharia principles as far as is allowed by the law of England and Wales”. However, in an editorial, the *Telegraph* newspaper warns, “Promoting Sharia is part of the radicals’ anti-integration agenda”. Is the Law Society colluding with this agenda?

Last year Prime Minister David Cameron, announced plans for Britain to become the first non-Muslim nation to offer a Sharia Law Bond. Proposals to issue the £200 million bond were set out at a World Islamic Economic forum last November. All dealings in this bond will be done in the context of Sharia law. The Prime Minister’s wants London to equal Dubai as “one of the great capitals of Islamic finance anywhere in the world”. In addition, the Treasury is putting measures in place to enable the Islamic Bank of Britain to participate in the Government’s “Help to Buy” mortgage scheme. All these measures are tending to validate Sharia law in Britain.

Concerned groups have voiced fears that this law could soon gain equal status with UK law and a group called *Sharia Law – Britain’s Blind Spot* warns that many senior British figures desire a full Islamic state in our country. And when we observe recent government legislation, it is clear how quickly undesirable changes can occur. Indeed Sharia law is already said to be operating unofficially in some mosques and Islamic communities. There

are 2.7 million practising Muslims in Britain and many demand the right to conduct their affairs within their own religious framework. Baroness Cox, a tireless campaigner against Sharia law, warned some two years ago that Sharia is “effectively a parallel quasi-legal system operating within some Muslim communities”. These are sobering words.

Sharia law is brutal, like the religion behind it. Persecution of Christians is inherent in its statutes as is the subjugation of women. If any man converts from Islam to Christianity he is sentenced to death. Most women suffer the same fate although some schools of Sharia law consider women to be so inferior that they are “just” to be imprisoned until they recant. In Islam a child inherits religion from its father and is registered as such at birth. A Muslim man may marry a Christian woman but their children must be Muslims. However, Sharia law forbids a Muslim woman to marry a Christian. He must first convert to Islam and their children will then be born Muslim. The system thus lends itself to the rapid growth of the Muslim population in any country. Muslim girls can be coerced into underage marriages. *Evangelical Times* has reported that “children as young as nine had been forced into such marriages in Islington. At least 30 such unions had taken place in 2010”. This is essentially legalising paedophilia and condemning young girls to a life of misery.

The inhumanity of Sharia law has been brought into sharp focus by the shocking treatment meted out to 27-year-old Sudanese doctor, Meriam Ibrahim. She claims that she was brought up in the Christian faith by her Ethiopian mother and never practised Islam. Her Muslim father had left home when she was six; yet the authorities insist she is Muslim. When she married a professing Christian, Daniel Wani, the Sudanese annulled the union because Sharia makes it illegal for a Muslim woman to marry a non-Muslim. Meriam was sentenced to 100 lashes for “adultery”. When she protested that she was a Christian she was sentenced to death for apostasy.

In February she was imprisoned, with her 20-month-old son, and shackled to a filthy cell floor in a Khartoum prison. There she gave birth to a baby girl at the end of May. Her husband, who suffers from muscular dystrophy, is allowed to visit them for only 20 minutes twice a week. This Islamic state intends that, whatever happens to Meriam, her children will be brought up Muslim and their father will not get custody: such is the barbarism and bondage of Sharia law. This tragic case has provoked international outrage and numerous appeals for her release, but at the time of writing she remains in prison and her sentences still stand.

In response to understandable concerns in Parliament and elsewhere, Justice Secretary Chris Grayling seeks to assure us: “Sharia law has no jurisdiction

in England and Wales and the Government has no intention to change this position". However, several MPs are not reassured and are pressing for an inquiry into the extent of Sharia law's influence in this country. Former Prime Minister Tony Blair possibly came near the truth when he acknowledged that Islam "is destabilising communities and even nations. It is undermining the possibility of peaceful co-existence, in an era of globalisation. And in the face of this threat we seem curiously reluctant to acknowledge it and powerless to counter it effectively."

Only the Lord in His great mercy can deliver our backsliding nation, and other nations, from the tyranny of false religions. Once our laws were based on the Word of God; now many are contrary to it. The Pharisees in Jesus' day had a multiplicity of man-made laws, keeping people in bondage and away from the truth. To them and to the other Jews, the Saviour said, "If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31,32). He says the same to us today. *KHM*

### **Three Parents for a Child?**

The UK is considering if it should allow the creation of babies from three people to avoid children dying from mitochondrial disease, which, in severe cases, leaves them with insufficient energy to keep the heart beating. A scientific review suggests that the form of IVF involved should be safe, and the Government backs the idea. In a very brief comment, one can only point to the creation principle quoted by the Saviour: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen 2:24). This is the context in which children are to be born. Not even the great sympathy we have for those whose children are so weak that death ensues can allow us to depart from Scripture principles.

---

## **Church Information**

### **Administrator at Ballifeary Home, Inverness**

Applications are invited for the above position. The successful applicant will support the matron in the running of the home. He/she will have direct dealings with the public and businesses and therefore must have a suitable personality. He/she must also support the Christian ethos of the Home. In particular, we hope that the successful applicant will administer the payroll and other aspects of the financial affairs of the Home.

The position is presently three days per week. Applications and requests for additional information should be sent to the Clerk of the Ballifeary Home Committee: Mr A MacLean, 32 Urquhart Road, Dingwall, IV15 9PE.



## 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** (Babblair): 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:** Sabbath 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; Thursday 7.30 pm. Manse tel: 01847 831758. **Thurso:** Sabbath 5 pm; **Wick:** 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** and **Strond** 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.
- Kinlochervie:** 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 6pm. 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) Miavaig:** 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: sydneyfpchurch@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 (Carterton)**: Senior Citizens' Hall, 150 High Street North. 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 Zadorozhnyi, P O Box 100, Odessa-91, 65091; e-mail: antipa@eurocom.od.ua; or Mr D Levytskyi; tel:00 38 048 785 19 24; e-mail: dlevytsky@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.by@gmail.com.

**Ingwenya**: 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.

## Free Presbyterian Church Bookroom

133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LE Tel: 0141 332 1760

E-mail: sales@fpbookroom.org Website: www.fpbookroom.org

### Book Selection

	RRP	Offer
<b>Pleading for a Reformation Vision</b> by David B Calhoun		
Banner of Truth, hbk, 336pp	£15.50	£12.40
<b>None but Jesus</b> by John Flavel		
Banner of Truth, pbk, 176pp	£3.25	£2.60
<b>Christ's Glorious Achievements</b> by C. H. Spurgeon		
Banner of Truth, pbk, 184pp	£6.00	£4.80
<b>The Shorter Catechism Explained from Scripture</b> by Thomas Vincent		
Banner of Truth, pbk, 280pp	£5.75	£4.60
<b>Prayer</b> by John Bunyan		
Banner of Truth, pbk, 176pp	£5.00	£4.00

(Postage is extra)

Subscription rates, including postage:

F P Magazine £26.00 (£2.00 per copy) • Y P Magazine £15.00 (£1.00 per copy)

Combined £39.00