

The Free Presbyterian Magazine

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

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

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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, Mbumba.

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: 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:** Chesley, Edinburgh, Gisborne, Uig, Mbumba.

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

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

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The Passover

The Passover will always be associated with the deliverance of the Children of Israel from Egypt. Over the generations, the Israelites had very much increased in number; and the reigning Pharaoh, viewing them as a threat, put plans in place that would have resulted, had he been successful, in the Israelites dying out. But, in God's providence, that could not be allowed to happen; it would then have become impossible for the Messiah to be born through the line of Abraham's descendants, as God had promised. His purpose of mercy to a lost world could not be thwarted.

The time had now come for Israel to be set free – again according to God's revealed purpose. He sent Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh to demand that he let the Israelites go free. But Pharaoh refused; he replied adamantly: "Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go" (Ex 5:2). A continued determination to persevere in rebellion against his Maker placed Pharaoh and the whole of Egypt under severe judgement: the firstborn in every family in the country were to perish. The Israelites themselves were not immune; after all, they too were rebellious sinners, and "the wages of sin is death" (Rom 6:23).

1. *A substitute.* God in His mercy made provision to deliver His people, and this provision involved substitution. The firstborn in each family was under sentence of death, but a lamb would die instead, so that the firstborn would go free. This clearly points forward to "the Lamb of God" that John the Baptist referred to (Jn 1:29). The Israelites were told: "Your lamb shall be without blemish". And the Lamb that God was to provide, as a substitute for sinners under sentence of eternal death, must be without blemish also – without the least stain of sin. He must be perfectly holy, with a true, enduring love to His Father, who gave the law which sinners have broken.

There was no possible substitute apart from the Son of God. He was a perfect substitute; Peter tells those who had been delivered from eternal death: "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold" – precious though these materials are in human terms, they will eventually perish – "from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but

with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pet 1:18,19). This perfect, sinless Lamb had to die, just as the Pass-over lamb must be killed. The correspondence between the two is not a merely-human idea: Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, indicates that the Pass-over lamb was a type of Christ. He writes, “Christ our passover is sacrificed for us” (1 Cor 5:7). There is eternal life for sinners in consequence of Christ’s death; and everyone who will believe in Him will “not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). Let us therefore heed the call: “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world”.

2. ***The sprinkling of the blood.*** The blood was the sign that the animal had died. So the blood had to be applied to each home so that the firstborn would not perish; the Israelites were commanded to “take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses”. Then their households would be saved from the destroying angel, who would pass by, sparing the firstborn. The promise was: “When I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt” (Ex 12:13). The blood was “a token” of the people’s obedience and of their faith in God’s promise to protect them.

Thus when a sinner, in the obedience of faith, looks to Christ as the One who died as the substitute for sinners, the benefits of Christ’s death are applied to that sinner. And the Lord in effect says, I see the blood and I will pass over you. Such sinners are justified, accepted by God as if they had never sinned. They are safe; they will not perish; eternal life is theirs.

One might think of an Israelite family on the evening before the destroying angel passes over Egypt. There may be a degree of concern for their first-born son. They may ask themselves if they are quite sure that he will be safe. Then they may think of the lamb that died instead of their son and think of its blood sprinkled by God’s command on the door posts and lintel of their home. They may further remember that the blood is a token, to remind them of God’s promise that no firstborn son will be slain where the blood has been sprinkled. So, whatever sins an individual believer may be conscious of, let him go again to consider the teaching in Scripture about Christ’s death and, in particular, the fact “that the blood of Jesus Christ [God’s] Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 Jn 1:7). If that sinner has no other hope but Jesus Christ and Him crucified, if that sinner is well satisfied with the great High Priest and the sacrifice that He offered at Calvary, let him receive it as a fact that God is saying to him in particular: “When I see the blood, I will pass over you”. Let him receive that fact and go on in dependence on God’s grace.

3. ***They must eat the Passover.*** The command was imperative: “They shall eat the flesh in that night”. They must feed on the lamb that was slain.

So must we feed on the Lamb of God. The Saviour spoke plainly and emphatically to the crowd in the Capernaum synagogue: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you” (Jn 6:53). He had already said, “I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst”, indicating that coming to Him was the same as believing on Him, and further, it is what takes away (spiritual) hunger and thirst – it is the same as eating and drinking; He is just using another set of symbols to describe the action of faith. Thus to “eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood” is to believe in Him as the One who took human nature that in that nature He might shed His blood – in other words, that He might die. Unless we so believe we will perish eternally.

4. ***The Passover was to be repeated.*** The great deliverance from Egypt was to be impressed over and over again on every Israelite as, each year, they observed the Passover. So those who, in the New Testament age, have been blessed with a more wonderful deliverance from the kingdom of Satan are to observe the Lord’s Supper. They are to receive it as a token from the Lord Himself that they are safe and that all their needs will be supplied.

Preaching on Exodus 12:13, C H Spurgeon declared, “Not the hair of the head of an Israelite was disturbed by the destroying angel. They were completely saved; so he that believeth in the blood [of Christ] is saved from all things. . . . There was a martyr once summoned before Bonner [Bishop of London]; and after he had expressed his faith in Christ, Bonner said, ‘You are a heretic and will be dammed’. ‘Nay, said he, quoting an old version, ‘there is therefore now no damnation to them that believe in Christ Jesus.’ And that brings a sweet thought before us: there is no damnation to the man who has the blood of Christ upon him; he cannot be condemned of God anyhow. . . . Let the blood be applied to the lintel and to the door post, there is no destruction. There is a destroying angel for Egypt, but there is none for Israel. There is a hell for the wicked, but none for the righteous. And if there is none, they cannot be put there.”¹

Those who were delivered from Egypt were taken safely through the Red Sea and at last brought into the promised land; just as surely will those whom the Lord brings out of spiritual darkness be taken safely through this life and brought at last to a better world. Let them keep looking to the blood that was shed; let them continue to feed upon a crucified Saviour, and so let them see how absolutely sure is the salvation which He has provided. And let the people of God seek grace to realise this particularly when they remember the Saviour’s death at His table.

¹Spurgeon, *New Park Street Pulpit*, Banner of Truth reprint, 1964, vol 5, p 31.

Salvation by Grace (1)¹

A Sermon by Andrew Thomson

Ephesians 2:8. *For by grace are ye saved, through faith.*

If any truth is more distinctly stated than another in the Bible, it is the truth contained in our text – that salvation flows entirely from divine grace, without anything in the sinner to deserve it, and without any ability on his part to bring it about. This truth is interwoven with every part of the gospel scheme. It stands forth as a leading declaration in the gospel record. This is what gives the gospel, as a message from God to our fallen race, all its meaning and consistency, all its value and effect.

It is indeed a truth which the human mind does not readily accept; and even when it is received, that reception is not always as cordial and unreserved as we might expect it to be. We are unwilling to have our lofty imaginations brought down, to confess our ignorance, our unworthiness, our insufficiency. We are unwilling to assent to a plan which presupposes the mortifying thought that we can do nothing effectively for ourselves, and must have everything done for us through the intervention of another. We have pride of understanding and think ourselves competent to devise a scheme which might at least contribute to our salvation. We have pride of heart and will not acknowledge the moral depravity and guilt which make salvation necessary and incapacitate us for working it out ourselves.

We cannot bear to believe that, amid all our seeming excellences, there is nothing truly deserving in us – that we must lie down, under a sense of our utter nothingness, in the dust of deep, unfeigned humility, and be indebted exclusively to outside help for all our blessings and hopes. Not only must this high-mindedness be subdued so that we may be saved, but no statement is more easily proved than this: *our salvation is wholly of grace*. Men may treat it with ridicule, from misunderstanding its meaning or from an evil disposition. Or they may deny it, appealing to principles and modes of reasoning which reject the authority of revelation. But it will at once commend itself to our judgement, our belief and our submission, if we will consent to take our views from the Bible, which alone assures us that there is salvation, tells us what it is, urges us to seek it, and promises that it will certainly become

¹This is the first part of a sermon – the exposition of the text and the first point of application – which was preached on 10 August 1828, at the introduction of John W Thomson, to the parish of Moneydie, Perthshire. Andrew Thomson (1779-1831) was the leader of the Evangelical party in the Church of Scotland, and was latterly minister of St George's, Edinburgh. This sermon is taken, with editing, from a posthumous volume of the preacher's *Sermons and Sacramental Exhortations*.

ours if we seek it as it is offered to us. It is to illustrate this truth that we mean to direct your attention at present.

How do the Scriptures represent our spiritual condition? They declare that man is guilty. But do they ever suggest that he has the wherewithal to atone for his guilt or that he can do anything to establish a claim to the pardon and absolution that he needs? They assert that he is ignorant. But do they assert that he can discover, by any exertion of his intellect, the way of reconciliation and eternal life? They describe him as in a state of inherent corruption. But do they teach that he has inherent power to change his heart and become a partaker of a divine nature? They represent him as led captive by Satan at his will. But do they anywhere ascribe to him either the wisdom or energy that is necessary to overcome this arch-enemy of his soul? They describe him as exposed to numerous difficulties and temptations. But do they give him the least encouragement to think that, if left to himself, he could struggle through the difficulties or resist the temptations?

No, my friends, you cannot read the Scriptures, however superficially, without perceiving that the answer to all these questions is, No. The Scriptures give a most melancholy picture of man's fallen condition, but the most melancholy part of it is that he cannot, by any efforts of his own, deliver himself from ruin, for his wisdom is but folly, his strength weakness, his righteousness filthy rags. If left to himself, he must inevitably perish for ever. Thus we are told that Christ came "to seek and to save that which was lost". As sinners we were "far off", "having no hope and without God in the world". And we were "without strength", when "Christ died for the ungodly".

These, and various other passages of holy writ, demonstrate that man as a sinner is, if abandoned to his own resources, utterly helpless and undone. And while they explicitly state his total inability to save himself, they as explicitly ascribe his salvation to the grace of God, and to no other source. "God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him". "Being justified freely by [God's] grace." "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us." "Grace reign[s] through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." "By grace are ye saved."

Besides a multitude of Scriptures to the same effect, we see from the whole strain of the gospel that it is a scheme of mercy, free and undeserved, for the benefit of creatures who have both forfeited all title to the divine favour and wholly lack the means of regaining it. The tidings it brings are good tidings, which could have no other source but the compassion of Him who, though a just God, is yet a Saviour. And as a Saviour He is rich in mercy and plenteous in redemption.

Not only has the grace of God brought salvation to the world, it has also proclaimed that grace to us and placed it within our reach. Multitudes of our fellow creatures have never heard of a Saviour; they are still ignorant of the true God and of Jesus Christ whom He has sent – living in the abominations of pagan idolatry, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenant of promise. But it is not so with us. Unto us the word of salvation has been sent. The light of divine revelation has been made to shine on our dwellings. The record God has given of His Son, whom He sent to save sinners, has been put into our hands. The way of eternal life and the means by which we may walk in it have been there distinctly unfolded to us.

Now what has made us thus to differ? What has secured for us superior privileges over myriads of human beings in the dark places of the earth? Did we possess any claims to God's favour, so that it would have been unjust to leave us in a state of spiritual darkness? Was it possible for us to have done anything to deserve such a high distinction as that to which we have been raised by the knowledge of Christianity? Or shall we attribute it to mere chance, which equally excludes God's interposition and what man deserves?

No, we do not find an adequate cause, in any of these things, for the great privilege of having the gospel communicated to us. We are to seek for it in God's sovereign grace. In Him the plan of human salvation originated, and He alone could determine those to whom it should be subsequently made known and those from whom it should be withheld. We cannot tell why it has been kept back from such a large proportion of our race; the reason has not been revealed to us, and we have no means of discovering it. Perhaps in this, as in many other cases, it becomes us to look up to God and say, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight". But whatever the explanation may be, it is obvious that, as far as we are concerned, it is God's favour, which we neither deserved or asked for, that has blessed us with the light and mercy of the gospel.

And we should observe that it is by the operation of divine grace that the salvation of the gospel is brought to us individually and effectively. We are all permitted to hear its joyful sound, but it is a mournful fact that we do not all listen to it and do not all obey it. Among the multitude to whom its message comes, only some give it a cordial welcome and embrace the deliverance which it offers and comply with the terms which it prescribes. This is an undeniable fact, but it is also true that, if we have embraced the deliverance, we must assign this blessing to the grace without which we can do nothing.

Looking at the powers of the natural understanding and the attitudes of the heart, as these are described in Scripture, we may well ask, Can these dry

bones live? The only answer that can be given is this: They cannot live unless the Spirit of God will breathe on them. In our character there is no power to put into effect that redemption from sin, or any merit to procure that restoration to the hope of heaven and that change in the moral constitution of our nature which are denied to many of our fellow creatures who live in the same neighbourhood, associate under the same roof, and receive the same instruction.

We must search somewhere else for the cause of this phenomenon. It is the doctrine of Scripture that it is God Himself who begins the good work in us, carries it on and brings it at last to perfection. This is effected in a way that corresponds to the rational nature He has given us. Our understanding is convinced by sufficient reasons; our will is moved by suitable motives; and we act on principles and exercise affections which have the full concurrence of our own minds. But the necessities of our spiritual condition require the whole to be under the awakening, guiding, constraining, overruling influence of divine grace, and this is what the scheme of the gospel has provided. It is grace – whatever instrument is used – which first brings us from darkness into light and from the power of Satan unto God; it is grace which enlightens us, renews us and makes us an obedient people.

If we have faith to embrace the Saviour, this faith has been wrought in us; it is the gift of God. If we have repented, so that our sins are blotted out, this repentance is given to us, as well as the remission with which it is accompanied. If we are taught to love God, this love is shed abroad in our hearts by the power of the Holy Ghost. Indeed, if there is anything good in our soul, if there is anything valuable in our Christian experience, if any change has been effected in our character or our condition as accountable beings before God, if we are living in any measure as the children of God – cultivating their temper and enjoying their privileges – and if we can appropriate to ourselves any of the promises of the gospel or any of the blessings of salvation, the sentiment which we hold and the language we employ must be that of Paul: “By the grace of God that I am what I am”.

Yes, Christian friends, if the grace of God had not brought you salvation, you must be still in your sins, and in your sins you must perish. As it was in that grace that the economy of redemption took its rise, it is by the same grace that you have not only been made acquainted with it, but led also to acquiesce in it. It is thus that you have been persuaded to accept Him who is mighty to save, that you are conducted along the path of righteousness, that you are cheered, upheld and animated amid your manifold trials, that you are enabled to rejoice in the hope of glory. And at every step you take in your heavenward pilgrimage, you have reason to stand still, so that you

may not only see the salvation of the Lord your God, but exclaim with mingled feelings of humility and gratitude: Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy great name be all the praise.

It is true that we speak of the merits of Christ as procuring our salvation, and some may be inclined to think that such a position is not altogether consistent with the statement that our salvation is wholly of grace. There is no real inconsistency, however. Christ certainly did fulfil the law in our stead – He finished transgression, made reconciliation for iniquity and brought in an everlasting righteousness. But then you will observe that all this – the thing which He did, His manner of doing it and the success which crowned His labours – all this was the gracious appointment of God.

It is not according to Scripture to state that Christ stepped forward and, by a work of spontaneous suffering and obedience, asserted for sinners a title to what God was not already inclined to bestow, or had not already determined to give. He came from God to execute a plan which God had devised in the counsels of eternity: it was by God that He was qualified for the great undertaking, and by Him the work was accepted, because it was the result of what He Himself ordained, and He performed it according to the direction of His own will. And the satisfaction which Christ offered to divine justice was a necessary measure for attaining the purposes of divine love – a step which mercy must take in its glorious march towards the salvation of perishing sinners.

In considering the manifestation of the free grace of God, we must pay attention to His other attributes; the glory of each of His perfections is concerned in the harmonious exercise of them all. Accordingly Christ's obedience was appointed so that His holiness and justice might be fully vindicated, while His pity operated for the pardon and redemption of rebellious men. But this was His own appointment. It was an expression of His grace; and you may judge of the extent of the grace it exhibited, when you remember that to deliver sinners from guilt and ruin, He did not spare His own Son, but sent Him into the world so that He might come under the law and pour out His soul an offering for sin.

This arrangement secured the authority of God's government and the glory of His character, as well as accomplishing the salvation of His fallen offspring. But it also magnifies His grace much more than if our iniquities had been blotted out, and our restoration effected, by an almighty act of His will. Thus, when the Scriptures speak with particular emphasis of the love of God, they refer to the mission, incarnation and death of Christ as its greatest and most overpowering manifestation.

It is also true that we say that sinners are justified and saved through faith.

And no doubt it is the plain doctrine of Scripture that without faith we can have no well-grounded hope of forgiveness and acceptance with God. But what is faith? Not only is it a gift of God, one of the fruits of His Holy Spirit – wrought in His people and maintained by His energy, not theirs – it is that very exercise of the mind which refers the whole of redemption to the love of God, as manifested in Jesus Christ. Faith does not merit redemption, and it cannot do so. It has no efficient virtue in itself. It no more deserves good than any other quality which belongs to the renewed mind.

Faith is the appointed means of becoming experimentally related to the Saviour, who is offered to us. It implies giving up all dependence on anything in ourselves. It is fixing our dependence on Him who has been set forth as a propitiation for human sins. And as that propitiation has been instituted solely by divine mercy, faith can be considered as nothing more than trust in that mercy, as the only ground on which we may expect to be saved – as the only source from which all the blessings of the gospel may proceed to us. It is in this sense that believers are said to be “justified by faith”. It is in this sense also that they are said to be “the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus”. And it is in this sense, finally, that they are said to be “chosen to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth”.

It is also true that we insist on the necessity of personal righteousness in those who shall finally be saved. But this too is compatible with the doctrine of free grace, as stated in my text. Holiness and happiness are inseparably connected; so unless you possess the one, you cannot be restored to the other. You cannot be happy unless you are qualified to enjoy what constitutes happiness; and the qualification consists in being holy. Scripture therefore declares that holiness is indispensable. But this very holiness must be considered a part of the salvation which is wrought out for His people by the grace of God.

In the exercise of grace, believer, to which you had no rightful claim, God sent His Son to redeem you from your iniquities, purify you as a special people, and make you zealous of good works. It is in the exercise of grace that He communicates to you the Holy Spirit, for the very purpose of sanctifying your souls. It was by a work of grace that God established those holy ordinances which go to improve your mind and character, that He puts it into your heart to embrace the ever-recurring opportunities of engaging in them, and that He blesses them effectually for your good. It is by a work of grace that He overrules the dispensations of His providence to teach you lessons of spiritual wisdom, and train you to habits of piety and heavenly-mindedness.

Even in your seasons of holiest resolution and most devoted zeal, and in the most favourable circumstances in which you can be placed, you are unable

of yourselves to resist temptation, to perform your duty and continue steadfast in the path of obedience. But His grace is given that it may be sufficient for you, and His strength is made perfect in your weakness. Thus in this part of the arrangement also, salvation is wholly of the grace of God. He not only restores you to the hope of eternal life, when He might have left you to perish, but He produces in you that holy suitability for its exercise and its joys, which you could never have produced in yourselves, and without them it never could possibly have been yours.

In every point of view therefore it is by grace that you are saved. It was the grace of God which provided salvation for the fallen race of Adam. It was His grace that made you acquainted with salvation and brought it within your reach. It is by His grace that you were effectually persuaded to embrace it and prepared for that eternal blessedness in which it ends. And even in those circumstances which at first sight may be thought to modify that grace, and to limit its freeness and fulness, we can trace not only additional proofs of its existence, but also the most gratifying illustrations of its tenderness, riches and all-sufficiency.

1. To those of you, my friends, in whose personal experience the remarks now made find an echo, I need scarcely say that the subject should inspire you with *gratitude*. You know what it is to be afar off, and what it is to be brought near; you know the value of that salvation in which you rejoice, and you know that it all emanates from the grace of that God whom you had done everything to offend and could do nothing to conciliate. Knowing these things, and feeling them, gratitude must be a prevailing and habitual feeling in your minds; you must be conscious that it cannot be too deeply cherished or too strongly expressed; you must lament that it is so disproportionate to the riches of that saving grace of God, for which it is so justly due – in its warmth, in its constancy and in its practical influence.

That you may be grateful, as you ought to be, meditate much and meditate often on this great truth: that all your safety, all your blessings, all your expectations, all that is precious to you in time and in eternity, comes from God's grace alone. And especially, when you think of that sacrifice of His own Son, let your souls rise in the most lively and devout fervour to the merciful Being by whose grace you are saved. In that sacrifice you are called to behold at once the reality of His love, its operation in redeeming you, its vast extent as exhibited in the costliness of that work, and the wisdom and efficacy of those means by which it has secured for you the salvation which it so liberally bestows. Let your souls magnify the Lord, and let your spirits rejoice in God your Saviour.

In your private devotions, you hold communion with the Father of your

spirits and the Author of your salvation; at family worship you present to Him your morning and evening sacrifices; in His house, you unite with His people in offering to Him the tribute of adoration and praise; and in the house, or in the field, or by the way, you converse with one another of the beauties of His character and of the greatness of your privileges and your hopes. As you do so, do not forget to celebrate the magnitude and the liberality of that mercy which He has shed on you spiritually, and with which he has brightened your eternal prospects.

Though the infidel disbelieves it all and the profligate scoffs at it all and the worldling despises it all, let the contemplation of it elevate your minds with emotions of wonder and delight. Let your experience of its inestimable value kindle in your hearts the ardour of devoted affection; let it be the song of your pilgrimage, whose path it enriches with its bountiful gifts, and whose darkest passages it cheers with its great and precious promises. And in the thanksgiving of every day and of every hour, let there be a preparation for enjoying the halleluiahs of that rapturous, everlasting anthem which all the redeemed from the earth shall sing in that blessed abode which mercy has provided for them, "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins, in His own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God and His father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

The Conversions at Pentecost¹

2. The Spirit's Work Is Necessary

James Buchanan

2. *The circumstances* which accompanied their conversion and the means which effected it. It is of considerable practical importance to distinguish between these two things and to assign to each its proper place. The circumstances of this case had, in some respects, no parallel in the experience of the Christian Church. Some of the means used here were preparatory and others were not.

This great awakening of souls was preceded by *fervent united prayer*. This was an important preparatory means. In accordance with God's faithful promise, it engaged almighty power on the side of the preachers of the gospel. The Lord had commanded the Apostles, immediately before His ascension to glory, to wait at Jerusalem until they should receive the promise of the

¹Taken with editing, from the "Illustrative Cases of Conversion" in *The Office and Work of the Holy Spirit*. Last month's article discussed "the previous state of the 3000 souls who were converted", as recorded in Acts 2.

Father. And when they returned to the city from Mount Olivet, “they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren.” The number of the disciples at this time was about 120; these all continued to meet for prayer; and so, “when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place,” when the promise of the Father was suddenly fulfilled by an outpouring of the Holy Ghost.

Mark here how prayer preceded the most remarkable awakening of souls that ever occurred in the Church of God – how it stood connected with the miraculous gifts of the Spirit. It was after frequent united prayer, and when they were again assembled for the same purpose, that “they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance”.

The Lord had given them an express promise which left no doubt as to the communication of the Spirit’s gifts; not only had He said before His crucifixion, “I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth,” but again, immediately before His ascension to glory, He said, “Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high”. “And being assembled together with them, He commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of Me.” “Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

The Lord’s promise was express, but it did not supersede prayer. On the contrary, the promise was the ground for prayer, according to the saying of the prophet, “I the Lord have spoken it, and I will do it. Thus saith the Lord God: I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them.” Great things are still promised in answer to believing prayer. Not only do we have the general promise: “Ask, and ye shall receive; seek and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you,” but specially we have that precious assurance: “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him”.

A special blessing is annexed to united prayer: “I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall

be done for them of My Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.” Let these gracious promises be an encouragement to fervent, persevering prayer; and let us, with holy importunity, never hold our peace day nor night. “Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.”

In answer to believing prayer, the disciples received the *miraculous gifts* of the Holy Spirit, which were, in various ways, fitted to prepare for the glorious work of conversion. These gifts served to strengthen the faith of the disciples; they were a manifest fulfilment of the Lord’s promise to qualify them to declare the gospel message to men of various nations then in Jerusalem – they conferred power to speak in their languages and afforded ample evidence to others of God’s interposition.

We have already seen that the gift of the Holy Spirit was the crowning evidence of the divine mission of the Saviour: it was expressly promised as the divinely-appointed proof of His exaltation to the right hand of God, of the acceptance of His finished work, and of its efficacy in procuring those gifts for men which He died to purchase and was exalted to bestow. We may well admire the wisdom of God in providing this crowning proof of Christ’s divine mission at that particular time. It made known the truth, and its divine evidence, to multitudes who were then at Jerusalem. On their return home, they carried with them the seed of the Word, and scattered it everywhere.

But the conversions recorded here are not chiefly ascribed to the miraculous circumstances by which they were preceded; otherwise there would be no ground to expect similar conversions in modern times, when the gift of tongues has ceased. The direct means of conversion in this, as in every other case, was the preaching of gospel truth, applied to the heart and conscience by the Holy Ghost. The gift of tongues served an important purpose in preparing the way for the Apostles to proclaim the gospel, and for the people to receive it by faith; for it enabled the Apostles to proclaim the gospel in various languages, so that it could be clearly understood and intelligently believed. It was fitted also to excite interest in the gospel message, as the gift of tongues demonstrated the miraculous interposition of God; it afforded evidence to authenticate the truth and establish the divine commission of the Apostles.

But it did not go any farther; it was not of itself the means of converting the soul; that change could only be wrought by the means that are still effectual for that end – the truths of the gospel, applied with power by the Spirit of God. You will note that no conversion followed immediately on the miraculous gift of tongues. All wondered; some doubted; others mocked; but no one was converted till the glorious gospel was proclaimed.

There were, in fact, three successive stages in the experience of those who were converted on the day of Pentecost. *First* of all, before any discourse was addressed to them, the whole multitude witnessed *the miracle of tongues*, and this produced in some a sense of wonder, and in others scorn. It set the minds of both groups to work – the one to inquire anxiously, the other to offer a sceptical explanation – for it is said: “They were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? Others, mocking, said, These men are full of new wine.” They were not converted; they were not even convinced by the miracle; but their attention was arrested by it.

Then followed, secondly, *a work of conviction* which was wrought by the first part of Peter’s sermon, where he established, by incontrovertible proof, the great truth that Jesus is the Christ. This effect is thus described: “Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Here we see the gift of the Spirit, the fruit of Christ’s exaltation to glory, producing in the minds of unbelievers a deep conviction of sin, as He told the Apostles: “When He is come, He will reprove [or convince] the world of sin . . . of sin, because they believe not on Me”. Still their conversion was not complete; as yet they were only undergoing the preparatory discipline of conviction, imbued with a spirit of thoughtful inquiry.

Thirdly, then followed the work of *real conversion*, by which they were persuaded and enabled to embrace Christ for salvation. This was effected, instrumentally, by the second part of Peter’s address, in which he declared the gospel message and exhorted them to close in with it. He presented the gracious assurance that, guilty as they were, they were welcome to come to Christ for life. “Then said Peter unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the promise is unto you and to your children; and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” Thus, on the day of Pentecost, it was the gospel chiefly, not the miracle, which led to the great work of conversion, by which 3000 souls were added to the Church.

Let us briefly consider the substance of this remarkable discourse. It has two parts. In the first, Peter removes from the minds of his hearers a prejudice against the message he was about to deliver. Accordingly he begins by referring calmly to the accusation of being intoxicated or unduly excited, which “mockers” had raised against the Apostles. He refers to Joel’s prediction of an outpouring of the Spirit of God, that many would prophesy before “the great and notable day of the Lord”. He represents the events which they now witnessed as the visible fulfilment of that prediction.

He proceeds fearlessly to preach Christ crucified, declaring that Jesus of

Nazareth was a man approved of God among them, by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in their midst. He appeals to their own knowledge, as ample confirmation of his testimony. He charges home upon them the guilt of having taken and, by wicked hands, crucified and slain Him. Appealing to their consciences as sufficient to convict them of this flagrant sin, he declares that Christ rose from the dead – both as predicted by the Psalmist and as testified by the Apostles, who were all witnesses of this.

Finally, he declares Christ's exaltation by the right hand of God – not merely His ascension, but His glorification, in token of God's acceptance, and in preparation for His great reward. The gift of the Holy Ghost, he says, was received from the Father as a pledge of His approbation, and was dispensed by the Son exercising His royal power as a Prince and Saviour. This gift showed that He who once hung on the cross was now seated on the throne, and occupied it by virtue of the authority of Him who said to Him: "Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thy foes Thy footstool".

Thus Peter narrates the leading facts of the Lord's personal history. The design of his whole discourse is, on the ground of proper evidence, to establish and to impress on their minds that one great but simple truth: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ".

Causes of the Scottish Reformation (5)¹

D Hay Fleming

The Scottish Parliament does not appear ever to have explicitly prohibited the Scriptures in the vernacular. Hence in March 1543, in Regent Arran's first Parliament – when it was proposed that it should be lawful to all to have the New Testament and the Old, "in the vulgar [common] tongue, in English or Scots" – the Lords of the Articles, a parliamentary committee, concluded that "there was no law shown nor produced to the contrary". But Gavin Dunbar, Archbishop of Glasgow, on behalf of all the prelates in Parliament, dissented against the Act, and intimated their opposition until a provincial council of all the clergy of the realm had advised on whether it was necessary that the Scriptures should "be had in vulgar tongue to be used among the Queen's subjects". Those who argued on behalf of the Church were driven to admit that the Scriptures might be read in the vulgar tongue provided the

¹The final, edited, extract in this series from Fleming's *The Reformation in Scotland*. Last month's article described the opposition of the Roman Church to the circulation of the Scriptures in the common language.

translation was true. When pressed to point out errors in the English translation, they could only reply that love was put in place of charity.

In mentioning the results of the Act, Knox says, "Then might have been seen the Bible lying almost upon every gentleman's table. The New Testament was borne about in many men's hands. We grant that some (alas!) profaned that blessed Word; for some that, perchance, had never read ten sentences in it, had it most commonly in their hand . . . and would say, 'This has lain hid under my bed these ten years'. Others would glory, 'O how oft have I been in danger for this book; how secretly have I stolen away from my wife at midnight to read upon it'. And this was done of many to make court [to court favour] thereby; for all men esteemed the Governor [the Regent Arran] to have been the most fervent Protestant that was in Europe. Although we say that many abused that liberty granted of God miraculously, yet thereby did the knowledge of God wondrously increase, and God gave His Holy Spirit to simple men in great abundance."

A month before the Scottish Parliament sanctioned the use of a vernacular version, Lord Lisle, the Warden of the English Marches, advised Regent Arran to circulate the Scriptures among the people and offered to help get some from England if he had none in his own tongue. To which Arran replied, "As for the Bible, there is none to be got in our vulgar tongue in this realm, wherefore it will please you to cause an Englishman [to] come here with certain of them, which shall have a sure passport and [be] well treated, to sell them to inhabitants of this realm". And a few days later it was reported that the English Bible, New Testament, and Psalter "be marvellously desired now of the people in Scotland"; and that "if there were a cart load sent thither, they would be bought every one". But they were not sent immediately, for fully a fortnight after the Act of Parliament was passed, Arran asked the English ambassador to write for copies of the Scriptures in English.

Curiously enough, at the very time when the Scottish Parliament sanctioned the reading of the Scriptures in English or Scots, Henry and the English Parliament passed a retrograde Act. It forbade printers and booksellers to issue Tyndale's translations of the Old or New Testament, the reading of the Bible in English in churches, and it also forbade women, and men of the lower classes, to read the New Testament in English. Those known in Scotland as "Pharisees and Papists" would have liked it much better if the Bible "had been generally restrained from all sorts". On the other hand, those who loved God's Word were "much offended" with the Act.

Arran's appointment of Guilliame to preach against the Pope's authority and his making it lawful "to every man to have the Bible in English," were regarded by John Lesley, a Roman Catholic historian, as "the first alteration

of religion” in Scotland. They were indeed the first steps of the civil authority in favour of the Reformation, and they were fruitful of good results. When, in September 1538, James V wrote for the third time to the Pope, urging him to make David Beaton a cardinal, he did so as one pressed with anxious thoughts concerning the ecclesiastical order as well as the faith, especially as the enemy was sowing tares, not merely in a neighbouring field but in the nearest furrows. And he asked the Pope to consider how much easier it was to maintain a standing Church than to raise one that was fallen.

During the preceding 11 years, five heretics had suffered the extreme penalty of the law in Scotland; and before long James was to see the obnoxious seed thriving so well in his own furrows that his Parliament, in March 1541, enjoined that the Virgin Mary should be worshipped and honoured and invoked; that no one should impugn the Pope’s authority, under pain of death; that no one should favour heretics; that fugitive heretics should be banished and condemned; that those who informed against conventicles of heretics should be rewarded; and that no one should cast down the images of the saints or treat them with dishonour or irreverence. From the standpoint of Rome it looked ominous that this legislation was deemed necessary. Since David Beaton became cardinal, eight other Scottish Protestants had suffered martyrdom. But now that the Bible was free, even though discussion was prohibited, the progress of heresy was, for Rome, much more alarming.

Because it had been “heavily murmured” to the Governor that various people in Scotland were holding disputations on the effect and essence of the sacraments, tending plainly to “the enervation of the Catholic faith”, the Privy Council ordained in June 1543 that “no man dispute or maintain any opinions of the sacraments, nor of the effect or essence thereof, other ways than is received by the Holy Kirk, under the pain of loss of life, lands and goods”. It was also ordained that daily inquisition should be made for all such persons; and when apprehended, they were to be brought to the civil magistrates, by whom they were to be securely kept until the mind of the Governor and lords of council was known regarding them. This Act of Council closed with the suggestive words: “Providing always that this Act be not prejudicial to the prelates and kirkmen anent their jurisdiction to take inquisition of all heretics as they have done in times begone”.

In the following September the Governor was openly reconciled to the Cardinal, acknowledged his offence, submitted to penance, was absolved, heard mass and received the sacrament. In the oldest manuscript of Knox’s *History*, the Governor’s conduct is summed up very briefly, in a marginal note believed to be in Knox’s own handwriting: “The Governor violated his faith, refused God, and took absolution of the devil”. In December, the

Governor caused Parliament to be informed “that heretics more and more rise and spread within this realm, sowing damnable opinions contrary to the faith and laws of Holy Kirk, acts and constitutions of this realm,” and therefore all prelates were exhorted to inquire concerning all such persons, and to proceed against them “according to the laws of Holy Kirk”. And it was promised that the Governor “shall be ready at all times to do therein” according to his office. So, exactly nine months after permission had been given to read the Scriptures in the vernacular, Parliament was officially informed that there ought to be another campaign against heretics.

It was shown next month that Arran’s assurance of personal help was no idle promise; he accompanied the Cardinal to Perth, and five heretics were put to death. The four men were convicted of meeting in St Ann’s Chapel, when they conferred and disputed on Holy Scripture; two of them were also convicted of having interrupted a friar when he was preaching, alleging that his doctrine was false, and contrary to Scripture. The woman was convicted of dishonouring the Virgin Mary. In childbirth she had refused to invoke her help; she had said that, if she had lived at that time, “God might have looked to her humility and low estate, as he did to the Virgin’s, in making her the mother of Christ”. A number of Protestants at this time fled the country.

When Henry VIII authorised translations of the Scriptures, “those who maintained the old Lollard theory – that the Bible could be safely interpreted without the aid of a priesthood – were encouraged in their opposition to the Church. This theory was clearly gaining in strength during the latter part of Henry’s reign, and its adherents became still more numerous in that of his son. Men founded their convictions on an infallible book, were confident in their own judgements, and died by hundreds under Mary for beliefs that were only exceptionally held in the beginning of her father’s reign. The pure delight in the sacred literature itself inspired many with enthusiasm.”²

The Word of God exerted a marvellous power in Scotland also, even over many who were personally unable to read it. The keenness of some of these illiterates was exemplified in Robert Maule of Panmure, who became “very penitent of his former life and embraced the Reformed religion”. He died in May 1560 aged 62. He had never been taught to read or write, but one of his sons, “a godly person given to reading of the Scripture”, instructed him each night in “the chief points of religion”.

While Quintin Kennedy, Abbot of Crossraguel in Ayrshire, admitted in 1558 that it was expedient that those should read the Scriptures who did so “temperately”, he contended that God had provided a better way than burdening every private man to read His Word in order to find out all its

²David Calderwood, *History of the Kirk of Scotland*, vol 1, pp 172-4.

secrets necessary for salvation. Private men ought not to pry into such mysteries as “the sacraments, predestination, free will and justification”. They should not, he argued, seek any other understanding of these than that already taught by general councils. In all such matters above their knowledge, the people should support the judgement of their pastors, “without curious reasoning”.

It was necessary to lean on “the judgement of the Kirk in all matters concerning both faith and religion”, for there were things which faithful Christians ought to believe, although “they cannot be proven by express testimonies of Scripture”. For example, “Is he not to be esteemed as a heretic who would deny the blessed mother of Jesus Christ our Saviour to be a perpetual virgin?” Although the authority of the Church extended to more than was expressly contained in Scripture, yet “the Scripture and Kirk are both alike true, equal of strength, power and dignity, governed ever with the same Spirit of God”.

This doctrine might continue to hold the field at Rome; it was rapidly ceasing to do so in Scotland. There, in that year of Walter Mill’s martyrdom, the ultimate triumph of the Reformed doctrines was already assured to the eye of faith. To the Parliament which met in November, the Protestants formally protested that, as they had not been able to obtain a “just reformation according to God’s Word”, it should be lawful for them to act in matters of religion and conscience as they must answer to God, until their adversaries proved themselves to be true ministers of Christ’s Church and purged themselves of the crimes laid to their charge.

On the following January 1, the notice known as The Beggars’ Summons was posted on the gates of the friaries. It made no attack on the shameless immorality of the ecclesiastical “beggars and vagabonds”, but vigorously denounced the feigned holiness and selfish craftiness by which the friars, though sturdy, had acquired the alms which ought to have been given to the diseased and feeble poor. In it the friars were warned, in the name of God, to quit the hospitals before Whitsun next, so that possession might be taken by the only lawful owners – the blind, crooked, bedridden, widows, orphans and other poor unable to work. These wretched poor intimated that, failing compliance with their demands, they would, with God’s help and the assistance of His saints on earth, take possession of their patrimony at Whitsun and eject the friars. But the provincial council, which met in March, failed to deal with the pressing matters of doctrine and ritual, and held out no hope of toleration to those who wished to be ruled by the Bible.

When Knox returned to Scotland on 2 May 1559, the realm was in the very throes of the Reformation. He found the thirst for the gospel to be wondrously great. By the beginning of September, though troubled with

fever, he had travelled through most of the country and found men of all sorts embracing the truth. A few weeks later he was still so engrossed that he could not get four hours out of the 24 for natural rest. The French held Dunbar and Leith and were strong enough to be aggressive, but for the body of the Scottish people, the battle of the Reformation was won.

The Place of the Sacraments in Worship¹

3. Subsidiary Questions

Rev K M Watkins

We have seen five aspects of sacraments which together point to their right place in the worship of God. They are ordinances directly instituted by Christ. They are signs, symbolising the covenant of grace. They are seals, by which God assures His people of the reality of His grace. They are means of grace, God using them when it pleases Him to communicate grace effectually. They are badges, by which God's people profess the true religion. To complete our view of the place of sacraments in worship, three subsidiary questions need to be addressed.

Firstly, what is the right place of the sacraments in worship relative to the preached Word? Sacraments must take their place *alongside* preaching. "The Word of God may never be separated from the sacraments, but must always accompany them, since they are virtually only a visible representation of the truth that is conveyed to us in the Word."²

Moreover, the sacraments *depend* on the preached Word, as they have no meaning in and of themselves, but only as they illustrate and confirm the doctrines of Scripture. "While the Word can exist and is also complete without the sacraments, the sacraments are never complete without the Word."³ Commenting on the heap of stones acting as a witness between Laban and Jacob in Genesis 31:48, Calvin wrote: "This rule ought to be applied to the sacraments: if the word by which God enters into covenant with us be taken away, useless and dead figures will alone remain". Therefore sacraments should never be administered without the Word being preached beforehand. Such sermons should be relevant; it does not help to preach on an altogether unrelated subject before dispensing a sacrament.

The Word then is primary, and the sacraments secondary. This order has

¹This is the third and final part of the substance of a paper given at the Theological Conference in 1998.

²Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, Banner of Truth, 1969, p 609.

³Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, p 616.

been reversed in Romanism, where the altar rather than the pulpit has become the centrepiece. “The place of the Word and of preaching was crowded to the background . . . because of the Roman Catholic understanding of the sacraments.”⁴ Charles Hodge wrote: “Nothing is said in the Bible to place the sacraments above the Word as a means of communicating to men the benefits of Christ’s redemption. On the contrary, tenfold more is said in Scripture of the necessity and efficiency of the Word in the salvation of men, than is therein said or implied of the power of the sacraments.”⁵

The place of the sacraments is always subordinate to the Word. Says Ryle, “The Lord’s Supper is not in its right place, when it is made the first, foremost, principal, and most important thing in Christian worship”.⁶ He continued: “Preaching of the Word, in my judgement, is a far more important ordinance than the Lord’s Supper”.⁷ But let this not be misunderstood. The place of the sacraments remains important and precious.

The second question concerns whether the sacraments can have a place outside of public worship. The Reformed view has been that, ordinarily, sacraments are not to be administered privately. Turretin’s summary is helpful: “Since a sacrament is a public act, it ought to be publicly administered in the church by public ministers and no necessity or sufficient reason can be given why a sacred and public act should be privately performed”.⁸ Berkhof says, “Because Baptism is not a private matter, but an ordinance of the Church, they [the Reformed Churches] also hold that it should be administered in the public assembly of believers”.⁹

Concerning the Lord’s Supper, the *Westminster Confession* states that the elements are to be given “to none who are not then present in the congregation” (29:3). Again, “private masses, or receiving this sacrament by a priest, or any other, alone . . . are all contrary to the nature of this sacrament, and to the institution of Christ” (29:4).

The sacraments are Church ordinances, to be administered in the visible Church in her collective worship. That is their place, as public ecclesiastical institutions. They express the unity of the Church: “by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body” (1 Cor 12:13); “For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread” (1 Cor 10:17). They should be dispensed when that body expresses her unity in her public gatherings. Further, “the right to baptize belongs only to those to whom was given

⁴G C Berkouwer, *The Sacraments*, Eerdmans, 1969, p 41.

⁵Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Eerdmans reprint, vol 3, p 502.

⁶J C Ryle, *Knots Untied*, C J Thynne, p 177.

⁷*Knots Untied*, p 178, note.

⁸Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, P & R Publishing, 1997, vol 3, p 396.

⁹Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, p 631.

by Christ the right of preaching the gospel".¹⁰ The sacraments should go hand in hand with the public preaching of the Word. To be badges of profession, sacraments must be in public. And attendance at the baptism of others is designed to be a means of us benefiting from our own baptism (see the *Larger Catechism*, answer 167).

Some have not confined the place of sacraments to public worship. Rome permits, not only her priests, but also laymen and even women, to perform baptism in private houses in cases of so-called necessity (for example, by a midwife when a newborn infant is about to die). Romanists mistakenly believe that water Baptism is essential for the eternal well-being of any soul. Anglicans dispense the Supper privately to the sick at home or in hospital. Some Independents dispense the Supper, not during public worship, but only at a private gathering of the local congregation, from which others are excluded even as witnesses. Some Brethren take it on themselves, unordained, to immerse one another in private houses. None of this is biblical.

Thirdly, there is the question of how often the sacraments should be administered in worship. Baptism, being the sign of the new birth, which can take place only once, should be administered to any individual only once. The Lord's Supper, on the other hand, is a sign of the believer's continued feeding on Christ throughout his lifetime, and therefore the believer is to partake of it repeatedly. But how frequently should the Supper be dispensed in a particular congregation?

If we really think the sacraments have such an important place, why do our congregations have the Lord's Supper no more than twice a year? Part of the answer, of course, is that it is because of its importance that we have it no more frequently. The preparatory services of the communion season declare the importance we attach to the sacrament, and plainly we could not have this every week. In theory Calvin favoured a weekly celebration of the Supper, but this was never achieved in Geneva. In practice the Supper could not be held more than four times a year.

When it is understood that the blessing flowing from sacraments does not come automatically, but that the sovereign grace of God is necessary, and with it an appropriate spiritual-mindedness in a believing heart, the exercised child of God will feel the need of receiving the Supper rightly. That text will weigh heavily with him: "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup" (1 Cor 11:28). He will feel his inability to achieve the right frame of mind each and every week by a sacrament just "tacked on" to the end of a service, after a sermon rarely focusing on the Saviour's sufferings unto death. Frequent communions come easier to those

¹⁰Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, vol 3, p 393.

who have lighter views of what is involved. Those who look on the Supper as little more than a public witness of their faith and a commemoration of what they hope Christ has done for them, and whose views of Christian experience are shallow, will also be more ready to favour a greater frequency.

In Scotland, a land where communions were richly blessed from heaven in the past, the sacraments are losing their once-honoured place. Communion seasons are dying out, if not long since gone, from many congregations in other Churches. Under the plea of holding the communion more regularly, its place has been downgraded. As people have lost sight of Christ and Him crucified, so they have lost sight of the importance and preciousness of commemorating His death, even though they outwardly do this more frequently.

To conclude, enough has been said to demonstrate that the sacraments have a unique, important and most precious place in the worship of God – a place full of potential for great blessing from heaven when rightly administered and received. In the outward form of our worship we tend to give them that place. But what place do they have in our hearts?

Compare, for example, our communion seasons now with one from the past, as recorded by John Kennedy:¹¹ “A communion season is approaching. . . . The minister preaches a suitable course of sermons on several preceding Sabbaths. The Lord’s people are stirred up to seek a special manifestation of His power and glory. A few who propose to seek admission to the Lord’s table are deeply exercised about the solemn step they contemplate. . . . As the appointed time draws near, special meetings for prayer are held, and with holy solicitude, all the preparatory arrangements are made. . . . Prayer meetings are held throughout the parish in the [Saturday] evening. . . . In many instances, these prayer meetings have been protracted all night. So sensible were the people of the presence of the Lord that they could not forsake the place where they enjoyed it; and they found ‘the joy of the Lord’ a sweet substitute for sleep.

“On Sabbath . . . the ‘beauty of the Lord’ is on the assembly of His people; and before the service is over, many a soul has had reason to say, ‘It is good to be here’. On Monday, the day of thanksgiving, a crowd almost as large as that on Sabbath is assembled. . . . Then comes the solemn parting. . . . What touching farewells are now exchanged between the Christians who enjoyed with each other, and together with the Lord, such sweet communion since they met a few days before! There are few tearless eyes, but the weeping is expressive of gratitude as surely as of sorrow. . . . All this was true of Ross-shire in its best days.”

How much we need that kind of communion season today! The

¹¹Kennedy, *The Days of the Fathers in Ross-shire*, Christian Focus reprint, 1979, pp 100-101.

question is a convicting one in respect of both sacraments: “What mean ye by this service?”

A Dying Man’s Testament to His Church¹

1. Durham’s Life and Writings

Rev A W MacColl

James Durham was born near Monifieth in Angus in 1622 into a family of minor gentry, his father being the Laird of Easter Powrie. Durham senior was also Director of the Rolls of Exchequer and a decided royalist in politics. The young Durham grew up to the life of a country gentleman. After studying at St Andrews, Durham returned to his native county but it was not until after his marriage that he was brought to a saving knowledge of Christ. His wife and her mother were pious individuals and the effect this had on the young gentleman eventually issued in his conversion. As a captain in the Covenanting army during the civil war he was famously overheard by the eminent David Dickson praying with his company, and so impressed was Dickson that he urged the captain to enter the ministry when the war was over.

Dickson’s influence was to continue, since it was at his feet that Durham sat while he studied for the ministry of the gospel at Glasgow University. He was a colleague of Dickson in Glasgow when he was ordained minister of Blackfriars, from 1647. And from 1650, after a period as chaplain to King Charles II, Durham was minister of St Mungo’s, the “Inner Kirk” of the city. The Dickson connection was also seen in the composition of *The Sum of Saving Knowledge*, usually attributed to Durham’s and Dickson’s joint-authorship. Durham continued in Glasgow until his early death at the age of 36 in 1658.

The “Judicious Durham” is one Scottish divine whose thought is beginning to receive a greater measure of recognition in Reformed circles through the republication in recent years of nearly all of his extant works. Durham was primarily an exegete and a theologian-pastor, in the sense that a great deal of his output originated in his preaching, for example his series of 72 sermons on Isaiah 53, *Christ Crucified, or the Marrow of the Gospel*; and again in his *Exposition of the Whole Book of Job* and *Practical Exposition of the Ten Commandments*. He is justly admired for his commentary on the Song of Solomon and his massive commentary on Revelation, which demonstrate

¹This is the first section of a paper delivered at the 2011 Theological Conference. It dealt with James Durham’s volume, *A Dying Man’s Testament to the Church of Scotland, or, A Treatise Concerning Scandal*.

how able an expositor Durham was, especially in dealing with some of the most difficult parts of Scripture. All his writings exhibit much wisdom and care in interpretation, with a great deal of searching and spiritual application. It is not difficult to see why Robert Baillie judged Durham to be "excellent" when it came to handling cases of conscience.

A Dying Man's Testament to the Church of Scotland, or, A Treatise Concerning Scandal was Durham's last work, written shortly before he passed from the realm of grace to that of glory, in 1658. It was composed as a result of the division in the ranks of the Covenanters between the Protesters and Resolutioners, in which Durham, along with Robert Blair, attempted to play a conciliating role. To give a brief summary of the dispute: the Resolutioners were the party that sought Charles II's full compliance with the Covenant and were persuaded that the restrictions on "malignants" – that is to say, enemies of the Covenant – who were serving in the army, had been too strict. They thus agreed with the "Public Resolutions" of the Scots Parliament which repealed laws prohibiting army service for malignants, in the name of national defence. Robert Baillie was the most prominent of the Resolutioners, along with David Dickson, George Hutcheson, Robert Douglas, James Wood and James Sharp.

The Protesters, on the other hand, were those who remonstrated with the 1650 General Assembly for hastily admitting Charles to the Covenants, believing that it was sinful to persuade him to take them without any realistic expectation that the King actually believed in what he was swearing to uphold. They also held it to be sinful to allow malignants into public office. They protested against the Assembly's actions the following year and declined its legitimacy since those who opposed the Public Resolutions were forbidden to be chosen as commissioners. The Protesters were censured by the Assembly and some of their number deposed, including Patrick Gillespie, James Guthrie and James Simson.

Although smaller in number as a party, the Protesters included some of the most eminent ministers of the day, such as Samuel Rutherford, William Guthrie, Hugh Binning and John Livingston. The Covenanters remained divided throughout Cromwell's ascendancy in the 1650s, and the Presbyterian Church in Scotland has never fully recovered visible unity since that time. The Restoration saw the end of the Resolutioner's schemes to engage the Stuart monarchy to support Presbyterianism. Baillie, on seeing that his political and ecclesiastical goals had vanished forever, is said to have died a broken man in 1662.

Durham was anxious from the start to mediate between the parties and drew up plans for reconciliation in 1652. In 1655 his aim was nearly achieved but

his endeavour was scuppered by the more zealous partisans on both sides. The Resolutioners and Protesters both chose him as Moderator of their rival Presbyteries in Glasgow during this period, which demonstrates how well respected Durham was by all shades of opinion. It was as a result of this sad and far-reaching dispute that the *Treatise on Scandal* was written.

The *Treatise* is in four parts. The first part deals with the nature of offence and scandal itself; the second deals with ecclesiastical offences and how the Church should respond to them; the third part concerns doctrinal error and how to detect it and deal with it; the fourth section is devoted to the subject of schism or, as Durham puts it, “scandalous Church divisions”. The *Treatise* is not an easy work to read. Whilst not excessively long – less than 400 pages in the modern edition – it is very closely argued and dense, with multitudes of distinctions and caveats. It often appears as if every conceivable case is covered exhaustively.

The volume and breadth of reading which are evidenced in the treatise clearly demonstrate how laborious Durham must have been in a ministry of less than 12 years. The practical and ecclesiological writings of the Puritans and the Reformers – from the Continent, Britain and New England – have been thoroughly digested, Greek and Romanist authors taken notice of, and, most outstandingly, the works of the Church fathers are extensively quoted. Athanasius, Chrysostom, Cyprian, Basil and, especially, Augustine are frequently referred to, and the lessons to be learnt from them obviously carried great weight with Durham. This familiarity with the history of the patristic era is of substantial importance when we come to look at Durham’s views on the unity of the visible Church. It may suffice to say that he tends to lean more to the history of the Donatist and Novatian controversies, in the early Christian centuries, than he does, for example, to the history of the Reformation and the divisions between Protestants much nearer his own day.

Principal John Macleod in *Scottish Theology* said concerning Durham’s treatise: “His book on Church divisions has long been looked upon as the Scottish classic on its topic”. James Walker stated that, whilst “it has a forbidding, or at all events not an attractive name . . . yet I am not sure that anywhere a better idea is to be obtained of our old ecclesiasticism, and of its freedom to a large extent from the severity and rancourousness which have been so often attributed to it”. Walker went on to describe Durham as “this judicious man, who, with his thorough, searching, cumbrous intellect, reminds you not seldom of John Owen”.²

²J. Durham, *The Dying Man’s Testament to the Church of Scotland, or, A Treatise Concerning Scandal*, (Naphtali Press, Dallas, 1990 reprint). The quotes from J Macleod and J Walker appear on the dust-jacket of this volume.

In his own preface, Durham draws attention to the rise of the *Treatise* out of his commentary on Revelation, particularly from his treatment of the Church of Pergamos in chapter 2. In that work, Durham has exercitations, or short doctrinal essays, interspersed throughout the *Commentary* and it was his intention to include one on the nature of scandal and offence. However, rather than being included in the *Commentary*, Durham's writing on the subject grew into the present work. With singular modesty he states that the subject of Church divisions was one to which his "mind and inclination was exceedingly averse at first, as knowing it not only to be difficult in itself to be meddled in, but also exceedingly above me, who am altogether unsuitable to hazard on such a subject".³

Book Review

Sermons of a Seceder, by William Tiptaft, published by Gospel Standard Trust Publications, hardback, 222 pages, £9.00, obtainable from the FP Bookroom. Tiptaft was born in 1803 and, after university studies in Cambridge, he was ordained to the Church of England ministry in 1826. Yet only in the following year was he awakened to a sense of his need as a sinner. "How gradually", he wrote, "did the scales fall from my blind eyes and how gradually have I been led to know the blessed doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints, and also the doctrines of predestination and election" (p 5). In 1829 he met J C Philpot, a leading Gospel Standard pastor; the two were to become close friends, perhaps especially after Tiptaft seceded (hence the title of the book) from the Church of England in 1831. He built a chapel in Abingdon, where he preached for the rest of his life. He died in 1864.

The book begins with a biographical note, abridged from Philpot's biography of his friend; it is followed by a few pages of "reminiscences". One notes the kindly touch to a petition Tiptaft almost always used in asking a blessing on a meal: "Make us very mindful of the wants of others" (p 34).

This book contains all 17 of Tiptaft's sermons that are known to have survived. The final sermon in the book was preached in 1829 before leaving his Somerset parish. Philpot alleges that "it is sadly leavened with the Arminian views which he then entertained and strongly advocated" (p 211). Perhaps the following quotation from Tiptaft (p 213) illustrates Philpot's difficulties: "Now real repentance is such a sorrow for past sins that causes us to forsake them, and afterwards to abhor them, and this by the assistance of the Holy Spirit leads to holiness of life. For a strong conviction of sin will alarm us on

³Durham, *Treatise on Scandal*, p xxvi.

account of the dreadful threatenings denounced against it in Holy Writ, and cause us to ask like the gaoler in Philippi, ‘What must I do to be saved?’ And God be praised! There is the same delightful answer for us, as there was for him: ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved’.”

Now, if by “assistance” Tiptaft meant something different from the use of the word “help” in God’s words through Hosea, “In Me is thine *help*” (13:9), and if he was accordingly leaving room for human merit, he was wrong. But no doubt exception is being taken also to Tiptaft’s use of the gospel call – what he was later, mistakenly, to condemn as “duty faith” (p 86).

The first 16 sermons focus very much on spiritual experience. For instance, in the first sermon, on Psalm 5:12, he asks, “But now, who among you have been panting after the knowledge of the pardon of your sins? Who is there that has been crying to God for deliverance from their iniquities and that He would give them some tokens and evidences that He had mercy on their never-dying souls?” Immediately he gives his answer: “Now, if you can appeal to God for a witness, and say this is the inmost desire of your heart, I have a good hope of your religion. . . . You shall have the desire of your souls.” It is a pity that these sermons have much less structure than the final one. But there is much in them to help those who wish to follow Christ.

Notes and Comments

Persecution of Christians in Iraq

“They are killing our people in the name of Allah and telling people that anyone who kills a Christian will go straight to heaven.” This was the chilling comment from a leading Orthodox churchman on the escalating scenes of terror in Iraq. Satan is blinding these murderers and persecutors, deluding them about a reward in the world to come – even if it means giving up their own lives while perpetrating their heinous crimes. Persecution of Christians in the Middle East is rapidly approaching genocidal proportions.

While thousands of Christians are unaccounted for and presumed dead, over one million Christians are said to have left their homes after ISIS, or IS (Islamic State) claimed that it had created a caliphate, or Islamic state, stretching from Aleppo in Syria to Diyala in Iraq. A cleric said, “The persecution is of immense proportions”, and added, “Christians fled from their homes with nothing but the clothes on their backs. They are walking . . . in Iraq’s searing heat towards the Kurdish cities of Irbil, Duhok and Soulaymiyia – the sick, the elderly, infants and pregnant women among them, facing a human catastrophe.” These people are crying out for help from the West,

both for protection and humanitarian aid: “If we are not protected soon, there will be none of us left in the country – which is our country – and no churches”.

Some churches are being burnt; others are being converted into mosques as ruthless jihadists take them under their control. When they captured Qaraqosh, the largest Christian town in Iraq, on August 7, it led to a significant heightening of fear amongst Christians. In Mosul, Iraq’s second largest city, and one which had a substantial Christian presence, IS told those wanting to remain to give up their faith and submit to Islamic rule or face execution. Red marks were painted on vacated houses indicating death for any who would dare to return. Mosul is now said to be empty of Christians.

We do not know how orthodox those are who call themselves Christians but it is evident that anyone who carries that name will not be tolerated by this barbaric Islamic regime. Their ultimate intention is to subjugate the whole world to their poisonous ideology and we in the UK are under threat as well as those in the Middle East. British Prime Minister David Cameron is realising, to a degree, although sadly with little reference to God, that “If we do not act to stem the onslaught of this exceptionally dangerous terrorist movement, it will only grow stronger until it can target us on the streets of Britain”. He is anxious about an estimated 400 radicalised recruits to IS from the UK who have gone to fight jihad in Iraq and Syria. He fears they will return home to carry out acts of terror and has threatened to have anyone seen with an ISIS flag, or trying to recruit people to its cause, arrested.

Mr Cameron does not, however, seem to appreciate Islam’s unswerving aim of world domination. He differentiates falsely between moderates and extremists, when he argues that this is “a battle between Islam on the one hand and extremists who want to abuse Islam on the other”. He “goes down to Egypt for help” when he relies on, as he puts it, “all our resources – aid, diplomacy, our military prowess – to help bring about a more stable world”. These are spiritual foes and we need spiritual weapons. A Church of England minister, Rev Nicholas Baines has written to the Prime Minister expressing “his serious concerns that we do not seem to have a coherent or comprehensive approach to Islamist extremism as it is developing across the globe”. He criticised “the increasing silence” on the plight of the tens of thousands of persecuted Christians and asked if they would be offered asylum in the UK.

The humanitarian aid organisation, Save the Children, is heavily involved in Iraq and their director states that the degree and speed of displacement is unprecedented. “We are seeing children and families who have fled their homes, often in the middle of the night, fearing for their lives and, when they

find somewhere safe to shelter, they don't have the means to buy basic necessities like food and medicines". Many are said to be "trapped in the desert with nowhere to go".

Open Doors, a Christian charity, has increased its relief work in the region. With partners it is providing food and hygiene parcels to several thousand displaced families. Its reports indicate something of the scale of the need. In some towns homes are filled with escaped relatives, churches are also filled, overflowing into halls and into gardens. One church hall housed 200 families in primitive conditions and it was reported that two babies had been born there. Another worker went to help, as he thought, 13 families on the Nineveh plain and found 200 people sleeping on the ground. One church is supplying meals to over 1000 people.

However, all these people, although still in great danger, have escaped with their lives. Others have not. The media report beheadings and unspeakable atrocities carried out on Christians and on others, including children. We need to pray for better days when it will be said: "So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and His glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him" (Is 59:19). KHM

The Wonders of Tobacco Smoke

A poster in the hospital lists 14 substances found in tobacco smoke, together with common uses for some of them, or situations in which they can be found. The list includes carbon monoxide, nicotine, tar, ammonia, arsenic, benzene, butane, formaldehyde, DDT. At the end of the list come the radioactive substances radon and polonium (used in the murder of the Russian dissident Alexander Litvinenko). Much longer lists can be found on the internet, and indeed it is said that there are over 4000 chemicals in tobacco smoke. The purpose of the poster, of course, was to deter people from smoking, but at the same time one cannot help marvelling that tobacco smoke should be so exceedingly rich in chemical substances. One book, *The Chemical Components of Tobacco and Tobacco Smoke*, says that over 80 chemical elements have been found in tobacco smoke, 90% of the naturally occurring elements.

Not all these substances are found in the tobacco itself; some come from additives and many are only present when the tobacco is set alight. Others come in from fertilizers and from contaminants in the air where the tobacco grew. Others, however, form an essential part of the plant, and indeed are said to be "extremely important" to its health. Tobacco belongs to the nightshade family of plants, which includes potatoes, tomatoes, chillies, and the

biblical mandrakes, but also several plants containing powerful poisons. Some of these poisons, however, are useful as drugs in very small doses, for example in reversing the effects of agents employed in chemical warfare.

In considering these astonishing complexities, one can only say with the Psalmist: "O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all: the earth is full of Thy riches" (Ps 104:24). How evolutionists can satisfy themselves that tobacco, fertilisers and human beings have all come into existence by chance is another matter of astonishment. It shows the exceeding hardness and wickedness of the human heart. *DWBS*

Church Information

Theological Conference

This year's Theological Conference will be held, God willing, in the Free Presbyterian Church, Inverness, on Tuesday and Wednesday, October 28-29. Rev D W B Somerset is to act as chairman. It is expected that the following papers will be read, all of which will be in public:

Christian Fellowship

Rev J R Tallach

Tuesday 2.30 pm

The Mediation of Christ

Rev A W MacColl

Tuesday 7.00 pm

The Theology of the Cross in Preaching

Rev Roderick MacLeod

Wednesday 10.00 am

The Reformation in Spain

Rev K D Macleod

Wednesday 2.30 pm

John Wycliffe

Rev K M Watkins

Wednesday 7.00 pm

(Rev) J R Tallach, Convener, Training of the Ministry Committee

Ballifeary House Fifty Years on

On Tuesday, 12 August 2014, some 90 invited guests gathered in a marquee on the lawn of Ballifeary House Residential Care Home to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Home. The Convener conducted worship and read Luke 2:1-35. He spoke briefly on Christ as "the consolation of Israel", who lay in Simeon's arms.

The Matron, Mrs Ella MacDonald, chaired the rest of the meeting. There were brief speeches from Matron herself, Inverness Deputy Provost Mrs Bet McAllister and Mr A MacLean, Clerk of Ballifeary Care Home Committee. Matron spoke of the small beginnings of the Home and referred to the matrons

who had served over the years, including Mrs M MacSwan, from 1975 to 1984, who had passed away during the previous night. The Care Inspectorate, she said, had made requirements which had put other care homes out of business, but Ballifeary had complied, survived and grown. Mrs C MacLean's retiral as administrator at the end of August was a particular concern, but Matron trusted that the Lord would provide a successor. Matron was especially indebted to Mr A MacLean for support and advice.

Mrs McAllister stood in for the Provost and apologised for his absence. She warned that money from the Council for the support of residential homes would become even more difficult to obtain in the future. She stated that Ballifeary was a model for other homes in the delivery of care and encouraged the Committee and staff to continue the good work.

Mr A MacLean recalled that in 1957 a Committee consisting of Revs W Grant, A F MacKay and D Campbell, Dr M Tallach and Mr J P H Mackay (now Lord Mackay) was set up by the Synod to investigate the feasibility of obtaining property for use as a care home for the Church. Lord Mackay, the only surviving member of that Committee, was present. Rev N M Ross and Mr S Grant were also associated with early developments in the Home, which opened in 1964.

Mr MacLean noted the Convener, Rev J R Tallach, had been a member of the Committee for 30 years. On behalf of the Committee, the Deputy Matron, Jackie MacKenzie, and the Administrator presented Rev J R Tallach with a watch and a Westminster Reference Bible.

Miss C J Tallach, a past Matron, cut a specially-commissioned cake and a buffet lunch was served. The Convener brought proceedings towards a close with a short speech in which he thanked the Committee for their generosity. He noted the difficulties of old age and the consolation and hope of the gospel. There followed prayer and the singing of the last four verses of Psalm 72. A pleasant atmosphere prevailed and several people expressed their indebtedness to the Lord for His providence to the Home over the years.

(Rev) J R Tallach

Depute Matron at Ballifeary Care Home

Applications are invited for the above position. The successful applicant will support the Matron in the running of the Home. An essential aspect of the work is to support the Christian ethos of Ballifeary Home. Applicants require to be suitably qualified to SVQ4 standard or have a suitable nursing qualification. Experience in the care sector is desirable. This is a full-time position with evening/night on-call on a rotational basis. 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** (Balblair): Sabbath 6.30 pm, Thursday 7.30 pm. Rev Neil M Ross BA, 10 Achany Rd, Dingwall, IV15 9JB; tel/fax: 01349 864351, e-mail: nmross2001@yahoo.co.uk.
- Dornoch:** 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; **Strathlyon:** 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.
- Kinlochberrie:** 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:** Church. No F P services at present. Manse tel: 01571 844484.
- Ness:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Rev A W MacColl MA PhD, F P Manse, Swainbost, HS2 0TA; tel: 01851 810228.
- North Tolsta:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Thursday 7 pm; 1st Monday of month 7 pm. Manse tel: 01851 890325. Contact Rev J R Tallach; tel: 01851 702501.
- North Uist: Bayhead:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm (fortnightly). **Sollas:** Wednesday 7.30 pm (fortnightly). Rev D Macdonald BA, F P Manse, Bayhead, North Uist, HS6 5DS; tel: 01876 510233.
- Oban:** Church and Manse. No F P services at present.
- Perth:** Pomarium, off Leonard Street. Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Contact Mr A MacPherson; tel: 01569 760370.
- Portree:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Contact Rev W A Weale; tel: 01470 562243.
- Raasay:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Saturday 7 pm. Contact Rev W A Weale; tel: 01470 562243.
- Shieldaig:** Sabbath 11 am; **Applecross:** Sabbath 6 pm. Tuesday 7 pm (alternately in Shieldaig and Applecross). Shieldaig manse tel: 01520 755259, Applecross manse tel: 01520 744411. Contact Rev D A Ross; tel: 01445 731340.
- Staffin:** Sabbath 12 noon, 5 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Rev W A Weale, F P Manse, Staffin, IV51 9HY; tel: 01470 562243.
- Stornoway:** Matheson Road, Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Thursday 7.30 pm. **Achmore:** Sabbath 12 noon; Tuesday 7 pm. Rev J R Tallach MB ChB, 2 Fleming Place, Stornoway, HS1 2NH; tel: 01851 702501.
- Tain:** Church and Manse. **Fearn:** Church. No F P services. See Dornoch and Bonar.
- Uig (Lewis) Mivaig:** 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; Monday 11.00 pm. Contact Rev K M Watkins; tel: 01282 850296.

Canada

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

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

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

USA

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

Australia

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

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

New Zealand

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

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

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

Wellington (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; Beacon International College, 70 Martaban Road, Singapore 328667 (entrance is opposite 37/39 Mandalay Road); Wednesday: 7.45 pm, Lion Building B, #02-11, 12 Arumugam Road, Singapore 409958. 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 Levyskyi; tel:00 38 048 785 19 24; e-mail: dlevyskyi@gmail.com.

Zimbabwe

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

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.

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