

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: Second Sabbath: Dingwall; **Third:** Stornoway; **Fourth:** North Uist, Zenka.

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

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

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

June: First Sabbath: Auckland, Farr, Perth; **Second:** Nkayi, Shieldaig; **Third:** Lochcarron, Uig; **Fourth:** Gairloch, **Fifth:** Bulawayo, Inverness.

July: First Sabbath: Beauly, Raasay; **Second:** Bonar, Staffin, Wellington; **Third:** Applecross; **Fourth:** Struan; Cameron.

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

September: First Sabbath: Breascleite, Chesley, Larnie, Sydney, Ullapool; **Second:** Halkirk, Mnaka, Portree; **Third:** Tarbert; **Fourth:** Barnoldswick, Ingwenya, North Uist.

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

November: First Sabbath: Raasay; **Second:** Glasgow; **Third:** Santa Fe (Texas); **Fourth:** Aberdeen; **Fifth:** Chiedza.

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

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Our Worship: Is It Acceptable?

How does God regard our worship? We may get some insight from the **H**verse: “The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: but the prayer of the upright is His delight” (Prov 15:8), where sacrificing and prayer are taken as two examples of acts of worship. Yet it seems very strong language to describe any part of a wicked person’s worship, when addressed to the true God, as an abomination. But this is a statement of inspired Scripture. So we must receive it as truth and inquire why the word *abomination* is used to describe the worship of the wicked.

The wicked person is “he that turneth away his ear from hearing the law” of God; he has no heart for it; his will is unsubdued; he is a rebel against the Most High. He is not necessarily a criminal, someone who sins with a high hand; he is simply someone whose heart is not right with God. Accordingly we should not be surprised to read further that “his prayer [like his sacrifice] shall be abomination” (Prov 28:9). In Isaiah’s time, the Lord thus described Israel’s worship: “This people draw near Me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour Me, but have removed their heart far from Me” (Is 29:13). The outward elements of worship were present, but their heart was not; they were insincere in coming before God. And He could not accept it.

Besides, “the thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord” (Prov 15:26); they are focused on the world and the things of the world; they are the thoughts of someone who is intent on enjoying himself *away* from God; he cannot imagine himself being happy if he was conscious that God was near – any more than Adam and Eve felt comfortable when they heard the voice of the Lord God in the Garden of Eden. This is particularly true when such a person comes before God in worship. It may have been an Israelite in Old Testament times bringing his lamb to the temple to be offered as a sacrifice. He goes through all the outward ritual, just like a true believer. No one might notice any difference – except God, who can see into his heart and examine his thoughts and motives. And He sees nothing but sin. There is no sense of need, no faith, no repentance, no love to God, no desire for His glory. Perhaps the man’s only reasons for coming to the temple are to silence

an accusing conscience and to maintain his reputation for being religious. There is absolutely nothing in which the Lord can take delight. No wonder the thoughts of the wicked are described as an abomination to God!

It is the same when someone today sends up petitions to God. The words may be appropriate, they may be expressed with eloquence and have an appearance of earnestness. Yet the prayer is an abomination to God; He can see nothing but sin in this person's heart.

Indeed God is not glorified in anything he does. Even "the ploughing of the wicked is sin" (Prov 21:4). This statement may seem even more extreme than the first. After all, what can be wrong with ploughing? Of course, in itself, there is nothing wrong with it; it is a necessity – as much for the most God-provoking blasphemer who lives off the land as for the godliest man who ever lived. The point is that wicked people's ploughing, or their brick-laying or nursing or teaching, is done without any regard to God's glory and without any sense of dependence on Him. The whole matter is summed up in the words: "without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Heb 11:6). Those who will not acknowledge their sin, and who therefore will not look to Christ for salvation, cannot possibly please God. Further, there is nothing about what they do that can be at all pleasing to God. Manifestly, this is particularly true of all that the wicked may do in the way of worship.

Yet it should be clear that the wicked remain under obligation to worship God. Among those apparently converted in Samaria under Philip's remarkable ministry was Simon, who had been a well-known sorcerer. It soon became clear that his was not a genuine conversion; he was still among the wicked. Peter spoke to him in no uncertain terms about the seriousness of his spiritual state: "Thy heart is not right in the sight of God". But Peter went on to direct him to "*pray* God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee" (Acts 8:21). Simon's prayer, while he remained in a state of sin, would continue to be an abomination to God; but it was his duty to turn to God in true repentance, with sincere, God-glorifying prayer arising from his heart. Especially it was his duty to come before God in the name of Jesus, who had given Himself a ransom for many. And it is the duty of all whose worship is unsatisfactory – because their heart is not right in the sight of God – to look to Christ to forgive the sins of their worship, and to send the Holy Spirit to create in them a new heart, so that they may begin to worship God acceptably.

A new heart is the result of the Spirit's work in regeneration. Then the whole person is renewed; he may now be described as "upright", someone who follows "after righteousness" (Prov 15:9). Whatever its defects, the prayer of the upright is fundamentally sincere. So David could, in all honesty,

refer to his prayer as one that did not come from “feigned lips” (Ps 17:1). And the prayer of all who are upright, as David clearly was, is a delight to the Lord. As Matthew Henry puts it, “praying graces are His own gift and the work of His own Spirit in them, with which He is well pleased”. And because God delights in the prayer of the upright, it must be heard – but not for any worthiness in themselves, even after their regeneration. All their blessings, including answers to prayer, come to them for the sake of Christ, the “one Mediator between God and men”. Though they once “were far off”, they have been “made nigh by the blood of Christ” (Eph 2:13).

Thus Daniel presented his supplications: not “for our righteousnesses, but for Thy great mercies” (Dan 9:18). Conscious of the sins that had brought his people into captivity, Daniel pled for forgiveness. And he asked the Lord to look upon His sanctuary, the temple which had lain desolate for so many years. This was a sincere prayer, offered up with a true desire for the glory of God – a prayer in which God took delight.

So today the Lord is pleased with His children’s prayers when, though sad at heart because of the desolation of the professing Church, they come to plead that He would look on it in mercy. Let them then be encouraged to plead for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, so that multitudes may be awakened to a sense of their need and brought to “repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ”. Let them pray that believers everywhere would become more trustful, that they would grow in grace and be more faithful to Him who has called them out of spiritual darkness into His marvellous light. Let them pray that God would send many men out into the wide harvest of this world to preach the glad tidings of salvation through a crucified Redeemer. And let them pray that Satan’s kingdom would be brought down – that the Lord would place a great restraint on sin and on false religion and rescue multitudes of sinners from it.

The upright may not feel able to pray as they should; they may feel that they are not able to pray at all. But they have the encouragement that “the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit Itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” (Rom 8:26). The Spirit makes intercession through His work in the souls of believers, giving them grace to pray, even in desires which cannot find proper expression in words. And Christ, as the exalted High Priest, makes intercession by presenting the petitions of His people before the Father. Thus, however imperfect these petitions are in themselves, there is reason to hope that they will be answered, for when they are presented by the exalted High Priest, all these imperfections will have been removed, and nothing will be left but what is perfectly delightful to God.

The Final Judgement (2)¹

A Sermon by *Thomas Ross*

Jude 6. *The judgement of the great day.*

The next important step in the solemn proceedings of the day of judgement is the opening of the books. "I beheld", says Daniel, "till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire; a fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him; thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the judgement was set, and the books were opened." And the Apostle John says, "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened . . . and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."

(1.) One book which will be opened on this solemn occasion is the divine revelation containing the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. In this book shall be distinctly exhibited the whole law of God, which He ordained to be the universal rule of duty to His intelligent creatures. Its injunctions and promises will be declared: "Ye shall do My judgements, and keep Mine ordinances, to walk therein: I am the Lord your God. Ye shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgements; which, if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the Lord." Its awful sanction will be proclaimed: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them". To this law will be compared the lives and hearts of all the children of men, that as many as have sinned in the law may be judged by the law.

(2.) For this purpose also the book of conscience shall be opened. Here shall be found recorded all the unpardoned sins – public, private and secret – which have ever been committed by each individual of the human race. Here the unenlightened heathen shall read those violations, of the law of nature implanted within him and of the light of nature which shone around him, of which he had been guilty; for even the Gentiles "show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another".

Here the profane despiser of the gospel shall read all his contempt of divine ordinances, all his Sabbath-breaking, all his hard and blasphemous speeches against the Most High and His ever-blessed Son; all his lasciviousness,

¹The first half of this sermon, reprinted from *The Scottish Christian Herald* of 1838 and edited, appeared last month. The preacher gave four reasons why the day of judgement is called in Scripture "the great day". Further reasons are now given.

lust, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings and abominable idolatries.

Here the lukewarm, nominal Christian shall read all his wilful omissions of duty, all his criminal carelessness, sloth and procrastination in his pretended progress heavenward, all his neglect of the means of grace which were within his reach and of his opportunities of doing and receiving good.

Here the rigid but cold-hearted formalist shall read the sin of all those spurious duties which he has ever performed, and in which he placed such mighty confidence; of all his attendance upon outward ordinances, while he felt nothing of the power of inward religion; of all his ostentatious calling of "Lord, Lord," to Christ, while his heart was wedded to the wealth or vanities of the present world.

Here the hypocrite shall read the sin of all those loudly-boasted pretensions to superior sanctity, those long prayers, those cruel penances and vain-glorious almsgiving, by which he had so long deceived the world, and laboured even to deceive himself.

Here shall be found, engraved in legible characters, all those sins of the hidden works of darkness which were committed in the most secret places, concealed from the eye of man and the light of day, and even the sins of the thoughts and affections which were never embodied either in actions or in words, for "God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ" and "He shall bring every work into judgement, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil". This is why conscience was placed in the human breast, to be a faithful witness on the side of God. Though it does not always speak with an audible voice, it suffers not one thought or word or action to escape, which is not instantly recorded. "The sin of Judah," says an inspired prophet, "is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond: it is graven upon the table of their heart." In this life men may forget their sins after they have been committed. But in that day the memory will fully do its duty, and in the book of conscience, lit up by memory, all the transgressions of every individual sinner shall be perceived, with all their special aggravations. "These things hast thou done," the Lord says, "and I kept silence: thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes."

(3.) The book of God's omniscience shall also be opened. However numerous and complicated the accounts may be, this book will correspond exactly with that which has been last mentioned. Vain and ignorant men may expect to conceal their sins from God, but in that day they shall be fully convinced that darkness does not hide from Him, but that the night shines as the day, and that the darkness and the light are both alike to Him. From His exalted throne in heaven, His piercing eye, like flaming fire, penetrates through all

the deep disguises of mortal men, and beholds their most secret faults with unerring certainty. "Thou hast," says David, "set our iniquities before Thee; our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance." "He searcheth the hearts, and trieth the reins of the children of men," says Jeremiah. "All things," says Paul, "are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." And, the wise man asks, "doth not He that pondereth the heart consider it? And He that keepeth thy soul, doth not He know it? And shall not He render to every man according to his works?"

The glorious Judge shall lay His hand on the book of His divine law, and from the book of His omniscience shall point out the innumerable sins of every individual, saying, Thus and thus hast thou done; in such and such instances thou hast sinned against the clearest light and strongest motives, as well as against the fullest conviction of thine own conscience, which now bears testimony to the truth of all that I allege. At such a solemn hour, where shall the man be found who shall dare to plead, Not guilty, to the charge? No, every mouth must be stopped, and the whole world become guilty before God and be compelled to say, "If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" For surely "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh living be justified in His sight".

Must the universal race of Adam then inevitably perish? And is there no prospect of escape from condemnation to any? What then shall become of those who stand on the right hand of the omnipotent Judge? Shall their hopes be blasted in the end, and has their joy been raised to so conspicuous a height only to aggravate the woe of so tremendous a reverse? No, they shall hear without dismay the awful challenge and, relying on the truth and justice of the Judge, await the outcome with humble confidence. The promise of Jehovah is a sure foundation of hope for sinners, and the events of this day will demonstrate to the world how safe they are who rest by faith upon it.

(4.) In order that these may be fully and openly acquitted, another book shall be opened, the book of life. "I saw," says John, "the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life." And again: "There shall in no wise enter into it [the new Jerusalem] anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life". In this book shall appear, in bright characters, the names of all the chosen company on the right hand of the throne.

Their names are there so that it may be shown to an assembled universe that, as they themselves always felt and confessed, their salvation is due to free grace alone. It is not on account of any merit they possessed or of any works of righteousness they had done. But the Father saved them according

to His mercy, having predestinated them unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will. Having chosen them out of the common mass of perishing mortals and predestinated them to eternal life, He gave them to His Son to be redeemed by Him and saved, according to a new and gracious constitution, established by infinite wisdom for that end, before the foundation of the world. It is also to be seen that they were kept by His power, through faith, unto that salvation which is now ready to be revealed.

If a murmur of discontent could arise when this book is opened – such as is often heard when it is spoken of in the present world – it would be instantly repressed by another appeal to the book of divine revelation, which contains the method of salvation by a Redeemer, called the gospel, or good tidings. This gospel not only declares that, in consequence of the original apostasy of mankind, God concluded the whole human race under sin, but it also declares His great love, wherewith He loved His people from eternity. Knowing the impossibility of their recovery by any exertions of their own, and indeed their total disinclination to return to Him, He decreed to send His only-begotten Son into the world. In His own person, but in the nature and room of man, He was to satisfy the demands of the divine law, which had been violated, and of divine justice, which had been offended. The gospel also makes known the amazing history of the incarnation and of the obedience unto death of Him who is now the exalted judge, and how amply God's decree, as it regarded suffering as well as doing, was fulfilled, till He who undertook the work proclaimed that all was finished.

All this will be exhibited before the eyes of sinners on the last day, as will the security given to those who relied on Christ for salvation, and the invitations, encouragements and motives held out to all, to come to Him for that purpose. Then shall all those impious objections for ever disappear by which men are now deterred from a cordial reception of the gospel. Then may the Judge address the impenitent sinners: "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out My hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all My counsel, and would none of My reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh". Then will they upbraid themselves: "How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof; and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ears to them that instructed me!" Then will it appear, with convincing evidence, that "there is . . . no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus". And the ransomed of the Lord will triumphantly exclaim, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?"

The sovereignty of divine grace, the universal depravity of mankind, and

salvation only through Jesus Christ, shall be thus fully asserted on this important day. Yet the authority of the divine law shall be equally displayed, both in them that are saved and in them that perish. As the perishing cannot say that they have acted up to the demands of the law, which now justly condemns them, so the saved, though not justified on the ground of any righteousness of their own, yet they shall be, in the strictest sense of the words, judged according to their works.

(5.) For this purpose, the book of God's remembrance shall be opened. "They that feared the Lord," says Malachi, "spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name."

In this book shall be found, faithfully recorded, all the works of faith and labour of love and deeds of righteousness and true holiness which, by divine grace, the righteous were enabled to perform. In this book all those secret acts of devotion in which, without eloquence of words or energy of action, He perceived humility, sincerity and fervour; all those secret deeds of charity, however small in themselves, in which He perceived the principle of love to Himself, and to mankind for His sake; all those expressions of zeal for His glory, which were founded on His Word, though they may not have attained their object. And all those holy aims, intentions and desires, which they never had an opportunity of expressing either by actions or by words, are individually recorded and shall now be proclaimed, both to the honour of sovereign grace and to their unspeakable advantage. He tells all their wanderings, puts their tears into a bottle, and will not forget so much as a drink of cold water which has been given in His name.

And when, in the presence of men and angels, a full display shall be made of the true character of the saints, as delineated in this book of God, then shall the short-lived triumph of infidelity be at an end, and the reproach of the cross shall cease. Then shall the mouth of calumny be stopped, which branded Christians as hypocrites or enthusiasts, and the righteous shall appear to be indeed "more excellent than his neighbour". Then shall it appear that, if the saints were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, it was that they should be holy, and without blame before Him in love. Then shall it appear that, if Jesus gave Himself for them, it was that He might redeem them from all iniquity and purify them unto Himself as a peculiar people, zealous of good works – and that, being sanctified and cleansed by the washing of water, by the Word, they might appear before Him as a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

Those on the left hand of the throne, being fully condemned by their own conscience, will be unable to answer the heavy charges that are brought

against them and, above all, the charge of having rejected an offered Saviour. And having no advocate to plead their cause, they must await, in speechless anguish, the just punishment of all their aggravated sins.

5. Another reason why the day of judgement is called a great day is the sentence which will then be pronounced on both the righteous and the wicked. The total separation, distinctive of character and state, has already taken place, and this final arrangement can never be disturbed. The books have been examined, and every thought, word and action has been weighed in an even balance; the circumstances of temperament and situation, of privilege and disadvantage, have been taken into the account; every reasonable plea has been attended to, on either side, and every soul has acquiesced in the reply; the true character stands forth confessed, and there is no disguise nor cloak. The tremendous prospect is in full view, and not a whisper of discontent is heard; but the Judge must pronounce the sentence and fix the eternal doom.

The Judge addresses Himself first to those on His right hand. With the joy of wonted faith, they anticipate the sentence but wish to hear it from His own mouth. He speaks, and eternity hangs upon His words: "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

"Come!" That word reminds them at once of their former distance, alienation and enmity; and of the love of the Father, the grace of the Son and the kindness of the Holy Spirit. It also calls back to their minds the many struggles which they formerly had with the wicked one, the world and the flesh, and the renewed supplies of grace by which they were enabled to resist, to contend and to overcome – while it banishes all their former doubts, anxieties and fears, and proves the faithfulness of Him who had so often said to them: Fear not; only believe, and ye shall see the salvation of God.

"Come, *ye blessed of my Father.*" "It is God that justifieth," say these happy souls; "who is he that condemneth?" Often have we heard the accusations of Satan, the accusations of conscience, the reproaches of the world and the thunderings of the law. But their terrors shall no more alarm; their voice shall no more be heard; we are declared blessed by Him who knows all things, and who cannot lie. This blessedness is complete, uninterrupted and secure!

"Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." This, then, is a kingdom suited to the renewed nature and the exalted character of the adopted sons of God, the joint heirs with Jesus Christ. And we shall therefore reign with Him for ever, and dwell for ever in the presence of the Father, where there is fulness of joy! Great was the happiness of these glorified spirits when their eyes were first opened to see Jesus as their own Saviour, and their hearts to receive the truth in the love of it.

Sweet were the foretastes of communion which they enjoyed with the Father and the Son during their pilgrimage on earth. High was their joy when delivered by death from infirmity and sin. Greater yet was their satisfaction at the restoration of their bodies, so gloriously transformed. And still more elevated was their happiness when they were placed on the right hand of the omnipotent Judge. But these last words of their Saviour exalt their joy to a pitch which they had never felt before; they touch the strings of their hearts with a force which, on earth, they were unable to bear; and they run through their whole frame; for they are now completely and for ever happy – happy in the approbation of their conscience, happy in the blessing of their God, happy in the sentence of their Judge, which finally determines their eternity.

The Judge turns to those on his left hand and wrath kindles in His eye. They mark His anger and are filled with terror. In fearful anticipation, they already hear His words; already they fall with horror on their astonished hearts. O for another offer of a Saviour! O for another opportunity of salvation, in whatever circumstances! O for one day, for one hour of the many which we have abused on earth! O how well we would use it! But no, the day of grace is past, the accepted time is gone, the voice of mercy shall no more be heard for ever. O for rocks to hide us from this awful scene, and for mountains to cover us! But no, the rocks have fled away and no place is found for the mountains. O for annihilation, once dreaded, to come to our relief, in this our last extremity, and plunge us deep in dark oblivion! But no, the Judge holds in His right hand the keys of death and hell. He turns the key of death. He shuts them out from the last refuge of the miserable and compels them to stand before Him, naked and defenceless. “Depart from Me, ye cursed,” He says, “into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”

It is said, and the howl of despair begins. But who can describe the scene? Sharp were the stings of an awakened conscience upon earth; more fearful at the hour of death were the first flames of an unextinguishable fire; alarming was the sound of the last angel’s trump. Shameful was the resurrection of their vile bodies; and more confounding still was the awful separation to the left hand of the Judge. But, at the sound of these last words, the recollection of all former sufferings is totally obliterated and lost, and the soul is wound up to a pitch of misery which it had never before conceived. All hell opens upon them in the sentence, and all the horrors of eternity accumulate upon their throbbing breasts. The mind refuses to dwell on this terrific scene.

But while we turn away our eyes from further contemplation, let us carry with us the important recollection that it is no more frightful than it will be real. The wicked angels which kept not their first estate are next condemned, and so the solemnities of judgement are brought to a final close.

6. One other circumstance remains to be considered – the important consequence of the sentence then pronounced, both to the righteous and to the wicked: “These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal”. The wicked shall go away, from what? From light to darkness, from past enjoyment to future and unmingled suffering, from God and the spirits of the just made perfect to the devil and his cursed angels, from the most fearful apprehensions to absolute despair. Despair! What heart can conceive the extent of misery which that one word conveys? Any other feeling might admit a ray of comfort, even into the dismal regions of the damned, but this sets a black, impenetrable seal on all their prospects, which eternity itself will never remove.

But the righteous shall go into life eternal. Happy, eternally happy band! You are now delivered from all your doubts and fears, from all your temptations and sufferings, from all your anxieties and watching, from all your infirmities and imperfections – and from sin itself, the source of all your other woes. You have now passed the limits of mutability and suspense. You have entered on a state of perfect purity and joy. Your eyes have seen the King in His beauty; they have beheld the land that, on earth, was very far off. You are come to the new Jerusalem, in which dwells the glory of God. You have arrived on the banks of the pure river, which proceeds out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. You shall eat of the fruit of the tree of life, which grows on either side of the river. There shall be no more curse, but you shall be before the throne of God and serve Him day and night in His temple, and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among you. You shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on you, nor any heat, for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed you, and shall lead you to living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes.

It is utterly impossible for a child of God to be found much in the confession of sin – of what are called little sins – and not walk with a tender, honest conscience. O there are no little sins. If there were a little God, if there were a little Saviour, if there were a little hell, there would be little sins; but there are no little sins with God. But for a child of God to confess what are called little sins – sins which some consider as no sins, transgressions which are overlooked as the violation of human laws only but which involve principles hostile to his own soul and to God’s glory – he is the one who knows what the happy walk is.

A consciousness of former blindness is an evidence of present sight. Here is one of the unmistakable marks of a man of God – he is one who sees.

This ungodly world is sunning itself in the beams of God’s goodness, yet throwing back in His face nothing but blasphemy, infidelity and sin.

Octavius Winslow

John Kennedy of Dingwall¹

1. Years of Preparation

Rev Neil M Ross

Rev John Kennedy of Dingwall was among the most eminent preachers of the Highlands of Scotland in the mid-nineteenth century. His biographer, Alexander Auld,² stated as the opinion of competent, contemporary judges that, taking him as a whole, he was “the foremost among them all”.³ Principal John Macleod in his *Scottish Theology* went as far as to say, “He was the great preacher of his generation in Scotland”.⁴

Those today who seek to understand something of John Kennedy’s eminence as a preacher find theirs a very difficult task as they stand at a distance of more than 120 years from his death. It is even more difficult if they have never heard preachers of his extraordinary ability, and especially difficult when they read that certain of his hearers spoke of his preaching as “indescribable”.

However, we have on record the testimonies of people – ministers and elders, learned and unlearned, men and women, old and young – who had first-hand knowledge of his outstanding godliness, eminent gifts and notable usefulness as a minister of Christ. There is marked agreement between those reports, and undoubtedly the truth about John Kennedy’s exceptional renown as a preacher is firmly established in the mouths of those witnesses.

If we go back for a moment to his times, say, to a Sabbath in the summer of 1870 and to the newly-built Free Church in Dingwall, the county town of Ross-shire, we would see John Kennedy, now in his fifty-second year, enter the wide pulpit with sedate step and serious countenance, ready to engage in work of great gravity. A neighbouring minister, William McDougall of Fodderty, said that when “Mr Kennedy came out to preach, it was from the secret place of the Most High; his face, so deeply solemn, indicating the weight of the burden of the Lord upon his spirit”⁵.

He stands before the people, a man of above average height and very

¹The first part of the Introduction to the recent volume *Dr John Kennedy of Dingwall – Sermon Notes 1859-1856*, used by kind permission of publishers, the James Begg Society.

²Rev Alexander Auld (1821-1905), after a period as assistant to Rev James Hamilton, London, was Free Church minister of Orlig, Caithness from 1855 until his death. He also wrote *Ministers and Men of the Far North* and *Life of David Steven*. (*Annals of the Free Church of Scotland 1900-1986*, p 7.)

³*Life of John Kennedy, DD*, fifth edition, p 92.

⁴P 327.

⁵*Life*, p 122.

broad build. He has an erect bearing, a large head, auburn hair, and a firm but kindly expression in which is mingled dignity and gentleness. There is, to quote one of his congregation, “a becoming native dignity about his whole demeanour”. His very appearance commands the attention of his hearers.

The verses of the psalm to be sung by the congregation have been carefully chosen and indicate the theme of his sermon. The congregational singing itself – a great volume of grave sweet melody – is memorably impressive. His prayer is the utterance of a man who is not only very familiar with the throne of grace but who also has a gracious, holy nearness to the divine Hearer of prayer. It is a prayer full of profound reverence and godly fear, gracious humility, holy adoration, and childlike faith; it is a prayer which presents the needs of all the people before him, believers and unbelievers alike. His reading of the Scriptures is manifestly an act of reverent worship; it is also “elegant, and with great taste and expression”, wrote John Noble.⁶

Then comes the sermon. He announces his text and proceeds to unfold it. His voice, which some have described as mellifluous, and others as melodious, is at first low but clear; it rises steadily as he warms to his subject and brings out things new and old from the treasures of Scripture. Rev Donald Beaton’s assessment was that his “eloquence differed from the impetuous on-rush of Dr Macdonald’s, and the rugged, thundering oratory of Rev John MacRae. His was more like the irresistible flowing of the tide, moving forward with majestic progress until every faculty of his hearers was filled by it”.⁷ The people listen intently. His biographer, who occasionally had the opportunity of sharing a pulpit with him, wrote, “It was a rare and interesting sight to look at a large congregation listening to Mr Kennedy. His elevated thoughts, his eloquent language, his impressive manner, his earnest tones, soon drew to him the eyes and ears of his audience, and rivetted their attention. He was a master of assemblies.”⁸

But it is the divine Master of assemblies Himself upon whom the minds and hearts of both the preacher and the Lord’s people are focused as the time swiftly passes. “Christ was the sun and centre of his preaching,” wrote John Noble, who as a young man belonged to Kennedy’s congregation. The preacher now concludes his sermon, and he appeals passionately to his hearers, converted and unconverted, to attend to the obligations laid upon them respectively by the part of Scripture he has been expounding and applying. As the people leave the house of God, some of them feel as others felt when they

⁶In his “Memoir” of Kennedy prefixed to the fifth edition of *The Days of the Fathers in Ross-shire*, p cxix.

⁷*Noted Ministers of the Northern Highlands*, p 274.

⁸*Life*, p 95.

got a view of the glory of Christ on earth: it was good for them to be there.

To return to our own time, we find that the name of Dr Kennedy of Dingwall is still cherished by many Christians in Scotland and beyond, despite increasing spiritual declension. While he is remembered as a stout-hearted and trenchant defender of the Reformed faith, the purpose of this piece is rather to indicate some reasons why he was so highly esteemed as a powerful preacher of the unsearchable riches of Christ. Even before he died it was said, “Dr Kennedy is distinguished among Highland ministers as the most eloquent and impressive preacher in both languages [English and Gaelic]”.⁹

A man cannot truly preach Christ until he is united to Christ by faith. Young John Kennedy was brought up in circumstances most conducive to being found in Christ. He was born in August 1819, the fourth son of the saintly John Kennedy of Killearnan,¹⁰ whose preaching was widely blessed. Not only was the Killearnan manse a home in which Christ was honoured daily, but also those were days when showers of blessing descended on Killearnan and the parishes round about.

After being educated in the local parish school, John Kennedy became an outstanding student at King’s College, Aberdeen, where he was awarded his Master of Arts degree in 1840. In the same year he entered the Divinity Hall in Aberdeen. Despite his marked success in his Arts course, he did not appear, as he begun his divinity course, to be someone who would achieve ministerial renown. A fellow divinity student, John Mackay, observed, “There was not much in his conversation to give any special promise of the high-toned personal piety and power as a preacher by which he afterwards became distinguished”.¹¹

Despite being the son of the eminent John Kennedy of Killearnan he was yet another specimen of what was not uncommon in theological colleges: the unregenerate divinity student. Mackay not only noted that young Kennedy lacked a high sense of the sacredness and solemnity of the ministerial office but also was more familiar with the fiction of Walter Scott than the facts of biblical theology. He possessed religion but it amounted to not much more than an intense dislike of cold moderatism, with deep respect and great

⁹*Disruption Worthies of the Highlands*, 1881 edition, p 532.

¹⁰Rev John Kennedy (1772-1841), a native of Kishorn, Ross-shire, was licensed to preach the gospel in 1795, and became the teacher of the parish school in Lochcarron. Two years later he was appointed as “preacher” in Lochbroom during the suspension of the parish minister there; then in 1802 he was settled as missionary in Erribol (his mission extended from Tongue in the north to Kinlochbervie in the south); and in 1806 became the assistant to Rev William MacKenzie of Assynt. In 1813 he was inducted to the parish of Killearnan, where he had a very fruitful ministry until his much lamented death 28 years later.

¹¹*Life*, p 4.

love for his pious father, and “great confidence in the efficacy of that father’s prayers.”¹²

It was the death of his father, on 9 January 1841, which was used by the Spirit of God to bring John Kennedy to consider seriously his relationship to his divine Creator, Lawgiver and Judge. He had heard many impressive sermons from his father but he did not profit from the preached Word as he was destitute of saving faith. When on holiday from college at the end of 1840, he heard his father preach a remarkable sermon on Revelation 3:20, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock . . .”. As he listened intently, it seemed as if his father’s utterances were of one who was just going to step across the threshold to eternity. However, John Kennedy returned to college still unconcerned about his spiritual welfare.

Some days later he was devastated by the distressing news of the sudden death of his father. In his painful bereavement he thought anxiously of his own solemn situation as an unsaved sinner. His just deserts for transgressing the divine law now assumed a fearful reality and he earnestly sought peace with God. “The sense of his sinfulness pressed heavily upon him,” we are told, but these words of Christ in John 6:37: “Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out,” came to his mind again and again and kept him from sinking into despair.

He was enabled indeed to come to Christ and he returned to his divinity studies a changed man. His diary reveals that during those days he was given deep insights into the person and redemptive work of the Saviour, especially through reading *The Person of Christ* by John Owen. But those times of spiritual light and comfort were interspersed with grave doubts and disturbing fears about the genuineness of his conversion. However, with hindsight and God-given assurance he saw (as he told a friend some years later) that he had gone back to Aberdeen after his father’s death “with a faith which, although weak in degree, was saving in nature”. Many years later he wrote of his father’s death: “The memory of that loss I can bear to recall, as I cherish the hope that his death was the means of uniting us in bonds that shall never be broken”.¹³

Youthful John Kennedy was certain that no man could be a true minister of the gospel without being called to that work by God. Was he really called? That was another question which troubled him. “Cannot clear my call to the ministry . . .”, he wrote in his diary. “‘Take My yoke upon you,’ binds me to the service of Christ, but special qualifications, special grace, and special providence needed to clear a call to this: its

¹²*Life*, p 5.

¹³*Disruption Worthies*, p 529.

highest department. What a catalogue of *wants*! But O what a *fullness*!”¹⁴

By grace he drew out of that fulness which is in Christ and went on to complete his studies. In September 1843, he was licensed to preach the gospel by the newly-formed Free Church Presbytery of Chanornry, and five months later he was ordained and inducted to what was to be his only charge: the Dingwall congregation of the Free Church of Scotland. As his biographer says, the severe spiritual struggles through which he passed were the preparation for the sphere of usefulness he afterwards occupied, as being able to comfort others with the comfort wherewith he himself had been comforted of God.¹⁵ “From the first,” said John Fraser, his brother minister in Rosskeen and author of his biographical sketch in *Disruption Worthies of the Highlands*, “he became one of the most popular and attractive preachers in the Highlands; and many were the vacant congregations which aspired to call him”.¹⁶

In his own large congregation he had an enormous burden of work. He preached three times on Sabbath, including once in Gaelic; twice during the week, in Gaelic on Tuesday evening, and in English on Wednesday evening. His discourses on Tuesday evenings were detailed expositions of the Book of Psalms, and so profitable and instructive did his own people find them that some people in neighbouring parishes, hearing of this, also attended. He was of the opinion that his ministry in Dingwall would not come to an end until he had finished expounding the Book of Psalms; and so it proved, for this series was actually complete in the week he went to Italy for the sake of his health (he died before he reached home). In addition, he frequently preached at communion seasons throughout the Highland and Islands and beyond. Although his literary output was not voluminous, it was considerable: at least three books, notably *The Days of the Fathers in Ross-shire*, plus several booklets, the best known perhaps being *Hyper-Evangelism – “Another Gospel”, Though a Mighty Power*. He was also an assiduous letter writer.

How did he succeed in carrying out so much work? Apart from the fact that he was endowed with a strong constitution, both physically and mentally, he said he owed much to the counsel given him by the renowned minister of Cromarty, Alexander Stewart, when he was licensed to preach the gospel.

¹⁴*Life*, p 42.

¹⁵*Life*, p 92.

¹⁶P 530. Rev John Fraser (1823-84) was a native of Killearnan, (not of Kilmorack as stated in *Biographies of Highland Clergymen*), and therefore he and John Kennedy, who was four years older, were boys together in Killearnan. He obtained his MA degree in Aberdeen in 1849, studied divinity under Thomas Chalmers, became assistant to David Carment, Free Church minister of Rosskeen in 1852, and was ordained and inducted as Carment’s successor a year later. He was described as “a model Ross-shire minister”. (*Memoir and Remains of the Rev John H Fraser, Rosskeen, 1885.*)

“John,” said Mr Stewart, “I think I know you now. Take one advice from me – don’t write your sermons. Spend your time in thinking, for be assured if you do not express clearly it will be because you have not thought sufficiently!”¹⁷ Towards the end of his life, Dr Kennedy wrote in the introduction to the last of his weekly published sermons: “This counsel I was constrained to follow because of the pressure of work that came upon me immediately after being licensed, in the busy year of the Disruption, and which certainly did not become less as years were passing”.¹⁸ He also owed much to the assistance of the wise and warm-hearted woman whom God had given him as his life-long help meet: Miss Mary Mackenzie, daughter of Major Forbes Mackenzie of Fodderty.

God’s Eternal Decree and Preaching (3)¹

Rev H M Cartwright

3. The relation between the doctrine and preaching.

3 (a) *The place which preaching has in God’s eternal decree.*

We do not need to say much on this subject but just to remind ourselves of the fact that “it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor 1:21). “How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?” (Rom 10:14,15). The sending of the preacher with the gospel, which is the means of making known the mystery of His will, revealing Christ to His people and calling them effectually into union with the Saviour through faith, comes from the same Decree which ordains them to eternal glory and provides for all the means of bringing them there. What a great privilege to be made useful in any way in helping sinners heavenwards. There is also the solemn thought that the preaching may be a witness against those whom God is pleased to pass by and ordain to dishonour and wrath for their sin.

The place which preaching has in God’s Decree should encourage the preacher to see his calling in the context of eternity and of the tremendous purposes which God is working out in time according to His eternal Decree.

3 (b). *The place which God’s eternal Decree has in preaching. The doctrine*

¹⁷*The Days of the Fathers in Ross-shire*, p xlix.

¹⁸*Kennedy’s Sermons*, p 608.

¹This article concludes the discussion of chapter 3 of *The Westminster Confession of Faith*. It was first presented to the Theological Conference in December 2007.

of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men attending the will of God revealed in His Word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election. So shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God, and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation, to all that sincerely obey the gospel (Westminster Confession 3:8).

Only a few hints can be thrown out on this subject, which would need a paper to itself. That this doctrine is “to be handled with special prudence and care” does not mean that it is not to be handled at all. Such a conclusion is surely an affront to God, in whose revelation through His prophets in the Old Testament and through His Son and His Apostles in the New Testament, His sovereignty and His distinguishing grace have such a prominent place. Those who come to such a conclusion are making themselves wiser than God.

Handling it with special prudence and care is essential because mishandling it can bring harm to souls and dishonour to God. It is mishandled if it is presented in such a way as makes it seem more like the arbitrariness of a mindless fate and chance than the most wise and holy counsel of a personal God of absolute perfection and infinite justice and grace. It is mishandled if it is subjected to philosophical speculation in the pulpit or presented in a way which inevitably promotes such speculation. As A A Hodge says, “The philosophy of the relation of His sovereign purpose to the free agency of the creature, and to the permission of moral evil, is not revealed in the Scriptures, and cannot be discovered by human reason, and therefore ought not to be rashly meddled with”.² It is mishandled if presented in such a way as makes the heart of the righteous sad, whom the Lord hath not made sad, and strengthens the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way (see Ezek 13:22). It is mishandled if it is presented in such a way as discourages sinners from making use of the means of grace and seeking the Saviour and believing the truth of the invitations and promises of the gospel to sinners as sinners. Perhaps the last is the most common danger among those who love the Lord and the doctrines of grace.

To handle this high mystery with special prudence and care involves presenting it in the proportions in which it is presented in the Bible and presenting it in the connections and for the practical purposes found in the Biblical presentation.

This section does not deal directly with the preaching of this doctrine to the unconverted – preaching in which our Lord engaged – though no doubt they are included in those whom the preaching should encourage to attend

²*The Confession of Faith*, pp 76,77.

the will of God revealed in His Word and to yield obedience thereto. An example of how those living around that time preached this high mystery of predestination, in conjunction with warrants given to sinners as sinners to believe in Christ, is found in *The Sum of Saving Knowledge; or, A Brief Sum of Christian Doctrine, Contained in the Holy Scriptures, and holden forth in the foresaid Confession of Faith and Catechisms: together with the Practical Use Thereof*. This is usually appended to the *Confession of Faith* and it has John 6:37 on its title page. The doctrine is useful for beating down human pride and extolling the sovereignty of the God of all grace, and is to be preached in such a way as does not deprive sinners of their encouragement nor relieve them of their sense of obligation to do what they cannot do without grace – repent and believe the gospel. They are to be shown that the Decree which ordains the end also ordains the means.

The section concentrates attention on the benefits brought to the Lord's people and the glory ascribed to God as a result of the biblical preaching of this precious biblical doctrine. As A A Hodge says, "The principle of the divine sovereignty in the distribution of grace is certainly revealed in Scripture, is not difficult of comprehension, and is of great practical use to convince men of the greatness and independence of God, of the certain efficacy of His grace and security of His promises, and of their own sin and absolute dependence"³.

In his *Outlines of Theology*, Hodge asks: "What are the proper practical effects of this doctrine? Humility, in view of the infinite greatness and sovereignty of God, and of the dependence of man; confidence and implicit reliance upon the wisdom, righteousness, goodness, and immutability of God's purposes; and cheerful obedience to His commandments, always remembering that God's precepts, as distinctly revealed, and not His decrees, are our rule of duty"⁴. Later on he says that this doctrine, when truly held, "(1.) Exalts the majesty and absolute sovereignty of God, while it illustrates the riches of His free grace and His just displeasure with sin. (2.) It enforces upon us the essential truth that salvation is entirely of grace – that no one can either complain if passed over, or boast himself if saved. (3.) It brings the inquirer to absolute self-despair, and the cordial embrace of the free offer of Christ. (4.) In the case of the believer, who has the witness in himself, this doctrine at once deepens his humility and elevates his confidence to the full assurance of hope."⁵

Calvin regarded God's eternal decree, and especially the reprobation of

³*Confession*, p 76.

⁴P 177.

⁵*Outlines of Theology*, p 189.

the non-elect, as awe-inspiring. He warns that “it is not right that man should with impunity pry into things which the Lord has been pleased to conceal within Himself, and scan that sublime eternal wisdom which it is His pleasure that we should not apprehend but adore, that therein also His perfections may appear. Those secrets of His will, which He has seen it meet to manifest, are revealed in His Word – revealed in so far as He knew to be conducive to our interest and welfare.” He goes on to say, “Everything, therefore, delivered in Scripture on the subject of predestination, we must beware of keeping from the faithful lest we seem either maliciously to deprive them of the blessing of God, or to accuse and scoff at the Spirit, as having divulged what ought on any account to be suppressed. Let us, I say, allow the Christian to unlock his mind and ears to all the words of God which are addressed to him, provided he do this with this moderation – namely, that whenever the Lord shuts His sacred mouth he also desists from inquiry”.

We conclude with Calvin’s comment on what he calls the utility of this doctrine and its most pleasant fruits: “We shall never feel persuaded as we ought that our salvation flows from the free mercy of God as its fountain, until we are made acquainted with His eternal election, the grace of God being illustrated by the contrast – namely, that He does not adopt promiscuously to the hope of salvation, but gives to some what He denies to others. It is plain how greatly ignorance of this principle detracts from the glory of God, and impairs true humility.”⁶

The True Idea of Grace¹

W S Plumer

The Synod of Dort says that “God owes no man grace. For how can God become debtor to him who has nothing to give first, that it might be recompensed to him again? Nay, what can God owe him who has nought of his own but sin and untruth? Whosoever therefore is made partaker of this kind of grace, ever owes and ever pays thanks to God only.” The term *grace* often occurs in Scripture. Sometimes it means beauty, as in Proverbs 1:9 and 4:9. But this is never the meaning of the word in the New Testament, where the generic idea of the term is favour, unmerited kindness, undeserved love, unbought pity, grace.

This grace is variously manifested. The gospel is itself called grace because

⁶*Institutes of the Christian Religion* 3.21.1, 3.21.3, 3.21.1.

¹Taken, with slight editing, from *The Christian Treasury* for 1854. Plumer was a nineteenth-century American Presbyterian minister.

it is the fruit and evidence of God's unmerited goodness. The privilege of preaching the gospel is for the same reason called grace. And it is indeed a great favour to be allowed to publish the glad tidings of great joy. No man deserves such an honour. Pardon of sin and acceptance with God are both often said to be by grace, by undeserved mercy. The work of purifying the hearts of His people and fitting them for glory is effected by the grace of God. He does it purely out of pity and love and not at all out of regard to any merit of ours. Renewal and sanctification are rich fruits of mercy. Without God's grace, salvation is absolutely impossible. A salvation which failed to root out sin and set up the reign of grace would, no doubt, be pleasing to the carnal mind and would delight a hypocrite but could never satisfy the longings of a real child of God. Sin in its reigning power, no less than in its fearful guilt, must be destroyed or it will destroy us. He who fails to gain the victory over his lusts fails of heaven. If they are not put down, we labour in vain and spend our strength for nought.

Hardly any thing is more striking than the obstinate attachment of men to their own works, and their subsequent aversion to the grace of God. The great mass of unrenewed men and women, even in Christian assemblies, really have no idea of ever being saved otherwise than by *becoming good* in their own strength. They generally suspect that they are not now what they ought to be, but they intend to do better hereafter. They seem very ignorant of the extent, spirituality and holiness of the law; and thus, while conscience does not flame out against them, they rest in the delusion that they are not very bad and may easily improve.

The very last thing which a sinner under conviction does is to give up his self-confidence. He cleaves to it as if salvation depended upon his good opinion of himself. Indeed, till God's Spirit enlightens his mind, he will not see that salvation can never be compassed by his own power or merit. So the very process by which a sinner is led to the Saviour is usually one of extreme sadness. In his own esteem He has less and less of what is worthy of honourable mention before God, until at last he finds out that he is nothing but a guilty, vile, lost, helpless, perishing sinner. To a Christian, who knows what is going on in the sinner's mind, these new views awaken lively hopes that a work of grace is begun in his heart. But often the sinner himself is almost in despair. He supposes that his convictions are forerunners of condemnation and rejection, not of conversion.

And when he is led to Christ and hope springs up in his mind, no one is more surprised at the change in his views than himself. He did not expect deliverance in that way. He had not yet become good in his own eyes. He now learns that it is God's plan to save sinners who simply believe. To him

the gospel is a revelation of mercy. He is charmed with the method of grace. He gives all honour to the Redeemer and is willing to be counted the chief of sinners. He no longer goes about to establish his own righteousness, which is of the law. His own merits he counts as nothing. He simply wishes to be found in Christ. His song is of free, unmerited grace. He is no longer wedded to the law as a means of justification, but he is married to Christ, who is now all his salvation. He works indeed, but it is from love to the Saviour. He says, What I am, I am by the grace of God. He casts his crown at the Saviour's feet. He expects all from the grace of Christ.

A minister once represented the conduct of awakened sinners towards God's offers of gratuitous salvation thus: "A benevolent and rich man had a very poor neighbour, to whom he sent this message, 'I wish to make you the gift of a farm.' The poor man was pleased with the idea of having a farm, but was too proud at once to receive it as a gift. So he thought of the matter much and anxiously. His desire to have a home of his own was daily growing stronger, but his pride was great.

"At length he decided to visit the man who had made the offer. But a strange delusion seized him about this time, for he imagined that he had a bag of gold. So he came with his bag and said to the rich man, 'I have received your message and have come to see you. I wish to own the farm but I wish to pay for it. I will give you a bag of gold for it.' 'Let us see your gold', said the owner of the farm. The poor man opened his bag and looked; his countenance changed and he said, 'Sir, I thought it was gold, but I am sorry to say it is only silver; I will give you my bag of silver for your farm.' 'Look again; I do not think it is even silver', was the solemn but kind reply. The poor man looked and, as he beheld, his eyes were further opened and he said, 'How I have been deceived! It is not silver but only copper. 'Will you sell me your farm for my bag of copper? You may have it all.' 'Look again', was the only reply. The poor man looked; tears stood in his eyes; his delusion seemed to be gone, and he said, 'Alas, I am undone! It is not even copper. It is but ashes. How poor I am! I wish to own that farm, but I have nothing to pay. Will you give me the farm?' The rich man replied, 'Yes, that was my first and only offer. Will you accept it on such terms?' With humility but with eagerness, the poor man said, 'Yes, and a thousand blessings on you for your kindness.'" The fable is easily applied.

Mather² has well expressed the difference between grace and merit in few words: "God was a God to Adam before he fell, but to be a God to sinners, this is grace. He was a God to Adam in innocency by virtue of the covenant

²Possibly Cotton Mather (1663-1728), a noted minister in Boston, New England, but other members of the Mather family were also prolific writers.

of works, but He is not a God to any sinner but in the way of free grace. Now that was the covenant: 'I will be a God to thee and thy seed' (Gen 17:7). Abraham was a sinner and a child of wrath by nature as well as others; yet God was truly his God. For God to be a God to them that never sinned, there may be merit; but for God to be a God to those that have sinned, this is grace indeed. They that do not think this is grace do not need argument but pity and prayer."

The pious John Newton states in few words, but with great clearness, what grace is: "To bestow gifts upon the miserable is bounty, but to bestow them upon rebels is grace. The greatness of the gifts, contrasted with the characters of those who receive them, displays the exceeding riches of the Redeemer's grace. He came to save not only the unhappy, but the ungodly. He gives pardon, peace and eternal life to His enemies, whose minds are so entirely alienated from Him that, until He makes them willing in the day of His power, their minds are determined against accepting any favour from Him."

Christ's Baptism and Its Testimony¹

1. The Baptism

Hugh Martin

Matthew 3:13-17. *Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad Him, saying, I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me? And Jesus answering, said unto him, Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered Him. And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

1 Corinthians 12:13. *By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.*

Our Lord gave the promise, "Lo, I am with you always," in connection with the command, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them". It will not be unsuitable therefore if we begin with the record of His own baptism when testing, somewhat rigorously and in detail, a few eminent

¹This is the first part of a chapter from the excellent book *The Abiding Presence*, which has as its theme Christ's words at the end of Matthew's Gospel: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world". The author demonstrates how he could therefore take the Gospel record as the means of realising "my Elder Brother's presence". After beginning his ministry in Angus, Martin (1821-85) moved to Edinburgh, but had to retire prematurely. He was one of the ablest writers of the immediate post-Disruption period in Scotland.

cases in which He enshrines and reveals His presence to our faith in the gospel history, by fulfilling this promise. If then Christ is present with us, looking out on us from this portion of the history, He commends Himself specifically to our present regard and acceptance as our baptized and living Head, here and now, in the enjoyment of His Father's testimony.

Let us, then, in the first place, consider the significance of Christ's baptism – His baptism both of water and of the Spirit – and, secondly, His Father's certificate or testimony to Christ's Sonship and well-pleasingness in His sight. Our leading object, of course, will be to bring out the validity and value of His perpetual presence, as here and thus revealed to us.

1. Consider our Lord's baptism. "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him." "And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water; and lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting on Him." Thus the baptism of water and the descent of the Spirit successively solicit our attention.

(1.) *The baptism of water.* And what is the specific significance of that ordinance as administered to Christ, as solicited and received by Him? Let it be observed that the fundamental idea – the ground thought – in "the doctrine of baptisms" (Heb 6:2) is that of engrafting, or, more generally, of uniting. This is manifest from the language of Paul – really the key to the doctrine of baptisms – in 1 Corinthians 12:12,13: "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." The members are many, but the body one. And it is baptism – not symbolical, of course, but real, and of the Spirit – that makes many members one.

Hence, penetrating to the original and deepest idea of the sacrament, the Westminster divines say: "Baptism is a sacrament, wherein the washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's". Such is the significance of baptism with water as administered to us. And what is thus signified and sealed by baptism with water, the baptism of the Spirit actually achieves. "We are baptized by one Spirit into one body."

What then is baptism with water when Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, which is His body, solicits and receives its administration? What does it signify and seal in His case? What is the leading thought in the doctrine of baptisms – what the chief design of the sacrament of baptism – when the doc-

trine is illustrated in His person, when the sacrament is administered to Him?

If the doctrine is not to be varied, and the sacrament is not to be evacuated of its specific meaning, and if moreover the co-relative interest which the Head and the members must be supposed to have in the one ordinance of God is to be preserved exact and entire, what can the sacrament of baptism be in Christ's own case but a sign and seal of His engrafting of the Church unto Himself, and communicating to her the benefits of the new covenant, and His engagement to be hers – her Lord and covenant-Head?

By His request for baptism with water, Jesus did therefore present Himself as the Head of the Church, which is His body. He formally and expressly announced – He signified and sealed – His adoption into Himself of all His elect ones, and His assumption – not merely of their flesh or nature into His person, as by His birth – but of their persons into His body in covenant unity, to be represented in Him before the Father and to be one with Him in the eye of that law which He came to magnify and make honourable.

This engrafting of the Church into one body with Himself justifies and explains His acceptance of the work given Him to do. On no other ground would it be right or natural that He should stand in the place of His people, bearing their responsibilities, as Himself their sacrifice for sin, their everlasting righteousness. He is their sacrifice, because He is their substitute and representative. And He is their representative, because He is their Head. He represents them most rightfully, because He is one with them most profoundly. And being one with them most profoundly, their obligations accrue to Him, and are incumbent on Him; while His services are accepted in the eye of the law in their name, and His righteousness is most directly and rightfully available to them.

But if His acceptance of the Church into one body with Himself explains and justifies His acceptance of the work given Him to do, it equally explains and justifies His request for the administration of the ordinance of baptism to Himself, prior to His public entrance on that work. In the consciousness of His everlasting covenant oneness with the Church as His body – in virtue of which it behoves Him to bring in, on her behalf, an everlasting righteousness – He solicits the divine symbol and confirmation of the union, its instituted sign and seal. In virtue of that union, “by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous”. And therefore the objection of the Baptist, which would refuse Him the sacramental pledge of His oneness with His people, He sets aside by the singularly pointed and beautiful reply: “Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness”. “Then he suffered Him.” And Emmanuel is baptized as the Head of the body; He is formally announced and sealed as Mediator between God and man.

Is it any wonder if “the heavens were opened”? For now He is become the attested antitype of that ladder which Jacob saw (Gen 28:10-22), and of which He Himself testified to Nathanael, saying, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man” (John 1:51). Baptized into oneness with the Church as His body, He is now the medium of communication between heaven and earth. Ah, I may have read this record of the Lord’s baptism without the Lord’s presence. But if, while I now read it, the Saviour fulfils the promise, “Lo, I am with you,” then the heavens are opened unto me, even as was performed for Jacob and promised to Nathanael. Here I hail and hold the King, as Nathanael did: “Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel” (John 1:49). And I exclaim as Jacob did: “Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not; this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven” (Gen 28:16,17).

Notes and Comments

Collapse of the Traditional Family

The traditional family is in “meltdown”. This view was expressed in a recent speech by a leading English judge, Mr Justice Coleridge. He described the situation as an epidemic affecting all of society from the Royal Family downwards. “Families are the cells which make up the body of society”, he said. “If the cells are unhealthy and undernourished, or at worst cancerous and growing haphazardly and out of control, in the end the body succumbs. The disease may be hidden from view until very late in its progress. And this makes the situation, when it is discovered, that much more difficult to control and treat.” The problem of broken families, he added, is the root cause of “almost all of society’s social ills” and results in “a ceaseless river of human misery”.

Although he complained that “the family justice system in this country has been and is being mismanaged and neglected by government”, he did not give reasons for the present collapse of traditional family life. And although he was stating the obvious about its very evident breakdown, he was contradicted by a spokeswoman for the Government’s Department for Children, Families and Schools. “We are absolutely committed to improving the well-being of all children, young people and families,” she claimed. “We do not agree that there has been a breakdown in the family.”

However, we agree with those who argue that the anti-family policies of successive governments have made a major contribution to this meltdown. Marriage is undermined by such legislation as the Sexual Orientation Regul-

ations which favours the homosexual agenda; and it is discouraged by fiscal policies which, for example, leave parents in a two-parent family better off financially if they split up. Family life is attacked by the promotion of sexual immorality in schools under the guise of safe-sex education, and by the refusal to teach the absolute necessity of love and fidelity within marriage. We agree also with those who cite the immoral examples of many in the public eye as a further factor – the infidelities of members of the Royal Family, the adulterous conduct of political leaders, the glorification by actors and actresses of immoral alternative lifestyles as valid substitutes for marriage.

It is, however, our national rebellion against God and His holy Word which is the root cause of what Mr Justice Coleridge calls the “ceaseless river of human misery”. Successive governments have manifested a distinct aversion to having their legislation undergirded by the principles of Christian morality as summed up in the Ten Commandments.

Among the solutions to the problem, says the judge, is that “family breakdown and family justice needs to be at the top of the political and justice agenda” – a proposal that is doubtful when this Government’s thinking is so much opposed to the traditional nuclear family. Some of the other remedies the judge proposes – such as giving cohabiting couples legal rights on separation, framing enforceable pre-nuptial agreements, reforming divorce law to remove the “fault” element from the process – would in fact exacerbate the already-deplorable situation.

The fundamental solution is, of course, a return “to the law and to the testimony”. “What saith the Scripture?” was the Saviour’s question. The Word of God requires us to uphold marriage as a divinely-appointed creation ordinance which is described as “honourable” – that is, of great value (Heb 13:4). The state, as well as the Church, has a responsibility to promote not only marriage but also the biblical principles of chastity outwith marriage and fidelity within marriage; as this verse adds, “Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge”.

It is imperative for us to pray for the preservation of what remains of traditional family life, for it is ever in danger, even in Christian homes, from the attacks of Satan. His objective always is the widening and deepening of that “ceaseless river of human misery” by eradicating family life as instituted by God Himself. “God doth set the solitary in families” (Ps 68:6). *NMR*

STIs in Britain

The figures on STIs (Sexually Transmitted Infections) in Britain have shown an alarming increase in recent years. The most dramatic increase has been in the incidence of syphilis, which has gone from 162 cases in 1997 to 2766 in 2006. For some diseases, the increase has tailed off; for instance, there

were 4916 cases of chlamydia in Scotland in 1998, 17 926 cases in 2006, and 17 928 cases in 2007 (effectively the same as the previous year, but a 260% increase since 1998). Other diseases, however, are continuing to increase: for gonorrhoea there were 469 cases in Scotland in 1998, 900 in 2006, and 1015 in 2007 (a 13% increase in the last year); while for herpes in Scotland there were 784 cases in 1998, 1830 in 2006, and 2167 in 2007 (an 18% increase in the last year). All these diseases can affect fertility, and some of them may be disfiguring, or may cause problems for babies. The total attendance at genitourinary medicine clinics in UK in 2006 was 1.8 million, more than double the number in 2002.

Some of the increase in these diseases might be related to immigration, but the principal factor is the breakdown of morality. People are not generally born with these diseases, and provided they abstain from fornication, adultery, and homosexual conduct (a major factor, particularly in the increase of syphilis), they are in very little danger of contracting them. There is a pool of infected people, and it is the immoral contact between these people and others that keeps these diseases in existence. The simple, cheap and biblical solution to the problem is found in the Seventh Commandment: "Thou shalt not commit adultery". If the Government would uphold morality by repealing vile laws passed in recent years, by setting a good example in not appointing openly-immoral people to high positions, and by promoting the teaching of Scripture in schools, then the problem might be greatly reduced.

The Government response, however, continues to be "more money" and "more sex education", along with a determined opposition to any return to morality. Whereas the Government has actively opposed smoking, with considerable success, it pretends that active opposition to sexual immorality would be "ineffective". Instead there has been Government-sponsored promotion of immorality in schools, some of it utterly obscene. The latest proposal in Scotland has been a reduction in the age of consent, to 13 in some cases. The ineffectiveness of the present Government policy is glaringly brought out by the recent statistics, but our rulers are undeterred.

The problem is that the liberty to engage in uncleanness is an idol for many in our country, and they would rather see the nation riddled with disease than that any restraints should be placed on their own conduct. We are become as Judah before her destruction. "When I had fed them to the full," says God, "they then committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlots' houses. They were as fed horses in the morning: everyone neighed after his neighbour's wife. Shall not I visit for these things? saith the Lord: and shall not My soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" (Jer 5:7-9). *DWBS*

The Embryology Bill

The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill is an extensive piece of legislation currently passing through the British Parliament. A number of aspects of the Bill have provoked controversy. One of these is that the Bill would allow scientists to implant the nucleus of a human cell into an animal egg in order to form a hybrid animal-human embryo. The implanting of small amounts of human DNA into animal cells for the manufacture of skin or insulin seems unobjectionable, but this goes further and starts to impinge on the sanctity of human life. As such, it is immoral. God allows us to engage in scientific research, but anything that is even dubious is to be avoided: "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom 14:23). The fact that the embryos thus formed would be destroyed after 14 days seems to indicate a general feeling of guilt about the experiments on the part of scientists and legislators.

Even worse are the various proposals involving human embryos. The Bill would permit the screening of human embryos in order to eliminate those with less desirable genetic features, and also the genetic modification of human embryos using a cloning technique in the hope of avoiding certain genetic diseases. Furthermore the Bill would recognize a lesbian couple as the "parents" of an IVF-child born to one of them. The evil that has given rise to all this is the fact that scientists have human embryos to play around with in the first place. If they thought that they would have to render an account to God for the life of every embryo, they would not be so ready to form them in the laboratory: "At the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man" (Gen 9:5). We pray for a day when there will be a godly restraint on scientific curiosity, and when our rulers will have a gracious concern not to incur God's displeasure.

DWBS

Protestant View

The Act of Settlement Again

On 25 March 2008 Mr Jack Straw, the Secretary of State for Justice and Lord Chancellor, made a statement in the House of Commons on the Government's programme for constitutional renewal. Jim Devine, the MP for Livingston, asked him to include provision for the abolition of the Act of Settlement "because it discriminates directly against Roman Catholics. That is legalised sectarianism, which has no role to play in the twenty-first century". Mr Straw, asserting that he was speaking for the Prime Minister, said: "Because of the position that Her Majesty occupies as head of the Anglican Church, this is a rather more complicated matter than might be anticipated. We are

certainly ready to consider it, and I fully understand that my honourable Friend, many on both sides of the House and thousands outside it, see that provision as antiquated” (*Hansard*).

This Act of the English Parliament, passed in 1701, aimed at permanently securing the constitutional government established by the Glorious Revolution. Addressing King William, it says, Your subjects “were restored to the full and free possession and enjoyment of their religion, rights and liberties, by the providence of God giving success to your majesty’s just undertakings and unwearied endeavours for that purpose”. The provision of this Act which its critics find most objectionable is the disqualification, from occupying the throne, of any who are or shall be “reconciled to, or shall hold communion with, the See or Church of Rome, or shall profess the popish religion, or shall marry a papist”. Specific provision is made “for the succession of the Crown in the Protestant line, for the happiness of the nation, and the security of our religion”. It is required that the monarch be a Protestant and “shall join in communion with the Church of England, as by law established”. Silly statements to the effect that the monarch could be a Muslim or a Mormon though not a Roman Catholic show ignorance of the terms of the Act.

When this Act was being discussed in the House of Lords in 2002 the then Lord Chancellor indicated that the Government had no plans to legislate in this area. He maintained that “where legislation could have far-reaching effects on our historical constitutional arrangements, both in the United Kingdom and in the Commonwealth, it is a good principle I would recommend to your Lordships – to consider legislative change only where it can be maintained that there is clear and pressing need for change”. While he did not think that there was any general public interest in repeal, the Government would monitor any ongoing debate.

Asked if the Act’s provisions had been extended to Scotland his reply was: “Yes. The provisions of the Act of Settlement 1701 relating to the succession to the monarchy of the United Kingdom were extended to Scotland by Article II of the *Treaty of Union with Scotland*, incorporated in the *Union with Scotland Act 1706*” (*Hansard*). The *Scottish Act Ratifying and Approving Treaty of Union of the Two Kingdoms of Scotland and England*, 16 January 1707, endorsed these provisions and required that the Monarch should be a Protestant. *The Protestant Religion and Presbyterian Church Act 1707* was adopted as “a fundamental and essential condition of any Treaty or Union to be concluded betwixt the two Kingdoms without any alteration thereof or derogation thereto in any sort for ever . . . in all time coming.”

What the above Government statements fail to acknowledge is that there

are constitutional arrangements which cannot be changed without destroying the identity of the nation. Professor David Walker, Regius Professor of Law in Glasgow University, 1958-1990, put forward, in *The Journal of the Law Society of Scotland*, 2007, the position that the Treaty of Union is a treaty in international law and that, except where it makes provision for changes in specific articles in the light of changed circumstances, its articles are permanent and Parliament does not have legal power to amend or repeal them. The articles relating to the Protestantism of the Throne are framed in a way which makes clear that they are intended to be perpetual. The independent bodies consenting to the Treaty have ceased to exist and these articles are fundamental to the existence of the resultant united entity.

No doubt political reasons make the Government wish to repeal the requirement for a Protestant monarchy, though the perception of legal and constitutional difficulties has prevented them from doing so before now. Among those who ensure that the debate continues and who call for the repeal of this requirement are Roman Catholic prelates; the First Minister of Scotland, who seeks to woo Roman Catholic voters and to break up the Union; those who wish thoroughly to secularise the national institutions and secure the disestablishment of religion and especially of churches professing the Reformed Faith; those opposed in principle to the monarchy and those caught up in the destructive multi-faith craze. Those indifferent to such matters see no reason to resist such repeal.

John Haldane, a Professor of Philosophy and a Consultant to the Pontifical Council for Culture, suggests that “half a millennium on from the Reformation, there appears the prospect of the restoration of the supremacy of Roman Christianity in these islands and beyond. . . . In the past few decades, interesting things have been happening which offer prospects of some reintegration of Christianity” (*The Scotsman*, 16 January 2008). The “supremacy” of Romanism and the “reintegration of Christianity” go together in the mindset of political Roman Catholics. In the meantime secularists, who repudiate the moralistic pronouncements of Rome and the place of religion generally in public life, and Romanists, whose religion requires the avowed subjection of the state to the Roman Pontiff, are content to work together towards their opposing ends by getting rid of the constitutional requirement for a Protestant throne and the establishment of ecclesiastical bodies professing the Reformed Faith.

We ought to be alert to the danger and start flooding our Members of Parliament with representations on the subject as well as pleading at the throne of grace. The Church of Christ will survive and prosper whatever the political and social conditions, but “the nation and kingdom that will not serve

thee shall perish” (Is 60:12). The identity, morality, freedom and security of the nation depend on genuine commitment to the Protestantism which the agitators wish to remove from its constitutional basis. HMC

Church Information

Free Presbyterian Publications

Readers have expressed appreciation of Rev Keith M Watkins’s series on the Book of Ruth as it appeared over a number of years in *The Young People’s Magazine*. We are glad to announce that it is now available as an attractive 288-page hardback costing £9.50, with the title, *Ruth: Her Story for Today*. While this book, like the original articles, is aimed particularly at young people, it will be valued by older people also. The book sets out in an engaging form the teachings to be gleaned from this part of Scripture. In particular there is much relevant application of the narrative of the Book of Ruth to the problems that young people, and those who are older, face in today’s godless society.

Volumes 1-9 of *The Free Presbyterian Magazine* have already been republished and are still available. It is hoped that the next in the series will be issued this month, DV. Volume 10 has the same variety of useful material as those which have already been reprinted.

Meetings of Presbytery (DV)

Western: At Laide, on Tuesday, June 10, at 4 pm.

Southern: At Glasgow, on Wednesday, June 11, at 3.30 pm.

Northern: At Dingwall, on Tuesday, June 17, at 2 pm.

Skye: At Portree, on Tuesday, June 17, at 11 am.

Outer Isles: At Stornoway, on Tuesday, June 24, at 11 am.

Australia & New Zealand: At Sydney on Friday, September 5, at 2.30 pm.

Leverburgh Residential Care Home – Officer in Charge

As the present post holder expects to retire later this year, the Leverburgh Residential Care Home Committee invites applications for this post. Nursing experience is desirable but not essential. Applicants should be in sympathy with the principles and practice of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. For an application form and further information, contact Rev D Macdonald, F P Manse, Bayhead, North Uist, HS6 5DS.

Home Mission Fund

By appointment of Synod, this year’s special collection on behalf of the Home Mission Fund, is due to be taken in congregations during May.

W Campbell, General Treasurer

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 & Strath: Broadford: no services at present. **Struan:** Sabbath 12 noon; Wednesday 7 pm (fortnightly). Contact Rev J R Tallach, Raasay; tel: 01478 660216.

Breascleite: Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Thursday 7 pm.

Dingwall & Beaully: Dingwall: Church, Hill Street: Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. **Beaully** (Balblair): Sabbath 6.30 pm, Thursday 7.30 pm. Rev Neil M Ross BA, Dingwall, 10 Achary Rd, IV15 9JB. Tel/Fax: 01349 864351, e-mail: nmross@ferintosh.co.uk.

Dornoch: Sabbath 11.30 am. **Bonar:** Sabbath 6 pm. Wednesday 7.30 pm (alternately in Dornoch and Bonar). Rev D J MacDonald MA, F P Manse, Evelix, Dornoch, Sutherland, IV25 3RD. Tel: 01862 811138. **Lairg:** Church and Manse; **Rogart:** Church; no F P services.

Dundee: Manse. No F P Church services.

Edinburgh: 63 Gilmore Place, Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Thursday 7.30 pm. Rev Hugh M Cartwright MA, Napier House, 8 Colinton Road, Edinburgh, EH10 5DS. Tel: 0131 447 1920.

Farr, by Daviot: Sabbath 12 noon and 5.15 pm; Thursday 7.30 pm (fortnightly). **Stratherrick:** Sabbath 7 pm (fortnightly); Thursday 7.30 pm (fortnightly). **Tomatin:** Sabbath 7 pm (fortnightly); Wednesday 7.30 pm (fortnightly). Rev Allan J Macdonald MA, F P Manse, Farr, Inverness, IV2 6XF. Tel: 01808 521357; e-mail: ajm@snmail.co.uk.

Fort William: Monzie Square, Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm. Manse: 15 Perth Place, PH33 6UL. Tel: 01397 708553. Contact Mr Forbes Fraser. Tel: 01397 772862.

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.

Glendale: Sabbath 12 noon (fortnightly). **Vatten:** Sabbath 6 pm; Wednesday 7 pm (fortnightly). **Waternish:** As intimated.

Greenock: 40 East Hamilton Street, Sabbath 11 am.

Halkirk: Sabbath 11.30 am, 5 pm; Thursday 7 pm. Manse tel: 01847 831758. **Wick:** Church; **Thurso:** Church; **Strathly:** Church; no F P Church services.

Harris (North): Tarbert: Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Thursday 7.30 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 (except first Sabbath of month). Prayer meetings in **Leverburgh, Northton, Sheilebost, Strond** and **Geocrab** as intimated. Rev K D Macleod BSc, F P Manse, Leverburgh, HS5 3UA. Telfax: 01859 520271.

Inverness: Chapel Street, IV1 1PF, Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Rev G G Hutton BA, 11 Auldcastle Road, IV2 3PZ. Tel: 01463 712872.

Kinlochbervie: Sabbath 11.30 am; Tuesday 7.30 pm. Manse: Tel. 01971 521268. **Scourie:** Sabbath 6 pm.

Kyle of Lochalsh: Sabbath 6 pm. Manse tel: 01599 534933. **Plocton:** No F P services. Contact Rev D A Ross; tel: 01445 731340.

Laide (Ross-shire): Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Rev D A Ross. F P Manse, Laide, IV22 2NB. Tel: 01445 731340.

Lochcarron: Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Manse.

Lochinver: Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm. Manse tel: 01571 844484.

Ness: Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Manse tel: 01851 810228.

North Tolsta: Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Thursday 7 pm; 1st Monday of month 7 pm. Rev D Campbell MA, F P Manse, North Tolsta, HS2 0NH. Tel: 01851 890286.

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. Manse tel: 01738 442992. Contact Mr J N MacKinnon; tel: 01786 451386.

Portree: Sabbath 12 noon, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7 pm (Church Hall). Contact Rev W A Weale; tel:01470 562243.

Raasay: Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Rev James R Tallach MB ChB, F P Manse, Raasay, Kyle, IV40 8PB. Tel: 01478 660216, fax: 01478 660358.

Shieldaig: Sabbath 11 am; **Applecross:** Sabbath 6pm. Tuesday 7 pm (alternately in Shieldaig and Applecross). Shieldaig manse tel: 01520 755259, Applecross manse tel: 01520 744207. 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 9UX. Tel: 01470 562243.

Stornoway: Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Thursday 7.30 pm. **Sandwick:** Last Tuesday of month 7.15 pm. **Achmore:** Sabbath 12 noon; Tuesday 7 pm. Manse tel: 01851 702755.

Tain: Church and Manse. **Fearn:** Church. No F P services. See Dornoch and Bonar.

Uig (Lewis) Miavaig: Sabbath 12 noon Gaelic, 6 pm English; Wednesday 7 pm. Manse tel: 01851 672251.

Ullapool: Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Manse: Quay Street, IV26 2UE. Tel: 01854 612449.

England

Barnoldswick: Kelbrook Road, Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Friday 7.30 pm; Wednesday 8 pm, alternately in Haslington and Gatley. **South Manchester:** Sabbath 6.00 pm, in Trinity Church, Massie Street, Cheadle (entry at rear of building). Contact Mr R Middleton, 4 Rhodes Close, Haslington, Crewe, Cheshire, CW1 5ZF. Tel: 01270 255024. Manse tel: 01282 851782.

London: Zoar Chapel, Varden St, E1. Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. **Broadstairs:** Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm at Portland Centre, Hopeville Ave, St Peter's; Tuesday 7 pm at Friends' Meeting House, St Peters Park Rd. Rev J MacLeod MA, 6 Church Ave, Sidcup, Kent, DA14 6BU. Tel: 0208 309 1623.

Northern Ireland

Larne: Station Road. Sabbath 11.30 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 8 pm. Manse, 23 Upper Cairncastle Road, Larne BT40 2EF. Tel: 02828 274865. Contact: 02828 273294.

Canada

Chesley, Ontario: Manse and Church, 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: Fifteenth Avenue and Fraser Street. For F P Church services contact Mr John MacLeod, 202-815 4th Avenue, New Westminster, V3M 1S8. Tel: 604-516-8648.

USA

Santa Fe, Texas: Suite B, 12221 Highway 6. Sabbath 10.30 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Contact: Mr Joseph Smith, 13732 West Sixth Street, Santa Fe, Texas 77517. Tel 409 927 1564.

Australia

Grafton, NSW: 172 Fitzroy Street. Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Rev E A Rayner BA, 23 Naim Terrace, Junction Hill 2460 (mail to: PO Box 1171 Grafton, 2460). Tel: 02 6644 6044.

Sydney, NSW: Corner of Oxford and Regent Streets, Riverstone. Sabbath 10.30 am, 6.30 pm; Tuesday 7.30 pm. Information contact: Mr C MacKenzie, P O Box 5, Riverstone, NSW 2765. Tel: 02 4730 2797. E-mail: cal.01@optusnet.com.au.

New Zealand

Auckland: 45 Church Street, Otahuhu, Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. For further information contact Mr C van Kralingen, 3 Earls Court, Manurewa. Tel: 09 266 7618.

Gisborne: 463a Childers Road. Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Wednesday and Saturday 7.30 pm. Rev J A T van Dorp, 14 Thomson Street, Gisborne. Tel: 06 868 5809.

Tauranga: Girl Guide Hall, 17th Avenue, Sabbath 11 am, 7 pm. For information contact: Mr Dick Vermeulen, Tel: 075443677.

Wellington: 4 Rewa Terrace, Tawa. Sabbath 11 am, 4 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. For further information contact Mr N Hicklin, 117 Woodman Drive, Tawa, Wellington. Tel: 04 232 7308.

Israel

Jerusalem: Lord's Day: 12 noon, 7 pm. YMCA Chapel, 26 King David Street, Jerusalem. Rev J L Goldby, P O Box 68001, Arnona, Jerusalem 91680. Tel: 00972 2 6739058. For details of weekday meetings please contact Mr Goldby.

Singapore

Singapore: Sabbath: 9.30am and 5.30pm; Wednesday: 7.45pm. Room: "Tanglin III" (Level 2), 60 Stevens Road, Singapore 257854. Contact: Mr Bernard Yong, 4 Chuan Place, Singapore 554822. Tel: (65) 6383 4466, fax: 6383 4477, e-mail: byong1@singnet.com.sg.

Ukraine

Odessa: Contact Mr I Zadorozhnyi, P O Box 100, Odessa-91, 65091; e-mail: antipa@eurocom.od.ua; or Mr D Levitskiyy; tel: 00380 482326685; e-mail: dmlev@eurocom.od.ua.

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.

Ingwenya: Church and Secondary School. Rev A B MacLean; e-mail: amaclea@mweb.co.zw. Postal Address: Ingwenya Mission, Private Bag T5445, Bulawayo. John Tallach School tel: 00263 85343.

Mbumba: Church and Hospital: Postal Address: Mbumba Mission Hospital, Private Bag T5406, Bulawayo. Hospital tel: 00263 898291.

New Canaan: Church: Rev Z Mazvabo. Postal Address: Private Bag 615, Zvishavane. Tel 00263 512196.

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

Kenya

Sengera: Rev K M Watkins, PO Box 3403, Kisii; e-mail: watkinskenya@access350.co.ke. Tel: 00254 733 731002.

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