

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:** Halkirk, Kyle of Lochalsh; **Fourth:** Barnoldswick; **Fifth:** Ingwenya, North Tolsta.

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

May: First Sabbath: Aberdeen, London; **Second:** Achmore, New Canaan, Donsa, Kinlochbernie; **Third:** Edinburgh; **Fifth:** Auckland, Chiedza.

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

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

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

September: First Sabbath: Breasclete, Chesley, Larne, 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, Mbuma, Uig.

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

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

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“The Lord . . . Will Bless Us”

Joshua does not appear in the biblical record until we see him lead Israel against the Amalekites in battle, while Moses prayed. Yet we can believe that, when the Lord revealed His purpose of delivering the Children of Israel from bondage in Egypt, Joshua was one of those who by faith laid hold of the promise: “I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt . . . unto a land flowing with milk and honey” (Ex 3:17).

Others may have been conscious of Pharaoh’s power and of Israel’s status as a subject people and that it was totally unrealistic for them to fight their way out of Egypt. Such people, probably the majority, might therefore conclude that, whatever Moses might tell them about God revealing Himself at the burning bush, the prospect of deliverance from Egypt was altogether beyond the bounds of probability. Some of them – such is the power of the unbelief – might continue doubtful even when they heard of the signs and wonders Moses performed, including his rod changing into a serpent, and then changing back again into a rod. But not Joshua; we would expect him to have been like Abraham, “strong in faith, giving glory to God” (Rom 4:20). Joshua would have been just as conscious as others of the power of Pharaoh and of Israel’s lack of resources but, in common with Moses and Aaron and other believing Israelites, he knew that the Lord was all-powerful and that, if Jehovah had spoken, He would fulfil His promise.

And the Lord did work in fulfilment of His promise; He brought His people out of Egypt. Yet they had not gone far when they realised that Pharaoh and his horsemen were behind them, while the apparently-impassable obstacle of the Red Sea lay in front of them. The people as a whole murmured; they spoke to Moses with nasty sarcasm. Yet Moses here was strong in faith, believing the promises God had made to Israel. “Fear ye not,” he told them, “stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord” (Ex 14:13).

We can assume that Joshua took the same attitude; as a true believer he would have followed the principle later set down in the Psalm: “The Lord hath been mindful of us: He will bless us” (115:12). God has entered into covenant with His people and, if He has shown His goodwill to them in the past through

particular acts of blessing, they are in faith to look on these blessings as sure evidence that He will further bless them in the future, whatever their circumstances. Thus, as God had shown His goodwill to Israel by bringing them out of the land of bondage, He would show them further blessing by delivering them out of their present danger and taking them forward on their way to the land of promise. Pharaoh's power could not be doubted, and Israel still lacked the resources to challenge that power. But Joshua, like Moses, could look to "the salvation of the Lord", the deliverance which they would experience through divine power. And the Lord did bring about that deliverance; the Red Sea was opened up miraculously so that the Israelites were able to walk through it unhindered to the safety of the other side, leaving their enemies drowned in the sea.

In due course, the Children of Israel reached the borders of the Promised Land. Moses sent out 12 men, among them Joshua and Caleb, to spy out the country. They all agreed that it was a good land, and the huge cluster of grapes from Eshcol was clear evidence of its fruitfulness. But most of the spies were more impressed by "the giants, the sons of Anak," and by the massive walls defending the cities. Joshua and Caleb saw all these things too, but they took something else into account: the power of God. They declared: "The Lord is with us; fear them not". Even when the people turned against them, ready to stone them, these two men continued to trust in God. Joshua, in particular, continued to act on the principle: "The Lord hath been mindful of us: he will bless us". And he was justified in doing so; the Lord brought him safely through the wilderness – though, as a result of Israel's unbelief, they had to experience many difficulties, and Joshua with them. The Lord provided food and water for them; neither their clothes or their footwear wore out; and they were kept safe from enemies.

Nearly 40 years later, Joshua and the rest of the Children of Israel were again at the borders of the promised land. He had experienced much in all these weary wanderings through the wilderness, but he had no doubt many times recognised the continuing validity of the principle: "The Lord hath been mindful of us: He will bless us". There were now many more occasions when Joshua had seen clear evidence that the Lord was mindful of him – not least the successful battles against Sihon and Og, the kings on the east side of the Jordan who had tried to stand in the way of the progress of the Israelites. He could look back on all these blessings, and could therefore look forward to divine help as he and his people went on to occupy the land which God had promised to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob.

But although Joshua had all these further reasons to encourage him to believe that God would continue to bless him, there was one particular matter

which must now have caused him considerable concern. Moses was soon to die, and Joshua had been appointed the new leader of Israel. It was a tremendous responsibility. All the cities of Canaan would have been as strongly fortified as ever; the giants would have been as intimidating as before; and the Jordan had to be crossed at a time when it was overflowing all its banks. But Joshua could recall that it was God who had appointed him, and the Most High sends no one on “a warfare any time at his own charges” (1 Cor 9:7). Joshua had every reason therefore to believe that God would give him all the strength and grace he needed if he was to lead his people on to occupy the land which God had promised them.

But the ever-merciful God did not leave Joshua to rely only on such general considerations; He gave him a specific promise to encourage him in all the duties which were now before him: “The Lord, He it is that doth go before thee; He will be with thee, He will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed” (Deut 31:8). God knows the weakness of His servants; He remembers that they are dust (see Ps 103:14). Real human beings that they are, they need His help. And, because God remembers the weakness of those whom He has sent out, He promised Joshua His presence and help in the particular work that he had been sent to carry out. Joshua need therefore not be dismayed or afraid, whatever difficulties he might face.

And the Lord did go on blessing Joshua; He continued to be mindful of the man whom He had appointed to replace Moses. Joshua might well look on the River Jordan in spate as a formidable obstacle, particularly as he was responsible for bringing the whole nation of Israel over to the other side. But the Lord went before him and prepared a way, so that “all the Israelites passed over on dry ground”, as they had passed through the Red Sea. God did not leave His servant to himself; He went before Joshua.

The walled city of Jericho also was a formidable obstacle. Again the Lord went before His servant and provided miraculous help, in such a way that it was clear that the conquest of Jericho was due to almighty strength, not to human power. And the fact that God had been mindful of him at Jericho would encourage Joshua to believe that God would bless him in continuing the conquest of Canaan.

After Jericho, Ai must have seemed much less difficult to conquer. But the Israelites were foiled in their first attempt. The disaster brought Joshua to cry: “Alas, O Lord God, wherefore hast Thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? Would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan!” (Jos 7:7). Had Joshua lost sight of the promise in the aftermath of his army’s defeat? That would have been natural. And the Israelites may indeed have been less

dependent here on the One who had promised to go before them. What we do know with certainty is that they could not stand before their enemies because of sin – Achan’s sin. So it was a time for repentance, for putting away sin. And when this was done, Ai was conquered. Joshua’s faith in the promise may momentarily have failed, but it was restored.

In the end, the whole land was conquered (though Israel did not drive out all the previous inhabitants of the land as God had instructed them). In his old age, Joshua called all Israel about him and reminded them: “Not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof” (Jos 23:14). God had continued to act according to the principle: “The Lord hath been mindful of us: He will bless us”. He had kept His promise.

Joshua is now in heaven. He understands much better than ever he did in this world God’s faithfulness to His promises. With hindsight, believers may comprehend even in time, some of the workings of His providence which, when the events were taking place, seemed altogether inexplicable and even contrary to His promises. So Joshua might, in later days or years, have looked back to the events at Ai and understood to some extent the necessity for them. And Joshua now understands some of the reasons why God led him and his people these 40 weary years through the wilderness and through all the other difficulties and temptations that he had to endure. Not every experience was easy, but God blessed him by making all these things work *together* for his good, especially in spiritual things.

God deals with His people today according to the same principles as in the time of Joshua. Although the age of miracles has passed, His promises to His people are as sure as ever – just as certain to be fulfilled as they were for Joshua. The Lord will go before them; He will be with them; He will never forsake them. Matthew Henry notes that “those shall speed well that have God with them, and therefore they ought to be of good courage. Through God let us do valiantly, for through Him we shall do victoriously; if we resist the devil, he shall flee, and God shall shortly tread him under our feet”. So God’s children need never fear; they need never be dismayed.

We can see the hand of the devil in tempting the ten spies to unbelief when they saw the strength of the cities and the extraordinary size of the giants in Canaan. And we can see the hand of the devil in tempting Achan to covetousness in Jericho. Yes, believers are to resist the devil but, above all, they are to trust in God’s faithfulness to each of His promises. And as they look back and remember God’s goodness to them in the past, they are to remember the principle: “The Lord hath been mindful of us: He will bless us”. It was true for Joshua. It is true today. And it will always be true.

Between Two Opinions¹

A Sermon by *Jonathan Edwards*

1 Kings 18:21. *And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.*

It is the manner of God to prepare a people for a striking mercy before He bestows it, and to cause them to forsake their sins before He removes the awful judgements which He has brought upon them for those sins. We have an instance of this in the context. It was a time of sore famine in Israel. There had been neither rain nor dew for three years and six months. This famine was brought upon the land for their idolatry, but God was now about to remove this judgement. To prepare them for it, He sent Elijah to convince them of the folly of idolatry and to bring them to repentance for it. In order to this, Elijah, by the command of the Lord, showed himself to Ahab and directed him to gather all Israel to mount Carmel, and the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of the groves. They were to bring to an issue the controversy whether Jehovah or Baal were God. To this end, Elijah proposed that he should take a bullock, and the prophets of Baal another, that each should cut his bullock to pieces, lay it on the wood, and put no fire under, and that the God who should answer by fire should be seen to be God.

The text contains an account of what Elijah said to all the people at their first meeting, and of their silence. We may observe:

1. How Elijah expostulated with the people about their halting [that is, limping] so long between two opinions; in this reproof we may notice:

(1.) The two opinions: Whether the Lord were God, or whether Baal were God. In Israel some seem to have wholly rejected the true God and to have been altogether for Baal. Among them were, to be sure, Jezebel and the prophets of Baal. Some were altogether for the God of Israel and wholly rejected Baal; as God told Elijah that He had yet left “seven thousand in Israel . . . which have not bowed unto Baal” (1 Ki 19:18). But the rest of the people halted between two opinions. They saw that some were for one and some for the other, and they did not know which to choose. As is commonly the case when difference of opinion prevails, many had no religion at all. Many who professed to believe in the true God were very indifferent, and many were wavering and unsettled. They saw that the king and queen were for Baal; and Baal’s party was the prevailing party; but their forefathers had been for the Lord; and they did not know which were right.

(2.) In this reproof is implied their unreasonableness. “How long halt ye

¹This sermon, preached in 1734 is abridged from Edwards’ *Works*, vol 2.

between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him." Which implies that they ought to decide one way or the other.

2. We may observe their silence: "the people answered him not a word". They were convicted in their consciences of the unreasonableness of wavering for so long; they had nothing to reply by way of excuse.

Doctrine. Unresolvedness in religion is very unreasonable.

1. Many remain undetermined whether to embrace religion or reject it.

Many who are baptized make a profession of religion and seem to be Christians, yet halt between two opinions. They were taught the Christian religion in their childhood; they have the Bible and have the Word preached all their days; yet they grow up unresolved whether to embrace Christianity or not, and many continue unresolved as long as they live.

(1.) Some have never come to a settled determination whether there be any truth in religion. They hear of the things of religion all their days but never come to a conclusion whether they are real or fabulous. Particularly, some have never come to a determination whether there is any such thing as conversion. They hear much talk about it, and know that many claim to be subjects of it; but they are not resolved if it is mere hypocrisy and imposture.

Some never come to any determination whether the Scriptures are the Word of God. They fear it is so but sometimes very much doubt it. Sometimes, when they hear arguments for it, they assent to them, but every little objection calls it in question and they are never settled about it. So it seems to have been with many of the Jews in Christ's time; they were always at a loss what to make of Him, whether He was indeed the Christ or one of the old prophets or a mere impostor (John 10: 24,25). "Then came the Jews round about Him, and said unto Him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not." Some have never so much as come to a resolution whether there is a God or not; often they very much doubt it.

(2.) Some have never come to any determination whether to embrace religion in its practice. Religion consists not merely, or chiefly, in theory but in practice. It is probably pretty general for men to plan to be religious some time or other before they die; for none intend to go to hell. But they still keep it at a distance; they put it off from time to time and never come to any conclusion which determines them in their present practice.

Many have continued unresolved about the necessity of striving and being earnestly engaged for salvation. They flatter themselves that they may obtain salvation, though they mind their worldly affairs more than their salvation. They are often told how necessary it is not to delay, but to do with their might whatever their hand finds to do; a slack way of seeking salvation is

never likely to be effectual. But they are never thoroughly convinced of these things. Some seem to resolve to be in earnest but soon fail because they have never been fully convinced of its necessity.

Many have never come to a determination what to choose for their portion. There are but two things which God offers to mankind for their portion: one is this world, with the pleasures and profits of sin, together with eternal misery ensuing; the other is heaven and eternal glory, with a life of self-denial and respect to all the commands of God. They must have one or the other; they cannot have both; but they never make their choice.

They would fain have heaven and this world too; they want salvation and the pleasures of sin too. God offers heaven only with the self-denial and difficulty which are in the way to it; and they are not willing to have heaven on these conditions. God offers the world and the pleasures of sin to men, but with eternal misery; so neither are they willing to have the world. They would fain divide heaven from holiness and self-denial, and then they would be glad to have heaven. They would fain divide sin from hell, and then they would fully determine to cleave to sin for ever.

But God will not make such a division for them. They must have one or the other, and therefore they never make any choice at all. Indeed in practice they choose sin and hell. But they are always wavering, halting between two opinions. Sometimes they seem to determine for the one and sometimes for the other. When they meet no difficulty or temptation, and can do their duty without much going against their carnal inclinations, they seem to choose heaven and holiness. At other times, when they meet difficulty in the way of duty, and great temptations of worldly profits or pleasures are laid before them, they choose the world and leave heaven and holiness alone.

So they have never yet determined which shall be their master: God or mammon. They are not of the few who resolve to serve God and to follow Christ at all times, whatever difficulties it may expose them to. Yet they are not determined to continue to serve Satan; they are afraid to come to such a conclusion. Thus many spend their lives without making their choice, though in practice they choose the service of Satan. The Apostle James thus speaks of them: "The double-minded man is unstable in all his ways" (1:8).

2. To continue thus undetermined and unresolved in the things of religion, is **very unreasonable** for the following reasons:

(1.) The truth or falsehood of the doctrines of religion concerns us to the highest degree possible. It is no matter of indifference whether there is a God, or whether the Scriptures are the Word of God, or whether Christ is the Son of God, or whether there is such a thing as conversion. Therefore we are under the greatest obligation to resolve in our minds whether they be true or false.

They who are content to be undecided whether there is truth in religion, and do not thoroughly use the means to become decided, act very unreasonably. They readily remain in doubt and do not diligently consider the force of the arguments that prove such things, but busy themselves about other things of infinitely less importance; they act as if they thought it did not much concern them if there is an eternal state. But a future state is a matter of such great importance that no wise man would rest until he had satisfied himself about it. If there is such a state as the Scriptures assert, we must receive either eternal rewards or eternal punishment. These opposite portions relate, not merely to a few days in this world, but to eternity. It is therefore infinite madness not to come to a determination.

So it is no matter of indifference what master we serve, whether God or mammon; or what interest we will pursue, whether temporal or eternal; or which we prefer: the commands of God, or our pleasures, ease and convenience. We ought therefore to come to some determination.

(2.) God has made us reasonable creatures, capable of making rational decisions. He has made us capable of making a wise choice as to the life we shall lead. He has given man so much natural understanding, as to make him capable of determining which is best: to lead a life of self-denial and enjoy eternal happiness, or to take our swing in sinful enjoyments and burn in hell for ever. The question is not difficult to determine. It is so far from being a matter too hard for our reason that the reason of a child is sufficient. Therefore men, in remaining undetermined in these matters, do not act as reasonable creatures, but make themselves like “the horse and the mule, which have no understanding” (Ps 32:9).

(3.) God gives us a good opportunity to determine for ourselves. He sets life and death before us: “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live” (Deut 30:19; see also Ezek 18:31,32; 33:11). What better opportunity can we desire, for securing the greatest good, than to have eternal life and unchangeable happiness set before us? Therefore they act unreasonably who neglect coming to a resolution.

(4.) The things among which we are to make our choice are but two, one of which must be our portion: either life or death, either blessing or cursing; either a life of universal and persevering obedience with eternal glory, or a worldly, wicked life with eternal misery. If we had to choose between many things of nearly equal value, it would be more excusable to remain long in deliberation. And there are but two states in this world: a state of sin and of holiness, a natural state and a converted state. There is but one way in which we can come to life. There are but two masters, one of whom we must serve:

Jehovah and Baal, God and Mammon. There are but two competitors for possession of us: Christ and the devil. There are but two paths to travel in: the narrow way which leads unto life, or the broad way which leads unto destruction. This shows the unreasonableness of those who live under light, and have the offers of the gospel made to them, and yet remain from year to year undetermined, halting between two opinions.

(5.) God has given us all the helps we need to bring us to a conclusion on the truth of the things of religion – whether there is a God, whether the Scriptures are the Word of God, etc. We are not left in the dark as to these things, as the poor heathen are, but we have clear sunshine to guide us. The Scripture lies open before us, and all the doctrines of the gospel are particularly set forth, with the reasons on which their evidence is founded. We may search and try their force and sufficiency as we please.

We have great helps to a wise choice, to determine whether it is best for us to choose a life of sin or a life of holiness, the service of God or the service of Baal. We have very plainly set before us the advantages of both sides; the loss and gain are particularly stated. Christ has faithfully told us what we shall get and what we shall lose by being His followers. He has also told us what we shall get and what we shall lose by a life of sin. He has not pretended that there are greater advantages in godliness than there really are, nor greater disadvantages or dangers in sin. “In my Father’s house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you” (John 14:2).

He has told us plainly that we must take up the cross daily and follow Him; that we must hate father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, and our own life also, in order to be His disciples; and that we must cut off our right hands and pluck out our right eyes in order to enter heaven. Thus we have a fair opportunity to count the costs on both sides and are directed to do so (Luke 14:28). How unreasonable it therefore is for those who have all these advantages to come to no conclusion whether they will be for God or the devil – though they have lived under the preaching of the Word and offers of the gospel for many years.

(6.) We have no reason to expect better advantages hereafter than we have now. We never shall have a clearer revelation of gospel truth, never shall have the advantages and disadvantages of both sides more plainly set before us than they already are in the Word of God; nor are we ever likely to have better advantages to know what will be best for us. Those therefore who delay gain nothing by their delays but give Satan more opportunity to darken their minds, to deceive them and lead them astray in their choice. Therefore their delay in coming to a resolution is unreasonable.

(7.) If they do not come to a determination in this life, God will determine

for them and appoint them their portion with the wicked. If sinners, by refusing to choose either life or death, either heaven or hell, could avoid both, the unreasonableness of delaying a determination would not be so great. But that is not the case; if they go on halting between two opinions, God will determine for them – and quickly. He will give them their portion among the unbelievers, in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone for ever. God will not always wait to see what they will choose; He will bring the matter to a conclusion by His unalterable sentence. Therefore it is appropriate for all, if they are afraid to have their lot in hell, to come soon to a determination.

(8.) Delay in this case is unreasonable, because those who delay do not know how soon the opportunity of choosing will be past. This opportunity will last no longer than life; then the sentence will be past; the matter will be closed. Those who delay their choice in this world will be glad to choose afterwards; then they will not be at a loss which to choose; they will be able to determine easily. After this life, sinners will soon judge whether there is any truth in religion or not; they will soon determine which is best: a life of obedience and self-denial, with heaven for a reward, or a life of irreligion and sin, with hell for a punishment. They will no longer halt between two opinions; but it is too late, their opportunity is past. They would give all the world for another opportunity to choose, but it will not be granted them.

Application. (1.) Let this send everyone to examine himself, whether or not he has ever yet come to a full determination in the affair of religion.

Firstly, Inquire whether you have yet come to a full determination about the truth of religion. Have you ever been fully convinced? Is it a question which you have answered: Is there a future state? Or is it yet an unresolved question with you? Here I desire you to note two things:

[1.] If the main reason why you assent to the truth of religion is that others believe it and you have been so instructed from your childhood, the truth of religion remains undetermined for you. Tradition and education will never settle the mind in a satisfactory and effectual belief of the truth. To take religion on trust is not such a faith as will stand a shock; a temptation easily overthrows it. The reason of man will not rest on such poor evidence in time of trial. Multitudes seem to grant the truth of religion, with whom the main foundation of their faith is the tradition of their fathers, or the profession of their neighbours, and it is to be feared that it is so with many who count themselves good Christians. But they halt between two opinions.

[2.] If you are fully convinced that the things of religion are true, they will weigh more with you than everything in the world. He who really is convinced that there is a heaven and a hell and an eternal judgement, that the happiness and misery of a future state is as great as Scripture represents it, and that God

is as holy and just as He has declared concerning Himself in His Word – he will be influenced by them above all things in the world. He will be far more concerned how to escape eternal damnation, and to have the favour of God and eternal life, than how he shall get the world, gratify the flesh, please his neighbours, or obtain any temporal advantage whatsoever. His main inquiry will not be, What shall I eat and what shall I drink? But he will seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

Examine yourselves therefore by this: Are your hearts not chiefly set upon the world and the things of it? Is it not more your concern to further your outward interest than to secure an interest in heaven? And is not this the very reason that you have never seen the reality of eternal things?

Secondly, Inquire whether you have ever yet come to a determination about the practice of religion, whether you have chosen heaven with the way to it – the way of obedience and self-denial rather than this world and the ways of sin; whether you have determined to devote yourselves to the service of God? Here I shall mention four things which are signs that men halt between two opinions in this matter.

[1.] They put off duty till the future. When persons love to keep their duty at a distance, when they do not engage in it for the present but think of doing so when they shall find it more suitable, when they intend very well for what they will do tomorrow but are very poor performers today, when they say as Felix, “Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will call for thee” – it is a sign that they halt between two opinions and have never come to a full determination about the practice of religion. Those who have fully determined that religion is necessary will make it their present business.

[2.] It is also a sign when people are conscientious in some things but not universal in obedience, do some duties but omit others, avoid some sins but allow others, are conscientious about public and private worship but not in their behaviour to their neighbours, are not just in their dealings or conscientious in paying their debts. The same may be said when they are just in their dealings with men, but not conscientious in other things – indulging sensual desires, drinking to excess – or are honest and sober, but licentious in using their tongues, backbiting and reproaching their fellow men (2 Tim 3:6,7).

[3.] You are halting between two opinions if you are sometimes considerably engaged in religion but at other times neglect it; sometimes forming a resolution to be in good earnest, then dropping it again; sometimes seeming to be really engaged in seeking salvation and very earnest in religious duties, but at other times wholly taken up with the things of the world, while religion is neglected and religious duties omitted. These things show that you have never come to a full determination concerning religion, and you therefore are

unstable in all your ways. “But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering: for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways” (Jas 1:6-8).

[4.] It is a sign that you are halting between two opinions if you evade your duty whenever any significant difficulty comes in the way which is much against your interest or inconsistent with your convenience or your temporal honour. Whatever zeal you seem to have, whatever concern about the things of religion, and however strict you ordinarily are, you have never fully made choice of religion and its benefits as your only portion. At best you have got no further than King Agrippa, who was almost persuaded to be a Christian (Acts 26:28). You are like the stony-ground hearers: you have no root in yourselves; you are like a tree without root, easily blown down by every wind.

(2.) I shall conclude with an earnest exhortation to all to halt no longer between two opinions but immediately to come to a determination whether to be Christians or not. Let me insist upon it that you now make a choice whether you will have heaven for your portion, with a life of universal and persevering obedience; or hell, with a life spent in the pursuit of this world. Consider those things which have been said showing the unreasonableness of continuing in such irresolution about an affair of infinite importance to you, and on which you have so short an opportunity to make your choice.

Consider two things in addition to what hath been already said:

[1.] Those who, under the gospel, continue undetermined about religion are more abominable to God than the heathen. He hates those who continue from year to year, under the warnings and instructions and entreaties of His Word, who will neither be Christians nor heathens. They are thus spoken of: “I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of My mouth” (Rev 3:15,16). And: “As for you, O house of Israel, thus saith the Lord God, Go ye, serve ye every one his idols, and hereafter also, if ye will not hearken unto Me: but pollute ye My holy name no more with your gifts, and with your idols” (Ezek 20:39). These are “ever learning, and never coming to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Tim 3:7).

[2.] If you still refuse to come to a determination whether to be Christians or not, how just will it be for God to give you no further opportunity! If you refuse to make any choice at all – after all that has been done to set life and death so often before you – how just will it be if God shall wait no longer but shall, by His unalterable sentence, determine the case Himself, and fix your state with the unbelievers, and teach you the truth of religion, by sad and fatal experience, when it will be too late for you to choose your portion.

Law and Gospel (1)¹

Rev J R Tallach

The right handling of law and gospel is at the heart of proper preaching. John Newton wrote, “Clearly to understand the distinction, connection and harmony between the law and the gospel, and their mutual subserviency to illustrate and establish each other, is a singular privilege and a happy means of preserving the soul from being entangled by errors on the right hand and on the left”.² A balance has continually to be kept between the error of Antinomianism on the one hand and legalism on the other. The gospel requires the law and the law the gospel, but these two are not to be confused. While they are interdependent, they are not to be intermixed. One encouragement to the study of law and gospel comes from Luther, who comments: “Whoso then can rightly judge between law and gospel, let him thank God and know that he is a right divine”.³ The same Reformer warns in his *Tabletalk*: “It is the supreme art of the devil that he can make the law out of the gospel”.

For the purposes of this paper, the law and the gospel will be taken in their strict sense. The *law* means the moral law, as declared in the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20, thus referred to by Paul: “I had not known lust except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet” (Rom 7:7). There has ever been but one moral law. It was in the heart of Adam as he was formed in the image of God.

Though that image was defaced by the Fall, yet knowledge of that law remained, and is written in the hearts of the Gentiles who never knew the law of Moses. “For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts” (Rom 2:14:15). Anthony Burgess, one of the Puritans, comments: “You must not compare this place with the gracious promise in Jeremy, of God writing His law within the hearts of His people. The first writing is of knowledge and judgement, whereby sinners apprehend what is good and bad: the second writing is upon the will and the affections, by giving a propensity and a delight, with some measure of strength, to this upon good grounds”.⁴ Burgess identifies two essential elements in the term *law*: (1) direction, as in Proverbs 20:27: it is “the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly”. *Law* and *light* are one word in Chaldee. (2) *obligation*. In this lies the essence of

¹The first part of a paper presented at the 2007 Theological Conference.

²Quoted by E C Reisinger, *The Law and the Gospel*, p 32.

³*Commentary on Galatians*, p 122.

⁴*The Vindication of the Law called Moral*, p 60.

a sin. Sin breaks the law and this implies the obligation which is of the essence of the law: "where no law is, there is no transgression" (Rom 4:15).

The gospel in its strict sense is a revelation of the covenant of grace to men. Thus Paul quotes Isaiah: "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things" (Rom 10:15). The gospel is made up of the following elements:

(1.) The statements of God relating to the redemption of lost sinners. This will include the council of peace between Father and Son: how the Father sent the Son to win a bride for Himself, how the Son undertook to be the Surety Substitute for His people, how the Spirit is the quickener and the sanctifier of elect sinners. The gospel makes the Redeemer to be the Alpha and Omega in the redemption of the sinner.

(2.) All the promises of the covenant of grace. The Old Testament had the coming of Christ in view; so the promises were free and absolute. The seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent (Gen 3:15), and Abraham was assured: "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen 12:3). In the New Testament, the gospel reveals the same Redeemer in a greater measure of spiritual influences. In this strict sense of the gospel, the injunctions to repent, believe and obey are part of the moral law, not part of the gospel.

(3.) God's gracious offers of Christ Himself and of all His promises to sinners at large. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). All duties are commanded in the law while all blessings are offered in the gospel. Ministers are commanded to "preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). As the manna was given to the Children of Israel before they partook of it, so Christ is given in the free offer to sinners before they partake of it by faith. "Verily, verily I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven" (John 6:32).

(4.) The gracious invitation to sinners in general to accept God's offer of a Saviour and salvation by Him. Those offers, as far as they place a duty upon man to believe and repent, are of the law, but as an expression of the mind of God to deal mercifully with sinners, they form part of the gospel.

This gospel is called "the gospel of God" (Rom 15:16), as God is the One who devised it. It is called "the gospel of Christ" (Mark 1:1), as all gospel promises are "yea and amen" in Him. It is called "the gospel of salvation" as, in the hands of the Spirit, it brings salvation to the lost. It is called "the gospel of the kingdom" (Matt 4:23) as it comes with the authority of Christ the King and brings rebels into willing service to Him. It is called "the

glorious gospel” (1 Tim 1:11), as it makes known the glorious perfections of God in Christ and brings many sons into glory. It is the everlasting gospel (Rev 14:6), as it was proclaimed from the beginning of time and as the manifold nature of it will be unfolded to the saints through all eternity.

The rest of this paper will consider how law and gospel impinge on the following four persons: Adam, Moses, Christ and the believer, followed by a section of application.

Law, Gospel and Adam. As already noted, Adam, being formed in the image of God, bore the imprint of God’s moral law on his heart, either naturally or by direct command. Adam in his state of innocence was the representative of the human race and was brought under the covenant of works, with its command: Do this and live. A test was set for him during his period of probation: “Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat”. Adam failed this test, and only shattered remnants of God’s divine law remain in the heart of fallen man.

This law is termed natural law, which is self-evidencing in the same way as the sun gives evidence of its presence by its own light. Thus the command, “Thou shalt not kill”, needs no reason to be attached to it, as the heart recoils naturally from murder. “Does not nature itself teach you?” Paul asks. On the other hand, the law of the seventh day is not part of natural law but is commanded by God in the Fourth Commandment; therefore a reason is attached: “because God rested that day”. There is a difference between the law of nature and the Ten Commandments but both alike are unchangeable and of perpetual obligation. Both are also alike holy. The moral law, as it is natural, is holy because the soul of man was created in the likeness of a holy God, and the moral law, as it is positive – what cannot be described as natural – is holy because it is the will of a holy God.

But while there are differences between the natural and moral law, it is easy to demonstrate, as Reisinger⁵ does, that the authority of all ten commandments continued during the period between Adam and Moses, and among the Gentiles from Moses to Christ; and they still have authority over the unregenerate heart now. Thus the Egyptians were punished for breaking the first three commandments: having false gods, adhering to false worship, and for blasphemy against the one true God (Ex 5-7). The man found breaking the Sabbath commandment (Num 15:32,33) was punished. Noah’s son Ham failed to honour his father and was punished (Gen 9:4-15). Other examples of the Ten Commandments being broken and sin being punished will readily come to mind. This demonstrates that the moral law is for all time and for all people; “for where no law is, there is no transgression”. Whether in Old

⁵*The Law and the Gospel*, p 19ff.

Testament times or New; whether people are converted or unconverted, their basic moral duties do not change.

The gospel also was revealed to Adam. The seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent. Satan, that old serpent, would be overcome by One from among the children of men. This One would suffer in that encounter but Satan's work would be destroyed (1 John 3:8). Both the manner in which this victory would be achieved, and the blessing which lay in it for Adam and Eve, were demonstrated by God providing animal skins as a covering for their nakedness and shame. The law of the covenant of works was: "The day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die", but in Eden it was the animal that died to cover the nakedness of our first parents. A substitutionary atonement and an imputed righteousness were revealed in embryo. As Adam and Eve walked away from Eden, leaving their original righteousness in the dust, they were bearing the righteousness of a substitute. Paul says of death, another departure: "Not . . . that we would be unclothed but clothed upon" (2 Cor 5:4). These revelations were, as noted above, embryonic. The revelation would grow, but the basic characteristics were unchanged till the Second Person of the Godhead came in our nature to gain a victory on behalf of all His people and to obtain a righteousness for them.

Robert Bruce on the Lord's Supper¹

5. Bruce's Legacy: Lessons and Conclusions

Rev D Campbell

In this concluding section we will look at a number of areas in which we can learn from Robert Bruce's sacramental doctrine and practice.

(1) ***The high middle ground in sacramental theology should be jealously guarded.*** Robert Bruce does not quote John Calvin once in his five sacramental sermons and it is not known how much of Calvin's writings he used. Yet he stands squarely with Calvin in the sacramental controversy which troubled the Reformation Churches and which Calvin attempted to resolve. We find in Bruce remarks which at first reading might seem obscure, particularly when he refers to the presence of Christ and to His body and blood. But his emphasis on the Holy Spirit's work and the necessity of having true faith makes his theological position clear. Similar emphasis is found in Thomas Cranmer's thoroughly-biblical work on the Lord's

¹This is the final section of a paper delivered at the Theological Conference in 2007. The previous article, last month, concluded the section on Bruce's high sacramental theology dealing with (3) faith and assurance and (4) preparation and conscience.

Supper. In many ways Robert Bruce's terminology resembles Cranmer's.²

The formal creed of the Scottish Church during the ministry of Robert Bruce was the Scots Confession of 1560. In more recent times much has been made of the fact that this Confession seems expressly to renounce Zwinglian-ism. A word of explanation from Principal John Macleod is appropriate here. It can be argued, he says, that Zwingli himself, and certainly the later Swiss divines who penned the Second Helvetic Confession, came as close to Calvin's view of the Lord's Supper as any among the Reformers of the sixteenth century. Indeed the Second Helvetic Confession was formally approved in Scotland in 1566. Macleod argues that the aim of the Scots Confession was not to attack Zwingli but the early Socinians, whose views must have been known to Knox from his time in Geneva.³ It is abundantly clear that no prominent Scottish Reformation divine, and certainly not Robert Bruce, espoused the impossible claims respecting the Lord's Supper associated with Martin Luther. We should be thankful for the clear teaching on the Lord's Supper which our Scottish divines have left to us and we should seek grace to remain faithful to that high and biblical sacramental theology.

(2) *The benefits of frequent communicating are to be valued and the practice encouraged.* While the sacrament is a memorial and also a public witness, there is reason to fear that too much emphasis being placed on these important truths has overshadowed the doctrine of the sacrament as a means of grace. The benefit to be had from worthily communicating should encourage the fearful and those who lack assurance because, as a seal, the Lord's Supper confirms the promise and offer of Christ in the gospel to the believing heart. Robert Bruce exhorted his hearers to frequent communion and says that the oftener one partakes of it in a right manner the better. He also gave great prominence to preparation, and out of this the services of the Scottish communion season developed. Communion gatherings from far and wide really began under the ministry of Robert Bruce, whose preaching was widely admired. He was greatly used of God both in the north and the south and had, it is thought, over one thousand seals to his ministry. Possibly Scotland is, in the present day, losing that feature of its sacramental heritage which emphasises the Lord's Supper as a means of grace.

The Westminster Standards make use of the terminology of sealing in their statements on the Lord's Supper and in so doing adopt a distinctly-Calvinistic sacramental theology. There may be reason to fear that this aspect of the sacrament is being lost sight of and its significance diminished. One symptom

²See the Preface to *Cranmer on the Lord's Supper*, 1553 edition, republished in 1907 and 1928.

³John Macleod, *Scottish Theology*, p 24.

of this neglect and possible doctrinal shift can be seen in the decline of the communion season. The Scottish communion season with its emphasis on preparation and, historically at least, on frequent attendance at the sacrament gave prominence to the sacrament as a means of grace.

Writing on frequent participation in the sacrament, the English Puritan Thomas Doolittle (1630 -1707) pointedly says that “the sense and feeling of the want of your food will direct you to” frequent eating. A sense of need and a clear understanding and experience of the blessings conferred would similarly “guide to a frequent application to this ordinance”.⁴ Robert Bruce would have heartily concurred in this view. If we find the Lord’s Supper to be a seal to us, we will be unwilling to neglect it wherever we have access to it.

(3) ***Discriminating preaching is required for self-examination before communicating.*** The solemn and direct dealing of Robert Bruce with the conscience has already been referred to. Bruce was fearless in applying the terrors of the law to all his hearers as well as the healing balm of the gospel. His six sermons on Hezekiah’s sickness were preached before James VI and contain frequent direct addresses to the King and his courtiers. The place of conscience in the life of grace and in the application of the truth to the unconverted was a subject with which the divines of Scotland were most familiar. Discriminating preaching, in which the ungodly are identified and addressed, the weak and the strong given their own portion, and the backslider and the hypocrite rooted out of their resting places, marks Bruce’s preaching and doubtless contributed to his fame and, under God, to his success.⁵

But this emphasis had a practical bearing on the Lord’s Supper in that Bruce strongly held that, where sin was entertained, conscience would be defiled and consequently the benefit especially designed in the sacrament could not be enjoyed. Until the conscience was purged by resorting to the mercy of God in repentance, and until the heart was in a measure sanctified as a fit dwelling place for Christ, the Lord’s Supper would prove hurtful rather than useful.

(4) ***The custom of fencing the Lord’s Table is most necessary.*** The practice of fencing the Lord’s Table has an early history in Reformed Scotland. When he was minister in Berwick-upon-Tweed between 1549 and 1551 John Knox is known to have followed an order of worship which was derived from that used by Zwingli. It probably came to Scotland through George Wishart. This order was adapted by Knox and included specific reference, not in the Zwinglian order, to fencing the table at the very point in the service where

⁴Thomas Doolittle, *A Treatise Concerning the Lord’s Supper*, chapter 6, p 30.

⁵See Laidlaw’s Biographical Sketch, p xviii, in his edition of Bruce’s *Sermons*, Edinburgh and London, 1901.

it is presently practised.⁶ The Scottish Church from the beginning adopted this practice, together with the use of communion tokens. These customs, rightly used, preserved the honour of Christ, the witness of the Church and the spiritual good of the people. Fencing the table ought to include a clear presentation of the meaning of the ordinance and an address to conscience, together with an encouragement of the weak.

Bruce seems to include at the end of his first sermon what could be styled a fencing of the table. The language is discriminating: "Remember that you should not address yourselves to this table unless you find your hearts in some way prepared. The first step in preparation is contrition, sorrowing for sin, a feeling of your own sins in which you have offended so gracious a God. If you are able, as that woman was by tears of a contrite heart to wash the feet of Christ, you are in a proper state of mind. But if you are wanting in all these, if you do not have them in any measure, you are altogether unprepared. Therefore let no one come to this table unless he has these at least in some measure."⁷

Conclusion. Bruce passed through deep waters spiritually before entering the ministry. He was marked in his day as a preacher of extraordinary power and majesty and he was used of God in the salvation of hundreds. The Lord graced his ministry with the honour of being persecuted for righteousness' sake. He ever sought the comfort of God's children and a careful study of his sermons will, we believe, provide material for comfort to believers today. If the sacrament is designed to strengthen the weak, Bruce's doctrine is highly conducive to that end.

We wish to conclude with Robert Bruce's own words. The experience referred to in the following extract, Bruce says, the servants of God (ministers) must know in some measure: "The heart that has once felt the love of God will feel it again. The Lord will restore to his creatures, before ever they depart from this life, the same gift of grace or taste of the powers of the world to come that He had already given them in this life. Therefore the soul that is tossed with severe assaults and great dangers, where present experience will not help, must have recourse to the past and keep in memory the former experience of mercy which the Lord has freely shown toward it. This same memory will be so pleasant to the soul that it will keep it from desperation in the present, uphold it until the time when the Lord will pacify the heart, and give comfort to the soul. Then that soul will see that however angry God was, he was angry only for a little while."⁸

⁶William MacMillan, *The Worship of the Reformed Church 1550-1638*, pp 25-27.

⁷*The Mystery of the Lord's Supper*, James Clarke 1958 edition, p 68.

⁸*The Mystery of the Lord's Supper*, p 194.

Christ's Temptation¹

Introduction

Hugh Martin

Here the King is known for a refuge. For He is always here, even to the end of the world. His two-edged sword, proceeding from His mouth, flashes here continually in the eyes of the enemy. Here He breaks the arrows of the bow, the shield, the sword and the battle, Himself more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey (Ps 76:3,4).

Here the sons of the adoption, baptized and engrafted into the eternal Son, must do battle in conjunction with Him and under Him, in defence of their sonship – as here He defended His. Nor is the issue of the battle in doubt which is waged here. Every combatant who abides here by faith shall be more than conqueror. “He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son” (Rev 21:7). His assaulted sonship shall be perfectly protected here, and at last publicly acknowledged, saith the Lord. Thus are all the faithful heirs to the promise; the description is fulfilled in themselves: “Ye are they that have continued with Me in My temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom as My Father hath appointed unto Me.” And He is here, in His temptations, that we may continue with Him in them.

Yes, we have Christ's presence in this portion of the Gospel history very eminently – the presence of the Captain of salvation in this entrenched camp, where our lot is cast and our cause is safe in the wilderness. For the history does not here record an event wholly past. It reveals an abiding state of things, a battle still “continuing”. This conflict is prolonged through the whole history of the Church; through the whole, still-current campaign that opened with the proclamation of an unparalleled war: “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Gen 3:15).

And if the war still rages round the camp, is the King not here Himself? And if He is, is He present any otherwise than as revealing Himself in the history? Truly He is looking out from the battlements of His fortress still. “He standeth behind our wall, He looketh forth at the windows, showing Himself through the lattice” (Song 2:9). Tried faith, assaulted by the enemy, finds its living Head present in His history here at this epoch very specially.

¹This is the first piece in a further series of slightly-edited extracts from Martin's *The Abiding Presence*. The series, aimed particularly at believers, is based on the account of Christ's temptation in Matthew 4:1-11, and on Luke 22:28,29: “Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations: and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me”.

And faith shall clear itself from all complicity with fancy or fanaticism when she boldly maintains that He is here, defending the camp and repelling the foe, as of old.

For, in the first place, the assault is carried on by the enemy only because he knows that Christ is here; it is the same assault prolonged. In the second place, the defence is possible and is carried on by the Church, only because she knows that Christ is here; and it is the same defence prolonged. In the third place, the outcome is the same, because Christ is with us now exactly as in the wilderness then, prolonging His action and victory perpetually.

Paul's Conversion (1)¹

James Buchanan

This case of conversion is, in many respects, the most remarkable of all the examples which the Spirit of God has recorded for the instruction of the Church. Saul of Tarsus, the Jewish persecutor, was suddenly converted into Paul the zealous apostle of the Gentiles. And whether we consider the talents, the learning or the morals of the man; or the suddenness and magnitude of the change which was wrought on him; or the rich and varied fruits of personal holiness and public usefulness which sprang from it, we shall discover ample reason for regarding him as one of the most conspicuous monuments of the riches and efficacy of divine grace.

In this instance, our materials are so abundant that there can be no difficulty in forming a correct conception, both of his state of mind before his conversion and of his experience afterwards. Not only have we three distinct accounts of his conversion in the Acts of the Apostles (9:1-22, 22:1-21, 26:4-19), but there are several instructive references to it in some of his Epistles (as Gal 1:13-16; 1 Cor 15:9), and every part of his writings teems with illustrations of the extent of that great spiritual change by which the persecutor became a preacher of the faith he had despised.

1. From his writings we derive much interesting information on *the state of his mind before his conversion*. It is evident that his education, as well as the natural vigour of his mind, was superior, not only to most of the primitive converts, but to all his fellow apostles. It appears that, from his infancy, he had shared in the rich advantages of a liberal education. In a notice which is incidentally given of his early life, we read that he was born in Tarsus, the chief city of Cilicia, where Greek learning was taught with eminent success.

¹Taken, with editing, from Buchanan's *The Office and Work of the Holy Spirit*. This is the third of his "illustrative cases" of conversion.

From the appropriate quotations which he makes from the poets and philosophers of Greece, it is certain that he had acquired a knowledge of literature and a taste for learning. He could speak to the polished Athenians, on Mars's hill, in their own dialect (Acts 17:22).

In Tarsus he had, in part, followed the occupation of his father, as a tent-maker, for it was the custom of good families among the Jews to bring up their children to a trade, even though they should follow the paths of learning; and this early training later proved useful. While he was yet young, he left Tarsus for Jerusalem, the chief seat both of Jewish learning and religion, probably with the view to pursuing his studies in the Scriptures and qualifying himself for the sacred office of scribe, or doctor of the law. There he enjoyed the privilege of studying under Gamaliel, who is described as a member of "the council . . . a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people". He enjoyed, then, the best opportunities which his age afforded for becoming acquainted both with Greek and Jewish literature. And that he had genius to relish these advantages, and industry to profit by them, appears from his wonderful writings and labours in after life, as well as from his own testimony: "I am verily a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers".

It is clear that, in his religious opinions and moral habits, Saul was by conviction, as well as in profession, a Jew, holding the faith of the Old Testament and observing the worship of the one living and true God, in opposition to all the false but seductive forms of polytheistic superstition which prevailed among the other nations. He was not a Jew only, but a Pharisee, a strict professor of the Jewish faith, maintaining, in opposition to the Sadducees – who were, both in their principles and habits, the libertines of the age – those grand doctrines which they had discarded, such as the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, and the certainty of a judgement to come. He exhibited, in his outward deportment, a fair and even a strict example both of ceremonial observance and of civil virtue.

His own account of his early life shows that he was never, either in his own estimation or in that of his fellow men, irreligious or immoral. On the contrary he says, "My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee" (Acts 26:4). "And I profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals [or contemporaries] in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers" (Gal 1:14). "Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh

that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless" (Phil 3:4).

Such is the account he gives us of his character before his conversion – an account which may, at first sight, appear to be inconsistent with those humbling confessions and deep penitential feelings which he uttered in other parts of his writings, where he speaks of himself as "less than the least of all saints", and as the very chief of sinners. But, on further reflection, these expressions when compared together will only serve to show that the fairest exterior may conceal an unsanctified heart, and that a correct creed and a moral life may well consist with the absolute necessity of regeneration. It is not said that he was anything more than a Pharisee, and our Lord Himself declared to His disciples: "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of God".

Saul knew the law in its letter and yet was ignorant of its spirit and power, for at a subsequent period he made this acknowledgment: "I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died". By the law is the knowledge of sin, but it is by the law spiritually understood. And hence he was destitute of any true sense of sin till he was impressed with the spirituality of the law. "I had not known sin, unless the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." In this state of mind he was neither more nor less than a zealous formalist, resting in the correctness of his creed and the decency of his life and the strictness of his religious observances, while his heart was far from being right with God. He shared largely in the character which is ascribed to the sect to which he belonged, when it is said of them that "they trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others".

In his views of Christ and the gospel, he was not only an unbeliever but a violent persecutor of the Christian Church. Here is a melancholy combination of apparently-incompatible qualities of character: a learned, religious, moral and self-righteous man displaying a disposition to oppress and exterminate the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus. We read that, at Stephen's martyrdom, "the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul," and "that Saul was consenting unto his death". And, during the great persecution which followed, it is said, "As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed them to prison". Not content with this, his zeal urged him to proceed further: "Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters

to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem”.

On this subject he often expressed, after his conversion, the deepest and most penitential sorrow; and it is clear that in this he acted in opposition to the advice of his great master, Gamaliel (Acts 5:34). Yet I apprehend that we are not entitled to regard it as a proof either that he was naturally cruel in his disposition or insincere in the profession of his former faith. It is indeed true that persecution for conscience' sake can, in no case, be defended, and the Apostle himself afterwards acknowledged this. Considering the tenderness of heart and warmth of affection which he subsequently manifested, I cannot help believing that it was the perfect sincerity of his attachment to the law of Moses which prompted him to oppose what he then conceived to be an impious innovation, and that it was his very zeal for what he thought to be the cause of God which stirred him up to persecute what he no doubt believed to be a dangerous heresy.

Saul had “a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge”; he was ignorantly opposing the same authority which he professed to revere; the very sincerity of his attachment to the traditions of his fathers made him unlikely to entertain the thought that, in persecuting the followers of Christ, he might probably be found to fight against God. Such is the account which he gave of the state of his mind after his conversion when penetrated with a conviction of his guilt and deeply humbled on account of it: “I verily thought that I ought” – a false sense of duty is clearly implied – “to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth; and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme: and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities” (Acts 26:9-11). And again: I “was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief” (1 Tim 1:13).

Such seems to have been the character of Saul; and there is enough in it both to account for his opposition to the gospel and to show that he needed, not less than the reckless jailer at Philippi, or the poor malefactor on the cross, to undergo a great spiritual change before he could enter into the kingdom. His character was indeed so respectable that some, looking only at the fair exterior, may be at a loss to discover in this learned, religious, moral and self-righteous man, anything that called for any change except his violent opposition to the gospel in persecuting its first professors. But, on deeper reflection, they will find cause to believe that if his vehement zeal, “in breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord”, did not

necessarily imply a cruel and bloodthirsty disposition, it did at least indicate a frame of mind in all respects opposed to the spirituality of the gospel, and that it is to be regarded as the natural fruit and the outward manifestation of a bitter aversion to the truth as it is in Jesus. It showed that in his heart he was an enemy to Christ and His cause; and there was enough enmity in his bosom to render regeneration absolutely needful, as well as to account for his zeal in the work of persecution.

His very learning made him look down with scorn on the illiterate fishermen who had appeared in opposition to the doctrine of the Scribes and Pharisees; his very religion prompted him to oppose a system of doctrine at variance with all his preconceived opinions. His very morality fostered a spirit of self-righteous confidence which rendered the humbling doctrine of the cross utterly offensive to him. His very patriotism made his heart seem to swell when he spoke of "the Israelites, to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises". His personal convictions, his national pride and his party spirit all combined to intensify his hatred and contempt for those who represented Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah that had been promised to the fathers, the Messiah whom he, like most of his countrymen, probably expected as a temporal prince to deliver them from the Roman yoke and establish a powerful monarchy in Judea.

Hence, when Jesus appeared, claiming this august character, Saul might conceive that He was justly condemned and that His followers might also be put to death as deceivers of the people. In those very features of his character, then, which at first sight seem most amiable and least likely to lead to such a result, we find the very strength and source of his opposition to the gospel – just as in modern times none are more bitter against the doctrines of free grace and a life of spiritual religion than those moral, decent and self-righteous men who have a form of godliness, while they deny its power.

But I apprehend that Saul's violent opposition to the truth is to be ascribed, in no small measure, to certain convictions which had been awakened in his conscience by what he had seen and heard of the gospel and the conduct of Christ's followers – convictions which were not effectual to subdue his enmity, but were abundantly sufficient to stir it up. It does not appear that he had been present at the crucifixion of Christ, but he was present, as an active spectator, at the death of Stephen, the first martyr for the truth. He had heard his sublime discourse and looked on his countenance when "his face seemed as it had been the face of an angel" and witnessed his triumphant death, when he fell asleep, saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my Spirit," and, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge".

On a mind like Paul's such a scene must have made some impression. If it did not subdue, it would excite. It might, and probably did, awaken some inward misgiving, some secret suspicion that possibly there might be truth in that gospel which Stephen sealed with his blood, and some feeling of uneasiness, amounting even to pain. Such is often the effect of conviction in the conscience of unbelieving men, as was remarkably the case with those who surrounded Stephen on that memorable occasion: "When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and gnashed on him with their teeth"; and again those who listened to the faithful testimony of Peter and the other apostles: "When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them".

Where the arrow of conviction fails to bring the sinner bleeding to Christ, saying, "What must I do to be saved?" it seldom fails to intensify his natural enmity, so as to rouse his violent opposition to Christ and His cause. Thus when at any time we see a man breathing out violence and threatenings against the ministers and people of God, we are ready to think that at one time that sinner must have had an arrow sticking fast in his conscience, and that he is uneasy and restless and wretched within, in consequence of its festering sore. That Saul had experienced some such convictions appears, I think, from the language of our Lord when He said to him: "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks". It is as if he had been pricked in his heart and as if he was goaded on to violence and bloodshed by convictions which he was determined to kick against and resist, in so far as they tended to subdue his haughty spirit to the faith and obedience of the gospel; just as King Saul's persecution of David was stimulated by a secret consciousness of his own guilt, and a lurking suspicion that David was the Lord's anointed.

Visit to the Ukraine

Rev W A Weale

On Wednesday, January 28, the first stage of this visit to the Ukraine began with Mr Edward Ross and me travelling by bus from Kyle and Portree respectively to Glasgow so as to be ready for flights to Odessa the following day. That day was a long one, with changes and long waits at London and Vienna. But we finally arrived safely at our destination, at 2 am (Ukrainian time) on Friday, January 30, to be warmly welcomed by Igor Zadorozhnyy and Dmytro Levytsky and driven to our accommodation; we were tired but conscious of the Lord's gracious keeping. For Mr Ross this was a familiar experience but for me it was all new. I felt, however, from

that very first meeting with the men, and later with Mrs Zadorozhnyy and Mrs Levytskyy and family, that we were among friends and that our stay in Odessa would be a pleasant one.

I was impressed when I saw how the Mission building had developed, since the work of clearing the site for building began in August 2006. The top floor (living accommodation) is complete. On the one side are the Levytskyys' living quarters with a kitchen, living room, two bedrooms, toilet and shower room. Then off to the other side of the stairs there are two most comfortable guest rooms, which Mr Ross and I used during our time there. In this area there was also a toilet and shower room, and a washing machine for our use.

On the ground floor is the place of worship, which also is complete, with seating, a pulpit and all the other necessary furniture. So we were able to have our first service there on the Sabbath after we arrived.

Below this floor is the basement, which has not yet been painted. It is here that the literature so diligently distributed by Mr Zadorozhnyy is to be stored. There is also a separate office for him which is all but complete and which will hopefully make his work that much easier.

As well as being impressed by the progress made with the building, I was also most impressed by the standard of the work. While credit here must of course go to the contractors who did the work, much credit also has to go to Mr Levytskyy for all he has done. He is kept busy with ongoing studying and proof reading and with the added burden of other work such as wiring and painting and plumbing in the building. He is owed a debt of thanks for this. During our time there, Mr Ross and I were able to assist a little in purchasing necessary items for the Mission and in getting things into shape in our quarters. We were also involved in meetings with the Church lawyer and taking steps that we hope, in God's providence, will lead to the Church being registered – which would mean that services could be advertised. This, it is hoped, would augment the numbers considerably.

On Sabbath, February 1, the first services took place in the new building. In the morning I spoke to a congregation of 11 and in the evening to a congregation of seven. The reason for the smaller number in the evening was that the Baptists had their own service at that time. This was my first experience of speaking through an interpreter (Mr Levytskyy). I cannot honestly say I found the experience easy but it did become just a little easier after a while. On the Wednesday there was the usual prayer meeting and then on the Thursday the communion season began. There were the usual preparatory services on Thursday, Friday and Saturday before gathering to remember the Lord's death on the Sabbath. That morning there was a

congregation of 12, which was the largest gathering, and we believe that we had the presence of the Lord among us. The faithful few again gathered that evening and on the Monday evening there was the usual thanksgiving service.

The final days in Odessa passed very quickly. There were so many things to attend to about registering the Church, as well as a meeting of the Deacons Court and a Field Mission Meeting, that it was soon time to prepare for the journey home. This began in the early hours of Wednesday morning and by the end of that day, in the Lord's gracious providence, Mr Ross and I were both safely home.

What the future has in store for the cause in Odessa we do not know. More of a congregation (12 adults) is required before the Church can be registered. As we reflect on how the Lord has brought matters on thus far, however, we cannot but feel a measure of confidence that what had a small beginning will grow like the "grain of mustard seed" and become a blessing in Odessa and throughout the Ukraine. For this we must of course look to the Lord, who alone can give the increase, but we must remember our own responsibility also, not only to support this work practically, but also, and above all, to support it prayerfully.

Book Review

Truth for All Time, by John Calvin, published by the Banner of Truth Trust, soft cover gift edition, 150 pages, £10.00, obtainable from the F P Bookroom.

This little book (its small page size means it can be easily carried around) is well described in the preface as a "priceless jewel. It has lain buried and forgotten for far too long, but now that it has been unearthed you will find that it shines as brightly as ever and has lost none of its value." Calvin wrote it when just 29, in 1537, and entitled it, *Brief Outline of the Christian Faith*. This translation, by Stuart Olyott, was first published as a paperback in 1998. It reads well, but some readers will be justifiably uncomfortable with God being addressed as "you".

The book covers basic doctrine, and includes an exposition of the Apostles' Creed and also of the Ten Commandments. Even at this early age, Calvin was remarkably surefooted in his handling of doctrine; however, he was always too much inclined to see the Sabbath as basically a Jewish institution. Calvin writes warmly and clearly. For instance, he describes faith as "an unwavering persuasion of the truth of God, which can neither lie nor deceive, and can neither be hollow nor false. . . . Faith believes God to be truthful: hope waits for Him to display His truthfulness at the appropriate time".

Protestant View

The Prime Minister and Rome

Prime Minister Gordon Brown, accompanied by his wife and children, has made his third visit to the Pope, his first since becoming Prime Minister (the previous two visits took place when he was Chancellor). The Vatican described the meeting as cordial and Mr Brown took with him not only a cross from Iona but a warm invitation for the Pope to visit all parts of the United Kingdom, possibly to mark the beatification of John Henry Newman, which the Pope is strongly promoting. A Vatican spokesman, after initial reports that no visit was envisaged, said that the Pope had welcomed the invitation “with great attention” and, although it had not yet been accepted, it would be taken into serious consideration.

Introducing a report of her interview with Mr Brown, Catherine Pepinster, in an article in the Roman Catholic Newspaper *The Tablet*, claims that “all the signs are that Gordon Brown is intent on being the first Prime Minister to welcome a pope to Downing Street”. Attributing to possible cynicism the idea that Mr Brown might be using his meeting with the Pope to augment his own declining popularity or as part of a political agenda, Pepinster suggests that what binds Brown and the Pope is a common commitment to the Millennium Development Goals. As he anticipates the G20 summit, “Brown wants influential backing for keeping the developing world on the agenda. The Pope’s influence on this has been proven.”

While she was at Downing Street, Catherine Pepinster seized on Mr Brown’s professed “regard for people with faith” and warm and adulatory words for Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O’Connor to ask if he would consider putting the Cardinal in the House of Lords when he retired as Archbishop of Westminster. “Brown laughs, fiddles with his tie, and doesn’t rule it out. ‘These are things to be discussed at a later stage’”. From this incident came such increasingly-positive headlines as “Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O’Connor could be made a lord” (*Daily Telegraph*), “Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O’Connor set to be the first Roman Catholic bishop in Lords since 16th century” (*The Times*) and “Arise, Lord Murphy-O’Connor” (*The American National Catholic Weekly*).

The *National Catholic Weekly*’s Austen Ivereigh claims that the Cardinal “loves the idea. A life peerage, he thinks, would give him a platform with which to combat the shrinking of the Church’s voice in public life. . . . And he would relish the further recognition of Catholicism by the British establishment which began under his predecessor, Cardinal Hume. . . . And I’ve no

doubt that Gordon Brown would like to nominate him. . . . The PM badly needs to recapture Catholic sympathies lost by laws crushing Catholic adoption agencies and allowing for animal-human hybrid embryos.” Ivereigh assumes that the supposed Roman Canon Law prohibition on clerics sharing in the exercise of civil power could be got round if the Pope approved and that there would be no obstacle in the British Constitution as it would be the individual rather than the office that would merit the title and he would be a “lord temporal” rather than a “lord spiritual”.

In his interview with Catherine Pepinster, the Prime Minister said that “faith and religion remain at the centre of our public life. Christian heritage is absolutely crucial to it.” It is a sign of the delusion which has taken possession of our rulers and people that a man who has acquiesced in, participated in or promoted a great variety of what has been described as the most anti-Christian legislation in modern British history, and who is obviously oblivious to the difference between the Christianity which is still at the heart of our Constitution and the religion represented by the Vatican and by the Cardinal, can speak as he does of the crucial nature of our Christian heritage.

The Pope, however honeyed his words may be, claims to be “his Holiness” and demands the allegiance of monarchs and nations. This cardinal does not think that “genuine Christianity” obliges one to believe “that the biblical stories of Creation as described in the Book of Genesis are literally true”; his “genuine Christianity” is that from which the Reformation delivered the United Kingdom. And this Prime Minister’s religion is a social gospel divorced from “the glorious gospel of the blessed God”. But, given the deceptive power of sin, it should not surprise us that they can all fraternise, each aiming for what he can get out of it for himself and his own ideology.

Looking around our society we see that ancient heresies and alien religions are taking centre stage as the “moral conscience” of the nation, that government legislation is rapidly destroying the basic morality nurtured by our Christian heritage, and that the liberty to “live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world” (Titus 2:12) is being eroded, initially in public life and daily occupations, and that no regard is had to the hand of God in the troubles coming upon our nation. “Our sins testify against us . . . in transgressing and lying against the Lord, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood. And judgement is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the Lord saw it, and it displeased Him that there was no judgement” (Is 59:12-15). May it yet be as was prophesied in these days by Isaiah: “When

the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him” (59:19). *HMC*

Notes and Comments

Outrageous Competition Sponsored by Kent Police

An essay competition for young people from under 14 to over 18 years old is being held by Kent Police. The subject is not, for example, crime prevention or the dangers of drug abuse but the acceptability of a homosexual lifestyle. Kent Police Deputy Chief Constable says the competition is “part of the national Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender history month” and that school pupils competing have “to explain what ‘All different, same respect’ [the slogan of LGBT month] means to them”. He added that the competition “is also part of Kent Police’s wider diversity programme to raise knowledge and awareness, and increase respect and understanding, of LGBT issues within our local communities”.

It is appalling that a public body whose fundamental purpose is to promote law and order is promoting a lifestyle that is not only most immoral but also has been amply proved to be dangerous and destructive. It is especially shocking that Kent Police should make use of schoolchildren in their “diversity programme” and thus condition them to believe that sodomy is not immoral, unnatural and perverse.

God will not be mocked by such deliberate and cynical corrupting of the rising generation. “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” (Is 5:20). *NMR*

Church Attendance in Britain

The charity Tearfund conducts a twice-yearly survey of church-going in Britain, and the figures for September 2008 indicate a surprising increase in church attendance. Based on a sample of 7000 people, they show that out of the 49 million adults in Britain, 12.8 million (26%) attended church at least once last year, 7.3 million (15%) at least once a month and 4.9 million (10%) at least once a week. The corresponding figures for September 2007 were 21%, 13% and 9%. In Scotland annual attendance increased from 19% to 27%. The research questions deliberately exclude attendance at weddings, baptisms, funerals and other invitation-only events.

Presumably these figures to some extent reflect the influx of Roman Catholics from Eastern Europe, but this is by no means the full explanation. The attendance figures for the Church of England and the Church of Scotland

are markedly up, and the increase involves most age groups, parts of the country and social classes. Many of the churches that people are attending preach a false gospel, but we would hope that there has been a corresponding increase in attendance at Evangelical churches. We should be thankful even for this glimmer of encouragement, and we pray that, like Elijah's "little cloud . . . like a man's hand", it may become "a sound of abundance of rain" (1 Ki 18:41,44). It is appalling, however, to think that three-quarters of the adults in Britain do not attend any Christian church from one end of the year to the other.

DWBS

Church Information

Death of Two Elders

Sadly we have to report the death of two elders earlier this year: Mr Murdo Finlayson of Ness, who passed away on January 24, and Mr Ken MacPherson of Gisborne on February 22. May the Lord raise up many others to take the places of those whom He has removed.

General Building Fund

By appointment of Synod, this year's special collection for this Fund, is due to be taken in congregations during April. *W Campbell*, General Treasurer

Acknowledgement of Donations

The General Treasurer acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:

College & Library Fund: Anon, Singapore, £170; Friend, Newcastle, Ps 34:1-10, £80.

Jewish & Foreign Missions Fund: Anon, Singapore, for Kenya Mission, £150.

Congregational Treasurers acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:

Gairloch: *Congregational Funds:* Anon, £200.

Inverness: *Bus Fund:* CMD, £20; Anon, £20. *College & Library Fund:* Anon, for Theological Conference expenses, £26 per IMK. *Congregational Funds:* Anon, £25, £30, £25, £30, £25, £25; Estate of the late Mr Alexander M McGregor, £80 662.02; N Pearce, Cymru, £50.

Kenya Mission: Anon, Netherlands, for Kenya Mission, €1000 per AP.

Laide: *Congregational Funds:* CM, Dun Eisean, £40; Anon, for Church car park, £100; JL, Strathburn Home, £5; DB, West Yorkshire, for taped sermons, £60. *Eastern Europe Fund:* Friend, Aultbea, £20 per CR; Anon, £50, £10, £50; KG, Gairloch, £30; MM, £40; Friend, Skye, £10; Friend, Lewis, £200; Friend, CO, USA, £18.22; Friend, £2.50; Friend, Laide, £100; Friend, for printing, £10 per Rev DAR; PL, Lochcarron, £30 per ER; for Bibles: Friend, Isle View Home, £97.82, £92.27, £103.89, £110.99; Isle View Residents, £20.50, £17 per Rev DAR. *Magazine Fund:* Friend, Aultbea, for free distribution of church magazines, £20 per CR.

North Uist: *Communion Expenses:* Glasgow Friend, £50.

Portree: *Congregational Funds:* Family of the late Mrs Bruce (Glenmore), £100 per AB.

Staffin: *Congregational Funds:* Estate of the late Mr John Cumming, £1000; N Pearce, Cymru, £50 per Rev WAW. *Where Most Needed:* Anon, £40.

Stornoway: *Communion Expenses:* SM, £100; Anon, £120; Mrs M, £20.

FREE PRESBYTERIAN PLACES OF WORSHIP

Scotland

- Aberdeen:** 2 Alford Place, AB10 1YD, Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Tuesday, 7.15 pm. Rev D W B Somerset BSc DPhil, 18 Carlton Place, Aberdeen, AB15 4BQ. Tel: 01224 645250.
- Bracadale:** **Struan:** Sabbath 12 noon; Wednesday 7 pm (fortnightly). Contact Rev J R Tallach, Raasay; tel: 01478 660216.
- Breascele:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm.
- Dingwall:** Church, Hill Street; Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. **Beauly** (Balblair): Sabbath 6.30 pm, Thursday 7.30 pm. Rev Neil M Ross BA, Dingwall, 10 Achany Rd, IV15 9JB. Tel/fax: 01349 864351, e-mail: nmross2001@yahoo.co.uk.
- Dornoch:** Sabbath 11.30 am. **Bonar:** Sabbath 6 pm. Wednesday 7.30 pm (alternately in Dornoch and Bonar). **Lairg:** Church and Manse; **Rogart:** Church; no F P services. Contact Rev G G Hutton; tel: 01463 712872.
- Dundee:** Manse. No F P Church services.
- Edinburgh:** 63 Gilmore Place, Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Thursday 7.30 pm. Rev Hugh M Cartwright MA, Napier House, 8 Colinton Road, Edinburgh, EH10 5DS. Tel: 0131 447 1920.
- Farr,** by Daviot: Sabbath 12 noon and 6 pm. Prayer meetings: Thursday 7.30 pm in **Farr, Stratherrick** or **Tomatin** as intimated. Contact Rev G G Hutton; tel: 01463 712872.
- Fort William:** Monzie Square, Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm as intimated. Manse: 15 Perth Place, PH33 6UL. Tel: 01397 708553. Contact Mr D A McKinnon. Tel: 01397 702597.
- Gairloch** (Ross-shire): Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm. Prayer meeting in **Strath**, Thursday 7.30 pm. Rev A E W MacDonald MA, F P Manse, Gairloch, Ross-shire, IV21 2BS. Tel: 01445 712247.
- Glasgow:** St Jude's Church, 137 Woodlands Road, G3 6LE. Sabbath 11 am and 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Rev Roderick MacLeod BA, 4 Laurel Park Close, Glasgow, G13 1RD. Tel 0141 954 3759.
- Glendale:** Sabbath 12 noon (fortnightly). **Vatten:** Sabbath 6 pm; Wednesday 7 pm (fortnightly). **Waternish:** As intimated.
- Greenock:** 40 East Hamilton Street, Sabbath 2.30 pm.
- Halkirk:** Sabbath 11.30 am, 5 pm; Thursday 7 pm. Manse tel: 01847 831758. **Wick:** Church; **Thurso:** Church; **Strathly:** Church; no F P Church services.
- Harris (North):** **Tarbert:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Thursday 7 pm. **Stockinish:** Tuesday 7 pm. Rev J B Jardine BD, F P Manse, Tarbert, Isle of Harris, HS3 3DF. Tel: 01859 502253, e-mail: northharris.fpc@btopenworld.com.
- Harris (South):** **Leverburgh:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm. **Sheilebost:** Sabbath 12 noon (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. Tel: 01859 520271.
- Inverness:** Chapel Street, 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. 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.
- Lochcaron:** Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Manse.
- Lochinver:** Sabbath 12 noon. Manse tel: 01571 844484.
- Ness:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Rev A W MacColl MA PhD, F P Manse, Swainbost, HS2 0TA. Tel: 01851 810228.
- North Tolsta:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Thursday 7 pm; 1st Monday of month 7 pm. 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. 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 6 pm. 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:** Matheson Road, 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.
- 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.
- 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. Contact Dr T Martin; tel: 01843 866369.
- London:** Zoar Chapel, Varden St, E1. Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Rev J MacLeod MA, 6 Church Ave, Sidcup, Kent, DA14 6BU. Tel: 0208 309 1623.

Northern Ireland

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

Canada

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

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

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

USA

Santa Fe, Texas: Church and Manse, 4031 Jackson St 77517. Sabbath 10.30 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Rev L T Smith. Tel: 409 925 1315; e-mail: lyletsmith@gmail.com.

Australia

Grafton, NSW: 172 Fitzroy Street. Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Rev E A Rayner BA, 23 Nairn 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: Rev J L Goldby, P O Box 68001, Arnona, Jerusalem 91680. Tel: 00972 2 6739058. For services please contact Mr Goldby.

Singapore

Singapore: Sabbath: 9.30am and 5.30pm; Wednesday: 7.45pm. Room: "Tanglin I/II" (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: dmllev@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. 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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