

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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July 2009

Vol 114 • No 7

The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland

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Website of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland: www.fpchurch.org.uk.

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

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

The Gaelic Supplement (quarterly): Editor: Rev J MacLeod MA, 6 Church Avenue, Sidcup, Kent, DA14 6BU. Available free on request.

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

Communions

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

February: 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: Beauly, Raasay; **Second:** Bonar, Staffin, Wellington; **Fourth:** Struan; Cameron.

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

September: First Sabbath: Breascleite, Chesley, Lame, 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: Applecross. **Sabbath:** Glasgow; **Third:** Santa Fe; **Fourth:** Aberdeen; **Fifth:** Chiedza.

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

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“Him Who Holds the Helm”

Events in 1732 made Ebenezer Erskine consider the time “a day of trouble”. Twenty years had passed since Parliament had reimposed patronage on the Church of Scotland. This meant that the right to nominate a minister for a vacant congregation lay with, normally, a local landowner. Now the 1732 General Assembly had agreed, in the face of considerable opposition, to permit non-Presbyterians to exercise that right – provided they were Protestants.

Erskine was deeply disturbed and preached before the Synod of Perth and Stirling on the words: “The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner” (Ps 118:22). He expressed his fear that this act of the Church would “very soon terminate in the overthrow of the Church of Scotland and of a faithful ministry therein”, because “the power of electing ministers is thereby principally lodged in the hands of a set of men that are generally disaffected to the power of godliness and to the doctrine, discipline, worship and government of this Church”.¹ Erskine’s action was to have very serious consequences for himself, but he preached in the knowledge that God was in total control of His Church and of the circumstances of all His children. That was why he could so confidently say, near the end of an earlier sermon, preached on the Sabbath evening of a communion season in his own Stirling congregation: “Keep the eyes of faith fixed on Him who holds the helm; and believe, with an assured faith, that ‘the Lord shall reign for ever, even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Praise ye the Lord’” (Ps 146:10).²

Storms will, time and again, arise to trouble the Church of God and the individual believer. The Saviour told His disciples plainly: “In the world ye shall have tribulation” (John 16:33); trouble is inevitable in a sinful world, where both the Church as a whole and every individual member of it are imperfect. Yet we are to realise that, whatever happens and however much everything seems to be out of control, it cannot really be so, for the Lord holds the helm – in other words, He has complete control of the ship of providence. Indeed Christ at once went on to tell His disciples: “But be of

¹Quoted in Thomas M’Crie, *The Story of the Scottish Church*, Free Presbyterian Publications reprint, 1988, p 466.

²Ebenezer Erskine, *Works*, Free Presbyterian Publications reprint, 2001, vol 2, p 16.

good cheer; I have overcome the world". It is a message of comfort for all succeeding generations of His followers

Storms of opposition and persecution may rise against the Church, but however difficult the experience, she is ultimately safe; she cannot be destroyed, because the One who holds the helm has unlimited power to protect her. Likewise, even when storms of heresy assail her and threaten to swamp her, she cannot be shipwrecked. This was the assurance that Christ gave to His disciples with reference to the Church: "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt 16:18). Satan, the prince of hell, and those of his angels with whom he takes particular counsel, are allowed to raise serious storms of opposition and persecution against the Church in the hope of doing her severe damage – especially in some periods of her history. They may succeed in this, but in the end it will be clearly seen that, because the Lord is in control, Satan and all his forces – of evil angels and of human beings who have been led captive by him at his will – cannot prevail. Equally such powerful forces may do tremendous damage within the Church by stirring up storms of false doctrine and practice. But whatever the nature of the storm, the gates of hell will never prevail, because their purposes will in due time be thwarted by the One who holds the helm.

Individuals too must, more on less, experience storms of various kinds. There are storms of temptation, when Satan and those who are doing his work disturb the peace of God's children by trying to lead them into sin. And, in the course of providence, many another difficulty may disturb their peace – bereavement, for instance, illness, disability, family upset and a vast number of other situations when life does not go smoothly. Yet, in them all, we are to remember the One who holds the helm. William Nixon, a Scottish minister of the nineteenth century, remarks that Christians "are too apt, like unbelievers around them, to separate God from His own world, and especially from their individual concerns, and to feel and act as if, so far at least as regards temporal events, mankind were left uncontrolled, unprovided for, to work out their own destiny for time. Coming too readily and too often under the power of the atheistic spirit which prevails all around them, no wonder that the followers of Christ are so apt to be tossed on a sea of troubles with reference to what they shall eat and what they shall drink and wherewithal they shall be clothed."³

If these words were true well over a hundred years ago, how much more relevant they are today, in a generation which has been very nearly overwhelmed by an atheistic spirit. But there *is* a God, and that God has, in the Scriptures, revealed Himself and His ways – including the fact that He has

³William Nixon, *Christ All and in All*, Edinburgh, 1882, p 365f.

His hand on the helm of providence. Human beings in their natural condition, especially in a generation which no longer shows even outward respect to the God who created them, are glad to put out of their consciousness the slightest thought that God is in control of their affairs – indeed of *all* their affairs. But His call is: “Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your heart” (Ps 95:7,8). Each individual is to bow in submission before the One who is in control of everything – in particular, they are to submit to the salvation that He has provided in Christ Jesus. And they are to heed the further call: “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things [what to eat and to drink and what to be clothed in] shall be added unto you” (Matt 6:33). The One who holds the helm of providence will ensure that those who seek Him and find Him will be provided for throughout the rest of their lives.

God’s children are themselves influenced by the atheism of a generation such as this. Yet, by God’s grace, they have responded in faith to God’s revelation in Scripture. In particular, they believably recognise that He is in control of all their providence, and that this control is exercised in His goodness. And they are to go on doing so, ever more trustfully.

One means of becoming more trustful is to meditate further on God’s revelation – pondering the fact, for instance, that He has entered into *covenant* with those who have trusted in Him. An important element in that covenant is His promise to believers that He “will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters” (2 Cor 6:18). In revealing the terms of this covenant, He is making known the care which He exercises over His children and over their providence. This revelation is intended to stimulate their trustfulness. They are accordingly to believe that He is good – that He is willing to bless – and that, in particular, He will be good to *them* throughout the future. They are, in Erskine’s words to “keep the eyes of faith fixed on Him who holds the helm”, especially as One who has entered into covenant with them.

Let us conclude with a remarkable example, provided by W S Plumer, of one gracious man’s understanding of the sovereignty of Him who holds the helm of providence – and a remarkable example of godly submission. “I once stood”, wrote Plumer, “by the open grave of a lovely child, whose father, a minister of the gospel, was leaning on my arm. The coffin had been lowered and was about to be covered. For a moment there was a pause. I asked him to say a word to the people. He seemed glad of the opportunity, though his words were few: ‘In my prosperity I have hitherto told you that God was good. Now I am sadly bereaved, but my testimony still is that God is good. Yes, He doeth all things well.’”⁴

⁴W S Plumer, *Commentary on Hebrews*, Baker reprint, p 516.

The Object of Faith¹

A Sermon by *William Trail*

2 Peter 1:5. *And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue . . .*

What is faith? “Faith”, says Paul, “is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb 11:1). It has to do with the future and the invisible. Prophetic in its vision, it is not things present but things “hoped for”, things still future, that it beholds. But it so beholds them that they do not flit on a distant horizon as faint images or airy outlines, but are fixed and firm as substantial realities. Spiritual in its vision, it is not objects which the senses can discern, but God and truth and heavenly things, that faith beholds – and so beholds them that, though “not seen”, they are evident to it – clear, certain, manifest.

Apply the Apostle’s definition of faith to salvation and to the Saviour. Here are “things not seen”, for you cannot set salvation forth in visible shape or form so that I can see it. And the Saviour, though visible, is not so to us – the heavens having received Him out of our sight. And here also are “things hoped for”: believers expect the coming of the Saviour and, at His coming, they look for the completion of their salvation in the redemption of their bodies from the grave, even as their souls have already been redeemed from death. “Ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it” (Rom 8:23-25).

But how can faith give substance or reality to things which are away in the distant future, or give evidence, or vividness, to things which are away in the upper world? It is a firm and unflinching belief in trustworthy testimony concerning those things “hoped for” and “not seen” – the testimony of a credible witness to whom they are already present and visible. It is also a new power of spiritual perception, imparted to the soul when born again of the Spirit, by which it can, as it were, pierce through distance in time or space. Thus it is easy to see how it gives substantiality to “things hoped for”, and how it is the evidence of “things not seen”.

In seeking to answer the question, What is faith? we will at present consider its object,² or what the Holy Spirit presents to the mind in order to bring this grace into existence.

¹Reprinted, with editing, from Trail’s book of sermons: *The Christian Graces*. Trail (1819-1874) was then minister of the Free Tron Church in Glasgow.

²Two further sermons, on the actings of faith, may be printed in future issues.

1. The object first presented to faith is **the testimony of God the Father in the Scriptures concerning His Son Jesus Christ**. The substance of that testimony is: God foresaw that man would fall, and the Father entered into a covenant with the Son by which to restore a portion of our race; according to this covenant, the Father sanctified and sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into this our world to be the propitiation for sin; on the cross Christ offered up Himself a true sacrifice to satisfy divine justice; this sacrifice, having fully met all the claims of the divine law, was accepted by the Father; on the ground of this sacrifice then offered up and accepted, God is ready to receive, to pardon and to favour any and every sinner who comes to Him through Christ; and the salvation which Christ, by His obedience and death, procured for sinners is a complete and perfect salvation – being all that God’s honour demanded, and all that the necessities of the sinner’s case can require.

This testimony concerning Christ as Saviour is the object of faith. Until I receive this testimony, not merely believing it, but feeling persuaded of it, and heartily assenting to it, as the very truth of Him who cannot lie, I do not have faith. For what are those doing who do not receive the Father’s testimony concerning Christ but giving the lie to God direct? They are doing to Him what, if done to a fellow-mortal, would be resented as the foulest affront. “He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son.” And what have you got to say, unbelieving sinners, in palliation of wickedness as enormous as this? Can you pretend to be ignorant? Or can you, with the Bible before you, try to hide this sin by feigning surprise? Well do you know that He has said so, and yet you do not believe Him.

But why must I have a divine testimony *here* as the basis of my faith? Simply because here is a matter on which God alone is either entitled or qualified to be the witness.

[1] God alone is *entitled* to be the witness here. I am His creature, the subject of His government, and amenable to His laws. If then I am apostate, it is from Him I have apostatised; if I have sinned, my sin has been committed against Him; if I am under condemnation, the sentence has gone out from Him. It is for Him to say whether I can be restored and pardoned. And if my restoration and pardon are possible, it is for Him to pronounce the means and the conditions.

[2] God alone is *qualified* to be the witness here. Events which run back into eternity are involved in the question of my salvation. And what can human testimony or the voice of history reveal to me about those eternal transactions which were necessary to my redemption, but took place before the creation of the world? And events which no human eye could see are in-

volved here. For what does history, with its human witnesses, tell me of the scene which was enacted on Calvary? It tells me what it saw: that a man, the man Christ Jesus, was led out to be crucified; that He was nailed to a cross; that He died on that cross; that His side was pierced with a spear upon that cross; that His dead body was taken down from that cross and buried. It tells me this much, because it saw this much. But what is this to my salvation? Had I any interest in the death of Christ? Can His blood, then shed, avail to wash away my sins?

It is not history that can tell me this, but One who saw deeper than human eye could look into this mystery. The divine Father alone can assure me of what He alone could know – that Christ's death on Calvary, by which malice sought to sate its thirst for blood, was an expiatory sacrifice for sin; that this victim, whom ruthless rage had seized upon, endured pangs which His enemies could not have caused, and received wounds in His soul which they could never have inflicted; that beside yonder cross which man could see, there was a bloody altar which man could not see; and besides the nails which cruel hands had driven through His flesh, the invisible sword of divine justice was also bathed in that bleeding heart. All this involves questions which no human intellect can answer. Did this sacrifice of Christ meet the demands of a broken law? And did it reach the depths of sin and misery into which I had sunk? But who can assure me of this except God Himself, for who but He could really know what His honour and glory required, or what would be sufficient to restore the creatures who had fallen from the state of innocence in which He had made them?

Thus the testimony about Christ, on which it is safe to rest, is not a human but a divine testimony. It is not what history records that faith is to believe, but what God the Father reveals about Jesus. It is not the witness of men that faith can rely upon here, but the witness of God, which is greater. Faith can listen to no voice but His who knows the Son, who knows the requirements of His own law, and who knows also the needs of His sinful children. Faith must hear what God the Lord will speak, or what He has already spoken. If *He* has said that Christ died for sinners, and that whosoever believes in Christ shall be saved, then faith is satisfied, for here is a true witness who cannot lie – a competent witness who cannot be deceived.

Then, Lord, let me hear Thy testimony about Thy Son. Thou hast said of *Him* that there is salvation through His blood; Thou hast also said of *Thyself* that Thou art ready to receive whosoever comes to Thee through Him. Let me then hear – and not only hear but also believe – this Thy testimony, to be persuaded of its truth as Thine, heartily to assent to it, and confidently to rest in it. Until I do so, I cannot, as Thou knowest, have saving faith.

2. When God's testimony concerning Christ is received, faith advances a step and its object is now **Christ Himself** – not merely what is testified or declared concerning Him but His own self, His very person. "Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto *Me*."

Why has the Father testified of His Son? Are His testimony and commendation meant to be as a barrier to keep the soul back from Him? Are they not rather designed to lead the soul directly and without delay to Him? For when we have heard the Father set forth the excellency of Christ, and our hearts are thus kindled with desire and cheered with hope, and every feeling within us moves us to cast ourselves at the feet of Him who died for sinners, will the Father say to us, See you do it not? No, the Father knows that the soul, in its new nature, cannot help wishing to see with its own eyes Him of whom such things have been testified. Accordingly the Father's testimony is purposely so expressed that, instead of repressing, it encourages this instinctive desire in the gracious soul: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; *hear ye Him*". "*Behold My servant, whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth.*" Look upon Him, sinner; listen to Him and judge now for yourself whether He is not such as you also may delight in – such as you also may be well pleased with as your Saviour.

The object of faith then is Christ Himself. The same divine Spirit, who has persuaded the sinner to receive the Father's testimony, also opens the eyes of his understanding – He imparts to him a new power of spiritual perception, so that faith with him is not now merely to hear of Christ, but actually to see Him. "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee." Therefore to answer the question with which we started, we should say, Faith is the going out of the whole soul to an actual Person, not merely assenting to verbal testimony. Belief is, of course, the basis of faith, but simple belief is not faith. The rain and the dewdrops, which have neither taste or odour, may be said to form the basis of those sweet juices which Eastern flowers distil under a hot sun. But as these juices, so rich in their flavour, and so fragrant in their aroma, differ from the tasteless raindrops, so does faith differ from mere belief.

Faith is *love* mingling with belief, at the sight of an object who is altogether lovely. Faith is *gratitude* mingling with belief, at the sight of an object who has done so much, even to the extent of laying down His life for sinners. Faith is *desire* mingling with belief, at the sight of an object who is so desirable in all respects. Faith is *trust* mingling with belief, at the sight of an object who has given such proofs of His trustworthiness. Faith is *wonder* mingling with belief, for the soul is lost in amazement to hear Christ say, Come unto Me, thou who didst pierce Me; come to this bosom which thou didst cause

to bleed, and I will shelter and caress thee there. Faith is *sorrow* mingling with belief when, through gushing tears, the witnesses of its contrition, the soul looks on Him whom it has pierced. Faith is *hope* mingling with belief, for if this Saviour, so beneficent and so trustworthy, is ours, then what may we not hope for? Faith is *satisfaction* mingling with belief, for having now found Christ Himself, the soul has found all its salvation and all its desire.

Scripture very clearly sets forth that it is not merely verbal testimony, but also Christ Himself, as an *actual Person*, who is the object of saving faith. Thus, for example, faith is represented as believing *in* Christ, but also as believing *on* Him. To believe *in* Christ is simply to believe that He exists; but to believe *on* Christ implies much more than a belief in His existence – it implies a personal trust and confidence in Himself; that we commit to Him all that we hold most precious, that we make Him our counsellor in every perplexity, our helper in every duty, our comforter in every sorrow. Again, to believe *in* Christ might imply no more than that we believe what is written about Him – as that He was born, crucified and buried. But to believe *on* Christ is to cleave to Himself, for it is not the birth, but the Child born that my soul embraces and my weary spirit can find rest in – not the crucifixion, but Jesus crucified; not the burial, but the Christ who was buried.

Again the Scriptures declare that “with *the heart* man believeth unto righteousness”. But if faith was simple belief, then I ought to say that it is with my reason, my understanding or my judgement that I believe. It is thus I believe in the truths of mathematics, the events of history and the facts of science. With regard to these, if you satisfy my understanding, I ask no more. A stoic, without any more heart than there is in a stone, may believe all the discoveries of mathematics and science and all that our historians have ever written. But Scripture says, “With *the heart* man believeth unto righteousness”. And it justly says so, when the object of faith is a personal Saviour – one who loves sinners, and is Himself loveable, one who gave Himself for them and is now as willing to give Himself to them, one who is even now ready to be their peacemaker with an offended God, and will enrich believing sinners with all blessings in time and throughout eternity. When this glorious and gracious being, this steadfast benefactor, this tried and faithful friend, is the object of the sinner’s faith, how else than with my heart am I to believe on Him? For here love has to respond to love; gratitude has to reciprocate generosity; and trustfulness to repose in trustworthiness.

Again, Scripture declares that faith unites us to Christ – that when we believe in Him, we are made one with Him: we in Him and He in us. But could this be the case if faith were mere belief, or if its object were so many doctrines or declarations, and not an individual person? For you never feel

your spirit united to abstract statements, even when you most firmly believe them to be true. You do not, for instance, feel that your soul circles with the planets, because you believe that they roll with ceaseless motion through the sky. And though you believe totally in the power of gravitation, which binds them together, you do not feel any living influence drawing your soul to their dead masses, as if you could have either union or communion with them. No, mere belief unites us to nothing, for we still believe that we are distinct from what we believe.

But faith *does* unite us to its object. Here there is unison, here also communion; indeed here there is entire oneness. And what shall I say of this oneness, so as to set forth how complete it is? Shall I say that the soul all but loses the consciousness of separate being – that its personal identity is, as it were, swallowed up in that of Christ? Were I to say this much, I would scarcely be saying more than Paul has said, “I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me”.

O mysterious oneness! What fitting emblem can anywhere be found to symbolise it? The union between the head and the members? Or between the vine and its branches? Or between a couple united in wedlock? No, none of these can fully set it forth. Such a oneness as cannot be found in nature must be called in to furnish the type of this union – even that mysterious oneness which unites the Triune Godhead itself. “As Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us.” And what cements a union as mysteriously close as this? If the Divine Son were not a person, could the Father thus be in Him? Would the heart of God so embrace a naked abstraction? And why does my heart by faith embrace, but because it finds a *person* whom it can embrace?

I have endeavoured to show that the object of faith is a *personal* Jesus. Let me now say further that its object is a *living* Jesus – not merely the Christ of history, so to speak, but Jesus, as He was when on earth and as He is now in heaven. It is Jesus, once dead but now alive; the same yesterday, today and for ever; the Christ of prophecy; the Christ of history; the Christ of heaven – not three but one. With what emphasis and reiteration Paul dwells on this important aspect of the object of saving faith! Out of many similar passages, take the following: “The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again” (2 Cor 5:14,15).

Now why does the apostle close up his argument here with the idea of a risen Saviour? Is it not because faith has to do, not with a dead, but with a living, Christ? Its real attitude is not that of a mourner at His tomb, but of a grate-

ful friend looking up to Him in His Father's house, to hold living communion with Him. If you would see the pertinence and the force of the Apostle's statement: "Jesus died and *rose again*", suppose that one of us had been rescued from drowning by some bold swimmer who used one arm to swim and the other to hold us, until at last, exhausted, he let go his grasp, bidding us make for the shore, which was now near and the water shallow. On reaching the shore, would our question not be: "Where is our deliverer?" If we were then told that a wave had carried him away, would we not pour out our heart in grateful sorrow?

Now Christ died for His people; He gave up His life that He might save theirs. Are they then to weep at His tomb? Or to embalm His memory in their unavailing tears? Or to tell what they would have done for Him had He not died? No, He *is* alive. He "died and rose again". They may therefore live to Him – tell Himself what they owe to Him. Instead of sorrow for the dead, they may yield service to the living. How dead a thing faith would be, if it had to lie in the cold embrace of a buried Christ. But united as it is to a risen Jesus, it is alive; for it lives with His life, in Him. And for Him it lives.

I have set forth two important points on the object of faith: first, that it is a *personal* Saviour; and second, that it is a *living* Saviour. There is also a third point not less important: that while everything pertaining to Christ – His earthly life, His names, His offices, His work – are presented to faith, yet it is not in any of these apart from Himself that faith trusts for salvation. Faith cannot repose in a biography, nor in a name, nor in an office, nor in a work, even when these are the biography, the name, the offices, the work of Christ – except when in and along with them it finds Himself.

The history of Christ, especially in His earthly life, is presented to us on the pages of the Gospels, in order that we may believe it. But the real object of faith is not that history but He whom that history presents to us. We believe in the nativity of the Child who was laid in the manger, and this so far is well, but it is not faith unless our trust is in the Child who thus was born. We believe in the crucifixion, and this so far is well, but it is not faith unless we are resting on Him who was crucified. We believe that Jesus wept and that He bled, and this so far is well, but it is not faith unless we are trusting in Jesus Himself – not in His tears but in Him who shed them, not even in His blood but in Him who bled.

Again the names of Christ are given in Scripture, and every one of them is significant: *Jesus*, the Saviour; *Christ*, the anointed; *Immanuel*, the God-man, yet a name is not the real object of faith. For when we are commanded to believe in the name of Jesus Christ, it is not the mere title – Jesus, or Christ, or Immanuel – that we are commanded to trust in for salvation. It is

in Him whom these names designate – *the Jesus, the Christ, the Immanuel*, the gracious and glorious being who is thus called.

Again, the offices of Christ are set forth in Scripture, but neither an office nor its emblems is the real object of faith. What would the prophetic office be without a living prophet? What would the priesthood be without a living priest? What would monarchy be without a living king? It is then not the offices of Christ – not His prophethood, nor His priesthood, nor his kingship, but Himself – the Prophet, the Priest, the King. Neither are the emblems of Christ's offices, any more than the offices themselves, the real object of faith. Not the Bible, which He holds in His hand as the prophet of God, but Himself, who is to open our hearts to receive and understand its truths. Not the blood of sacrifice which He holds in His hand as the priest of God, but Himself, who, as He shed that blood for sinners, must also sprinkle them with it; not the sceptre which He holds in His hand as God's anointed king, but Himself, for not the sceptre, but the hand which holds it, can protect or shield us.

The work of Christ is fully set forth in the Scriptures. And in the reality, the fulness, the fitness and the sufficiency of that work, we must believe if we are to be saved. Still it is not that work, as viewed apart from Him who undertook and finished it, that is the real object of faith. To trust in redemption, while not trusting in the Redeemer, is not saving faith. Redemption can never apply itself to my soul any more than a cup of medicine can raise itself to the lips of a sick man. The balm which is in Gilead could never heal my sin-diseased spirit unless there was also a physician to bind up its wounds.

Behold then the attitude of faith – it sits at Calvary gazing on the mysterious work which was finished there; but from the foot of the cross at Calvary, it looks up to heaven, where Jesus is seated at the right hand of God and thus it addresses Him: Thy work, O Lord, is glorious – Thou hast finished transgression and made an end of sin; Thou hast brought in an everlasting righteousness. But I look to Thee, to Thyself rather than Thy cross – I look to Thee to make that righteousness mine; I look to Thee to bestow upon me the blessings which are the purchase of Thy blood; I look to Thee, who didst accomplish redemption, to apply it to my soul, as Thou only canst. Yes, Lord, Thy work was finished, all of it that could *then* be done. And who is to do that part which remains to be done *now*, even to make me a sharer in it? Who is to do this but Thyself? And therefore I look to Thee to do it.

This is given as the glory of the grace that was to be administered under the gospel: that it should change the nature of the vilest men – that it should take away cruelty from the wolf and violence from the leopard, rage from the lion and poison from the asp, making them gentle and useful as the kid and the calf, the cow and the ox (Is 11:6-9).

John Owen

Calvin's Arrival at Geneva¹

J H Merle d'Aubigné

One evening in July 1536 a carriage from France arrived at Geneva. A man, still young, alighted from it. He was short, thin and pale; his beard was black and pointed and his frame somewhat worn by study, but in his lively and severe eyes and expressive features there were indications of a profound spirit and an indomitable character. His intention was to "pass through Geneva hastily, without stopping more than one night in the city". He was accompanied by a man and woman of about the same age. The three travellers belonged to the same family – two brothers and a sister. The foremost of them, long accustomed to keep himself in the background, desired to pass through Geneva unobserved. He inquired for an inn where he could spend the night; his voice was mild and his manner attractive.

Scarcely a carriage arrived from France without being surrounded by some of the Genevans, or at least by French refugees; for it might bring new fugitives, obliged to seek a country in which they were free to profess the doctrine of Christ. A young Frenchman, at that time the friend and disciple of the traveller, who had gone to the place where the carriage from France put up, in order to see if it brought anybody whom he knew, recognized the man with the intelligent face and conducted him to a hotel. The traveller was John Calvin, and his friend was Louis Du Tillet, ex-canon of Angoulême, Calvin's travelling companion during his Italian journey. From Strasbourg, whither he had gone to meet Calvin, he had returned to Geneva, no doubt because he thought that the war between Francis I and Charles V would compel his friend to make a detour and pass through Bresse and the Valley of the Lemman. This was actually what happened.

Calvin, who had come to Geneva without a plan and even against his will, having sat down with Du Tillet in his room at the hotel, their conversation naturally turned on Geneva, of which the Reformer knew but little. He learnt, either from his friend or from others subsequently, what he probably knew something about already: that Popery had been driven out of it shortly before then; that the zeal, struggles, trials and evangelical labours of William Farel were incessant, but that affairs were not yet "put in order in the city";

¹The last chapter, slightly edited, of *The History of the Reformation in the Time of Calvin*, vol 5. It has been reprinted to mark the five-hundredth anniversary this month of Calvin's birth. D'Aubigné (1794-1872) was a liberal student for the ministry in Geneva when he was very significantly influenced for good by the Scot Robert Haldane. D'Aubigné's two volumes on *The Reformation in England* have been reprinted by the Banner of Truth Trust and are available from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom. "His ability", say the publishers, "to popularise serious history – with true spiritual insight – remains unsurpassed."

that there were dangerous divisions; and that Farel was contending almost alone for the triumph of the gospel. Calvin had long respected Farel as the most zealous of evangelists, but it does not appear that they had ever met. Du Tillet could not keep to himself the news of his friend's arrival and, after leaving Calvin, he called on Farel.

Farel, who had read the *Christian Institutes*, had recognized in the author of that work the most eminent genius, the most scriptural theologian and the most eloquent writer of the age. The thought that this extraordinary man was in Geneva, and that he could see and hear him, moved and delighted Farel. He went with all haste to the inn and entered into conversation with the youthful theologian. Everything confirmed him in his former opinion. He had long been looking for a servant of God to help him, yet had never thought of Calvin. But now a flash of light shone into his soul; an inward voice said to him: This is the man of God you are seeking. "At the very moment when I was thinking least about it," he said, "the grace of God led me to him." From that moment there was no hesitation or delay. "Farel, who glowed with a marvellous zeal for promoting the gospel," says Calvin, "made every effort to retain me."

Would he succeed? Seldom has there been a man who, like Calvin, was placed in the influential position he was to occupy all his life, not only without his concurrence but even against his will. "Stay with me," said Farel, "and help me. There is work to be done in this city." Calvin replied with astonishment: "Excuse me, I cannot stop here more than one night". "Why do you seek elsewhere for what is now offered you?" replied Farel; "Why refuse to edify the Church of Geneva by your faith, zeal and knowledge?" The appeal was fruitless: to undertake so great a task seemed to Calvin impossible.

"But Farel, inspired by the spirit of a hero," says Theodore Beza, "would not be discouraged." He pointed out to the stranger that, as the Reformation had been miraculously established in Geneva, it ought not to be abandoned in a cowardly manner; that if he did not take the part offered to him in this task, the work might probably perish, and he would be the cause of the ruin of the Church. Calvin could not make up his mind; he did not want to bind himself to a particular church; he told his new friend that he preferred traveling in search of knowledge and making himself useful in the places where he chanced to halt. "Look first at the place in which you are now," answered Farel; "Popery has been driven out and traditions abolished, and now the doctrine of the Scriptures must be taught here." "I cannot teach," exclaimed Calvin; "on the contrary, I have need to learn. There are special labours for which I wish to reserve myself. This city cannot afford me the leisure that I require."

He explained his plan. He wanted to go to Strasbourg, to Bucer and Capito, and then, in communication with the other scholars of Germany, to increase his knowledge by continued study. "Study! Leisure! Knowledge!" said Farel. "What! Must we never practice? I am sinking under my task; please help me." The young doctor had still other reasons. His constitution was weak. "The frail state of my health needs rest," he said. "Rest!" exclaimed Farel, "death alone permits the soldiers of Christ to rest from their labours." Calvin certainly did not mean to do nothing. He would labour, but each man labours according to the gift he has received: he would defend the Reformation not by his deeds but by words.

The Reformer had not yet expressed his whole thought: it was not only the work they asked him to undertake that frightened him, it was also the locality in which he would have to carry it out. He did not feel strong enough to bear the combat he would have to engage in. He shrank from appearing before the assemblies of Geneva. The violence, the tumults, the indomitable temper of the Genevans were much talked of, and they intimidated and alarmed him. To this Farel replied that "the severer the disease, the stronger the measures to be employed to cure it". The Genevans storm, it is true; they burst out like a gust of wind in a gale; but was that a reason for leaving him, Farel, alone to meet these furious tempests? "I entreat you," said the intrepid evangelist, "to take your share. These matters are harder than death." The burden was too heavy for his shoulders; he wanted the help of a younger man.

But the young man of Noyon was surprised that he should be thought of. "I am timid and naturally lacking in courage," he said; "how can I withstand such roaring waves?" At this Farel could not restrain a feeling of anger and almost of contempt. "Ought the servants of Jesus Christ to be so delicate," he exclaimed, "as to be frightened at warfare?" This blow touched the young Reformer to the heart. He frightened! He prefer his own ease to the service of the Saviour! His conscience was troubled and his feelings were violently agitated. But his great humility still held him back; he had a deep feeling of his incapacity for the kind of work they wanted him to undertake. "I beg of you, in God's name," he exclaimed, "to have pity on me! Leave me to serve Him in another way than what you desire."

Farel, seeing that neither prayers nor exhortations could avail with Calvin, reminded him of a frightful example of disobedience similar to his own. "Jonah also," he said, "wanted to flee from the presence of the Lord, but the Lord cast him into the sea." The struggle in the young scholar's heart became keener. He was violently shaken, like an oak assailed by the tempest; he bent before the blast and rose up again, but a last gust, fiercer than all the others, was about to uproot him. The emotion of the elder of the two speakers had

gradually increased, in proportion as the young man's had also increased. Farel's heart was hot within him. At that supreme moment, feeling as if inspired by the Spirit of God, he raised his hand towards heaven and exclaimed: "You are thinking only of your tranquillity; you care for nothing but your studies. Be it so. In the name of Almighty God, I declare that, if you do not answer His summons, He will not bless your plans."

Then, perceiving that the critical moment had come, he added an "alarming adjuration" to his declaration; he even ventured on an imprecation. Fixing his eyes of fire on the young man, and placing his hands on the head of his victim, he exclaimed in his voice of thunder: "May God curse your repose! May God curse your studies, if in such a great necessity as ours you withdraw and refuse to give us help and support!"

At these words, the young scholar, whom Farel had for some time kept on the rack, trembled. He shook in every limb; he felt that Farel's words did not proceed from himself. God was there; the holiness of the presence of Jehovah laid strong hold of his mind; he saw Him who is invisible. It appeared to him, he said, "that the hand of God was stretched down from heaven, that it laid hold of him and fixed him irrevocably to the place he was so impatient to leave". He could not free himself from that terrible grasp. Like Lot's wife when she looked back on her tranquil home, he was rooted to his seat, powerless to move. At last he raised his head and peace returned to his soul; he had yielded; he had sacrificed the studies he loved so well; he had laid his Isaac on the altar; he consented to lose his life in order to save it. His conscience, now convinced, made him surmount every obstacle in order to obey. That heart, so faithful and sincere, gave itself, and gave itself for ever. Seeing that what was required of him was God's pleasure, says Farel, he did violence to himself, adding: "And he did more, and that more promptly, than any one else could have done".

The call of Calvin in Geneva is perhaps, after that of Paul, the most remarkable to be found in the history of the Church. Unlike that of the Apostle on the road to Damascus, it was not miraculous; and yet in the chamber of that inn, there was the flash of light and the roar as of thunder. The voice which the Lord made to sound in Calvin's heart terrified him, broke down his obstinacy and prostrated him as if a thunderbolt from heaven had struck him. His heart had been pierced; he had bowed his head with humility and, almost prostrate on the earth, he had felt that he could no longer fight against God and kick against the pricks. At the same time confidence in God filled his soul. He knew that He who made him feel those "stings" had a sovereign remedy calculated to heal all his wounds. Has not God said, "Commit thy way unto the Lord . . . and He shall bring it to pass?" The young man desired

no longer to run restive but, “like a docile steed, permit himself to be guided peaceably by the hand of his Master”.

From that hour the propagation and defence of truth became the sole passion of his life, and to them he consecrated all the powers of his heart. He had still, after this solemn hour, to undergo, as he says, “great anxiety, sorrow, tears and distress”. But his resolution was taken. He belonged to himself no longer but to God. “In everything and in every place he would guide himself entirely by his obedience.” He never forgot the fearful adjuration which Farel had employed. He had not set himself, he thought, in the place he occupied but had been put there by the arm of the Almighty. Hence, whenever he met with obstacles, he called to mind “the hand stretched down from heaven” and, knowing its sovereign power, he took courage.

The Reformer did not, however, stop in Geneva immediately. On leaving France, he had undertaken to accompany one of his relations, named Artois, to Basle. For some days the brethren of Geneva refused to let him go. At last, seeing that Calvin was decided, they confined themselves to extorting from him an engagement to return; after which he started for Basle with his relative. On the road he encountered fresh importunities: the Churches whom the author of the *Christian Institutes* saluted on his journey desired to detain him. At last he arrived at Basle and, having finished his business, returned to Geneva, probably in the latter half of the month of August.

But he had no sooner arrived than his delicate health was shaken; he suffered from a severe cold, and was ill for nine days. When Calvin recovered from his indisposition, he at once set to work. As he would have a crowd of hearers – men and women, old and young, Genevans and strangers – the cathedral of St Peter’s was assigned him. It was in that vast building, where the mass had been so often sung, that Calvin was about to inaugurate the reign of Holy Scripture. The doors of St Peter’s opened; the frail and humble but powerful preacher entered the Gothic portal; a numerous crowd made their way with him into the nave, whose majestic grandeur seemed to harmonise so well with the new teaching that was about to be heard in it; and soon his voice resounded under those time-honoured arches.

Calvin, coming after Luther and Farel, was called to complete the work of both. The mighty Luther, to whom will always belong the first place in the work of the Reformation, had uttered the words of faith with power; Calvin was to systematise them and show the imposing unity of the evangelical doctrine. The impetuous Farel, the most active missionary of the epoch, had detached men from Romish errors and had united many to Christ; Calvin was to unite these scattered members and constitute the assembly.

Possessed of an organising genius, he accomplished the task which God

had assigned him: he undertook to form a church placed under the direction of the Word of God and the discipline of the Holy Ghost. In his opinion, it ought not to be, as at Rome, the hierarchical institution of a legal religion; nor, as with the mystics, a vague ideal; nor, as with the rationalists, an intellectual and moral society without religious life. It is said of the Word, which was God, and which was made flesh: "In Him was life". Life must therefore be the essential characteristic of the people that it was to form. Spiritual powers must – so Calvin thought – act in the midst of the flock of Jesus Christ. It was not ideas only that the Lord communicated to His disciples, but a divine life. "In the kingdom of Christ," he said, "all that we need care for is the *new man*."

And this was not a mere theory: Calvin must see it put into action. Not content with the reformation of the faith, he will combat that decline of morality which has for so long filled courts, cities and monasteries with disorder. He will call for the conversion of the heart and for holiness of life; he will interdict luxury, drunkenness, blasphemy, impurity, masquerades and gambling, which the Roman Church had tolerated.

This strictness of discipline has brought down severe reproaches on the Reformer. We must confess that if Calvin did take a false step, it was here. He conceded to man, to the magistrate, too great a share in the correction of morals and doctrine: in the sixteenth century the intervention of the state in the discipline of the Church disturbed the truly-salutary action of the Word of God alone. Calvin cleansed with pure water the gold and silver of the tabernacle, but left on it one spot – the employment of the civil arm. We must not, however, accuse him more than justice permits. He had to suffer from this action of the temporal power much more than he employed it.

Since 1532 the Genevan government had set itself in the place of the bishop. It gave orders to preach the gospel without any admixture of human doctrines. A little later it organized the grand disputation, and presided over it as judge. Did it not even go so far as to remove from the people of Thiez the excommunication pronounced by the bishop? Elsewhere we have described how in the Swiss cantons, and especially at Zurich and Berne, the magistrates did the same. The intervention of temporal authority proceeded from the temporal power. The Council of Geneva had no intention of permitting a strange minister, a young man of Noyon, to deprive them of prerogatives to which they clung strongly. They claimed the right to regulate almost everything by their decrees – from the highest things, the profession of faith, the regulation of worship and the government of the church, down to women's dress. Calvin often protested against those pretensions, and on this point his whole life was one long struggle. Far from blaming the Reformer for certain regulations he was obliged to permit, we should praise him for the firmness with which

he maintained, more than any other teacher of the sixteenth century, the great principles of the distinction between what is temporal and what is spiritual.

But he contributed still more forcibly by his direct teaching to scatter the seeds of a true and wise liberty among the new generations. Doubtless the sources of modern civilization are manifold. Many men of different vocations and genius have laboured at this great work; but it is just to acknowledge the place that Calvin occupies among them. The purity and force of his morality were the most powerful means of liberating men and nations from the abuses which had been everywhere introduced, and from the despotic vexations under which they groaned. A nation weak in its morals is easily enslaved.

But he did more. How great the truths, how important the principles that Calvin has proclaimed! He fearlessly attacked the Papacy, by which all liberty is oppressed, and which during so many centuries had kept the human mind in bondage; he broke the chains which everywhere fettered the thoughts of man. He boldly asserted "that there is a very manifest distinction between the spiritual and the civil governments". He did more than this: the aim of his whole life was to restore the supremacy of conscience. He endeavoured to re-establish the kingdom of God in man, and succeeded in doing so, not only with men of genius, but with a great number of obscure people. These were the men who, resolving to obey God above all things, were able to resist the instruments of the Pope, the Valois, Philip II, the Duke of Alva and their imitators. While maintaining their liberty as regards faith, those noble disciples of the gospel – Knox, Marnix de Sainte-Aldegonde and a multitude of other Christian heroes – learnt to maintain it in earthly matters. Such was the principal gate by which the different liberties have entered the world.

Calvin did not confine himself to theories; he pronounced frankly against the despotism of kings and the despotism of the people. He declared that "if princes usurp any portion of God's authority, we must not obey them"; and that if the people indulge in acts of mad violence, we should rather perish than submit to them. "God has not armed you", he said, "that you may resist those who are set over you by Him as governors. You cannot expect He will protect you if you undertake what He disavows." Nevertheless Calvin taught men to love such eternal blessings, and said that it was better to die than to be deprived of them. "God's honour," he declared, "is more precious than your life." And from that hour we see those in the Netherlands and elsewhere, who had learnt at Geneva to maintain freedom of conscience, acquiring such a love for liberty that they claimed it also for the state, sought it for themselves and endeavoured to give it to others. Religious liberty has been, and is still, the mother of every kind of liberty; but in our days we witness a strange sight. Many of those who owe their emancipation in great part to Calvin,

have lost all recollection of it, and some of them insult the noble champion who made them free.

Still, the establishment of temporal liberty was not the Reformer's object; it flows only from his principles as water from a spring. To proclaim the salvation of God, to establish the right of God – these are the things to which he devoted his life, and he pursued that work with unalterable firmness. He knows the resistance with which men will oppose him, but that shall not check his march. He will batter down ramparts, bridge over chasms and unflinchingly trample under foot the barriers which he knows are opposed to the glory of God and the welfare of man. Calvin has a correct, penetrating and sure eye, and his glance takes in a wide horizon.

He resists not only the chief enemy, Popery, but courageously opposes those who seem to be on his side and pretend to support him; there is no acceptance of persons with him. He discerns manifold and grave errors hidden under the cloak of reform – errors which would destroy from its foundation the edifice which those teachers pretend to help build. Whilst many allow themselves to be surprised, he notices the small cloud rising from the sea; he sees the skies are about to be darkened and filled with storms, thunder and rain. At the sight of these tempests he neither bends nor hides his head; on the contrary, he raises it boldly. “We are called”, he says, “to difficult battles; but far from being astonished and growing timid, we take courage, and commit our own body to the deadly struggle.”

That man had occasioned astonishment at first by his youthful air and the weakness of his constitution, but he had no sooner spoken than he rose in the eyes of all who heard him. He grew taller and taller, he towered above their heads. Every man presaged in him one of those mighty intelligences which carry nations with them, gain battles, found empires, discover worlds, reform religion and transform society.

Calvin teaches in Geneva; he writes to those far beyond its walls. And ere long we see something new forming in the world. A great work had been commenced by the heroic Luther, who had a successor worthy to complete it. Calvin gives to the Reformation what the Pope affirms it does not possess. There is a noise and a shaking, and the dry bones meet together. The breath comes from the four winds, the dead live and stand upon their feet, an exceeding great army. The Church of Christ has reappeared upon earth. From the bosom of that little city goes forth the word of life. France, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Germany, England, Scotland and other countries hear it. A century later, that same word, borne by pious refugees or faithful missionaries, shall become the glory and strength of the New World. Later still, it shall visit the most distant isles and continents; it shall fill the earth with the knowledge

of the Lord, and shall gather together more and more the dispersed families of the world round the cross of Christ in a holy and living unity.

On 5 September 1536, the Council of Geneva ordered these words to be written in their public registers: “Master William Farel explains that the lecture which that Frenchman had begun at St Peter’s was necessary; wherefore he prayed that they would consider about retaining him and providing for his support. Upon which it was resolved to provide for his maintenance.”

On 15 February 1537, they gave six crowns of the sun, and afterwards a cloth coat, to “that Frenchman” recently arrived, whose name it would seem they did not know. Such are the modest notices of the young man in the public records of the city which received him. In a few years that name was sounded all over the world; and in our time a celebrated historian – impartial in the question, as he does not belong to the churches of the Reformation – has said: “In order that French Protestantism [we might say Protestantism in general] should have a character and doctrine, it needed a city to serve as a centre, and a chief to become its organizer. That city was Geneva, and that chief was Calvin.”

Law and Gospel (4)¹

Rev J R Tallach

Application. *First*, the lives of believers are to demonstrate good works. Each sinner saved by grace has been “created in Christ Jesus unto good works” (Eph 2:10). Since this is the purpose of the new creation they profess, believers ought to be active in good works.

What is a good work? It must have the following three elements: (1) It is a work prescribed by the Word of God. “He that keepeth the commandment keepeth his own soul” (Prov 19:16). Everything apart from the Word is merely an expression of our ignorance and self-righteousness, and this brings us back to the moral law. (2) It must be done by faith in Christ. In the wilderness, every day began with the sacrifice of the morning lamb. This sacrifice was set before God’s people as a type of Christ. If properly observed, the sacrifice was offered with faith in Christ. That morning exercise of faith sanctified the journey of the day, the journey which took them away from Egypt and towards Canaan. The application of this is plain: no truly good work is done – nothing that draws us nearer to things unseen and eternal – apart from saving faith in exercise in the heart. “Without faith it is impossible to please

¹The previous section of this paper appeared last month. It discussed “Law, Gospel and the Believer”. This article concludes a paper presented at the 2007 Theological Conference.

God” (Heb 11:6). (3) It must be done to the glory of God. “This people have I formed for Myself; they shall show forth My praise” (Is 43:21). But those who do good works to be seen of men will have their reward in this world only (Matt 6:2).

Good works are appropriate to believers; they serve a good God. The preface to the moral law states: “I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage”. The law was prefaced by a reminder of God’s goodness in delivering them from slavery so that they might do what is good. Good works ought to characterise those who are the people of a good God. They were once incapable of anything good, but now that God has brought them out of the house of bondage, let them demonstrate that freedom. “If the Son . . . shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (John 8:36). Theirs is a covenant relationship because God has made it so: “I am the Lord thy God”. Let their service be the service of covenant children.

Good works as described above marked Israel out among other nations as God’s nation, and they are still a source of assurance that believers are His people in this world. “Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments” (1 Jn 2:3).

By good works believers adorn the gospel; they “put to silence the ignorance of foolish men” (1 Pet 2:15). They manifest the glory of Christ in the world, “being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God” (Ph 1:11).

Second, the law is to be used by every believer to rebuke sinners and admonish them in the hope of reclaiming them from their ungodly and evil ways.

An unpublished manuscript by William Grimshaw named, “The admonition of the sinner”, was the subject of a Westminster Conference paper by Paul Cook in 1995.² Grimshaw warns that, “when we reprove anything reprobable in another, we must take special heed that, in so doing, we are not selfish rather than truly Christian-hearted”. The motivation is of primary importance. The necessity of heart knowledge must be insisted on: “We must urge upon them the experience and evidence of these truths in their hearts”, and encourage them to use every means of grace in the expectation that “God will be found of them”. They must be convinced that we sincerely pity them and long to do them good. We must not generalise: “We are all sinners”, but rather rebuke the ungodly for their cold hearts towards God and for their cursing, swearing, drinking and immorality.

“Let us urge them”, he says, “to consider what a bubble this world is: its pleasures fading, its honours transient and its profits vain. Heaven and hell

²“William Grimshaw and the Admonition of a Sinner” in *Adorning the Doctrine*, p 58ff.

are at hand, and God is just and jealous, His threatenings real. The judgement day is terrible; death is approaching and life is uncertain. Therefore we must strenuously remind them how deep they are in sin, how hardened in bad habits, how far from God, how soon they must die.” One might be afraid here that Grimshaw would be in danger of being tactless and insensitive in his application of the law, but he adds, “We must discharge this duty with prudence and discretion”.

Cook quotes Richard Greenham to the same effect. “Though good duties are to be done, yet every man is not fit to do every good duty; therefore let us see who is fit to execute this work of reprehension. The eye is a tender part; every finger must not go raking in it: for of an action without skill cometh an end without fruit. This duty doth not consist in readiness of utterance nor in bitterness of tongue and stinging words, but in good, sound judgement, which maketh a man fit.” Lastly Grimshaw urges that our lives should speak the same standards that we press on others. “A godly life”, he comments, “is a continual monitor to the wicked; it disquiets their conscience and constantly solicits them to change their course.”

Third, though the subject of law and gospel has difficulties of a doctrinal, exegetical and practical nature, we are assured in the Word that the Lord has His eye on those that fear Him and that He regards with complacency a sincere desire to be conformed to that holy law. “We are of those that desire to fear Thy name,” said Nehemiah (1:11), and his prayer was heard. Law and gospel are like parallel lines, but parallel lines may be said to converge at infinity. And the parallel lines of law and gospel will not meet short of the better country. There God’s servants will serve Him without sin and without intermission. They will sing the song of Moses and the Lamb – law and gospel in perfect harmony. To put the matter another way: the sincere desire for heart-conformity to God’s holy law corresponds to that expectation of the Lord’s poor which shall never perish (Ps 9:18).

Scottish General Assemblies

The Church of Scotland

Rev N M Ross

Many commissioners to the General Assembly, both ministers and elders, returned to their homes with heavy hearts because of decisions which they rightly viewed as bringing shame on the Church of Scotland.

The decision which left many of them aghast and generated most publicity was the approval by the General Assembly of the decision of the Aberdeen

Presbytery to induct Rev Scott Rennie, Brechin, as minister of Queen's Cross Church in Aberdeen city. The Assembly refused, by 326 votes to 267, to find in favour of those members of the Aberdeen Presbytery who, because Mr Rennie is a practising homosexual who lives with his male homosexual partner, complained against the Presbytery's decision to induct. The Assembly's judgement included the strangely-inconsistent statement: "This decision does not alter the Church's standards of ministerial conduct"!

Such a deplorable decision might not have been made if the Assembly had dealt first with the overture of the Lochcarron and Skye Presbytery, which requested the Assembly to enact that "the Church shall not accept for training, ordain, admit, re-admit, induct or introduce to any ministry of the Church anyone involved in a sexual relationship outside of faithful marriage between a man and a woman". The preamble to their overture stated that this should be done because "the Church's historic understanding of the Biblical teaching on homosexual practice has been questioned in recent years;" and "it is undesirable that the courts of the Church should be asked to judge on individual cases in advance of any such resolution".

However, the order of business of the Assembly was so arranged as to have the case about the induction of the homosexual minister heard before the Lochcarron and Skye Presbytery overture. Indeed, the hearing of their overture was deferred until after the Assembly had appointed a Special Commission to prepare a study on admission to the ministry in the light of "same-sex relationships", and prohibited, until May 2011, ordinations or inductions in similar circumstances, and banned the issuing of public comments "in relation to contentious matters of human sexuality".

When the Assembly finally came to deal with the overture, the Moderator made the absurd ruling that the Presbytery could not mention homosexuality in presenting the overture. The Presbytery was thus deftly steered into withdrawing its overture. There appears to be some truth in the comment in a report in *The Times* that many evangelicals leaders "felt that the proceedings had been rigged by their highly-organised liberal opponents".

Certainly it was the determined purpose of the leaders of the Church to prevent another ecclesiastical disruption – a laudable purpose but not when it is at the cost of Scripture principle. In moving the appointment of the Special Commission and the prohibition of public comments, Rev John McPake said that he did so "for the sake of the peace and unity of the Church". In seconding the motion, the retiring Convener of the Mission and Discipleship Council, Rev Angus Morrison, agreed, saying, "The notion that these tensions within a church can best be solved by going separate ways is deeply flawed".

The Fellowship of Confessing Churches, which organised the online pet-

ition of 12 555 signatures in support of the Lochcarron and Skye Presbytery overture, said through two of its leaders, Rev David Court and Rev William Philip, that the decision “has brought great shame on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and His Church by publicly proclaiming as holy what God, the Bible and orthodox Christianity all down the ages, and all over the world, unambiguously call sin”.

Another minister, Rev Richard Buckley, speaking for Forward Together, another evangelical grouping in the Church, said, “As far as we are concerned, the Church has sent out the wrong message about Christian morality. God has revealed the truth . . . the Word of God stands for ever.” Yet another minister, Rev Robert Anderson, wrote to the press: “It is disingenuous and mendacious to any sensible person that the Church can agree to the appointment of a homosexual minister and then decide not to appoint any more for two years until a commission brings a report on whether the Church should have homosexual ministers. . . . If correct Church of Scotland procedure had been important, the issue of the ‘ministerial code of practice’ would have been central to any discussion that did take place. It was not. The acting Principal Clerk strategically kept it at a distance.”

One comment afterwards by Rev Scott Rennie is truly appalling: “I hope the General Assembly’s decision will strengthen many people who are gay and lesbian in the church. Everybody knows there are other Kirk leaders and elders in this position.” His knowledge of those who practice this abomination, and his former membership of the Church’s Working Group on Human Sexuality, no doubt make it a credible comment.

Another indicator of this moral decline were some remarks by Rev Peter MacDonald, speaking in support of the ambivalent report, *Sex, the Single and the Church*. From what he said it was clear that when he was single and training for the ministry he committed fornication several times. He was evidently glorying in his shame, as appears from what Rev William Philip reported: “During the debate, one Evangelical minister asked the question how, with such an equivocal position on chastity taken in the report, we were to encourage purity until marriage among younger people? A mocking response was given by a minister [Rev Peter MacDonald] proudly announcing to the Assembly his own pre-marital sexual exploits, and making feigned ‘repentance’ for such ‘sins’ to the sound of loud applause and roars of laughter.” However, many others were deeply grieved.

The most serious matter, however, is that a majority of commissioners this year have abandoned the Word of God as the rule of faith and practice, or have refused to defend it as such by abstaining from voting. As one newspaper columnist commented perceptively: “The real battleground is the Bible”. Some

liberals in the Church accuse those who condemn sodomy of misinterpreting Scripture or of being selective in quoting texts. One minister in support of Rev Scott Rennie said, “We uphold the historic orthodox teaching on Scripture as the infallible Word of God. In the question of homosexuality, it is not that the Bible is wrong, it is our interpretation that has been wrong.”

Rev Steven Reid of the Forward Together group said of the Aberdeen decision, “I think it is bad for the Church because it can never be good for it to depart from something that is so plainly and extensively stated within Holy Scripture. There are people on both sides of the debate who have said that this is an argument about the adoption of Scripture and the seriousness with which you take the teaching of the Bible. . . . But the standards are not ours, they are given to us by Jesus and the Scriptures.”

In a report by the Working Group on Human Sexuality, there appears to be an impasse about how to interpret Scripture in understanding ethical questions. But a close perusal reveals that while lip service is paid to the “traditional interpretations” of Scripture, a high, if not preferential place is given to “revisionist interpretation”. The report says, “Revisionists similarly [to traditionalists] emphasise Scripture as foundational to their understanding of God and humanity, but are less prone to see narratives as normative . . . A high regard for reason is brought to bear in theological endeavours, and where reason appears to disagree with the plain text of Scripture, it is often accepted that Scripture needs to be re-interpreted or even laid to one side as belonging to the culture when it was written and not of the essence of God’s word to us now. Finally, experience is considered as of particular importance in teasing out ethical questions.” It is truly the height of pride to elevate human reason and experience above divine revelation.

No doubt the authors of the report would argue that they were even-handed in presenting “traditionalist” and “revisionist” methods of interpreting Scripture. That a majority of Assembly commissioners have embraced revisionism is indicated by two decisions: to support the induction of a homosexual minister and to avoid hearing an overture calling for the affirmation of the Scriptural prohibition of sexual immorality in a minister. Those who use Scripture to support the gross perversion of sodomy do indeed “wrest” – that is, pervert – the Scriptures. They claim that the Bible is their yardstick, but they are really echoing the devil’s question, “Yea, hath God said?”

The unregenerate sinner would be pleased to have pardon without renovation; but this is a foolish wish. “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” “Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” There must be a remedy for inherent depravity as well as for guilt, and that remedy is provided in “the sanctification of the Spirit”, through the truth.

Archibald Alexander

The Free Church of Scotland

Rev D W B Somerset

The main items of interest at the Free Church General Assembly were the discussions on the continuing of formal talks with the Church of Scotland, and on the internal disagreement over exclusive psalmody and musical instruments.

The decision on the first of these was to continue the formal talks with the Church of Scotland. An unsuccessful counter motion – to suspend the talks but to encourage co-operation at the local level – was moved by Rev I D Campbell (Back) and seconded by Rev Marcos Florit (Lochcarron). The decision was reached prior to the Church of Scotland debate on homosexuality; perhaps with hindsight it might have been different.

It is a source of astonishment to the present writer that the Free Church should think of entangling itself in any way with the Church of Scotland. Doubtless there are godly people in the Church of Scotland, but in the church courts they are swamped by unbelievers and enemies of Christ. Anyone who doubts this should look at the answers which the Aberdeen Church of Scotland Presbytery gave to the appeal in the Queen's Cross case (available on the internet). For instance, the Presbytery says that "the 'Word of God' is not synonymous with the Scriptures, but it can, in part, be discerned from the Scriptures through prayer and through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit". Any believer knows at once that the people who wrote this (1) have never prayed themselves, (2) are pretending to speak with authority on a subject about which they know very little, (3) are using words without meaning when they talk about "discerning" the Word of God "through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit". What benefit would the Aberdeen Free Church get from links with such people? "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph 5:11).

The decision on the second item was that the Board of Trustees should present a recommendation on whether to change the present practice on exclusive psalmody and musical instruments to the 2010 Assembly, and that there should be a full debate at that Assembly. Rev I D Campbell queried whether even this decision was not a violation of their ordination vows. When it is recalled that each minister present had pledged himself "to avoid the use in public worship of uninspired materials of praise, as also of instrumental music", declaring his belief that this prohibition was "founded on the Word of God", it will be seen that Dr Campbell had a good point.

There is not a way nor an instrument in the Scriptures of God whereby we can apply Christ to our souls but only the instrument of faith.

Robert Bruce

Book Review

Lectures to My Students, by C H Spurgeon, published by the Banner of Truth Trust, hardback, 928 pages, £19.00, obtainable from the F P Bookroom.

The three series of lectures by the famous Baptist preacher, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, bound together in *Lectures to My Students*, are doubtless familiar to many in this country and overseas. They were originally published between 1875 and 1894, and therefore were particularly relevant to that time, yet they represent Spurgeon's mature thoughts on important aspects of the work of the ministry and preaching. The lectures were delivered on Friday afternoons to students in the Pastor's College, which served Baptist churches in England from 1856. By Spurgeon's admission and express design they are "colloquial, familiar, full of anecdote, and often humorous". The passage of time has not eroded any of these features and their republication by the Banner of Truth highlights the contemporary relevance of Spurgeon's approach to gospel preaching.

Perhaps the most obvious feature of the lectures, apart from the style referred to and recognised as Spurgeon's very own, is their great emphasis on the importance of both a natural and practical presentation of the truth. Again and again this theme is addressed and enforced. Spurgeon, more than any other writer on this subject, shows his abhorrence of mechanical mannerisms and an artificial preaching style. While a balance is clearly needed, this emphasis was undoubtedly an overdue corrective to the clericalism and formalism of many in Spurgeon's day. We perhaps live in times when the pendulum has swung too far towards irreverence and banality in the pulpit.

The first series, which is possibly the most useful and wide-ranging, deals with the subjects of the call to, and the dignity of, the ministry, the choice of texts, the use of the voice and the minister's ordinary conversation. Spurgeon famously opposed the practice of preaching series of sermons on the same text, chapter or book. He was noted for his soundly-biblical expositions and his penetrating application of the truth. The abundance of sensible and often highly-amusing instruction lends itself to a thorough reading of this series. Students for the ministry in the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland are examined on this first series by their presbyteries before entering the ministry.

While the first series of lectures is better known than the other two, the first lecture of the second series is arguably the most weighty and significant. Entitled, "The Holy Spirit in Connection with Our Ministry", it contains a biblical overview of the dependence of the ministry on the Holy Spirit and highlights the solemn results of the influences of the Spirit being withdrawn from preachers. While we cannot agree with some of Spurgeon's statements

(on pages 239-40) on the subject of Independent Church government, we commend this chapter heartily to readers.

Some of the lectures in the second and the third series, for example those on open-air preaching, preaching posture, and also his references to works useful for illustration, are now dated. Yet the general importance of these subjects will not be lost on present-day preachers reading Spurgeon's comments, even although they were addressed to his students in Victorian London. Spurgeon is justly famous for his own use of illustration in preaching and most of what he says on this important subject is highly relevant and practical. He advocates the use of illustrations from every possible source, including history, fable, science and the natural world. He encourages what other writers have called the "sermonising habit" and lays out guidance for the discerning and discreet use of illustrative sources.

Importantly for one with a natural wit, Spurgeon warns against humour in preaching. "Those of us who are endowed with the dangerous gift of humour have need, sometimes, to stop and take the word out of our mouth and look at it, and see whether it is quite to edification." In our day, when the pulpit is much abused with frivolous remarks in the name of illustration and relevance, Spurgeon's restraint is exemplary. "We need the Spirit of God," he says, "to put bit and bridle upon us to keep us from saying anything that would take the minds of our hearers away from Christ and eternal realities" (pp 230-231). The solemnity of the office and function of the gospel preacher cannot escape the attention of those who read Spurgeon with care.

This new edition of Spurgeon's lectures includes his *Commenting and Commentaries*, which was originally published for the benefit of his students in 1876. Many of the works referred to are now no longer in print, but Spurgeon's comments on the use of commentaries in general are insightful and relevant. To those who shun their use, he is scathing: "It seems odd that certain men, who talk so much of what the Holy Spirit reveals to themselves, should think so little of what he has revealed to others" (p 659). Spurgeon gives first place to Matthew Henry, John Calvin, Matthew Poole, John Trapp and John Gill, in that order. It is instructive to notice that these perhaps remain the most widely-used Bible commentaries.

A preacher must use commentaries with much discretion. Clearly plagiarism is dishonest, betrays laziness and will prove very ineffective. Yet preaching which expounds the Word of God, such as Spurgeon so persistently commended, requires close study of the Scriptures. Spurgeon lived when popular preaching could be topical, hortatory, experiential or doctrinal without being particularly expository. He stressed the imperative of searching for the mind of the Spirit in Scripture and recommended the accumulated wisdom of older divines as aids to this study.

This volume, if not already acquired, should be found in every preacher's study and will be useful and interesting to others who may have a concern for the effectiveness of the gospel ministry today. *(Rev)D Campbell*

Protestant View

The Shame of Church and State in Eire

A Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse (CICA), charged with investigating complaints regarding physical, emotional and sexual abuse in residential schools and orphanages in the Irish State between 1936 and the present time, but mostly between 1936 and the 1970s, was established in 2000. It was in the 1990s that the abuse perpetrated in these institutions became a matter of more general public knowledge. Many of the Industrial and Reformatory schools were under the supervision of Roman Catholic Orders, most prominently the Christian Brothers and the Sisters of Mercy.

The Commission's 2500 page Report was published as recently as May 2009 by Mr Justice Sean Ryan, the delay largely contributed to by the lengthy but successful legal battle of the Christian Brothers to ensure that the names of the perpetrators of physical, mental and moral abuse should not be revealed in the Report. (In 2002 the Roman Catholic Church agreed with the Irish State to make at least the equivalent of £113 million available for victims of abuse in return for immunity from lawsuits.) The Commission investigated all institutions concerning which there were more than 20 complaints. Due to a move away from institution-based care many of these places were closed by the 1990s but the Commission's Confidential Committee heard evidence from 1090 surviving men and women who claimed to be victims of abuse. Such documentation as was available was examined and religious orders and legal representatives were consulted.

According to the official summary of this Report (which we read when invited to comment on this matter) many of these children, particularly boys, lived in a harsh climate of oppression and fear. They suffered not only from neglect and "a lack of attachment and affection" but from dread of disproportionate, undeserved or severe physical punishment and especially of repeated abuse. While the actual abuse could in some cases be attributed to a few individuals within these institutions, the Commission found that, in addition to practising a severe regime, the authorities within the religious orders and institutions did not deal properly with complaints and generally, "to avoid scandal and publicity, protected the perpetrators of abuse".

Violent and abusive "Christian Brothers" were moved between institutions

rather than dismissed and were protected by diocesan and school authorities. Complaints made by children or their relatives to school authorities, the Department of Education, Health Boards, parish priests and others were generally ignored, the children often punished and relatives persuaded to be silent or withdraw complaints. Inspections by the Department of Education were too few and limited in scope. There was tacit acknowledgment by the state of the “ascendancy” of the religious orders and “their ownership of the system” which resulted in it defending the religious orders and the schools when complaints were made. The fact that such abuse was a criminal offence was ignored. “There was no attempt to address the underlying systemic nature of the problem.” It was made very difficult for members of staff who wished to provide care and affection to children. One commentator concludes that the CICA Report reveals “an entire system that was rotten at the core” rather than merely the existence of bad individuals.

Cardinal Sean Brady and Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, together with other Irish clerics, have made public apologies and spoken of their distress. The Cardinal and Archbishop have discussed the matter with Pope Benedict, who as Cardinal Ratzinger in 2001 endorsed the Vatican view that such matters “be pursued in a most secretive way”, the main consideration then and now being defending the reputation of the Roman Catholic Church. The religious orders still justify the policy of protecting the identities of the abusers whose crimes they profess to detest, even though they may concede that the compensation offered may be increased and more help given to surviving victims. The new Archbishop of Westminster, Vincent Nichols, whose recent installation was attended by official representatives of the Prince of Wales and the Prime Minister, praised the courage of those priests who acknowledged that abuse had taken place.

Scandals in Roman Catholic institutions are not new in Ireland, nor confined to Ireland, as reports from around the world during the past decade demonstrate. Undoubtedly and sadly there have been scandalous cases within Protestant churches and there have been serious failures to deal with some of them in a biblical way. But the religion of the Bible, believed and practised, inevitably promotes holiness and chastity and love and creates an environment in which the works of the flesh are aberrations to be abhorred. We recognise that many Roman Catholics, and many who have no religion, detest the deeds uncovered in the CICA Report. But the religion of Rome inevitably provides fertile ground for the growth of all the evil fruits of our corrupt nature in those whose new birth is nothing more than their baptism and whose faith is nothing other than resting on the rites of the Church for salvation. Particularly, as Loraine Boettner points out in *Roman Catholicism*, forced celibacy and

auricular confession are by their very nature conducive to such perversions as the CICA Report documents. Boettner draws attention to Bernard of Clairvaux's twelfth-century protest against forcing celibacy on the Church's ministers: "Deprive the Church of honourable marriage, and you fill her with concubinage, incest, and all manner of nameless vice and uncleanness".

No doubt, some in their outward lives are worse and some are better than the creeds they profess, but throughout the centuries and around the world, judged by the fact that "ye shall know them by their fruits" (see Matt 7:15ff), Romanism as a system has thrown light upon what Paul meant by "the mystery of iniquity" (2 Thess 2:7). *HMC*

Notes and Comments

French Airbus

A French Airbus was lost over the Atlantic at the end of May. At the time of writing, bodies from the missing aircraft are starting to be recovered. The flight took off from Rio de Janeiro at 7 pm (local time) on Sabbath, May 31, and crashed about four hours later. Fatal accidents happen on every day of the week, but it is particularly solemn when they happen on the Sabbath, and to people engaged in Sabbath-breaking. Running aeroplanes for profit on the Sabbath, and travelling on such aeroplanes, is not remembering "the Sabbath day to keep it holy" (Ex 20:8). *DWBS*

True and False Love to Sinners

Watching part of an interview with the homosexual Church of Scotland minister at the centre of the recent controversy, it was observable how little conscience he showed for his sin. He may perhaps have more than appears, but the impression was of a man unaware of the evil of what he was doing.

If the Word of God is true when it says that "neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, no effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind . . . shall inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor 6:9-10), then the greatest need of those ensnared in such sins is repentance; and anything that tends to confirm and harden them in their sins is a grievous sin against them. How great then is the guilt of those in the Church of Scotland who have been defending homosexual conduct! They boast of their love, but the Day of Judgement will show the harm that they have done to the souls of those they claimed to be befriending. The best friend that a sinner has is the true Christian who lovingly warns him of his danger. "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him" (Lev 19:17). *DWBS*

Women Ministers and Homosexual Ministers

The Church of Scotland has been ordaining women ministers since 1969. The practice is manifestly unscriptural and is therefore sinful: "I suffer not a woman to teach nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence" (1 Tim 2:12). One of the points brought out by recent events in the Church of Scotland is the close connection between the ordination of women and the ordination of homosexuals. Those who favour the ordination of homosexuals are arguing that the Church of Scotland already ordains women, and therefore does not regard herself as bound by Scripture, and they are asking, On what ground can the Church of Scotland refuse ordination to homosexuals? It cannot be on the ground of Scripture, because that has already been set aside. There does not seem to be any answer to their question. The ordination of women has opened the door for every kind of evil in the Church of Scotland.

DWBS

Church Information

Deposition of Northern Presbytery Minister

At its meeting on 31 March 2009, the Northern Presbytery, having found Rev A J Macdonald guilty of having resorted to the civil magistrate to be reinstated to the functions of the ministry, deposed him from the office of the ministry of the gospel.

(Rev) G G Hutton, Presbytery Clerk

Acknowledgement of Donations

The General Treasurer acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:

College & Library Fund: Friend, Newcastle, Ps 66:20, £80; E Robertson, £457.

Eastern Europe Fund: Anon, NI, for Ukraine, £40.

Jewish & Foreign Missions Fund: N Pearce, Cymru, Rev 7:12, for maize for Kenya brethren, £125; Anon, NI, for Israel Mission, £40; Anon, NI, for Zimbabwe Mission, £40.

Welfare of Youth Fund: M Scott, Cymru, where most needed in children's work, £100.

Congregational Treasurers acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:

Lochbroom: *Congregational Funds:* Friend, Elgin, £15 per MC.

North Uist: *Congregational Funds:* Estate of the late Miss Harriet MacIsaac, £5000. *Jewish & Foreign Missions Fund:* Estate of the late Miss Harriet MacIsaac, £1000.

Santa Fe: *Church & Manse Building Fund:* KM, for manse furnishing, £300.

South Harris: *College & Library Fund:* Anon, £100. *Congregational Funds:* Friend, North Uist, £40 per Rev KDM.

Staffin: *Congregational Funds:* Estate of the late Mr J Cumming, £2897.97; Anon, where most needed, £40. *Door Collection:* CM, Staffin House, £40. *Sustentation Fund:* CM, Staffin House, £40.

Stornoway: *Congregational Funds:* CMD, £20, £25. *Jewish & Foreign Missions Fund:* Anon, for Kenya Mission Poor Fund, £20; CMD, for Zimbabwe Mission, £32, £45.

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 W A Weale; tel:01470 562243.

Breasclete: 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 Achary 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.

Kinlochervie: Sabbath 11.30 am; Tuesday 7.30 pm. Manse tel: 01971 521268. **Scourie:** Sabbath 6 pm.

Kyle of Lochalsh: Sabbath 6 pm. Manse tel: 01599 534933. Contact Rev D A Ross; tel: 01445 731340.

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

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

Lochinver: Sabbath 12 noon. Manse tel: 01571 844484.

Ness: Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Rev A W MacColl MA PhD, F P Manse, Swainbost, HS2 0TA; tel: 01851 810228.

North Tolsta: Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Thursday 7 pm; 1st Monday of month 7 pm. 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. Manse tel: 01478 660216.

Shieldaig: Sabbath 11 am; **Applecross:** Sabbath 6pm. Tuesday 7 pm (alternately in Shieldaig and Applecross). Shieldaig manse tel: 01520 755259, Applecross manse tel: 01520 744207. Contact Rev D A Ross; tel: 01445 731340.

Staffin: Sabbath 12 noon, 5 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Rev W A Weale, F P Manse, Staffin, IV51 9UX; tel: 01470 562243.

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

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

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

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; Thursday 7 pm. 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

Jaffa: Rev J L Goldby, P O Box 27082, Jaffa, Tel Aviv. Tel: 00972 36597871. For services 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: dmlév@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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