

# The Free Presbyterian Magazine

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

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*“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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**January: First Sabbath:** Nkayi; **Fifth:** 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, Ingwenya, North Tolsta.

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

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

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

**July: First Sabbath:** Beauty, Raasay; **Second:** Bonar, Staffin; **Fourth:** Struan; Cameron.

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

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

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

**November: First Sabbath:** Applecross; **Second:** Glasgow; **Third:** Wellington; **Fourth:** Aberdeen; **Fifth:** Chiedza.

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

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## “A Dreadful Evil”

Sin is everywhere around us in a fallen world. We come in contact with it constantly; the media bring some particularly-awful examples of it to our attention again and again. And no matter where we look, in any part of the earth, we will find sin and its terrible consequences staring us in the face. Yes, as W S Plumer succinctly expressed the matter, “sin is a dreadful evil”.<sup>1</sup>

He made this remark, not merely on the basis of a lifetime of observing his fellow creatures; it is the infallible testimony of Scripture. Accordingly he added that sin “is everywhere so represented [as a dreadful evil] in God’s Word. It is defiling to the soul and dishonouring to God. Its heinousness arises from the fact that it is against infinite majesty and purity and authority and benevolence. No man has ever thought sin to be a greater evil than it actually is.” To put the concept of sin in the simplest of language: it is to do wrong *against God* – the One who made us, who therefore has complete authority over us. Plumer went on to quote from John Owen: “It is the contempt of God and His authority in His law that is the gall and poison of sin”.

It is, no doubt, human rebellion against that authority which has gained for the theory of evolution, in spite of all its difficulties, the level of acceptance it has attained today. If there is indeed a divine Creator, He has an absolute right to our obedience, but fallen man does not like the idea of being under obligation to obey God; nor does he like the punishment that must follow his refusal to give God the obedience due to Him. It is so much more convenient to convince himself that God does not exist. But it is “the fool [who] hath said in his heart, There is no God” (Psalm 14:1).

Scripture and experience make it obvious that sin has a great hold on each of us personally, not just on other people. David’s words to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord” (2 Sam 12:13), may have referred to a particularly-serious sequence of transgressions, but these words are the confession that every one of us needs to make continually. Even the best of God’s children are never able in this life to yield to Him perfect submission; that will only be possible in a better world – one entirely free from the dreadful evil of sin.

<sup>1</sup>All Plumer quotations are from his *Commentary on Hebrews*, Baker reprint, 1980, pp 421-2.

David, in his confession, made clear his consciousness of the One against whom his sins were committed – the Lord. Apart from the acknowledgement that sin is committed against the living and true God, any such confession is worthless. Pharaoh admitted to Moses and Aaron: “I have sinned against the Lord *your* God” (Ex 10:16), but he was refusing to acknowledge the true God as his God. That lack of submission was in itself a serious sin and the absence of sincere repentance in Pharaoh’s heart was confirmed when, after the plague of locusts was removed, he returned to his sin – his refusal to obey God’s command to let Israel go free.

Over recent centuries, religion has often been blamed for the strife in the world. Eliminate religion, is the cry, and all will be well; individuals and nations will live at peace with each other. Well, the experiment has been performed, and nowhere more energetically than in Stalin’s Russia and Mao’s China. For most of the time these men were in power, they made every effort to suppress religion and promote atheism; and rarely has the world seen more awful displays of horrid cruelty, oppression and wickedness. Religion is not the real problem; it is the dreadful evil of sin. The absence of religion actually allows sin more scope to flourish; estimates of the total number of Communism’s victims have been placed between 85 and 100 million.

Religion *may* impose a real restraint on sinful human nature. But genuine heart religion will not only restrain sin; it will produce real obedience, both inward and outward, to God’s commandments – for then the Holy Spirit is present to provide the only truly-effective restraint on sin. It is an evil which has such a tenacious root in the human soul that only divine power can subdue it; for the Spirit deals, not merely with symptoms, but with the root.

Sin of every kind deserves punishment; it cannot be otherwise when a holy, just God rules the universe. But whatever punishment may follow sin in this life, it is almost as nothing in comparison with the endless punishment that must be experienced by the unrepentant in another world. Of all the doctrines of the Bible, perhaps none have been more strongly opposed than eternal punishment. But human objection is of no force in the face of divine revelation. And Christ Himself, who did not come “into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved” (John 3:17), was the one who spoke more than any other about a lost eternity. Plumer commented wisely: “When we are disposed to think God’s punishment for sin to be too great, let us remember that He only can gauge the depths of moral evil. We should also notice the universal fact that slight thoughts of sin always proceed from unworthy thoughts of God.” Clearly if we are to have appropriate thoughts of sin as a dreadful evil, we must have high thoughts of God as holy and just and good – infinitely so.

A dreadful evil clearly requires a powerful remedy, and an evil as dreadful as sin requires a divine remedy. So that sin could be taken away, the Son of God had to take our nature, suffer and die. This is the remedy that must be proclaimed to a fallen world. Fallen human beings, with corrupted hearts, are to be presented with the good news about the glorious Saviour who came into a world so saturated with the dreadful evil of sin. He bore the guilt of sin, enduring dreadful suffering which culminated in what the *Shorter Catechism* calls “the cursed death of the cross”.

The remedy for the dreadful evil of sin is, according to God’s appointment, to be proclaimed by men, not by angels. John Newton points out that “the angel who appeared to Cornelius did not preach the gospel to him, but directed him to send for Peter. For though the glory and grace of the Saviour seems a fitter subject for an angel’s powers than for the poor stammering tongues of sinful men, yet an angel could not speak experimentally, nor describe the warfare between grace and sin from his own feelings. And if we could suppose a minister as full of comforts and as free from failings as an angel, though he would be a good and happy man, I cannot conceive that he would be a good and useful preacher; for he would not know how to sympathise with the weak and afflicted of the flock, or to comfort them under their difficulties with the consolations wherewith he himself, in similar circumstances, had been comforted of God.”<sup>2</sup>

Those who are sent out by God to preach the gospel can be thankful that they have a message which is perfectly suited to the needs of all kinds of sinners – those who are infected by the dreadful evil of sin in all its varied manifestations. The message of the gospel, as presented in Scripture, describes the means devised by God in His infinite wisdom so that fallen human beings may be delivered from both the guilt and the corruption of sin. It is a message that lays those who hear it under further obligation, for it comes from Him who has been appointed King over all the earth: they are to listen; they are to receive it as sent to them in infinite kindness; and they are to submit, by faith in Jesus Christ, to the righteousness of God revealed in it.

Those who believe are immediately forgiven all their sins, for the sake of Christ, who suffered the awful consequences of these sins. And through the activity of the Holy Spirit, that dreadful evil – their sin – is being subdued, in a process which will go on until it is finally completed as their soul is being removed from this world to eternal glory. There they will be able to serve God perfectly; they will be able to do his will without coming short in the least degree. And it is one of the most wonderful aspects of the eternal blessedness of heaven that the dreadful evil of sin can find no place there.

<sup>2</sup>*Wise Counsel: John Newton’s Letters to John Ryland Jr*, Banner of Truth, 2009, p 34.

## God's Blessedness and His Statutes (2)<sup>1</sup>

A Sermon by *Hugh Martin*

Psalm 119:12. *Blessed art thou, O Lord: teach me thy statutes.*

**2.** **“Teach me Thy statutes.”** Much might be said here. I fasten on the leading thought, the thought suggested by the word *statutes* – “Thy statutes”. The law of God is strictly moral law; it is commandment; it is authoritative and peremptory. It is statute: “Thou shalt”. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.” “Thou shalt not covet.” We will notice two modern errors which contradict this simple truth.

(1.) There are those who hold that the moral law is merely of the same kind as natural and physical laws, and they would explain the consequence of a breach of it, not as punishment, penalty, retribution or wrath inflicted by a personal offended lawgiver; but as the reaction caused by striking against the law itself, as when someone leaning incautiously over the top of a lofty tower falls by the law of gravity and, by the law of the impenetrability of matter, is dashed to pieces or is taken up bruised and bleeding. So, they hold, God rules intelligent men much as He rules planets, as He leaves them to circle round the sun in virtue of the laws of attraction and inertia; or as when He gave properties to fire which substantially say to man: Thou shalt not touch me, for when thou touchest me, thou shalt be burned.

Now, I ask, Is this a fair account of moral law? Does God lay as little responsibility upon me as when He rolls the moons and planets in their orbits, or sends a comet forth into the distant realms of space? And does He, by moral law, address Himself to me no more directly or personally than when He leaves me to discover that by violating the law of fire I am burned, or violating the laws of inertia and of prudence alike I dash my foot against a stone? Away with the futile absurdity! It is most miserable science – still more wretched philosophy. It is the destruction of morals; it makes Christianity an impossibility. Indeed it overthrows all evidence of the personality of God and refuses all recognition of the personality of man. For if God deals with me in such a fashion, I may recognise Him as a power, but I am not obliged to see Him as a Person. And I do not see that He deals with me as a *person*; He seems to count me as only a thing.

I ask also, Is this the sort of law by which earthly monarchs rule? Are the laws enacted and ordained in this land like physical, material laws that lay no responsibility upon us, and address themselves in no respect to our sense of obligation? Does our earthly monarch rule her subjects after such a fashion?

<sup>1</sup>Taken with editing from the 1868 *Family Treasury* and preached on June 14 that year. The first head of this sermon, “The Blessedness of God”, was printed last month.

When our Queen desired to send a general to give deliverance to the captives and to quell the savage, did she dispatch him into the distant land bound to a camel and leave him there to work as laws of gravitation, of metals, of fire, of projectile might allow – observing these laws, but without any authoritative commandment from his sovereign? No, she called him to her counsels; personally she gave commandment; she dealt with him as her responsible subject – a free agent, able to accept or to refuse responsibility. And in the mutual action of her sovereign free will and his subject free will, she laid responsibility upon him, and duty: Your duty shall be to give deliverance to the captive and to quell the heathen's pride.

He accepted the responsibility; and under its weighty burden, he went, bound in duty, free in will. In full free will he did his duty. He gave deliverance to the captive and he quelled the savage and he sheltered and comforted the heathen widow's death-bed and he took her son to be the pupil of a man of God and missionary of the cross and he praised the Lord Most High for his success and he praised the soldiers under him, and he shall return to hear his monarch's "Well done, good and faithful servant," and to hear his country's gratitude and praise. Do you not know how his monarch honoured him by saying to him, "Thou shalt . . . ?"

It is even so that God puts honour – perilous, yet grandest honour – on intelligent, responsible man, not dealing with him as with dead material substance, but calling his free will into play, laying it under obligation. He shows me that I am personally under law to Him, who is a living person, sovereign and giving me commandment. He shows me that I have broken that commandment, and He is justified when He therefore condemns me. He shows me also a glorious One to whom He gave commandment also – a very different commandment – a commandment to lay down His life for the sheep; and He accepted the commandment and the responsibility. Not at the loss of the sinner's life but the surrender of His own, He brings deliverance to the captive and quells the sinner's pride and makes him the pupil, not of a man of God merely, but of the everlasting Father and the Prince of Peace.

He shows me a warfare in which not a single life was lost but in which one was freely given. And from the altar where that life was given He takes a live coal and lays it on my lips and says, "Lo, this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged". Then I hear Him say, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" He enables me in personal responsibility and personal free will to say, "Here am I; send me". And He answers, Thou shalt go unto all to whom I send thee and preach the preaching that I bid thee – deliverance to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; and all that I shall say unto thee thou shalt speak. He

gives me authoritative commandment; I am under law to Him; He is always saying to me, "Thou shalt". He is my Lord, my Sovereign, my Lawgiver, my King, and when my commission is at last finished, if it has been at all faithfully fulfilled, He will say, "Thou hast been faithful over a few things"; "Go thy way . . . thou shalt . . . stand in thy lot at the end of the days."

That, I submit, is far more honourable to my nature and person than if He moved me about upon the broad plains of His government as if I were only susceptible of planetary movements and chemical affinities, rather than of willing obedience to His sovereign word and will. It concerns me greatly to prefer being under express, authoritative, statute law to "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Yes; "blessed art Thou, O Lord," my Lawgiver and King; "teach me Thy statutes".

(2.) There is a second perversion of this truth. Some would have it that, although the moral law is imperative in itself, it is not so to the believer. Regenerated by the Spirit of God, the law is the law of his heart; and now he needs no outward commandment to rule and bind and obligate him. Inward principle moves him spontaneously, and external imperative law is removed. Is it so? Was it so with the first Adam or with the second Adam, either of them? And they are the two representative men of the race.

How was it with our first parent? If ever outward law, categorical and imperative, might have been dispensed with, it was in his case. God's law was in his heart. In all of his holy, blessed nature there was nothing adverse to the law of God. He was a law unto himself. He was the moral law unto himself, loving God with all his heart and his neighbour as himself, in all things content, coveting nothing. Was imperative, authoritative, sovereign commandment therefore utterly unnecessary? Did God see it needless to say to him, Thou shalt, or, Thou shalt not? It was the very thing infinite wisdom saw he still needed; after being proved by it, he might obtain the crown of life, which was otherwise out of his reach. Therefore God gave that sovereign commandment which was not written on his heart and could not be by nature, but must be enjoined upon him outwardly by sovereignty: "Thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die".

How was it with the second Adam? All God's law was in His heart. It operated there as an inward principle of grace, acted in Him by the Spirit of holiness, who was immeasurably His. Surely if anyone might have dispensed with strict, imperative, authoritative law and commandment, He might. "I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart." Was no commandment therefore laid upon, no obedience ordained, unto Him? Or did He complain if there was? No, I hear him specially rejoicing in it. Every word He uttered, every work He did, was by commandment, and I hear Him



rejoicing that it was so: "My Father which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment what I should say and what I should speak. . . . Whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak."

Grand beyond compare as was His willing priestly act of laying down His life, and second only to it in grandeur as was His kingly act of taking it again, both these acts of Zion's Royal High Priest were done in obedience to strict, imperative commandment. "I lay [My life] down of Myself. . . . and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father." At this moment, while He pleads at the right hand of the throne, an advocate for sinners, He is acting by commandment, by the imperative law and obligation of official duty. The vilest sinner seeking His aid can appeal to Him by the obligation of His office and by the force of His Father's commandment, that "him that cometh" to Him, He "will in no wise cast out". *He* at least counts it no dishonour to be under imperative commandment, to hear the Father say to Him, "Thou shalt". How blessed to me that it should be so! I hear the Father's "Thou shalt" to the Son take gracious, glorious forms like these: The bruised reed Thou shalt not break and the smoking flax Thou shalt not quench, till Thou bring forth judgement unto truth.

And shall His members, though the regenerating Spirit dwells in them, claim an exemption from what the Son was not exempt, from what the Son counts it honourable not to be exempt even in His heavenly glory? For even there He shall for ever be "subject to the Father, that God may be all in all". Shall believers, because the Spirit puts the law into their hearts, claim a right to act merely at the dictate of inward gracious principle – untrammelled, uncontrolled by outward peremptory statute?

I appeal to Paul in Romans 7, where he says, "The law is holy", and adds, "The commandment is holy, and just, and good", as if to show that it was no inward actuating law of the heart, but God's outward commanding law to the will. And I appeal to the sweet singer of Israel, a man whose heart was after God's own heart, yet trusted not his obedience to the keeping of inward principle, but bowed to outward categorical commandment. For in Psalm 119, which is throughout the breathing of a heart in which the law of God is written, I find him, over and above that, owning his joy at being under peremptory external law: "Thou hast commanded us to keep Thy precepts diligently. O that my ways were directed to keep Thy statutes! Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all Thy commandments" (vv 4-6).

**3. What are the practical relations between God's blessedness and our subjection to His statutes?** They are not expressly indicated in the text. The two topics are simply placed together, without any formal link. The bond that binds them is like a telegraph cable under the sea; yet the soul that under-

stands them will read without difficulty the silent telegraphic message that hidden line conveys. The parts of this message supplement each other and may be stated thus: (1.) If I would effectually learn His statutes, let me constantly contemplate His blessedness; (2.) If I would safely contemplate His blessedness, let me cherish subjection to His statutes.

(1.) If I would effectually and loyally learn His statutes, let me contemplate Him as the blessed God. If I would in good faith and love accept Him as my only King and Potentate, let me dwell much upon the thought that He is the blessed and only Potentate. For if I am to be His obedient servant hearkening to the voice of His commandment – under stringent, strict, imperative law to fulfill His will – it concerns me much to know what sort of God He is and, in particular, whether He is blessed for evermore. My perceptions of His blessedness will enter deeply into the style of spirit with which I set myself to learn His statutes.

Take the case as it appears in the infinitely-lower sphere of relation to a human teacher or master. I am to be indentured to a master as his servant or his pupil. I ask not only, Is he just; is he kindly? but, Is he a happy-minded man? Is he even-tempered? He may in the main be righteous and good, but is he dark, moody, gloomy, fitful? That certainly would make my obedience to him greatly more difficult, my relation to him greatly more uncomfortable.

I have oftener than once seen a truly blessed man, a father, a brother in the ministry, his face gleaming with gladness and love as he turned to me. I could gladly have served him to the utmost that health of body and power of soul permitted me; and as I have recalled that shining countenance – ripe alike in the rich joy of pious silvered age and in the golden youthfulness that “shall be fat and full of sap, and aye be flourishing” – I have felt as if I could understand somewhat of the depth of that prayer: “God be merciful unto us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us”. And if a brother’s or a father’s blessedness could make me serve him gladly, if God would but show me the blessedness of the blessed and only Potentate, I think I would cry out: O blessed God, I will not let Thee go until Thou bless me – by teaching me Thy statutes. The commandments of a God so blessed cannot possibly be grievous; Thy statutes cannot but be blessed too.

2. If I would safely contemplate God’s blessedness, let me cherish subjection to His statutes. I say *safely*, for there is a danger of envy – of dark, malignant envy, grudging God His blessedness. Is this said to be a devilish and fanciful idea? Devilish? Yes. It is precisely what made angels devils. Fanciful? No. It is too terribly real, as must be confessed by the children of the two blessed beings who fell from their integrity by their desire to be “as gods”. And the carnal mind is too truly enmity against God; it is not subject

to the statute-law of God, neither indeed can be. Rightly probed and interpreted, the carnal mind is envious of God – envious of His inviolable, independent blessedness and would excuse its own unholiness, if it dared, by saying, It is very easy for such a God to be holy – blasphemously grudging that it is not independent and independently blessed also.

This envious desire is a most insidious form of our malignant unbelief and vanity. Both by law and by gospel, both by wrath and by grace, God will have it avenged or annihilated. The very reconciliation proclaimed in “the gospel of the blessed God” is expressly framed for overthrowing it. That reconciliation takes place as a justification – judicial, in terms of law – contemplating the saved sinner as a subject under strict, imperative, inviolable law, standing at his Sovereign’s throne condemned and self-condemned.

Never is the soul of man made to feel more subject to the law of God than in being justified freely by His grace. The believer, in the very act of receiving forgiveness and acceptance in the Beloved, is most expressly presented to himself, to God, to all the universe, as a subject of his Sovereign. He is under peremptory obligation to authority and law, even by his very faith “submitting himself to the righteousness of God” (Rom 10:3) – the righteousness which God’s righteousness requires Him to require.

Never am I more profoundly in subjection than when tremblingly I take hold on that righteousness of Christ. Never do I more profoundly own the strict severity of law than when I seek to make use of the death of Christ, which the law demanded with such severity – the death of Him who took my place, and came to magnify the law and make it honourable. Most blessed is our reconciliation to God. A most painful quarrel is composed. Friendship with the Most High sweetly restored. All elements of generosity, good taste, good feeling are in it; and “blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered . . . unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity”.

Nevertheless, fundamentally it is a justification, a legal act, a sovereign deed – in a court of law, where all is prescribed by statute. Is not that indeed its charm and its strength – its exhaustless charm, its eternal strength? Again, I say, it is well it should be so, for this as for other reasons – well that I should be made to feel under God’s imperative commandment. Otherwise I might envy Him His blessedness by the very reason of its supreme and infinite independence; resting, as it does, on eternal, unchangeable perfection and on sovereign supremacy above all creatures and influences whatsoever.

What is my relief against the snare of envying the blessedness of God? Is it, on the one hand, the conviction that He rules me only as He rules material substances, binding me like a planet by iron fate to circle round His throne? Certainly that will never teach me to rejoice in contemplating His blessed-

ness, as He is “God over all, blessed for evermore”. Is it, on the other hand, an indolent resigning myself to some principle in my heart, even if that is the grace of this blessed God Himself? No, as little will that qualify me to rejoice in the blessedness of the blessed and only Potentate. What I need is a personal, practical acknowledgment – of His supremacy, His absolute sovereignty. I need a personal, cordial recognition that “the Lord God omnipotent reigneth”; that He reigns over me; that I am under statute-law in His kingdom, “hearken- ing”, like the angels, “unto the voice of His word”.

That, and that alone, will keep me safe, as I gaze into the bright, fathom- less abyss of the blessedness of God. That, and that alone, shall be my own reflected blessedness; while beholding the blessedness of God, I am changed into the same image from glory to glory, from blessedness to blessedness, as by the Spirit of the Lord. I may be in some measure like God in righteousness, by cultivating similar righteousness; or like God in wisdom, by cultivating similar wisdom, in my measure, by the Spirit of wisdom. I may be like God in holiness by sharing His holiness, being made partaker of His holiness, par- taker of a divine nature through His “exceeding great and precious promises”. In all these I may be like God by cultivating similarity.

But I can be like God, I can bear the image of God in His sovereignty, as the blessed and only Potentate, only by cultivating dissimilarity. That is the paradox, and it has its real ground in reason. I sympathise with God in righteousness, in holiness, in wisdom, by sharing these attributes in their *direct* reflection. I sympathize with Him in His sovereignty only by a *reverse* reflection. I sympathize with His sovereignty only by being in subjection – subjection absolute, unconditional, unqualified, even as His sovereignty is absolute, unconditional, unqualified. By claiming to share with Him here, I would be repudiating His sovereignty, envying Him His independence, invading, if I could, the inviolable blessedness which is His as the only Potentate. I have no relief against this snare apart from learning His statutes; and the more I learn and am subject, the more I see – and the more deeply I rejoice in seeing – that He is the blessed and only Potentate. I can safely see His blessedness then. Blessed art Thou, O Lord; teach me Thy statutes.

I close with two brief appeals, founded on the clauses of the text:

1. I appeal to you to cherish a deep sense God’s statutes as authoritative, imperative, of absolute and unchangeable obligation. “Thou hast *commanded* us to keep Thy precepts.” They are His commandments, for ever binding all men, regenerate and unregenerate alike; and they are enforced by authority most absolute, from which there is and can be no appeal. Unless we feel that we are in this sense under law to God, spiritual life is utterly impossible. We are under an error that is fundamental, pervasive and fatal.

Unless we realise that God's law is continually and absolutely binding, we will be incapable of understanding what sin is, for sin is the transgression of the law; incapable of conviction of sin; incapable of self-condemnation; incapable of contrition, of repentance unto life; incapable of faith in Jesus Christ, who magnified the law; incapable of receiving the sprinkling of His blood, which is God's infinitely-wise device for placing a once-dishonoured law again in perfect honour in the conscience, unto the sinner's perfect peace and salvation and adoring gratitude for ever. We will therefore be incapable of sanctification; for a man is sanctified insofar as, and no further than, he is obedient to the law of God. I know of no spirituality that is not unqualified, unconditional obedience to God's unconditional, sovereign authority. "If any man think himself to be . . . spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

2. I appeal to you to ascribe blessedness to our God. My text is not a cold, assertion of the proposition that God is a blessed Being. It is a warm, adoring, direct ascription of blessedness to Him by a soul in communion with Him, rejoicing in His blessedness: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord". Therefore, brethren, join with me in thus ascribing blessedness unto our God. "Bless ye God in the congregations, even the Lord from the fountain of Israel." "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me bless His holy name." "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He hath visited and redeemed His people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David." And "blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to His abundant mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead".

And blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who does not keep His blessedness to Himself, but has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. "His name shall endure for ever; His name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall call Him blessed. Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things; and blessed be His glorious name for ever." "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting, and let all the people say, Amen." "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy. From every voice on the crowded battlements of Zion let the joyful shout ascend, and let it be echoed back from all that are around the throne. "Bless the Lord, ye His angels that excel in strength, that do His *commandments*, hearkening unto the voice of His word. Bless ye the Lord, all ye His hosts; ye ministers of His that do His pleasure. Bless the Lord, all His works, in all places of His dominions. Bless the Lord, O my soul." Amen.

## God Is Unchangeable (2)<sup>1</sup>

*John Flavel*

What remains then, seeing God is unchangeable in His love to His people, pursuing the great ends of all His gracious promises in a steady course of providence? In it He will never effect or permit anything that is really repugnant to His own glory, but He would have us enter also into this chamber of rest, shut the doors about us, and make comforting use of the unchangeableness of God, while we see nothing but changes and troubles here below.

1. Enter into God's unchangeableness by faith; take up your lodging in this sweet attribute also. And to encourage your faith to do so, seriously consider a few particulars.

(1.) Consider how constant, firm and unchangeable God has been to His people in all times and straits. Many thousands of His people have passed on before you and all of them have found Him so by frequent and certain experience. What a singular encouragement is this to our faith in the case before us! "They that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee, for Thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek Thee" (Ps 9:13). So also: "Thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as the storm against the wall" (Is 35:4). Neither is there anything in your experience which contradicts the encouraging reports others have made of God. You must acknowledge that, notwithstanding your own changeableness, who have hardly been able to maintain your hearts in any spiritual frame towards God for one day together, yet His mercies towards you have been new every morning, and great has been His faithfulness. You have often turned aside from the way of your duty; you have not followed God in a steady course of obedience; yet, for all that, His goodness and mercy have followed you all the days of your life (Ps 23:6).

(2.) Consider how often you have doubted and mistrusted the unchangeableness of God and been forced, with shame and sorrow, to retract your folly therein. God has many times convinced you that His love to you is an unchangeable love, however many changes have passed over you in the course of His providence. Consult Isaiah 49:14 and Psalm 77:7,8 and see how the cases are parallel, both in respect of God's constancy to them and you, and the inconstancy of His people's faith then and yours now. Your fears and doubts are the same as theirs, though His goodness and love have been as unchangeable to you as ever they were to them.

<sup>1</sup>Another edited extract from Flavel's *The Righteous Man's Refuge*, in vol 3 of his *Works*. Last month's piece considered God's unchangeableness in His promises and providences.

(3.) Consider the advocateship and intercession of Jesus Christ in heaven for you, by virtue whereof the favour and love of God become unalterable towards His people. If anything can be supposed to cool or quench the love of God towards you, nothing in the world is more like to do it than your sin; and this indeed is what will, you fear, alienate the heart of your God from you. But if you are one who sincerely mourns for all the grief and dishonour done to God by your sin, who applies the blood of sprinkling to your soul by faith and makes mortification and watchfulness your daily business, comfort yourself against that fear from that singular encouragement given you in this case: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not; and if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins" (1 Jn 2:1,2). Consider that, as the death of Christ healed the great breach between God and the soul, by your reconciliation at first, so the powerful intercession of Christ in heaven effectually prevents all new breaches between God and your soul afterwards, so that He will never totally and finally cast you off again.

2. Shut the door behind you against all objections, scruples and questionings of God's immutability. And by a resolved and steady faith, maintain the honour of God in this point, by your constant adherence to it and dependence upon it; and especially see that you give Him the glory of His unchangeableness.

(1.) When you shall see the greatest changes made by His providence in the world, what though you should live to see all things turned upside down, the foundations out of course, all things drawing into a sea of confusion and trouble? Yet in the midst of those public distractions and distress of nations, encourage yourself in this: Your God and His love to His people are the same for ever. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble; therefore will not we fear, though the earth be moved, and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. . . . God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved" (Ps 46:1-5).

(2.) Live by faith upon God's unchangeableness under the greatest changes of your own condition in this world. Providence may make great alterations upon all your outward comforts: it may cast you down, however dear you may be to God, from riches into poverty, from health into sickness, from honour into reproach, from liberty into bondage; you may outlive all your close relations, and of a Naomi become a Marah. "Thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down," said as good a man as you (Ps 102:10). Yet still it is your duty, and will be your great privilege in the midst of all these changes, to act faith upon the never-changing God, as that holy man did: "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine; the labour of the

olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stall; yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation” (Hab 3:17,18) – that is: Suppose a thousand disappointments of my earthly hopes, yet will I maintain my hope in God. O Christian, how many *yets*, *notwithstanding*s and *nevertheless*s must your faith bear up with in times of trouble, or you wilt sink.

(3.) See that you live upon God’s unchangeableness when age and sickness shall inform you that your great change is at hand; though your heart and your flesh fail, comfort yourself with this, your God will never fail you (Ps 73:26). “O God,” says David, “Thou hast taught me from my youth, and hitherto have I declared Thy wondrous works. Now also when I am old and grey-headed, O God, forsake me not” (Ps 71:17,18).

(4.) Live upon the unchangeableness of God under the greatest and saddest changes of your spiritual condition; God may cloud the light of His countenance over your soul, He may fill you with fears and troubles, and the Comforter that should relieve you may seem to be far off. Yet maintain your faith in the unchangeableness of His love; trust in the name of the Lord; stay yourself upon your God, when you walk in darkness and have no light (Is 50:10). Thus shut your door.

3. Use the unchangeableness of God to your best advantage in the worst times, by drawing thence such comforting conclusions as these:

(1.) If God be an unchangeable God in His promises and in His love to His people, what should hinder the people of God from living happily and comfortably in the saddest times and the greatest troubles upon earth. “As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things” (2 Cor 6:10). Certainly nothing ought to quench a Christian’s mirth, that is not able to separate him from the love of Christ” (Rom 8:35).

(2.) If God is an unchangeable God in His love to His people, then it becomes all that have a special interest in this God to be unchangeable and immoveable in the ways of their obedience towards Him. God will not cast you off; see that you cast not off your duties – no, not when they are surrounded with difficulties. He loves you, though you often grieve Him by sin; see that you still love Him though He often burden you by affliction. He will own you for His people under the greatest reproaches of the world; see that you own and honour His ways and truths when you are under most reproach from a vile world.

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Live near to God, and so all things will appear to you little in comparison with eternal realities.

R M M'Cheyne



# The Early Scottish Reformation<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Patrick Hamilton in Germany – a Time of Preparation

*J H Merle d'Aubigné*

Hamilton's ambition was to go to Wittenberg, to hear Luther, Melancthon and other Reformers; but circumstances led him to go first to Marburg. This town lay on his way, and a renowned printer there, Hans Luft, was then publishing the works of William Tyndale. In fact, on 8 May 1527, when Patrick arrived on the Continent, there appeared at Marburg the *Parable of the Wicked Mammon*; and seven months later, Luft published *The Veritable Obedience of a Christian Man*. But Hamilton hoped to find at Marburg something more than Tyndale's writings – Tyndale himself. Hamilton was also aware that Lambert d'Avignon, the Reformer whose views were closest to those which prevailed afterwards in Scotland, had been called to Marburg by the landgrave, Philip of Hesse. The Landgrave was about to found there the first evangelical university, and its inauguration was fixed to take place on May 30.

Hamilton and his friends bent their course towards Hesse. He found the sprightly, pious and resolute Lambert – a man determined to take action so that the Reformation should not be checked halfway. Lambert told him that the hidden things had been revealed by Jesus Christ; that what distinguishes our religion from all others is the fact that God has spoken to us; that the Scriptures are sufficient to make us perfect. He did not philosophise much, persuaded that by philosophising one swerves from the truth. He set aside with equal energy the superstition which invents a marvellous mythology, and the incredulity which denies divine and supernatural action. "Everything which has been perverted [*déformé*] must be reformed [*réformé*]," said Lambert, "and all reform which proceeds otherwise than according to the Word of God, is nothing. All the inventions of human reason are, in the matter of religion, nothing but trifling and rubbish."

After the delivery of the inaugural discourses, Hamilton was among those who enrolled in the new university. From that time the Frenchman and the Scot frequently studied the Holy Scriptures together, and always with fresh interest. Hamilton's extensive acquaintance with the Word of God astonished Lambert; the freshness of his thoughts and of his imagination charmed him; the integrity of his character inspired a high esteem for him; his profound remarks on the gospel edified him. A short time after this, the Frenchman said to the landgrave Philip: "This young man is of the illustrious family of the Hamiltons, which is closely allied, by ties of blood, to the King of Scotland.

<sup>1</sup>Abridged from *The History of the Reformation in the Time of Calvin*, vol 6.

Although hardly 23 years of age, he brings to the study of Scripture a very sound judgement and has a vast store of knowledge. He has come from the end of the world, from Scotland, to your academy, in order to be more fully established in God's truth. I have hardly ever met a man who expresses himself with so much spirituality and truth on the Word of the Lord."

Because of an outbreak of the plague in Wittenberg, Hamilton gave up the idea of travelling there. Lambert resolved to turn the disappointment to good account. Having a high idea of Hamilton's faith, judgement and abilities, he begged him to compose some theses on evangelical doctrine and to defend them publicly. Everyone supported this request; an academical solemnity at which a foreign theologian belonging to the royal family of Scotland should hold the chief place, would inevitably throw a certain eclat over the new university. Hamilton consented. His subject was quickly chosen. In his eyes a man's religion was not sound unless it had its source in the Word of God, and in the inmost experience of the soul receiving that Word and thereby being led into the truth. He deemed it necessary to present the doctrine in this practical aspect, rather than to lose himself in the speculative ideas of scholasticism.

On the appointed day Hamilton entered the great hall of the university, in which were gathered professors, students and many others. He announced that he was about to establish a number of truths about the law and the gospel, and that he would maintain them against all comers.

"There is a difference, and even an opposition, between the law and the gospel," said Hamilton. "The law shows us our sin; the gospel shows us the remedy for it. The law shows us our condemnation; the gospel shows us our redemption. The law is the word of wrath; the gospel is the word of grace. The law is the word of despair; the gospel is the word of comfort. The law is the word of unrest; the gospel is the word of peace. The law says, Pay thy debt; the gospel says, Christ has paid it. The law says, Thou art a sinner; despair and thou shalt be damned; the gospel says, Thy sins are forgiven thee: be of good comfort, thou shalt be saved. The law says, Make amends for thy sins; the gospel says, Christ has made it for thee. The law says, The Father of heaven is angry with thee; the gospel says, Christ has pacified Him with His blood. The law says, Where is thy righteousness, goodness and satisfaction; the gospel says, Christ is thy righteousness, thy goodness, thy satisfaction. The law says, Thou art bound and obliged to me, to the devil and to hell; the gospel says, Christ hath delivered thee from them all."

The attack began, and Hamilton's defence was as remarkable as his exposition. His phraseology was clear and concise, and his practical Christianity struck the minds of his hearers forcibly. Certainly, said Lambert, Hamilton

has put forward thoroughly-Christian statements and has maintained them with a great deal of learning.

Hamilton engaged in other public disputations. As justification by faith in Christ is the principle which distinguishes Protestantism from other Christian systems, he felt bound to establish the nature, importance and influence of that doctrine. He believed that faith is born in a man's heart when, as he hears or reads the Word of God, the Holy Spirit bears witness in his heart to the main truth which is found in it, and shows him clearly that Jesus really is an almighty Saviour. For the young Scot, faith was a divine work which he carefully distinguished from a merely-human faith. On this subject he laid down and defended the following propositions: "He who does not believe the Word of God does not believe God Himself. Faith is the root of all that is good; unbelief is the root of all evil. Faith makes friends of God and man; unbelief makes enemies of them. Faith lets us see in God a Father full of gentleness; unbelief presents Him to us as a terrible judge. Faith sets a man steadfast on a rock; unbelief leaves him constantly wavering and tottering. To wish to be saved by works is to make a man's self his saviour, instead of Jesus Christ."

In the midst of all these labours, however, Hamilton was thinking of Scotland. It was not of the benefices which had been conferred on him, nor of St Andrews; it was not even of his family or friends that he thought the most. What occupied his mind night and day was the ignorance and superstition in which his countrymen were living. What powerfully appealed to him was the necessity of giving glory to God and of doing good to his own people.

And yet would it not be madness to return to them? Had he not seen the animosity of the Scottish clergy? Did he not know well the power of Archbishop Beaton? Had he not, only six or seven months before, left his country in all haste? Why then these thoughts of returning? There was good reason for them. Hamilton had been fortified in spirit during his sojourn at Marburg; his faith and his courage had increased. By living with decided Christians, who were ready to give their lives for the gospel, he had been tempered like steel and had become stronger. No one could doubt that extreme peril awaited him in Scotland; his two friends, John Hamilton and Wynram, did not understand his impatience and were resolved to wait.

But neither their example nor Lambert's urgency could quench the ardour of the young hero. He felt the sorrow of parting with Lambert and of finally giving up the hope of seeing Luther and Melancthon; but he had heard God's call; his one duty was to answer it. About the end of autumn 1527 he embarked with his faithful servant and sailed towards Scotland.

# The Preparation of Sermons (1)<sup>1</sup>

Rev J R Tallach

It is difficult to speak too highly of the act of preaching the gospel. The answer to Question 155 of *The Larger Catechism* states, “The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the Word, an effectual means of enlightening, convincing and humbling sinners; of driving them out of themselves, and drawing them unto Christ; of conforming them to His image, and subduing them to His will; of strengthening them against temptations and corruptions; of building them up in grace and establishing their hearts in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation”.

*The Directory of Public Worship*<sup>2</sup> puts aside the Liturgy of the Church of England<sup>3</sup> and, as well as praise and the reading of the Word, sets extemporaneous public prayer and the preaching of the Word at the heart of public worship. The *Directory* states, “Preaching of the Word, being the power of God unto salvation, and one of the greatest works belonging to the ministry of the gospel, should be so performed that the workman need not be ashamed, but may save himself, and those that hear him”.

In Charles Bridges’ opinion, “so powerful is the influence of the pulpit on the Church that the general state of the Church at any given period may be correctly estimated by the prevalent style of preaching”.<sup>4</sup> Paul states, “The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds” (2 Cor 10:4), and one of these weapons is the public use of “the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God” (Eph 6:17). The exercise of preaching is clearly important; so Moses said, “See, I set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil” (Deut 30:15). Accordingly preparation for preaching must be of the utmost importance also.

**1. The Preliminary Matters** are: (1.) The *General Aim*: as in every other endeavour, if we are clear in our aim in preaching, we are more likely to succeed. “By whom [the Son of God] we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name” (Rom 1:5). (2.) *Christ is central to the exercise*: “We preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus sake” (2 Cor 4:5). (3.) *The Holy Spirit*: “Them that have preached the gospel unto you with the

<sup>1</sup>This is the first part of a paper given at the Theological Conference in 2009. The subject is handled under two broad headings: (1) Preliminary matters, and (2) Specific preparation.

<sup>2</sup>Available with the other Westminster Assembly documents in *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, published by Free Presbyterian Publications.

<sup>3</sup>The *Directory* adds: “Notwithstanding all the pains and religious intentions of the compilers” of the Liturgy.

<sup>4</sup>*The Christian Ministry*, Banner of Truth reprint, 1976, p 190n.

Holy Ghost sent down from heaven” (1 Pet 1:12). (4.) *Meditation*: “While I was musing the fire burned” (Ps 39:3). (5.) *Prayer*. Paul entreats the Colossians: “Withal praying also for us that God would open unto us a door of utterance to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds” (4:3).

(1.) *The General Aim* in preaching is *to open up the Word*; and since Scripture must explain Scripture, this activity is defined by the Word. When Ezra would instruct the people who had returned after the Captivity, he gathered them together and, “having opened the book before all the people (for he was above the people)”, it is recorded: “So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense and caused them to understand the reading” (Neh 8:8). Matthew Henry comments, “Let those that read and preach the Word learn also to deliver themselves distinctly, as those who understand what they say and are affected with it themselves, and who desire that those they speak to may understand it, retain it, and be affected with it likewise”.

We find Paul among the Jews in the synagogue. “Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus whom I preach unto you is Christ” (Acts 17:3,4). J A Alexander notes on this verse, “*Opening*, in Greek [is] an emphatic compounding: opening out or through, that is, completely opening or explaining”. The same verb is used by Luke in reference to the understanding of the two on the way to Emmaus. Their understanding was entirely or completely opened so that they understood the Scriptures.

The Scriptures thus exercise *a controlling power over every aspect of the preparation and delivery of the sermon*. Owen observes, “Preachers of the gospel and others have sufficient warrant to press upon all men the duties of faith, repentance and obedience, although they know that in themselves they have not a sufficiency of ability for their due performance; for [1.] It is the will and command of God that so they should do, and that is the rule of all our duties. They are not to consider what man can do or will do, but what God requires. To make a judgement of men’s ability and to accommodate the commands of God unto them accordingly is not committed unto any of the sons of men. [2.] They have a double end in pressing on men the observance of duties with a supposition of the state of impotency described: (1) To prevent them from such courses of sin as would harden them and so render their conversion more difficult if not more desperate. (2) To exercise a means appointed of God for the conversion, or the communication of saving grace to them. Such are God’s commands and such are the duties required in them.”<sup>5</sup>

The Word will also provides *a balance of doctrine, illustration and applic-*

<sup>5</sup>*The Works of John Owen*, vol 3, p 295.

ation. Cotton Mather speaks of the “phraseology of the Spirit dictated for use”, and John Brown of Haddington writes, “God hath made me generally to preach as though I had read no other book but the Bible. I have assayed to preach Scriptural truths in Scriptural language.” Though Paul was speaking of the inspiration of the Spirit when he wrote to the Corinthians, he identified an important rule for the interpretation of Scripture: “Which things also we speak not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual” (1 Cor 2:13). He thus set a good example for all who would make Scripture plain to their people. Let us use the analogy of faith and compare spiritual things with spiritual. Spurgeon said of Bunyan, “Prick the man anywhere and you will find his blood is bibline”. That is how it ought to be with us.

(2.) ***Christ is central to the exercise.*** Christ’s presence and work are fundamental to our preparation for preaching. When Isaiah was called to preach to Israel he felt his inability for the work due to the holiness of the Christ he was to serve and the uncleanness of his lips in the light of that holiness. His lips were cleansed and he rendered fit for the work of prophesying, only when his lips were touched by a coal from off the altar. “Hence”, writes Matthew Poole, “he took it to show that men are to expect purification and expiation from sin only by such means as God hath appointed, and particularly by Christ, whom that altar did manifestly represent.” When Isaiah had experienced the grace of God in Christ anew, he said, “Here am I; send me”.

Faith in Christ is particularly necessary for those who are called to declare Him to others. Paul writes to the Corinthians: “We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak” (2 Cor 4:13). Paul here quotes David describing in Psalm 116:10 how he had been in the midst of great trouble and sorrow, but his faith in God revived and he was able to speak to God’s praise and to pay his vows before all God’s people. Likewise Paul was passing through great trouble in the service of the Lord and in the proclamation of the gospel, but his trust in God remained strong and he continued to speak of God’s goodness and grace: “We preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord” (2 Cor 4:5).

Christ is the great subject of our preaching, its recurring theme. In the patriarchal period there was no acceptable worship without a blood sacrifice. This made the difference between Abel’s sacrifice and that of Cain. Likewise, in the Mosaic period, no day passed in the journeys of the Children of Israel, nor during their stay in the promised land, without the sacrifice of the morning and evening lambs. There was no significant gathering for the

worship of God without many such sacrifices being offered, for “without shedding of blood is no remission” (Heb 9:22).

All these references give the background which one would expect for Paul’s great declaration: “We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Cor 1:23,24). And again: “I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (1 Cor 2:2). Charles Hodge comments, “Paul’s only design in going to Corinth was to preach Christ; and Christ not as a teacher or as an example or as a perfect man or as a new starting point in the development of the race – all this would be mere philosophy – but Christ as crucified, that is, as dying for our sins. Christ as a propitiation was the burden of Paul’s preaching. It has been well remarked that *Jesus Christ* refers to the person of Christ, and *Him crucified* to His work; which constitute the sum of the gospel.”

Bunyan refers to the Lord’s presence in the act of preaching. As is well known, John Owen would have exchanged his folios on theology for Bunyan’s gifts in the pulpit. Bunyan himself said that when the Angel of the Covenant stood behind him in the pulpit, “then I preach”. Both the necessity and the promise of the Lord’s presence in preaching and teaching are in the words of the great commission: “Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Mt 28:20).

Calvin comments, “As Christ gave to the apostles a commission which they were unable to discharge by reliance on mere human power, He encourages them by the assurance of His heavenly protection. For before promising that He would be with them, He began with declaring that He is the King of heaven and earth, who governs all things by His power and authority. The pronoun *I* must be viewed as emphatic; as if He had said that the apostles, if they wished zealously to perform their duty, must not consider what they are able to do but must rely on the invincible power of those under whose banner they fight. The nature of that presence which the Lord promises to His followers ought to be understood spiritually; for it is not necessary that He should descend from heaven in order to assist us, since He can assist us by the grace of His Spirit as if He stretched out His hand from heaven. For He who in respect of His body is at a great distance from us not only diffuses the efficacy of His Spirit through the whole world but even actually dwells in us.”

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The blood of Christ is the only balm for a soul wounded with a sense of sin.

*Archibald Alexander*

## Our Gospel Work in Africa and Israel

*Rev N M Ross*

**Zimbabwe:** Rev J R Tallach visited Zimbabwe for three weeks last October – a very hot and dry month there. He says he experienced great kindness from the Mission staff and workers while he was in the country and is very grateful to them. He spent the first weekend at Zvishavane with Rev Z Mazwabo and preached at the first and third of three services while Mr Mwzabo preached at the second. He says he was encouraged by the hearty singing and good attendances (ranging from 75 to 150).

On his second Sabbath he preached at Bulawayo, where the church was well filled at both services; the Thembiso children were present at the morning service. The following week he paid a visit to Thembiso Children's Home, which is being converted from one institution to five family houses. Two of these have already been constructed and the next stage is to appoint and train house mothers to take charge of "family" groups of the children, each "family" having children of various ages. Miss Petra Beukers, at present working in Thembiso, will be joined by Miss Margaret MacAskill in April (DV) in order to implement this welcome upgrading of the Home.

During Dr Tallach's visit Mr Melusi Mpfu, the son of the late Rev Alfred Mpfu, was appointed to replace the previous Administrator. He had a responsible post in the Ministry of Education before this appointment.

The third weekend was spent at Mbumba, where Dr Tallach assisted Rev M Mloyi at the communion. "It was very good," says Dr Tallach, "to have Rev P Mzamo, his wife and daughter (Mrs Zikhali) at the communion, and to hear Mr Mzamo preach on the Saturday and address the second Lord's Table on Sabbath".

Miss K M MacAulay hopes to return to Zimbabwe in March to rejoin the translation team in its ongoing work.

**Kenya:** Rev K M Watkins reports that there have been several new developments in recent months. Most significant is the commencement of a new translation of parts of the Bible into Ekegusii, the language of the Kisii people, because of the unfaithfulness and inaccuracy of the present Kisii Bible. The translation of the Psalms into metre continues.

He continues, "Recent months have seen a number of younger visitors come to the mission – either to work or to see the work – which has been very encouraging indeed". Miss Elizabeth Munns from our London congregation joined the staff in September and has been busy working with the younger people of the congregation. She conducts a weekly English reading class, using as a basis the articles on John G Paton which appeared in *The Young*



*People's Magazine*. The library has been re-arranged and some attractive booklets of suitable articles from *The Young People's Magazine* have been printed and are now available for borrowing.

Mr Watkins also reports that on Saturday mornings several "mock exams" were held for those of our young people who attend the neighbouring Rianyakwara Primary School to help prepare them for their end-of-primary-school exams in November. A basic computer course for some teachers at the primary school and mission workers has also been commenced, using several computers donated to the Mission last spring.

Although the weekly catechism class continues at the primary school, further involvement has been hindered because the school awaits the appointment of a replacement headmaster. The Mission is liaising on this matter with the Ministry of Education.

The clinic continues as usual but, for the first time, a programme of TB sputum testing began on January 11.

During the December school holidays a Sabbath School Conference was held – implementing for the first time what was approved in the 2005 Mission Plan. Over two weeks, more than 220 Sabbath School children gathered at the mission for Bible teaching, Bible quizzes, activities and games. Young people (aged 13 to 18) from the three outstations were also included and were accommodated at the Mission. Mr Watkins comments, "Our desire is that the young people would have received something of lasting benefit for their souls from the time they spent at the Mission".

The Church Session has had meetings to interview applicants for the sacrament of Baptism. Although many in the congregation still need more understanding of, and outward conformity to, God's law, a number have been granted the privilege of Baptism, which was dispensed on January 17. This is an important step forward for the Sengera congregation.

**Israel:** In November, Rev John Goldby resumed services in Jerusalem, after moving back there from Jaffa, where he had been based for the previous 18 months. Each Sabbath he holds a service at 11 am in the YMCA in Jerusalem and at 7 pm in Tel Aviv, where the congregation consists mainly of Russian-speaking Jews.

He has been encouraged to have some visitors in recent times from other congregations of our Church. The de Boer family from New Zealand came for a few days, as did Mr and Mrs Hayden from Barnoldswick. My wife and I also spent some days with Mr and Mrs Goldby and not only enjoyed their warm and unstinting hospitality but were also privileged to be present at the first of the resumed Free Presbyterian services in Jerusalem.

In the imposing YMCA building we met in a small simple chapel with

bare cream limestone walls and furnished with oak chairs and lectern. Into the stone above the entrance door are carved the words of Psalm 65:2: "O Thou that hearest prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh come". We pray that the day will speedily come when many, both Jews and Gentiles worldwide, will come to God through Jesus Christ.

Mr Goldby is still much involved in translation work, and meets with two other pastors to translate the *Westminster Confession of Faith* into modern Hebrew. The whole of the *Confession* has now been translated and is presently being carefully rechecked. He spends one day a week as a member of another team, consisting of one of the pastors already mentioned and two Hebrew scholars, as they revise the Delitzsch Hebrew New Testament. The team has nearly completed the Gospel of John and, in more than 300 places, has recommended revision to the Trinitarian Bible Society (TBS), the body supervising and rechecking the translation.

I was privileged to spend a session with each of the translation teams, one meeting at Gedera, near Ashdod, and the other at Yad Hashmona, in the Judaen hills, and was much impressed by the scholarly and painstaking work they are prayerfully doing on each of these projects.

Another important development was the arrival in Jerusalem in December of Mr Albert Hembd and his wife from our congregation in Texas. Mr Hembd is employed full time by the TBS as a Bible Translation Consultant. In Jerusalem he will have access to many resources and Biblical-language expertise and will be able to exert influence in support of the Greek Textus Receptus and the translation principles of the TBS. Both Mr Goldby and Mr Hembd were invited to speak to the TBS Committee and staff at their meeting in London on Monday, November 30.

On the previous Friday evening, Mr Goldby gave an address to our London Congregation about our work in Israel. May the Lord prosper such work and gather in His ancient people – a glorious event which will be as "life from the dead" to the Gentile world (Rom 11.5).

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## Book Review

*One of Heaven's Jewels: Rev Archibald Cook of Daviot and the (Free) North Church, Inverness* by Norman Campbell, published by the author, paperback, 278 pages, £19.99, obtainable from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom. In his *Memorabilia Domestica*, Donald Sage, no mean judge of ministerial ability, wrote of his contemporary, Archibald Cook: "I question if there be any of the age in which we live who, in pure disinterested zeal, in holy ab-

stractedness from the world, in vital godliness, or in exclusive devotedness to the eternal interests of the kingdom of heaven, more nearly approximates to the divinely-trained disciples of Galilee than does Archibald Cook.”

The memory of such an ambassador of Christ surely ought to be kept green – as indeed it has been to some extent in *Sidelights on Two Notable Ministers*<sup>1</sup> and in various biographical sketches. However, there has been no full biography of Archibald Cook until the most welcome appearance of *One of Heaven's Jewels*. Norman Campbell has indeed succeeded in doing what he set out to do: to produce “a sympathetically critical biography” of this eminent minister of the gospel.

Cook's life is charted from his childhood in Arran during a time of spiritual revival there, to his student days in Glasgow; then to his first pastorate in Caithness, his subsequent pastorates in Inverness and Daviot, and his death in 1865. Other chapters deal with the influence of John Love on his preaching, his own emphases in preaching, and his friendship with Jonathan Ranken Anderson. Yet others examine the Separatist movement, the Union debate, revival, and communion seasons.

Of special interest to many readers will be the chapters on Cook's preaching. In his student days he sat under the deeply-spiritual ministry of John Love and enjoyed a close friendship with him. Theirs was the bond of spiritually-minded men who had zeal for the glory of God in the salvation of sinners and the holy living of His people. In later life Cook “used to refer to this time in Glasgow with much solemnity and feeling”.

The author suggests some ways in which Love's influence may have affected Cook's preaching. Like Love, Cook had a profound view of the reality and solemnity of eternity, and when preaching on one occasion, declared with great feeling, “Those who believe in eternity are not very plentiful. . . . O, Eternity! Eternity! Eternity! When millions of years pass, eternity will be the same. O Eternity, Eternity, Eternity.”

As Love's great themes were “the majesty of God, the grandeur of the divine attributes of holiness and justice, the glories of the death of Christ, and the tremendous vengeance that awaited the ungodly”, so Cook could show, for example, how God's attributes are a comfort to believers, although initially causing fear. In one sermon Cook says, “You who are spiritually alive, was His unchangeableness not like fire to you? Was His holiness and truth not as fire to you, and was His omniscience not as a destroying flame? Now think of these attributes coming to be a comfort to the soul in the worthiness of Christ! They met in Christ in your salvation.”

As a searching preacher, Cook faithfully exposed the deceitfulness of sin

<sup>1</sup>Still available from Free Presbyterian Publications.

in hearts and lives, but he was especially a “comforter of mourners” in Zion. Not unlike Love, who was singularly skilful in applying “the balm of consolation into the wounded heart”, Cook was “most careful that the tendency of his preaching should not be to drive sinners to despair. . . . He dwelt much upon the infinite intrinsic efficacy of the blood of Christ.”

While the author indicates many similarities between the preaching of Cook and Love, he does acknowledge that preachers come to similar conclusions without actually influencing one another, and that one is to be wary of being dogmatic. Cook’s abiding concern was to have the blessed influence of the Holy Ghost from heaven.

We are indebted to Norman Campbell for this extensively-researched life of Archibald Cook. Not only is there valuable information about Cook himself, but also about the ecclesiastical scene in Inverness and beyond, during his time. The breadth of his research is indicated by the numerous endnotes to each chapter, which make the book a most useful resource for the student of Highland Church history.

May it be blessed in generating an appreciation of the greater power in the pulpit and the deeper godliness in professing Christians which prevailed in Cook’s days.

*(Rev) N M Ross*

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## Protestant View

### Free Church Minister in Ecumenical Service with Priest

BBC Scotland announced that a “Christmas Eve carol service” was to be broadcast from Ness Bank Church of Scotland, Inverness. The service was to be conducted by Church of Scotland minister Rev K D Macleod, with prayers and readings from Rev Ronnie Morrison (Free Church, Tain) and Father James MacNeil (Roman Catholic).

The singing of carols in public worship is not permitted by Scripture and is therefore sinful, and the same is true of services held in connection with the heathen midwinter festival now called “Christmas”. The sinfulness of these things used to be well-known in Scotland, and Messrs Macleod and Morrison do not have the same excuse of ignorance that people may have in other parts of the world.

Harmful as these things are, however, they are small compared to the enormity of sharing a service with a Roman priest. This is virtually to deny the faith. It is saying to the world that there is no fundamental difference between Protestantism and Romanism; it is a denial of the pre-eminent importance of the doctrine of justification by faith alone in Christ alone. If Father

MacNeil believes that all-important doctrine, he should leave the Church of Rome and join the Church of Christ. If he does not believe that doctrine, why is a Free Church minister sharing a service with him?

It is high time that Free Church ministers were called to account for this sort of thing by their Presbyteries. The more liberal ministers are pushing at the boundaries all the time but we do not hear of any attempt to discipline them. The keys of Church discipline have been entrusted to the Church courts by Christ but they are not being used. Worldliness and error are flowing into the Church but are not being purged out. If an amoeba allows itself to swell indefinitely with water, it will burst, and the Free Church will go the same way. It may be by one increment at a time, but the end of it will be the same apostasy that the Church of Scotland is in.

To use a Biblical figure (which may startle our readers but is surely intended by the Holy Spirit for just these situations), what the Free Church needs is a Phinehas to rise up, seize the javelin of Church discipline, and thrust it through those who are committing spiritual whoredom (Num 25:7-8). How otherwise will the plague be stayed? *DWBS*

### **Ireland's New Blasphemy Law**

In Ireland, the Roman Catholic Church has long had a special position in the state. In 1972 that special position was removed from the constitution but the Church continued to have privilege and power in the life of the nation. But that privileged position has become more precarious since the child abuse perpetrated by priests and nuns was exposed – hostile criticism of the Church has increased, as have calls for its total separation from the state.

However, those criticisms and calls are likely to be muted by the new blasphemy law which was passed by the Irish government in July 2009 and came into force on January 1. If any person “publishes or utters matter that is grossly abusive or insulting in relation to matters held sacred by any religion, thereby causing outrage among a substantial number of the adherents of that religion,” he or she will be fined up to about £22 000.

One secular commentator wonders if this law will be used to stop Irish citizens from criticising the behaviour of Roman Catholic leaders in Ireland as the atrocious record of child abuse and its concealment increasingly becomes public knowledge. Another commentator is undoubtedly right when he says that those scandals were “long quiet because of general reluctance, even fear, of criticising the Church. But now, the new anti-blasphemy law adds weight to that fear, and is a drag on the movement toward the separation of the established Church and the government.”

But of course, whatever steps may be taken to prevent exposure and

criticism of Rome's errors and sins, the truth will out sooner or later. Moses' warning still applies to those institutions and individuals who cover their sins: "Be sure your sin will find you out" (Num 32:23). *NMR*

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## Notes and Comments

### **"They Will Also Persecute You"**

A pastor in northern Nigeria, about to be beheaded in July 2009 by an Islamist group for refusing to convert to Islam, appealed to a fellow captive: "If you survive, tell my brothers that I died well and am living with Christ". Professing Christians among the Karen people are greatly persecuted by the Burmese military government. Christians in the Punjab Province of Pakistan had at least 100 homes burned down in mob violence and many more looted or vandalised, while a similar incident nearby resulted in seven deaths.

Two Christians in China were sentenced to ten and seven years in prison for aiding North Koreans who tried to flee to South Korea through China to escape persecution. A Chinese pastor was convicted of divulging state secrets and sentenced to 15 years in prison after giving innocent interviews to media outside China. Five leaders of an unregistered church were sentenced by the Chinese authorities to between three and a half and seven years for holding a service, regarded as "assembling a crowd to disrupt public order".

Two women were imprisoned in Iran for converting to Christianity and refusing to return to Islam. Men in this situation are liable to the death penalty. Throughout the Middle East, even in countries regarded as allies of the West, Christians suffer various degrees of persecution, especially if they have converted from Islam. "Saudi law is based on Islamic sharia, and it prescribes the death sentence for converts from Islam. Public Christian worship is forbidden, even for the large expatriate community, and Christians may be detained, assaulted or deported for meeting to pray together even in private." These notes are taken, almost at random, from recent editions of the Magazine of the Barnabas Fund and other periodicals.

As noted previously in connection with this subject, many of those professing Christians do not have the heritage and understanding for which we shall have to give an account. But they suffer because they are identified, in their own courageous confession and in the minds of their persecutors, with the Lord Jesus Christ. "But all these things will they do unto you for My name's sake, because they know not Him that sent Me" (John 15:20). Surely we should pray for them and support those who seek to aid them directly or to bring pressure on the governments of "free" nations to intervene on their behalf.

We used to wonder when old ministers expressed the fear that persecution would yet overtake Christians in the United Kingdom but now, although certain freedoms of speech are still safeguarded by law, persistent attempts are being made to restrict even peaceful and reasoned criticism of what Christians can only regard as religious and moral deviations and perversions. Laws which already exist have been used by police and prosecuting authorities against persons who have engaged in such criticism, even in private discussions, but scorn can be poured on the cherished beliefs of those who adhere to the Christian faith established in our nation, and on their God and Saviour; and those adhering to that faith can be derided as bigots or something less polite. Employers have come down heavily on the most unobtrusive Christian witness of, for example, a care worker to a troubled client. There are professions which a Christian cannot readily practise because, for example, scriptural beliefs prevent a registrar from officiating at civil partnerships. How increasingly difficult it is becoming in some situations to be a Christian doctor, primary school teacher, social worker.

On the grand scale of sufferings, the public harassment which most Christians experience may as yet amount to no more than the smiting on the face to which Paul refers in 2 Corinthians 11:20, though some may have severe trials personally. But it is time we awoke to serious realisation that the freedoms this nation began to enjoy with the Reformation, established in its Scottish form 450 years ago, are being progressively eroded by an intrusive state, which promotes legislation attempting to force even on churches the recognition of laws and practices hostile to the law of God, and which has a cowardly fear of the militant elements of non-Biblical religions. The more secular, morally liberal and religiously neutral Britain becomes, the more restrictions will be imposed on the Christian witness, whether positive or negative, in word or deed.

HMC

### **Comments on Other Magazines**

A writer in the Calvinistic Baptist publication *Reformation Today*, concluding a series on the Psalms, discusses which psalms, in his opinion, are “of most obvious value in public worship”. He mentions Psalms 92, 93, 95-100 and 145-150 as “suitable for opening or closing public worship”; Psalm 103 as suitable “for all seasons”; Psalms 65, 67, 113, 127, 128 and 134 as “relevant and useful”; and allows that Psalms 1, 19 and 119 “can have their place”. He suggests that the so-called “penitential Psalms”, in particular Psalms 32, 51 and 130, “may be of value in public worship”, as may Psalm 42. The “Messianic Psalms”, by which he means Psalms 2, 8, 16, 22, 45, 72, 118 (and possibly Psalms 69 and 116 – he is not sure about these), “are of

immense value, but need to be familiar, or explained, to the worshippers”.

His selection comes as something of a surprise. We believe, of course, that all the psalms, and only the psalms, are to be used in public worship, but we would expect a list of the most commonly-sung psalms to include Psalms 23, 27, 34, 46, 63, 73, 84, 89, 107, 121, 122, 126, 133 and perhaps several others. One practical effect of hymn-singing, we see, is to deprive congregations of all this treasure.

In a different direction, the magazine *Bible League Quarterly*, edited by Rev John Thackway, has carried two articles exposing the “Deepening Downgrade in the FIEC” (the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches). One prominent FIEC church, Carey Baptist Church in Reading, supports a missionary in Poland who is overtly ecumenical. Neither the church nor the FIEC is prepared to express disapproval of the missionary. Without entering into the merits of the case, we are glad to see the *Bible League Quarterly* tackling the issue. English Evangelicalism has suffered from an unbiblical tendency to avoid controversy of this sort, allowing Satan to spread error unopposed. Those who will not turn a blind eye to the dangerous errors of other professing “Evangelicals” are all too often dismissed as being of a sour and unchristian spirit.

On a more positive note, the new editor of *Banner of Truth Magazine*, Rev Jonathan Watson, draws attention to an article written by a former editor, Rev Iain Murray, in January 1960. At that time, Mr Murray reported, “no Christian magazine exists for the Jews in Palestine”; “in Portuguese-speaking Brazil, Reformed books are non-existent, and even works that are “Evangelical” are few”; “the story is much the same in India”; “behind the “Iron Curtain” the situation is, of course, even worse . . . there is no such thing as freedom of the press”; while in China there was a desperate need for Christian literature to satisfy the “spiritual starvation”. “How things have changed!” Mr Watson comments. “Fifty years later, good Christian books are available in ever increasing quantities in all of these places and more beside.” Perhaps another 50 years will see the end of Evolutionism and political correctness, and even of Romanism and Islam. Christ is going forth “conquering and to conquer” (Rev 6:2). “Every plant, which My heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up” (Mt 15:13). DWBS

### **A Disturbing Proposal**

Liberal Democrat leader Nick Clegg appears, in an interview with a columnist on *The Independent* newspaper, to be shamelessly attempting to buy the homosexual vote in the forthcoming General Election in the United Kingdom. Particularly disturbing is his proposal to force all schools – includ-



ing faith schools – to teach that homosexuality is “normal and harmless”.

But it is not normal and, spiritually and morally, it certainly is not harmless. The Bible’s teaching is clear, but then Mr Clegg is an atheist (though his wife is a Roman Catholic and his children are being brought up as Roman Catholics). When he became party leader, he declared that one of his priorities was to defend civil liberties, but it would seem that he has put a very large question mark over the liberty to believe that homosexual activity is a serious sin. We live in an age when God is, in judgement, increasingly giving people up “unto vile affections” (Rom 1:26). Woe betide those nations where people like Mr Clegg obtain power; in a magazine interview in 2008 he admitted to sleeping with “no more than 30” women.

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## Church Information

### Removed by Death

We note with sadness the death of Dr D R MacSween, Glasgow, on January 14. As we sympathise with his wife and family, we are conscious of the great loss to the Church.

### *A Heart for Africa*

A number of reviews have now appeared, in various periodicals, of this biography of Jean Nicolson by Dolina MacCuish (Free Presbyterian Publications, 229 pages, hardback, £11.50). Some extracts follow.

*The Bible League Quarterly* summarises Miss Nicolson’s life story from her birth in Arizona until “in 1933 Jean Nicolson, accompanied by her mother, left Scotland to take up what was to be over 40 years’ service for the Lord with the Matabele people just 30 miles or so north of Bulawayo. This interesting book is not merely the story of Jean Nicolson, but it also gives a great insight into life in that part of Africa . . . where the primary school at Ingwenya . . . ultimately became a benchmark for other schools in Zimbabwe and southern Africa – largely through the efforts, under God, of Jean Nicolson.”

The reviewer continues: “Jean Nicolson was essentially a head teacher, yet she as well as all the other missionaries there, under the auspices of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, considered the school as a handmaid to the gospel of Jesus Christ. The spiritual welfare of those girls and boys, and the men and women too, were paramount in their hearts and thoughts.” The review concludes: “Jean Nicolson’s verdict on her long years among these courteous and lovable people was, ‘I’d live it all over again’. She had indeed, A Heart for Africa.”

The review in *The Gospel Standard* begins: “We knew Miss Nicolson. She certainly was a remarkable woman – a life of self-sacrifice, devoted to the

Saviour.” The reviewer describes how “the book embraces the remarkable story of how the Free Presbyterian Church in Scotland was led to set up the mission in Rhodesia [as the country was formerly known]. Much emphasis was placed on education, but the great aim in the schools was that the Lord would sanctify the education of the African children, teaching them the knowledge of the truth, and with a desire that the Holy Spirit would bless it in bringing them to saving faith in Jesus.” He sums up: “The book is well written, in quite a lively style, and has preserved the faithful memory of an amazing woman – talented but, above all, blessed with the grace of God”.

The *English Churchman* reviewer was brought up in what is now Zimbabwe, and this clearly added to his interest in *A Heart for Africa*. He recalls that Miss Nicolson “had written a book about the founder of the work at Ingwenya”, which he reviewed; this was *John Boyana Radasi* (also published by Free Presbyterian Publications and still available). He comments that “the reader will readily note how many lives were changed as the Lord used this work to draw people unto Him: pupils, people living in the vicinity, including the fifth wife of the King Lobengula (who died after the Matabele War of 1893), whose own faith was a shining example to those about her”. And he refers to Miss Nicolson’s life as “a most extraordinary story” and refers to her “many, many years of selfless sacrifice and obedience to the call to mission work”.

Finally, the review in *The Monthly Record* of what it calls “this well-written short biography” gives a brief summary of Miss Nicolson’s life and the Mission in Ingwenya before concluding with the words: “a captivating story”.

### **Committee Meetings**

Synod committees will meet, DV, in Inverness Free Presbyterian Church on Tuesday, March 16, as follows:

- 9.00 - 9.30 Church Interests Committee
- 9.30 - 11.00 Training of the Ministry Committee
- 11.00 - 11.45 Magazines Committee
- 12.00 - 1.00 Sabbath Observance Committee
- 2.00 - 3.00 Outreach Committee
- 2.00 - 5.00 Finance Committee
- 3.00 - 5.00 Religion and Morals Committee
- 6.00 - 7.30 Publications and Bookroom Committee
- 7.30 - 8.30 Welfare of Youth Committee
- 8.30 - 9.30 Dominions and Overseas Committee

(Rev) *John MacLeod*, Clerk of Synod

### **Bookroom Fund**

By appointment of Synod, the Collection for the Bookroom Fund is due to be taken in congregations during February. *W Campbell*, General Treasurer

# FREE PRESBYTERIAN PLACES OF WORSHIP

## Scotland

- Aberdeen:** 2 Alford Place, AB10 1YD, Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Tuesday, 7.15 pm. Rev D W B Somerset BSc DPhil, 18 Carlton Place, Aberdeen, AB15 4BQ; tel: 01224 645250.
- Bracadale: Struan:** Sabbath 12 noon; Wednesday 7 pm (fortnightly). Contact Rev J B Jardine; tel: 01859 502253.
- Breasclote:** 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.
- 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; **Strathlyon:** Church; no F P Church services.
- Harris (North): Tarbert:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Thursday 7 pm. **Stockinish:** Tuesday 7 pm. Rev J B Jardine BD, F P Manse, Tarbert, Isle of Harris, HS3 3DF; tel: 01859 502253, e-mail: northharris.fpc@btopenworld.com.
- Harris (South): Leverburgh:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm. **Sheilebost:** Sabbath 12 noon (except first Sabbath of month). Prayer meetings in **Leverburgh, Northton, Sheilebost, Strond** and **Geocrab** as intimated. Rev K D Macleod BSc, F P Manse, Leverburgh, HS5 3UA; tel: 01859 520271.
- Inverness:** Chapel Street, Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Rev G G Hutton BA, 11 Auldcastle Road, IV2 3PZ; tel: 01463 712872.
- Kinlochbervie:** Sabbath 11.30 am; Tuesday 7.30 pm. Manse tel: 01971 521268. **Scourie:** Sabbath 6 pm.
- Kyle of Lochalsh:** Sabbath 6 pm. Manse tel: 01599 534933. Contact Rev D A Ross; tel: 01445 731340.
- Laide** (Ross-shire): Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Rev D A Ross. F P Manse, Laide, IV22 2NB; tel: 01445 731340.
- 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 McKinnon; tel: 01786 451386.
- Portree:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Contact Rev W A Weale; tel: 01470 562243.
- Raasay:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Contact Rev W A Weale; tel: 01470 562243.
- Shieldaig:** Sabbath 11 am; **Applecross:** Sabbath 6 pm. Tuesday 7 pm (alternately in Shieldaig and Applecross). Shieldaig manse tel: 01520 755259, Applecross manse tel: 01520 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 9JX; tel: 01470 562243.
- Stornoway:** Matheson Road, Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Thursday 7.30 pm. **Achmore:** Sabbath 12 noon; Tuesday 7 pm. Rev J R Tallach MB ChB, 2 Fleming Place, Stornoway, HS1 2NH; tel: 01851 702501.
- Tain:** Church and Manse. **Fearn:** Church. No F P services. See Dornoch and Bonar.
- Uig (Lewis) Miavaig:** Sabbath 12 noon Gaelic, 6 pm English; Wednesday 7 pm. Manse tel: 01851 672251.
- Ullapool:** Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Manse: Quay Street, IV26 2UE. Tel: 01854 612449.
- Vatten:** Sabbath 6 pm; Wednesday 7 pm (fortnightly). **Glendale, Waternish:** As intimated. Contact Rev J B Jardine; tel: 01859 502253.

## England

- Barnoldswick:** Kelbrook Road, Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Friday 7.30 pm; Wednesday 8 pm, alternately in 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. 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. 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; 3rd Wednesday of the month (not secondary school holidays) 7.30 pm. Contact: Mr Hank Opland, P O Box 150, Carterton, 5743. Tel: 02 7432 5625

#### Israel

**Jerusalem / Tel Aviv**: Rev J L Goldby, 3/4 Mordechai Caspi, North Talpiot, Jerusalem 93554. Tel: 00972 2 6738181. Morning service at Jerusalem YMCA, evening service in Tel Aviv; for further details 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**: F P Mission Station, 3 Pestelya Street, 65031. Contact Mr I Zadorozhnyi, P O Box 100, Odessa-91, 65091; e-mail: antipa@eurocom.od.ua; or Mr D Levytskiyy; tel:00 38 048 785 19 24.; e-mail: e-mail: dlevytsky@gmail.com.

#### Zimbabwe

**Bulawayo**: Lobengula Township, PO Magwegwe, Bulawayo. Rev S Khumalo, F P Manse, Stand No 56004, Mazwi Road, Lobengula, PO Magwegwe, Bulawayo. Tel: 00263 9407131.

**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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