

# 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, Laide; **Fourth:** Glasgow, Grafton; 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.

# The Free Presbyterian Magazine

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No 1

## “The Time Is Short”

So Paul told the Corinthians (1 Cor 7:29). And that brief statement had huge implications for the way that believers in Corinth were to live. It would seem that much of the advice the Apostle gave them in this chapter – for instance, not to marry – was relevant to what he calls “the present distress”, some serious difficulties in the near future. We live in a different historical situation, but whatever difficulties the future may or may not bring, it should be clear – even if we are still relatively young – that the time we will be spared in this world is indeed short. And the way we live out the rest of our lives here should be profoundly influenced by the fact that time is short and eternity is long.

And, Paul emphasises, because the time is short, “it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away”. Calvin comments: “This life which we are now spending is . . . of short duration. Let us not therefore be . . . entangled by it. . . . All things that are connected with the enjoyment of the present life are sacred gifts of God, but we pollute them when we abuse them. If the reason is asked [why Paul writes as he does], we shall find it to be this, that we always dream of continuance in the world, for it is owing to this that those things which ought to be helps in passing through it become hindrances to hold us fast.

“Hence . . . the man who considers that he is a stranger in the world uses the things of this world as if they were another’s – that is, as things that are lent to us for a single day. The sum is this, that the mind of a Christian ought not to be taken up with earthly things or to repose in them; for we ought to live as if we were every moment about to depart from this life. By *weeping* and *rejoicing*, he means adversity and prosperity, for it is customary to denote causes by their effects. The Apostle, however, does not here command Christians to part with their possessions, but simply requires that their minds be not engrossed in their possessions.”

Calvin has been emphasising the relevance of Paul's words to God's children – that it is their duty to spend well the short period of time which is left to them before they enter heaven. But let us take a step back to consider the position of the unconverted; they too have only a short time before they enter the eternal world and yet they are hurtling down the broad road to never-ending destruction. They only have a short time to prepare for eternity, and they do not know how soon that time may end.

Apart from divine power, sinners will continue to presume that they have plenty of time; they never feel any urgency to seek the Lord Jesus Christ and find forgiveness and new life in Him. As one year passes into another – as, for instance, 2009 passes into 2010 – we should feel that death is coming increasingly near. We should feel a conviction that neither wives nor husbands, neither prosperity nor adversity, nor anything else in this world, whether good or bad, should be allowed to distract us from preparing for eternity, for the time is short. That part of our life which is still left to us may, given life's uncertainties, be far shorter than we expect. Even if the evidence is piling up which indicates that the remaining years of our life will most likely be few, do we face up to the urgency of preparing seriously for eternity? As illness afflicts us, as disabilities interfere with our lives, as the body grows weaker, and the mind also, do we go before God with increased urgency as poor guilty sinners who need to be forgiven? Do we go to Him, in the name of Christ, pleading with Him to do what we cannot do – to save our souls?

This world is full of distractions, and Satan is adept at using them to divert the attention of sinners from their souls and from the eternity which they will so soon enter. God gave His own Son to die in the place of sinners; He has given a clear revelation in the Scriptures of His gift; He has also made it plain that the time during which sinners may receive this gift is short. How great then is the force of these words: “Seek ye the Lord *while He may be found*; call ye upon Him *while He is near*” (Is 55:6)!

There are some who, having sought the Lord before it was too late and called upon Him while He was near, have found Him and are therefore sure of a place in heaven. Yet it is they, in particular, who are reminded that “the time is short”. Why?

1. *They are not yet ready for heaven.* Yes, they have the fundamental preparation; they are justified; they have a right to the inheritance of the saints in light. Further, they have new hearts and are beginning to serve God. But it is only a beginning, and they need to make progress. They are in danger of being impeded, in their progress towards glory, by many things which are in themselves perfectly legitimate. But it is not spiritually helpful to give, for instance, the place to a husband or wife which belongs to God only. Most

certainly, their progress will be impeded if they allow an unconverted wife or husband to have too much influence over their lifestyle. They may indulge in activities which, if not obviously sinful, are at least questionable, and they may not give the time to prayer and Bible reading which they otherwise would.

But life is short; there is so little time to “grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pet 3:18). It is imperative that they spend time on their souls. Has their Lord not said, “Watch . . . for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping” (Mark 13:35)?

2. *The time to serve God in this world is short.* Believers have already spent more than enough time in the service of the devil; they have good reason to confess, “The time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles” (1 Pet 4:3). And why waste more of the precious resource of time, when there is so little of it left? Now their time ought to be focused on serving God in a world which is given over to wickedness, a world which is ready to perish.

Clearly ministers have a great work to do: to preach to dying sinners the glorious gospel message: of salvation through a crucified Redeemer who is now exalted to give repentance and forgiveness of sins. Ministers have only a few short years during which they may preach this gospel, and their hearers too have only a few short years before they must appear before their Maker. Thus every sermon must expound and apply the Word of God, and there ought to be a particular focus on the central point of the gospel message: Christ and Him crucified. Whatever other activities may occupy the minister’s attention, he must not forget that his main duty is to preach the gospel, which requires proper preparation. At the same time, it should be remembered that the minister is not a machine; he needs, for instance, relaxation and sleep. And, it scarcely needs to be said, ministers as much as anyone else are under the authority of the command: “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it” (Eph 5:25).

Rowland Hill had a clear sense of the shortness of time: “Some say we live in the land of the *living*; more properly it may be said we live in the land of the *dying*. For let us resist whatever diseases we may, I am witness that time brings on the diseases of old age, which are never to be resisted. Friends may surround you and tell you that you may yet see many days, but at last we *must* die.” Accordingly he wished to continue preaching as long as possible; he told a brother minister: “Old, very old, as I am, yet still I trust I find it not less my privilege than my duty to dedicate the very last of my declining

strength to His glory in the accomplishment of the sacred work. Should a physician tell me that my life may be endangered if I continue to preach, I will answer him, ‘Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God’.”<sup>1</sup>

Not everyone can be a minister; God does not call everyone to that work. Yet, whatever spiritual duties God may lay upon individual believers in His providence, they all have the obligation to *pray* earnestly for the souls of sinners everywhere. And the time in which they may do so is short; they will soon be away from this world, and so will all who should be the subject of their prayers. Even when David’s prayers were almost ended, he continued to cry, “Let the whole earth be filled with His glory” (Ps 72:19).

We have no reason to believe that this is such a time of “distress” that believers would be well-advised not to marry. But in common with all other ages of the Church, it is a time when they should give the Lord the first place in everything; they are not to abuse the blessings of their ordinary providence by, for instance, spending too much time on them.

3. *Believers have only a short time to live to God’s glory in this world.* In heaven they will serve Him perfectly, but however imperfect their service may be in this life, they perform it in the face of God’s enemies. Some of them may suffer much from mockery and even from outright persecution, and all of them are subject to the devil’s temptations and to the resistance of an imperfectly-sanctified heart. But as they follow on, more or less faithfully, towards heaven in such circumstances, they glorify God in a way that is not possible in heaven.

As believers live out what may be very ordinary lives, they are – to the extent that these lives are consistent – showing that true godliness is possible. They may be more conscious of their imperfections than of their godliness but, generally speaking, others who work with them or live beside them, or even have occasional contact with them, can see that it is possible to be honest in one’s dealings with other people, to speak without swearing or using obscene language, and to have a proper respect for those around them. In these and various other ways they live as lights in the world and act as salt in the earth. This is how they are directed to spend their short time in this world: “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor 10:31). And when their short time in this world is over, they will be brought home to the house of many mansions. There they will serve God perfectly throughout eternity and will be graciously rewarded for their service to God in this passing, sinful world.

<sup>1</sup>Quoted in Tim Shenton, *The Life of Rowland Hill*, Evangelical Press, 2008, pp 490f.

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

A Sermon by *Hugh Martin*

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

The blessedness of God, subjection to His statutes, and the relation between these topics – such are the threefold materials of thought furnished by this verse. Depending on the blessed God Himself to teach us, we take the three topics in order.

**1. The Blessedness of God.** “Blessed art Thou, O Lord.” The blessedness of God is a great deep; it is a dazzling, bright abyss. We can look into it only as with shaded eyes; we can speak of it only as with a lisping tongue, like children. Yet if with childlike spirit we look and listen and meditate, our exercise may neither be unacceptable to the “blessed God” nor destitute of blessing to ourselves.

The blessedness of God! It is the result of His possession of all perfections, natural and moral. “God is light”; “God is love”. He is infinitely wise to devise the best conceptions, to entertain the infinitely true and good and grand ideals, and infinitely powerful to accomplish them. Thus His intelligent nature cannot but be characterised by that combination of inviolable repose and unhindered activity which constitutes a great element of our worthiest ideas of blessedness. His moral nature also in each of its glorious attributes – and in the unison of their fulness and in the harmony alike of their indwelling in His being and of their outgoing into action – is at once suggestive of the highest conception we can form of blessedness.

To speak negatively is often, to our feeble intellects, the best means of grasping truth and guiding our own intelligence. Speaking negatively of God's moral nature, it must be apparent that He is “the blessed God”. In Him is no darkness, no gloom, no shadow; no variableness or shadow of turning. In Him is no malevolence, no pleasure even in the death of the vilest of the wicked. In Him is no unrighteousness, no inequality. His nature and His ways are equal. Beautiful is that word *equal* as applied to God's nature and ways, and blessed is what it implies. There is nothing unequal in Him; there is no excess, no defect, no incongruity, no conflicting element, no discord; no stain, no blemish, no shadow, no spot or wrinkle or any such thing. In all the boundless fulness of His being He is right, and only right – right, righteous, upright, even as one of His adoring servants has sung: “To show that the Lord is upright: He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him”

<sup>1</sup>Reprinted with editing from *The Family Treasury* for 1868, having been preached on June 14 that year. For an account of Martin's life, see *The Bulwark* for October-December 2008 and January-March 2009.

(Ps 92:15). How then can we think of Him as other than the “blessed God”?

But the blessedness of God is intimately connected, not only with the absolute perfections of His being, but with His absolute natural supremacy and moral sovereignty. These may be distinguished. His natural supremacy is His necessary and absolute independence and superiority over all that exists; His moral sovereignty is His kingly rule over intelligent, responsible beings. And in each of these relations Scripture attributes to Him “blessedness”. In one passage He is designated *God over all* – that is, the Supreme Being – “blessed for ever” (Rom 9:5); and in another, “the blessed and only Potentate” (1 Tim 6:16) – the Sovereign, King of kings, and Lord of lords. As the Supreme Being He is blessed: “God over all”. As the sovereign God He is blessed: “the blessed and only Potentate”.

Nor is it difficult to see the grounds of these glorious assertions. He is in the fullest, the deepest sense, God over all, and therefore blessed. He is independent, absolutely so. He has relations to what is outside His own being, but He is independent of all that is outside His own being. All except Godhead exists by His will and at His pleasure: “Of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things”. “For His pleasure they are, and were created.” His is the uncreated, self-existent, independent Being; infinite, eternal, unchangeable. Thus the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, and He dwells in light that is inaccessible.

Language fails to tell, and thought fails to encompass the secret dwelling-place of the Most High, where the omnipotent and self-sufficient Godhead sits enthroned above all being beside, in His supreme and absolute independence, exalted above all circumstances, above all creatures, above all changes, above all influences. He is “God over all”, in blessedness which no events can invade, affect or control, which the will of no creature can cross, which no alien influence can overshadow or approach, which no voice of complaining or questioning can ever penetrate or ruffle, even though millions of apostate creations should unite to cry, “What doest Thou?”

For God is not only naturally and necessarily the Supreme Being, He is morally and judicially the absolute Sovereign of the universe, and herein also He is blessed. “Blessed art Thou, O Lord.” Thou art *the Lord*, the Master, the Ruler. God is Judge, Lawgiver, King. The Church welcomes and glorifies Him very specially in this relation, with emphatic, repeated, rejoicing recognitions: “The Lord is our Judge; the Lord is our Lawgiver; the Lord is our King; He will save us”. In this capacity in which we give Him threefold recognition as Judge, Lawgiver and King – Sovereign Lord Most High – He will save us.

And in this moral sovereignty God is blessed. For it is the outcome of His



moral nature, which is blessed, and is therefore a high exercise, expression, enjoyment of conscious blessedness. For His kingly rule is at once the outgoing of His blessed nature and the fitting action of His blessed supremacy, when He deals with intelligent and moral beings. And if His nature and His supremacy are blessed, then blessed is He also in that sovereignty, which is the adequate expression alike of His nature with its perfections and of His supremacy with its rights and claims.

And the more pure and simple we perceive this sovereignty is – more absolute, independent, uncontrolled – the more we see it to be the pure and simple expression of His sheer and absolute will, so much the more will we see that it is blessed, and be disposed to acquiesce and rejoice in it. For if His will cannot contradict His nature, which is light and love, beneficence and righteousness, and if it vindicates to moral beings His supremacy and independence, why should it not be sheer and absolute – the mere good pleasure of His will? Shall we plead for it to be brought down beneath His natural supremacy as He is God over all, blessed for ever? Shall we plead for it to be taken outside the boundless glory of His blessed nature as light and love – the only wise, the only good; in whom there is nothing tortuous, perplexed, unequal, unrighteous?

Would we not thereby impair His blessedness as our Sovereign? Indeed would we not destroy our own perceptions of His blessedness. And would we rather serve a Sovereign whose blessedness we could not recognise than one whom we must perceive to be the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, absolute and uncontrolled? No, it concerns me much, if I am to be His subject and His servant, to see His sovereignty ruled by nothing but His nature – His will controlled by nothing but His perfections, His reign worthy of His absolute supremacy and impaired by no influences that must be infinitely inferior. Let Him do what seems good in *His* sight alone. Let me rejoice that He takes counsel with none – whose counsel would be infinitely beneath His own, incongruous with it, degrading to it. “Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight.” Thy sovereign rule is as blessed as Thy nature is blessed. Thou art the blessed and only Potentate. “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”

But further: the blessedness of God subsists in fellowship – fellowship worthy of His eternal being and Godhead, worthy of His glorious nature and its infinite perfections, worthy of His absolute supremacy and uncreated independence, fellowship in the everlasting relations of the ever-blessed Three in One. As far as I see, after much and frequent thought, the doctrine of the Trinity enters indispensably into the blessedness God. For it provides the element of fellowship – fellowship fully worthy of God's nature and alone

adequate to God's infinite capabilities of fellowship. Without fellowship, I confess I cannot conceive of blessedness either in the creature or the Creator.

I cannot conceive of a Unitarian's God as a blessed being. A unipersonal Deity inhabiting a past eternity, absolutely without relations, without converse, without all love or ought to love; in solitariness, solitude, silence seems to me to add only the element of infinity to the idea of all that is blank and cold and terribly repulsive. Such a past eternity inhabited absolutely by only one unrelated Person, contemplating naught and in naught conversing, alike unloving and unloved, seems to add the character of boundlessness, of illimitable magnitude, to that of the very grave itself. It is the most unchristian idea even of the grave: "the cold grave to which we haste, where everlasting silence reigns".

I cannot imagine a unipersonal deity blessed in contemplating himself – contemplating his own nature in his own only person, however full of all possible perfections that nature may be. I doubt whether it is even possible to imagine him as self-conscious at all, or capable of saying from eternity, "I am". And I do not wonder at the particular heathen doctrine which represents a unipersonal deity Brahm as asleep from all eternity until he awakens up in the act of creating. As far as I can see, the profoundest modern doctrine of what is called the absolute Being fails because it proudly refuses to borrow light from revelation and to draw on the glorious revealed truth that Godhead subsists as Three in One.

I do not say that reason may discover that truth; but I do say that, if this truth is suggested from any quarter, reason can justify it more fully than has been, as far as I can see, generally admitted. For how an absolutely and eternally unrelated unity should ever begin to enter on relations, I utterly fail to understand. How such a God, subsisting in one eternal Person alone, should ever begin to create, I cannot possibly imagine; more especially how He ever could call persons – personal beings, intelligent, moral persons – into being.

A personal God, self-conscious, can utter from all eternity the great word, "I am". A dependent intelligent being created by Him, conscious of his own being, gives forth a created reflection of that utterance; and being in the image of God, self-conscious though dependent, expresses the essential dignity of highest created being by also saying, "I am". It is a result of the uncreated "I am". That any creature in the universe can say, "I am", demonstrates that there must be One who from all eternity could say, "I am" – in His case, "I am that I am", Jehovah. But then, besides the great word, "I am", there is another which seems to me as great – indeed, it would appear, the necessary reciprocal and complement – "Thou art."

A created intelligence can say, "I am", but that is not the first time that great word has been uttered; Jehovah was from everlasting the eternal utterance of it, "I am"; "I am that I am". A created intelligence looking to his Creator can, in the instant following first consciousness, exclaim, "Thou art"; and his Creator looking to His intelligent creature can say, "Thou art". Is this the first time that this great word has been uttered or utterable? Is it right that the great word, "Thou art", expressing relation, expressing recognition, expressing fellowship, should begin to be uttered in time and should have no place in eternity – should have no eternal root to grow upon, no eternal fountain to flow from, no eternal rock to lean and rest upon? I cannot think so.

Is it right, is it fitting, is it conceivable, that God and His first intelligent creature should be on equal terms, in that each of them should, for the first time begin, in recognising each other, to say, "Thou art", to each other? They are not on equal terms in saying, "I am". God has from everlasting been the "I am"; "I am that I am". There was no beginning of circumstances to enable Him to say, "I am." Shall there be a beginning of circumstances to enable Him to say, "Thou art"? Is it right and fitting that this self-existent God, who has no beginning of being, should have a beginning of fellowship, the very crown jewel and diadem of being, that He should begin in time, and only on the frail platform of created things, to say, "Thou art"? No. "To which of the angels said He at any time, *Thou art My Son*; this day have I begotten Thee?"

But to His eternal Son He has eternally – in the unbeginning, unending now, the day that has no morning and no evening – been saying, "Thou art". All along the eternal line of His having said, "I am", to His own Son, He has been saying, "*Thou art My Son*; this day have I begotten Thee". Not reflecting merely on self, the Father has seen – and He has been the blessed God in seeing – the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person in His Son. In no self-seclusion, selfhood, or exclusiveness, but in fellowship, the Father has seen in the Son also and has admired – and has been blessed in admiring – Godhead's sovereignty; and unto the Son He saith, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom".

I cannot imagine a unipersonal God as a creator at all. I cannot imagine God beginning to say, "Thou art", to a creature if He had not been eternally saying, "Thou art", to One altogether worthy to say, "I am", in all the same exhaustless fulness of meaning in which Jehovah says, "I am that I am". Without an eternal "Thou art", we search in vain for a beginning of creation – we meet with nothing but an eternal gulf between a unipersonal deity and a created being. Reason fails to find a possibility of a beginning till it is said

of a second Person in the Godhead that “He is the beginning of the creation of God”; The eternal Son”; the indispensable divine Mediator of creation – afterwards the divine Mediator of redemption.

I repeat, I cannot possibly imagine a unipersonal eternal God, having in his own being no relations, no fellowship, no “Thou art”; no one therefore to whom to say even, “I am”; and therefore no voice, no word – no word at all. I cannot imagine a beginning to creation from such a God. But there has been a “beginning”, for there has been a “word” – an eternal Word. And I adore the wisdom that links that Word and that beginning thus: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God” – there was fellowship. “And the Word was God”; it was fellowship adequate for Godhead – fellowship of God with God – yes, fully adequate, for the “same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.”

Tell me not of a dark, blank, cold, and cheerless past eternity, with one only, eternal, self-inclusive, self-contemplating person dwelling in it, however much you may accumulate into your description of his being all possible perfections. The more you tell me that he is self-subsisting, self-sufficient, self-complete and absolutely independent, so much the more do you remove him far away from every idea of blessedness that reason, as it seems to me, can frame or can accept. It is a dark abyss of solitude and silence, from which I shrink back in terror and from which I cannot possibly believe that any bright and blessed creation could ever spring – that any bright beginning or blessed work could ever emanate. I demand some inward, living, bright and blessed relation in the eternal God Himself before I can imagine Him beginning to give birth to blessed and bright created things.

An absolute *unity*, such as reason tells that Godhead must necessarily be, combined with *relation*, such as reason and heart alike demand, may be an insoluble problem in which I can but doubtfully and darkly grope my way. But my reason is more than satisfied and my heart is more than joyful when, from what were otherwise the dark and blank abyss of unipersonal solitude and silence, I hear an eternal Person – an eternal Word – saying: “The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, *before* His work of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. When He prepared the heavens, I was there; when He set a compass on the face of the earth, then I was by Him as one brought up with Him, and I was daily His delight.” Blessed art Thou therein, O God! “I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him” (Prov 8:22-32).

O Thou everlasting Son of God, Thou art the depth of all true philosophy,

the solution of the profoundest problems, the satisfaction of our reason, the joy of our heart, the Saviour of Thy people. Thou art alike the light of men and the explanation of the Godhead's blessedness. Thou fillest Thy Father's boundless bosom with boundless, uncreated bliss. Blessed art Thou, O Thou Father of an Infinite Majesty, and Thou, O Word of God, His true and honourable Son, also the Holy Ghost. For the Father and the Son are blessed, not only in each other, but in the fellowship of the Spirit as I cannot now stay to show.

Observe, however, that the fellowship of two, each of whom can say, "Thou art," seems incomplete and still only a kind of mutually-reflected self-hood till, going beyond themselves, they can add that other great word, "He is". But in Trinity there is provision for this; and the Father and the Son having fellowship in the Spirit and concerning Him; the Father and the Spirit concerning the Son; the Son and the Spirit concerning the Father; blessedness in Godhead is in all relations complete – complete in every kind and in every degree, complete in every kind beyond degree. "Blessed art Thou, O Lord."

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## Calling the Sabbath a Delight<sup>1</sup>

### 3. What We Should Expect From Sabbath-Keeping

*Rev H M Cartwright*

“**T**hen shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it” (Is 58:14).

The Sabbath is for the glory of God. It is also for the good of mankind. There are temporal blessings attached to the right keeping of the Sabbath. As the old rhyme puts it: “A Sabbath well spent brings a week of content and strength for the toils of the morrow; but a Sabbath profaned, whate’er may be gained, is a certain forerunner of sorrow”. But it is also a divinely-appointed means to spiritual blessing. As Patrick Fairbairn puts it, the Sabbath is designed to carry the heart up in holy affection to its Creator, and outwards in acts of goodwill and kindness to men on earth. Without it the Lord and eternal things would be even less in our minds. It gives us time and means to cultivate acquaintance with the Lord. As M’Cheyne says, it is a day for exalting Christ, meeting God, praising God. If there were no Sabbath, spiritual and eternal things would be swallowed up even more than they are

<sup>1</sup>This is the last part of a series giving the substance of an address delivered in Portree in November 2008. The title comes from Isaiah 58:13. The previous article, last month, considered how we should keep the Sabbath.

by the things of time and sense. When the Sabbath is loosely kept by those who have some regard for it, there can be no doubt that the effect can be seen in a low level of spirituality personally and communally, and in a lack of enjoyment of God and of the blessings of His Covenant and the means of His grace.

The Lord will cause those who honour Him in this way to triumph over all that would deprive them of the blessing. The Sabbath brings us back to the sources of our strength. It confirms principles and habits of devotion to God which are so threatened by our engagement with the world on other days. It makes for strong, triumphant Christians, enabled to overcome the temptations that are in the world. And it strengthens the Lord's people for their witness to the Lord in the world.

We have the Lord's own word for it that He will fully satisfy those who honour Him with the rich provisions of His covenant. The blessing of Abraham, which was the heritage of Jacob, comes on sinners through Jesus Christ, who has redeemed them from the curse; they receive the promise of the Spirit through faith (Gal 3:13, 14). The Sabbath is a sign of that covenant and a means of conveying covenant blessings to His people. "I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them" (Ezek 20:12).

A well-kept Sabbath would lead to a strengthening of the habits of devotion and a greater enjoyment of the blessings of grace. It would lead to clearer views of God and closer communion with Him. Each Sabbath would be seen as another step on the ladder to heaven above, in the sense of increased preparation for, and enjoyment of, what the Lord's people will experience in the heavenly Sabbath. Sabbath observance is by no means the whole of what it means to be a Christian, but it does contribute substantially to nourishing Christian life through the opportunities which it gives for worship and for attention to spiritual matters.

It is not that Sabbath-keeping merits these blessings. It is not the basis on which these blessings are bestowed. Here as elsewhere the truth prevails: "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us" (Titus 3:5). Legalists may use the Fourth Commandment, as they use other commandments, in a vain endeavour to secure their salvation by their own works. We are as dependent upon the Lord for ability to keep the Sabbath to any degree as we are for any other Christian grace or work. But Sabbath keeping is a means of blessing in the Lord's hand. He has said that it shall be so.

David Dickson counsels us: "Aim at the blessing as well as the duty, hang on Himself for life and strength to discharge the duty, and for the blessing,

since He is the author and bestower of both, and do the duty delightfully and with joy, through the faith of the blessing”.

The Sabbath is presented in Isaiah 58 as the test of a person’s religion. What a person thinks of the Sabbath, viewed as God means it to be viewed, is an indication of what that person thinks of God Himself. The Sabbath is a barometer which indicates the spiritual atmosphere of the Church and of society. It is a thermometer which indicates the spiritual temperature and health of an individual. When a person is acquainted with the biblical doctrine of the Lord’s Day and its significance, delight in the Sabbath as God means it to be kept is a good indication of what a person thinks of God Himself. The absence of Sabbath observance in the churches today is indicative of the low state of religion and of delight in the God of holiness and grace. The Sabbath has always come into its own in times of true spiritual revival and will do so again.

There are those who say this may be all very well for Christians but we should not seek to impose Sabbath keeping on society. But the Sabbath is a creation ordinance; it belongs to the moral law; and it was made for man.

When the Sabbath goes from the community, religion and morals also eventually go. It is common today to divorce morality from religion and many indignantly protest that they can be perfectly moral without subscribing to any belief in God or accepting biblical doctrines and precepts. Such persons repudiate claims that there is a correlation between the attitude to the Fourth Commandment and morality. However, rejection of divine authority at this point reveals an attitude to God which cannot but permeate the whole moral outlook and undermine the foundations upon which conformity to absolute moral standards depends. The rapid decline in morality undoubtedly reflects resentment at that interference with personal sovereignty over one’s own life and arrangements which is seen to be embodied in the Fourth Commandment.

Daniel Wilson describes the Sabbath as “the institution which sustains Christianity”. We may well say that, if it were not for the Sabbath, it would be very difficult for any public testimony to God, and the preaching of the gospel and corporate worship to be maintained, for the glory of God and the conversion and edification of sinners. Wilson also claims that the Sabbath “sustains those duties and habits, those virtues of the heart, that mildness and humanity, that regard to truth and the sanctity of an oath, that sense of conscience and prospect of the tribunal of Christ, which strengthens human authority, preserves the peace of communities and nations, and is the bond of human society”.<sup>2</sup> There is so much involved even in the outward observance of the Lord’s Day which makes its recognition beneficial to body,

<sup>2</sup>*The Divine Authority and Perpetual Obligation of the Lord’s Day*, p 181.

mind, morality, family life, social relations, business efficiency and national life, not to speak of its contribution to the spiritual well-being of individuals and communities.

There are many complaints today regarding the breakdown of family life, law and order, respect for people and institutions. Many are suffering from high levels of stress. One of the significant factors which contributed to the stability of family life and the social cohesion of communities in the past was the shared freedom on the Sabbath from the routine of other days. The observance of a day when all except those engaged in works of necessity or mercy are free at the same time from the lawful activities of other days would be highly beneficial economically, socially and morally as well as spiritually. It would also, directly and indirectly, reduce the strain on the services of those whose work is necessary, such as doctors, nurses and the police.

The regular return of a day when the monotonous routine and often-hecktic frenzy of other days ceases would not only be beneficial to physical and emotional health and family togetherness, but it would also help to restore a sense of order and help people to evaluate the real priorities of life. Such a general ban on everyday working may be regarded by some as an interference with personal liberty. It would rather be a corrective to the selfishness which makes so many people pursue their own agendas, no matter what stress and inconvenience that imposes on others required to work as a consequence.

To quote James Walker once more: “We may come to find our strict Sabbath doctrine something more vital, having deeper reaches than we had ever dreamed; in so far as it is not a mere human superstition, like the rites of the Church of Rome, but that by which the Scottish conscience has been kept in loving connection with a Lawgiver and an objective law, as our religion has thereby been endowed with a faith and reality which may be greatly helpful in a trial-day. I think there is everything to make us cling in this matter to the old paths, instead of being ashamed of them. Suppose you took it in no other way, who shall say what Scottish intellect owes to the Sabbath? It had a thinking day as well as a worshipping day in that.”<sup>3</sup>

Apart from the specific ways in which a neglected Sabbath is detrimental to the overall well-being of individuals, families, businesses and social and national life, there is the consideration that it deprives the guilty nation which has abandoned the once-acknowledged Sabbath of the blessing of the Lord. “Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the Sabbath day? Did

<sup>3</sup>*The Theology and Theologians of Scotland 1560-1750*, pp 185-186.



not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? Yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the Sabbath” (Neh 13:17,18).

Professor Douglas F Kelly, in a chapter on the Sabbath in his book *Creation and Change*, makes the point that “the Creator made us to exist as creatures who need to rest one day out of seven. To go against our creaturely limits tends to cause disintegration in both personality and body (and relationships). To transgress this basic rhythm which is built both into the universe and into the human soul and body is to transgress a kindly-bestowed blessing of God, and is to ask for increasing personal stress and disturbance, if not breakdown.”<sup>4</sup> But he goes on to say: “Without denying the far-reaching benefits of ‘remembering the Sabbath day to keep it holy’ on mankind’s physical and emotional life, the creation account seems to reach a great crescendo on the seventh day, showing that the entire creation is directed towards the Sabbath, so that something far greater than physical or even societal well-being is intended here”.<sup>5</sup> The title of Dr Kelly’s chapter on the Sabbath is: “The Sabbath Day and the Orientation of the Whole Created Order Towards Worship of God”.

Let us rejoice in the Lord’s Day as a day devoted to God – a day which is good for the soul, for the mind, for the body, for the family and personal relationships, for the Church and for society; a day which honours God; a day which acknowledges that Jesus Christ is Lord and that our lives are only what they ought to be when lived in dependence upon the grace of the crucified and risen Saviour and in accordance with His revealed will.

In his article, “I love the Lord’s Day”, Robert Murray M’Cheyne gave three reasons for his love of the Lord’s Day: (1.) *Because it is the Lord’s Day*, and we love everything that is Christ’s; (2.) *Because it is a relic of paradise and a type of heaven*: “A well-spent Sabbath we feel to be a day of heaven upon earth”; (3.) *Because it is a day of blessings*. After exhorting his readers to prize the Lord’s Day and to defend it, M’Cheyne asked several “serious questions”, one of which was: “Did you ever meet with a lively believer in any country under heaven – one who loved Christ, and lived a holy life – who did not delight in keeping holy to God the entire Lord’s Day?” Such a question would be heard with astonishment by multitudes in the Reformed and Evangelical churches today because the concept of the Christian Sabbath has been so generally lost. May grace be given to those of us who profess still to value the Lord’s Day to find and to demonstrate in our own lives that there is nothing more delightful than a Sabbath kept in any measure “according to the commandment”.

<sup>4</sup>P 241.

<sup>5</sup>P 242.

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

## 1. Patrick Hamilton – Scholar and Preacher

*J H Merle d'Aubigné*

Patrick Hamilton was probably born in 1504 and was brought up at Kincavil, near Linlithgow. He was the son of Sir Patrick Hamilton, a close relation of the King, James IV.

The Hamiltons had many relations in Paris and Sir Patrick decided to send his son there at the age of 14. It is probable that Hamilton entered the College de Montaigu, to which Calvin was admitted four or five years later. His father, who destined him for the great offices of the Church, had already procured for him the title and the revenues of abbot of Fearn, in Ross-shire, and from that source the expenses of Patrick's journey and course of studies were to be defrayed. It was the moment at which the fire of the Reformation, which had just been kindled on the Continent, began to throw out sparks on all sides. One of these sparks was to light on Patrick's soul.

Hamilton had a great love for the writings of the philosophers, but soon a purer light than that of Plato and Aristotle shone in his eyes. As early as 1520 the writings of Luther were being read with eager interest by the students in the colleges of Paris, some of whom sided with the Reformation, others against it. Hamilton was listening to these disputations and reading the books which came from Germany when suddenly he learned of his father's tragic death. He was profoundly affected by the news and began to seek God with more ardour than before.

Hamilton took the degree of Master of Arts about the close of 1520 and returned to Scotland, probably in 1522. He was admitted to the University of St Andrews that year and in 1523 became a member of the faculty of letters. St Andrews had powerful attractions for him; no other university in the kingdom had on its staff so many enlightened men. The studies which he had pursued, the knowledge he had acquired, and the rank he held, gave him distinction among his fellow-disciples. George Buchanan, a severe judge, looked on him as a "young man of great intellect and of astonishing learning". Hamilton held the hypocrisy of the monks in such abomination that he never would adopt either their dress or their way of life; and although he was abbot of Fearn he never took up residence in his monastery.

<sup>1</sup>Abridged from *The History of the Reformation in the Time of Calvin*, vol 6. It is hoped to include, DV, in future issues of this Magazine, further articles using d'Aubigné's account of the events leading up to the Scottish Reformation to mark the four-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary this year of this important event. However, his death prevented d'Aubigné going further than 1546.

He dreamed, as all reformers do at the outset of their career, of the transformation of the Church. He resolved to seek the imposition of hands, "in order," says John Frith, "that he might preach the pure Word of God". Hamilton did not, to be sure, preach at that time with the boldness and the power of a Luther or a Farel. He felt himself weak; and being lowly-minded, he was content to impart faithfully the truth which he had received.

In 1524, and at the beginning of 1525, some books of Luther and of other Reformers were brought into Scotland by merchant ships. When dispersed over the country, they produced the same effect as they had in France and Italy. Gawin Dunbar, the old bishop of Aberdeen, was the first to become aware of this. He discovered one day a volume of Luther in his own town. He was in consternation when he saw that the fiery darts hurled by the hand of the heretic were crossing the sea. As similar discoveries were made at Linlithgow, St Andrews and other places, the matter was brought before parliament. "Damnableness are spread abroad in various countries", said the partisans of Rome. "This kingdom of Scotland, its sovereigns and their subjects, have always stood fast in the holy faith since they received it in the primitive age; attempts are being made at this moment to turn them away from it. Let us take all needful steps to repulse the attack."

Consequently, on 17 July 1525, Parliament enacted that no person arriving in any part of the kingdom should introduce any book of Luther or of his disciples or publish his opinions except for the purpose of refuting them. About four days after the closing of parliament, the sheriffs received orders from the King's council to set on foot without delay the necessary inquiries for discovering persons who might possess any books of Luther or profess his errors. "You will confiscate their books," the order ran, "and transmit them to us." The Reformation, which till that time had been almost unknown in those regions, became suddenly a public fact, proclaimed by the highest body in the realm, and was on the point of attracting everyone's attention. The enemies of the truth were preparing its triumph.

The reform of the Church by the Church itself would not suffice; nor would reform by the writings of the Reformers; a mightier principle was needed, the Word of God. This Word does not merely communicate bare knowledge; it works a transformation in the will and in the life of man, and as soon as such a change is accomplished in two or three individuals in any place, there exists a church.

Early in the summer of 1526 merchants of Leith, Dundee, St Andrews, Montrose and Aberdeen sent out their ships laden with Scottish products to the ports of the Netherlands, there to procure commodities for which there was a demand in Scotland. At that time there was no prohibition against bring-

ing the New Testament into Scotland; only the books of Luther and other Reformers were forbidden. These Scottish seamen took advantage of this; and one day Hacker, who had received orders from Henry VIII to burn all the Testaments translated by Tyndale (“for the preservation of the Christian faith”), learned at Berg-op-Zoom, that the Scottish traders had put on board many copies of the Gospels as they were on the point of setting sail for Edinburgh and St Andrews. He started with all speed for the ports which had been named to him: “I will seize those books,” said he, “even though they be already on board the ships, and I will make a good fire of them”. He got there: but the Scottish vessels had sailed the day before.

The citizens of Edinburgh and the canons of St Andrews were reading that astonishing Book as well as the citizens of London and the canons of Oxford. There were monks who declared that it was a bad book “recently invented by Martin Luther”, but the reading of it was not forbidden. At St Andrews especially, these sacred writings soon shed the light of the gospel over the souls of men. Patrick Hamilton, already acquainted with the great facts of salvation announced in this Book, and gifted with keen intelligence and a Christian heart, knew how to set forth in a concise and natural manner the truths of which he was convinced. He knew that there is in the Scriptures a wisdom superior to the human understanding, and that in order to comprehend them the illumination of the Holy Spirit is needed. He believed that Scotland required the spoken word, which would call restless and degenerate souls to seek the living water which springs up unto eternal life.

God was then preparing His witnesses in Scotland, and the first was Patrick Hamilton. He laid open the New Testament; he set forth the facts and the doctrines contained in it; he defended the principles of the gospel. In early 1527, he publicly preached in the cathedral and elsewhere the doctrines taught by Martin Luther. We have no further particulars of his preaching, but these are sufficient to show that at this period the people who gathered in the ancient churches of Scotland heard this faithful minister announce that “it is not the law, that terrible tyrant, as Luther said, that is to reign in the conscience, but the Son of God, the King of justice and of peace, who, like a fruitful rain, descends from heaven and fertilises the most barren soil”.

Circumstances were by no means favourable to the Reformation when Hamilton began to preach at St Andrews the glad tidings of free salvation through faith in Christ. The clergy took alarm, some priests and monks went to the castle and pleaded with Archbishop Beaton to deal with the young preacher. He ordered an inquiry; those with whom Hamilton had engaged in discussion were heard, and some of his hearers gave evidence as to the matter of his discourses. He was declared a heretic. Beaton would perhaps have been

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content with seeking to bring Hamilton back by fatherly exhortations into the paths of the Church. But by the side of the primate were some fanatical spirits, especially his nephew David, and they redoubled their urgency to such a degree that the Archbishop ordered Hamilton to appear before him to give account of his faith.

Hamilton perceived the fate that awaited him; his friends perceived it too. Everyone was moved with compassion; even some of his enemies, touched by his youth, the attractiveness of his character and his position in society, wished to see him escape death. There was no time to lose, for the order of the Archbishop's court was already signed; several implored him to flee. What should he do? All his desire was to show to others the peace that filled his own soul; but at the same time he knew how much he lacked. Who could better enlighten and strengthen him than the Reformers of Germany? Who more able to put him in a position to return afterwards to preach Christ with power? He resolved to go. Two of his friends, Hamilton of Linlithgow and Gilbert Wynram of Edinburgh, decided to accompany him.

Preparations for their departure were made with the greatest possible secrecy. Hamilton took with him one servant, and the three young Scotsmen, finding their way furtively to the coast, embarked on a merchant ship. This unlooked-for escape greatly provoked those who had set their minds on taking the evangelist's life. "He, of evil mind, as may be presumed, passed forth of the realm," said the Archbishop's confidants. No, his intention was to be instructed, to increase in spiritual life from day to day. He landed at the beginning of May 1527 in one of the ports of the Netherlands.

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

*John Flavel*

Let us consider the unchangeableness of God in its relation to His *promises* and to His *providence*.

1. The immutability of God lets down its comforts to believers through the *promises*. There is no other way by which they can have a comforting admission into this attribute of God, and six sorts of promises in the Word make it of great use to their support and comfort in an evil day.

(1.) The unchangeable God has engaged Himself by promise to be with His people at all times and in all straits: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" (Heb 13:5). The life, joy and comfort of a believer lies in the bosom of that promise; the conclusion of faith from thence is sweet and sure: if I

<sup>1</sup>An edited extract from Flavel's *The Righteous Man's Refuge*, in vol 3 of his *Works*.

shall never be forsaken of my God, let hell and earth do their worst, I can never be miserable.

(2.) The unchangeable God has promised to maintain their graces and thereby His interest in them for ever: "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good: but I will put My fear in their hearts, that they shall not turn away from Me" (Jer 32:40). There the Lord undertakes for both parts in the covenant, His own and theirs: "I will not turn away from them". O inexpressible mercy! Yea, but Lord, the poor believer may say, that is not so much my fear as that my treacherous heart will turn away from Thee. No, says God, I will take care for that also: I will put My fear into thy heart, and thou shalt never depart from Me.

(3.) The unchangeable God has promised to establish the covenant with them for ever; so that those who are once taken into that gracious covenant shall never be turned out of it again: "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee" (Is 54:10).

(4.) The unchangeable God has secured His loving kindness to His people by promise, under all the trials and smarting rods of affliction with which He chastens them in this world; He has reserved to Himself the liberty of afflicting them, but has bound Himself by promise never to remove His favour from them: "I will visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless My lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer My faithfulness to fail" (Ps 89:32,33).

(5.) The promises of a joyful resurrection from the dead are grounded upon the immutability of God: "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob: God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Matt 22:32). Death has made a great change upon them but none upon their God. Though they be not, He is still the same; therefore they are not lost in death but shall assuredly be found again in the resurrection.

(6.) The promises of the saints' eternal happiness with God in heaven are founded on His immutability (1 Cor 1:8,9, Titus 1:2). By all which you see what a pleasant lodging is prepared for the saints in the unchangeable promises of God, amidst all the changes and alterations here below.

2. Once more let us view the unchangeableness of God in His *providence* towards His people. Whatever changes it makes upon us or whatever changes we seem to discern in it, nothing is more certain than this: it holds one and the same tenor, pursues one and the same design, in all that it does upon us or about us. Providences indeed are very variable, but the designs and ends

of God in them all are invariable and the same for ever. It is noted in Ezekiel 1:12 that the wheels “went every one straight forward; whither the spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went”. As it is in nature, so in providence; you have one day fair and bright, another dark and full of storms; one season hot, another cold. But all these serve to one and the same end and design: to make the earth fruitful; and the end of all providences is to make you holy and happy. That is a sweet promise, “All things work together for good to them that love God” (Rom 8:28). This is the compass by which all providences steer their course, as a ship at sea does by the chart. But, more particularly, let us note the unchangeableness of God in His providences of all kinds, effective and permissive, and see in them all His unchangeable righteousness and goodness.

(1.) It must needs be so, considering the unchangeableness of His decree: “The foundation of God standeth sure” (2 Tim 2:19). Providences serve the decree, but never frustrate it; they execute it, but cannot make it void. So you may say of the most afflicting providences, as David does of the stormy winds: They all fulfil His word (Ps 148:8).

(2.) The wisdom of God proves it; He will not suffer His works or permissions to clash with His designs and purposes. Divine wisdom shows itself in the steady direction of all things to their ultimate end. To open this in some particulars, consider:

[1] Does the Lord permit wicked men to rage and insult, persecute and vex His people? Yet all this while providence is in its right way; it walks in as direct a line to your good as when it is in a more pleasant path of peace: “Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good” (Jer 24:5). Israel was sent to Babylon for their good. This aids your faith and patience: “Here is the patience and faith of the saints” (Rev 13:10). So by Him “also we have access by faith into this grace, wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God; and not only so, but we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience” (Rom 5:2,3). By this you are weaned from, and mortified to, this world.

[2] Does the Lord in His providence order many and frequent, close and smarting afflictions for you? Why, here is the same design managing as effectually as if all the peace and prosperity in the world were ordered for you. The face of providence indeed is not the same, but the love of God is still the same; He loves you as much when He smites, as when He smiles on you: for what are His ends in afflicting you, and what the sanctified fruits of your afflictions? Is it not (1) To purge your iniquities? “By this therefore

shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his sin” (Is 27:9). (2) To bring your hearts back to God? “Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept Thy word” (Ps 119:67). (3) To enliven you in your duties? Let the best man be without afflictions, and he will quickly grow dull in the way of his duty.

[3] Does God let loose the chain of Satan to tempt and buffet you? Yet He is still the same God to you as before. Only observe His ends in that permission and you will find that, by these things, the Lord is leading you towards that assurance of His love which your souls long after. Few Christians attain in any degree to a settled state of soul but by such shakings and combats; the end of these permissions is to put you to your knees and blow up a greater flame and fervour of spirit in prayer (2 Cor 12:8). Thus these permissions of providence eventually prove great advantages and blessings to you.

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## Believers’ Sins<sup>1</sup>

*Charles Hodge*

Objections are sometimes made to the Protestant doctrine on justification because believers recognise themselves as justly exposed to condemnation for their present shortcomings and transgressions, and also because the Scriptures thus represent them and constantly speak of God as punishing His people for their sins. How is this to be reconciled with the doctrine that they are not under condemnation – that, as regards them, justice has been fully satisfied, and that no one can justly lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?

It must be admitted – rather, it is fully acknowledged – that every believer feels himself unworthy of the least of God’s mercies. He knows that if God were to deal with him according to his character and conduct, he must inevitably be condemned. This sense of ill-desert or demerit is indelible. It is a righteous judgement which the sinner passes, and cannot but pass, upon himself. But the ground of his justification is not in himself. The believer acknowledges that in himself he deserves nothing but indignation and wrath, not only for what he has been, but for what he now is. This is what he feels when he looks at himself.

Nevertheless, he knows that there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, that Christ has assumed the responsibility of answering for him at the bar of God, that He constantly pleads His own perfect righteousness as a reason why the deserved penalty should not be inflicted. If punishment

<sup>1</sup>An edited extract from Hodge’s *Systematic Theology*, vol 3.



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were not deserved, pardon would not be gratuitous; and if punishment were not felt to be deserved, deliverance could not be received as a favour. The believer's continued sense of ill-desert is in no way inconsistent with the Scriptural doctrine that the claims of justice in regard to him have been satisfied by his substitute and advocate.

There is a great difference, as is often remarked, between demerit and guilt. The latter is the liability in justice to the penalty of the law. The former is personal ill-desert. A criminal who has suffered the legal punishment of his crime is no longer justly exposed to punishment for that offence. He, however, thinks of himself no better than he did before. He knows he cannot be subjected to further punishment, but his sense of demerit is not thereby lessened. And so it is with the believer: he knows that, because of what Christ has done for him, he cannot be justly condemned, but he feels and admits that in himself he is as hell-deserving as he was from the beginning. The heart of the believer solves many difficulties which the speculative understanding finds it hard to unravel. And it need not inordinately trouble the believer if the speculative understanding is not fully satisfied with the solution, provided he is sure that he is under the guidance of the Spirit by the Word.

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## Book Reviews<sup>1</sup>

*Sermons on Genesis, chapters 1-11*, by John Calvin, published by the Banner of Truth Trust, hardback, 867 pages, £20.00.

These sermons were preached in St Peter's Church Geneva to the citizens there between 4 September 1559 and 23 January 1560. They are numbered 1-49 (though number 27 is missing) and they are here translated into English for the first time by Dr Rob Roy MacGregor.

Calvin's custom apparently was to expound the Old Testament on weekdays and the New Testament on the Sabbath. In his introduction, John R de Witt tells us that the sermons, "were taken down in shorthand and then transcribed by the indefatigable Dennis Raguener and several scribes under his supervision. What this means is that the preacher himself never had the leisure to edit them with an eye to publication." As well as this, the reader must bear in mind that, while Calvin "had a clear idea in his mind what he intended to say, a plan drawn from the text for the day, he spoke without a manuscript, expanding upon and carefully applying the various aspects of truth found in the passage". The result of this is that "on one level the sermons can hardly be compared with the exact and carefully formed prose of the *Institutes* or the

<sup>1</sup>Both volumes reviewed here are obtainable from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom.

commentaries. On the other level . . . they enable us to see and hear a man aflame with love for the Lord and His Word, a preacher who spent himself utterly in the work of summoning his people to repentance, faith and holiness.”

There can be no doubt that all this made Dr MacGregor’s task more difficult, and it makes the reading of the sermons at times somewhat difficult, for, while there is a simplicity of language, it takes some effort in places to work out what Calvin is really saying. However any such effort is amply rewarded.

The sermons take us through the early chapters of Genesis up to verse 4 of chapter 11; so they cover the vital doctrines of the Creation, the Fall and the Flood. Speaking in Sermon 6 of the honour bestowed upon man by being made in God’s image, Calvin says, “Now man is a creature noble above all others and has in himself worth that exceeds all visible creatures. That is why God deliberates when He prepares to create him. . . . It is noteworthy then that God begins to consult at this point, not that He encounters problems, but He does so in order to express better the infinite kindness He wanted to extend to us.”

Later in that same sermon Calvin says: “Now by [the] wretched Fall, we have been stripped of that image. How is it that we are so dense and ignorant? How is it that all our senses are darkened, indeed completely depraved, our affections corrupt and filled with evil? How is it that instead of truth there is only falsehood in us, and instead of being upright we are twisted and counterfeit? What is the origin of all that? Our father Adam, being alienated from his Creator, was given over to shame and ignominy, and God stripped him of his excellent gifts with which He had previously adorned him”.

After dealing with the Fall, Calvin goes on to the murder of Abel and Cain’s subsequent punishment (Sermon 26). Referring to Cain going to the land of Nod, or trembling, Calvin claims that the land took its name from Cain’s trembling, which was the mark God put on him, and that while he went out from God’s presence, he was in that land like a criminal in chains, “unable to move without being forced to look his Judge square in the face”.

In drawing lessons from this, which Calvin constantly does in these sermons, he says, “That was not written for him but for our instruction. We see then in the first place, that that detestable man was not touched so deeply that he repented of his evil and the enormity of his crime. He became hardened like a desperado and no longer thought about God, who had previously been his judge. Now, as I said, this applies to us so that we will know that true repentance is not in some sudden fright which will strike us, but it will take root in our hearts so that the evil will distress us the rest of our lives as we think about our past sins and recall them every day.”

In speaking of the effect of the Flood on Noah and the application of this

to the believer, Calvin comments: “It is very certain that Noah, seeing such a sight, was deeply distressed in his heart. He was not a log or a stone, and although he detested men’s sins, there is no doubt he still loved them as God’s creatures.” Calvin goes on to say that Noah “experienced great anguish” and “was not glad and delighted in the ark, but . . . he groaned and sighed. In fact, that is how God’s children rejoice in the good He has done for them. Sadness, regrets, anxieties and fears must be mixed with the joy of the Holy Spirit, whom God gives them” (Sermon 38).

In this manner of exposition and application Calvin continues throughout these sermons. So the reviewer was sorry when he reached the last sermon, on Genesis 11:1-4, about the building of Babel, and entitled, “Ambition, Its Consequences and Cure”. This volume of sermons is highly recommended and will bring home to any serious reader how vitally important these early chapters in Genesis are and the numerous lessons they contain for every age and generation.

(Rev) W A Weale

*Christ and the Future, The Bible’s Teaching About the Last Things*, by Cornelis P Venema, published by the Banner of Truth Trust, paperback, 224 pages, £7.50.

In the year 2000 this author’s *The Promise of the Future*, a hardback volume of over 500 pages, was published by the Banner of Truth. The present book abridges the previous one, intending to whet the appetite for the more substantial volume. Setting out to pursue “a disciplined study of what God promises in the Bible”, Venema cautions us to keep four biblical themes in mind: “the need to stay within the boundaries of God’s Word; Christ is the Lord of history; ‘Paradise regained’ will surpass ‘Paradise Lost’; and our hope is living and certain” – “a hope nurtured by the Word and a lively expectation of the accomplishment of God’s purpose in Christ”.

Arguing that “what Old Testament believers anticipated on the furthest horizon of redemptive history has become a reality in the person and work of Jesus Christ” – though “something further lies on the horizon of history” – Venema affirms that “the promised future is already a reality in the person and work of Jesus Christ, the crucified, resurrected and ascended Lord, but it is not yet fully present to the believer, who must walk by faith not sight”.

After outlining the Biblical teaching on individual eschatology, the book moves on to general eschatology, the study of the last things in relation to the appearance of Christ in glory at the end of time. To put this study in true perspective the author begins with what he calls “the Future of Christ” – His return being “the great centrepiece of biblical hope and expectation for the future”.

An interesting chapter identifying the preaching of the gospel to all nations and the conversion of the Jews as *gracious* signs of the times is followed by discussion of signs of *judgement*. The author considers that these signs of judgement characterise the whole current age but intensify as the coming of Christ draws nearer. It becomes clear that Dr Venema's outlook is A-millennial, even before he discusses the various views of the millennium: Historic Pre-millennialism, Dispensational Pre-millennialism, Post-millennialism and A-millennialism. Before evaluating these views the author considers Revelation 20 and the relation between chapters 19 and 20, mainly giving reasons for repudiating the common Pre-millennial interpretation but also claiming the passage for the A-millennial view.

In evaluating the various millennial views Venema argues conclusively against the claims of Pre-millennialism and Dispensationalism to be biblical, examining their various defences in the light of the truth that the second coming of Christ "is a consummating event at the close of the age". Identifying himself as an optimistic A-millennialist, Venema rejects what he calls golden-age Post-millennialism. He contends that to "golden-age Post-millennialism the kingship of Jesus Christ is not so much a present as a future reality", but this is contradicted, for one thing, by the centuries-long struggle of the largely Post-millennial Scottish Church for the "Crown Rights of the Redeemer" here and now and for the Establishment Principle.

His claim that Post-millennialism fails to take account of the fact that throughout history the Lord's people will be partakers of the sufferings of Christ is not an argument against Post-millennialism – which anticipates that the nations will come under the influence of the truth in an unprecedented way – but against a view which transfers to earth what will only be experienced in heaven. The assumption that Post-millennialism "alters the focus of the believer's hope for the future" and "encourages an outlook that focuses on the millennium rather than the return of Christ" may be based on the defect of some who have held this position but is not an implication of the position, as has been demonstrated in the lives and writings of many who maintained it and yet were obviously "looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God" (2 Pet 3:12), Samuel Rutherford being a notable Scottish example. The apostles themselves were "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (1 Thess 2:13) though that day was not imminent and they expected to die before it came.

Three chapters deal, on the whole, in a clear biblical manner with the resurrection of the body, the final judgement and the doctrine of eternal punishment, described by Charles Hodge as "concomitants of the second advent". Differing views may be taken of the author's description of the resurrection body as

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“material and fleshly” and of his contention for degrees of gracious reward for the redeemed in heaven. The “horror of hell as a place of unceasing, consciously-felt punishment” is clearly, faithfully and persuasively asserted over against universalism, annihilationism and conditional immortality.

The final chapter deals with the new heavens and earth. This reviewer is not persuaded by arguments for the renovation of what already exists rather than a new creation. An alleged parallel with the identity of the Christian’s present body and the gloriously-transformed resurrection body may have some plausibility but is not derivable from the statements of Scripture regarding the destruction of the present creation and the inauguration of the new heavens and earth.

This is a clearly written and comprehensive treatment of its subject, and conclusions with which one disagrees provoke thought regarding one’s own position rather than resentment at misrepresentation. Unlike *The Promise of the Future* this book has no indices. The New American Standard Bible (1979) has regrettably been used rather than the Authorised Version.

(Rev) H M Cartwright

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## Protestant View

### Paedophile Priests Shielded by Roman Catholic Diocese

The Ryan Report (by the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse in Eire, appointed by the Irish Government), published last May, exposed something of the horrors of the sexual and other abuse inflicted on children since 1936 by Roman Catholic priests and nuns (see July 2009 issue, p 221).

Now a new, shocking report (from the Commission of Investigation into the Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin), published in November, focuses not so much on the abuse itself as on the way the Roman Catholic authorities in Dublin handled it. The Report reveals that for decades successive archbishops, (the late John McQuaid, Dermot Ryan and Kevin McNamara, and retired Cardinal Desmond Connell), deliberately suppressed evidence of “widespread” abuse by priests. The knowledge that the Church authorities had of the abuse is shown by their taking out insurance cover in 1986 against potential heavy compensation claims by the abused.

A statement by the Irish Government says that the Report “shows clearly that a systemic, calculated perversion of power and trust was visited on helpless and innocent children in the Archdiocese over a 30-year period. . . . We pledge, on behalf of the Irish people, that we will do whatever is necessary to make sure that the dark days of sexual abuse of children, compounded by

cover-up and complicity, are over for good.” However, the Roman Catholic Church and the State have been so intertwined that government agencies – as well as the police, politicians, lawyers, members of the caring professions and the media – looked on the Church as above the law. Senior police officers regarded priests as “outside their remit”, says the Report. “There are some examples of Gardai actually reporting complaints to the Archdiocese instead of investigating them.”

The Report is not only a sharp reminder of the horrible scars which still pain the victims of abuse but also of the vile consequences, in many instances, of the enforced celibacy of Rome’s priests. It also points to the baneful influence of Rome upon the Irish government. In fact, Archbishop John McQuaid had a hand in drafting the modern Irish constitution of 1937 and had a close partnership with Taoiseach Éamon de Valera.

No doubt this latest report will have a further weakening effect on Rome’s influence in Ireland. May its power soon be completely weakened, and the eyes of people and governments everywhere opened to see its true nature as the doomed spiritual Babylon by whose sorceries nations are being deceived (see Rev 18:23). NMR

### **Self-Sourging by the Last Pope**

Karol Wojtyla, the last Roman Catholic pope, regularly scourged himself with a whip, according to the Vatican Commission which is considering whether to pronounce him a saint. The information is released in order to show how holy the man was, but it rather confirms how blinded he was spiritually. According to Vatican staff he did it as a “bodily penance” and “in remorse for his sins”.

The reason for this bizarre and barbaric self-harm, which is also known as “mortification of the flesh”, “discipline” and “flagellation” is to atone for one’s sins, claims one Roman Catholic book, and also to “subdue the unruly inclinations of the flesh and bring them into subjection to the stern commands of conscience”. Some Roman sources say that bodily penance is not common among their people but a former editor of the *Catholic Herald* recently wrote, “The truth is that the habit of mortification within Catholicism continues to be widespread today”. Of course, Rome claims the authority of Romans 8:13: “Mortify the deeds of the body”, and similar passages, for the practice. But true mortification is a spiritual activity, not self-inflicted abuse of the body. It is sanctification, “whereby we die unto sin and live unto righteousness”; and it takes place through union with Christ and the work of the indwelling Spirit of God (Rom 8:13), so that the believer is enabled to obey the exhortation: “Be ye holy for I am holy.”

Anyone who tries to rid himself of sinful desires by torturing his body

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shows that he is yet dead in trespasses and sins; and his endeavours to atone for his sins by self-scourging are a direct denial of the sufficiency of the atoning death of Christ and striking evidence that he is under a strong delusion and believes a lie (2 Th 2:11). May multitudes of Roman Catholics be led to behold the blessed Lamb of God so that their sin may be taken away, and to rely on the effective working of the Holy Spirit to enable them to lead holy lives. NMR

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## Notes and Comments

### Worldliness

This subject, which is of great significance to the Church today, was suggested by an interesting article in the current edition of the *Scottish Church History Society Records*, entitled *Charlotte Chapel, Edinburgh: Evangelical Social Involvement*. In that article we read: “In 1939, the minister, Sidlow Baxter, added a question to the membership application: ‘As a Christian do you see the necessity of dissociating yourself from all such practices and pleasures as might be considered questionable or of a worldly nature?’ When the stock of membership applications ran out in 1975, the elders agreed that the paragraph about dissociating ‘from . . . practices . . . of a worldly nature’ was unduly negative, and they replaced it with a more positive question”.

Certain expressions of worldliness are readily discerned, although today in many circles watching films, dancing, clubbing and pubbing, reading mind- and soul-contracting if not polluting literature, participation in some of the less-than-profitable activities of the internet, and such-like pursuits, are regarded as acceptable alternatives to what is dismissed as narrow-minded Puritanism. Professing Christians consider themselves just like other people in these respects, except that they have an added, hope-inspiring dimension to their lives. Indeed the kind of musical, artistic and acting scene which attracts those who seek their pleasure elsewhere than in Christ is given a Christianising overhaul and introduced into the Church as an attraction. Even within theologically and liturgically conservative circles, accommodation can be made in one’s personal life to practices generally discountenanced not long ago.

Of course Christians are like other people in that they are human and have their being in an environment which God created for the benefit of soul and mind and body and in which they are to glorify and enjoy God. Recognising the universe as the creation of their God and Saviour, they can find pleasure for the whole person in admiring and making good, active use of all that is

around them. As Calvin put it, “there is not an atom of the universe in which you cannot see some brilliant sparks at least of His glory”. In that sense no one can be more at home and more happy in the world, and make a better use of it, than a Christian.

But we live as sinners in a world defiled by sin. Worldliness is something other than making a legitimate use of the good things God has provided for us. While worldliness has discernible forms from which we must flee, it can exist and control where its recognised forms are not seen and its presence is not even suspected. In *Evangelicalism Divided*, Iain H Murray says, among other things, that “worldliness is departing from God. It is a man-centred way of thinking; it proposes objectives which demand no radical breach with man’s fallen nature; it judges the importance of things by the present and material results; it weighs success by numbers; it covets human esteem and wants no unpopularity; it knows no truth for which it is worth suffering; it declines to be a ‘fool for Christ’s sake’. Worldliness is the mind-set of the unregenerate. It adopts idols and is at war with God. Because ‘the flesh’ still dwells in the Christian he is far from immune from being influenced by this dynamic.”

It is so easy to be motivated, even in something that may be right in itself, by considerations characterised by love of the world and the things that are in the world rather than by love of the Father. The things that are in the world and ever pressing for possession of our hearts are “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life”. We need ever to hear the alarm sounding in our ears: “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world” (1 Jn 2:15-16). Worldliness is basically a system of thought, a way of thinking and of looking at things, originating in the fallen nature of man. Undoubtedly the worldly spirit contributes greatly to the weakness of the Christian and the Church at present. Regenerate people need to seek grace to have every thought brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor 10:5) – to have their whole outlook on life in keeping with the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us (Rom 5:5). HMC

### **Scientology**

The so-called Church of Scientology has twice been in the news recently. In October it was convicted of fraud and fined €600 000 in France, and in November Senator Nick Xenophon denounced it in the Australian Parliament as “a criminal organisation that hides behind its so-called religious beliefs”.

The cult was founded in 1954 by the American, L Ron Hubbard. It has bizarre “beliefs” such as that the human race willed itself into existence trillions of years ago and then willed the material universe into being. The result was that humans were trapped in their physical bodies and need to be



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“untrapped” by means of Scientology. For this benefit, they have to pay large sums of money and the cult is extremely rich, boasting several film stars and pop stars among its adherents. Whether any member of the cult credits these “beliefs”, one rather doubts, but they like the idea that through counselling and their own efforts they are going to achieve “fulfilment” and “release”. Hubbard himself had no such “beliefs”. In a letter of 1953, found during an FBI raid on the Scientology headquarters, he discusses the possible financial advantages of marketing Scientology as a religion. His eldest son, who left Scientology in 1959, described his father as being “one of the biggest con-men of this century”.

The cult has several times been involved in serious criminal activities such as burglary, theft of US Government documents, kidnapping, and an almost-successful attempt to “frame” one of its critics as a terrorist. It is highly aggressive towards anyone who tries to investigate it. The online encyclopaedia Wikipedia has banned Scientologists from editing articles because of their systematic attempts to conceal information about the cult. Many countries are reluctant to recognise Scientology as a religion and it does not currently enjoy charitable status in Britain.

One cannot help noticing the similarities between Scientology and Romanism: the absurd beliefs (such as transubstantiation and the “assumption” of the Virgin Mary into heaven); the rich and powerful leaders who benefit from the religion but are utterly cynical of its doctrines; the deluded and defrauded adherents; the ruthless attempts to suppress criticism; and the ready employment of lies to protect the religion. One great difference is that Romanism is sufficiently influential for countries to be reluctant to deal with it as they do with Scientology. But our Protestant laws against Romanism, such as the Act of Settlement, are in principle no different from laws which countries are ready to pass against Scientology. If a religion is highly dangerous, then the state should legislate against it to protect its citizens. Romanism, with its greater plausibility, power, and ambition of world dominion, is vastly more dangerous than Scientology. If governments regard the manoeuvres of Scientology with suspicion, how much more wary should they be of the manoeuvres of Rome.

*DWBS*

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## Church Information

### **Synod Resolution on the People’s Postcode Lottery**

The Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, met on Wednesday 20 May 2009 at Inverness, resolves to warn our people against the sin of gambling

in all its forms as presently encouraged and promoted in this country. In particular, the Synod wishes to draw the attention of the people of the Church and nation in Scotland to the “People’s Postcode Lottery” launched in January 2008 and advertised in as “Scotland’s own charity lottery”. This lottery has an English version which was launched in 2005.

Similar to the National Lottery, this scheme encourages contributors to buy weekly tickets, costing £2 and paid by direct debit from their bank account. It is shared among residents of randomly-picked postcodes in Scotland. Subscribing to this gambling service is portrayed as an act of charity, and is widely advertised as such in newsletters and television promotions. Several leading Scottish charities receive hundreds of thousands of pounds from this source. The Synod deeply regrets the endorsement of this gambling service by the First Minister of Scotland, Alex Salmond MSP, who praised the “wonderful achievement” of the organisers. We reject his assertion that others should “take inspiration from those working tirelessly for the People’s Postcode Lottery”.

The Synod reminds the people of Scotland that gambling is sinful and is not a proper motive to the charity which the Bible recommends. While the Synod heartily encourages giving of our substance and wealth to worthy charitable causes and re-affirms the obligation on Christians to “do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again” (Luke 6:35), it strongly rejects as dishonouring to God this and all other forms of charity by lottery. The Synod further warns our rulers of the corrosive nature of gambling on the morality which ought to motivate true charity.

### Meetings of Presbytery (DV)

**Northern:** At Dingwall, on Tuesday, February 23, at 2 pm.

**Southern:** At Glasgow, on Wednesday, February 17, at 4.30 pm.

**Western:** At Lochcarron, on Tuesday, March 23, at 1 pm.

**Australia & New Zealand:** At Auckland, on Friday, January 29 at 2.30 pm.

## Acknowledgement of Donations

**The General Treasurer** acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:

*Jewish & Foreign Missions Fund:* Anon, for African Missions, £250; Anon, for Thembiso Children’s Home, £200; The Barn Chapel, Suffolk, £410.

**Congregational Treasurers** acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:

**Edinburgh:** *Congregational Funds:* Friend, Cymru, £125.

**Ness:** *Communion Expenses:* Mrs MMK, Stornoway, £20 per Rev AWM. *Congregational Funds:* Friend of the Cause, £20; Anon, £20; AMK, £20 per CT. *Sustentation Fund:* Friend, Stornoway, £20 per Rev AWM.

**Raasay:** *Congregational Funds:* Estate of the late John Cumming, £2897.97; Anon, “in loving memory”, £150.

**Stornoway:** *Communion Expenses:* Anon, £120. *Congregational Funds:* CMD, £20; £45. *Jewish & Foreign Missions Fund:* CMD, for Zimbabwe Mission, £20.

# FREE PRESBYTERIAN PLACES OF WORSHIP

## Scotland

- Aberdeen:** 2 Alford Place, AB10 1YD, Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Tuesday, 7.15 pm. Rev D W B Somerset BSc DPhil, 18 Carlton Place, Aberdeen, AB15 4BQ; tel: 01224 645250.
- Bracadale: Struan:** Sabbath 12 noon; Wednesday 7 pm (fortnightly). Contact Rev J 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 Peter's Park Rd. Contact Dr T Martin; tel: 01843 866369.
- London:** Zoar Chapel, Varden St, E1. Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Rev J MacLeod MA, 6 Church Ave, Sidcup, Kent, DA14 6BU. Tel: 0208 309 1623.

## Northern Ireland

- Larne:** Station Road. Sabbath 11.30 am, 6.30 pm; 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 Optland, 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: dlevytskyy@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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