

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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**November: Second Sabbath:** Glasgow; **Third:** Wellington; **Fourth:** Chiedza.

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

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## The Puritan Outlook on Life

The word *Puritan* was originally a nickname, applied to those who, in the late sixteenth century, were anxious to have the Church in England further purified, in the light of Scripture. The name continued to be applied to their spiritual successors down to the end of the following century; among the best known of them were Thomas Watson, John Owen and John Flavel. The Puritans have long been caricatured as killjoys, people who could not be happy if they saw others enjoying themselves. It is, of course, a caricature, but the Puritans did have a different outlook on life from their detractors, past and present – one which was altogether better.

Critical to the Puritan outlook were the questions: What does the Bible say about our lives? What has God made known about how we should live? Scripture determined the Puritans' sense of right and wrong. They had submitted sincerely to the voice of God speaking in Scripture; it was their dearest wish to live their lives in absolute obedience to His will. So it was to the Bible they turned for an answer to such questions as these: Which activities are forbidden and which are permitted? Which are wrong and which should be encouraged? In particular, which activities may one engage in with the hope of finding pleasure and which activities must one shun?

A secular historian of the twentieth century, with a special interest in the Puritan period, has brought out remarkably well the essence of the Puritan outlook: "The life of the Puritan was in one sense a continuous act of worship, pursued under an unremitting and lively sense of God's providential purposes and constantly refreshed by religious activity, personal, domestic and public".<sup>1</sup> Accordingly the Puritan was conscious of his duty to live to God's glory. He knew his Bible; he knew that Paul had written: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor 10:31); and he knew that this particular verse summed up the teaching of the whole of Scripture on the fundamental attitude we should have to God and His authority.

There was nothing mechanical about the Puritan's knowledge of Scripture;

<sup>1</sup>Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, Clarendon Press, 1991 reprint, p356.

it was woven into the very warp and woof of his thinking. He knew, in the words of Nehemiah Rogers, that “God will be ever most glorious, let men be ever so obstinate or rebellious. Yea, God will have glory by reprobates, though it be nothing to their ease; and though He be not glorified of them, yet He will glorify Himself in them”.<sup>2</sup> Yet while he understood that God so ruled in providence that He would take glory to Himself from every event that takes place, even from the most ungodly actions of those who will be finally lost, the Puritan was very conscious of his own *duty* to glorify God in everything that he did.

Now if God is ruling over everything that happens, it is glorifying to God to trust Him always. Accordingly Thomas Watson emphasised that “God is to be trusted when His providences seem to run contrary to His promises”. He illustrated this from David’s experience: “God promised David to give him the crown, to make him king; but providence turns contrary to His promise; David was pursued by Saul, was in danger of his life; but all this while it was David’s duty to trust God” (p 230). The genuine Puritan sought to trust God in all circumstances, however discouraging; he had learned that the promises are totally reliable, for Scripture told him: “God is faithful”.

In answer to the question, “Why must we glorify God?” Thomas Watson gives five helpful answers: (1) Because He is our Creator; “He gives us our being . . . (2) Because God has made all things for His own glory. . . . It is true, they cannot add to His glory, but they may exalt it; they cannot raise Him in heaven, but they may raise Him in the esteem of others here. . . . (3) Because the glory of God has intrinsic value and excellence; it transcends the thoughts of men and the thoughts of angels. . . . Better men and angels be annihilated than God should lose . . . one beam of His glory. . . . (4) Creatures below us and above us bring glory to God . . . Shall everything glorify God but man? . . . (5) We must bring glory to God because all our hopes hang upon Him. . . . The child that is good-natured will honour his parent by expecting all he needs from him.”<sup>3</sup> And in typically-Puritan fashion, all this is backed up by a multitude of Biblical quotations; Watson is profoundly conscious of where all authority comes from, and he puts his thinking into practice by referring to particular scriptures.

The Puritans did not forbid recreation, but it was obvious to them that their general principles for life apply here also; the teachings of Scripture provide direction. Among William Perkins’ rules are the following: “Our recreations must be profitable to ourselves and others, and they must tend also to the glory

<sup>2</sup>Quoted in I D E Thomas, ed, *A Puritan Golden Treasury*, Banner of Truth Trust, 1977, p 120. Other references to this book are indicated by page numbers only.

<sup>3</sup>*A Body of Divinity*, Banner of Truth Trust, 1965 reprint, pp 9-10.

of God; the end of our recreation must be to refresh our bodies and minds; recreation must be moderate and sparing, even as the use of meat and drink and rest” (p 233). Perkins was conscious that we are responsible to God for the use of our time; we cannot afford to waste even one moment of it.

The suggestion that the Puritan’s life was, at least in one sense, “a continuous act of worship” may seem a gross exaggeration. But it is no more so than Paul’s direction, “Pray without ceasing” (1 Th 5:17), is unreasonable – and prayer, after all, is a significant element in worship. We need not be surprised that the Puritan Matthew Poole understood the significance of this direction; he explained it as requiring us “to preserve a heart disposed to pray at all times, and to mingle ejaculatory prayers with the several actions of our lives; our wants are continual . . . and therefore we ought to pray continually”. John Bunyan emphasises the connection between prayer and godly living: “Prayer will make a man cease from sin, or sin will entice a man to cease from prayer” (p 211). And John Flavel points out the connection between prayer and happiness: “That which begins not with prayer seldom winds up with comfort” (p 211). The teaching of these men was eminently practical, and timeless.

It was no hardship for the sincere Puritan to engage in worship, whether in private, or with the rest of his household at their family devotions, or with the rest of the congregation in public. Without a doubt, there were among them those whose heart was not in their worship, for they were unconverted; they did not have the heart of a Puritan. And if Paul had to complain about his imperfections (as in Romans 7), the Puritans were by no means immune from such shortcomings also, and doubtless not all the converted had attained to the same degree of godliness. But by God’s grace they pursued the way of holiness, seeking God’s glory in what they did, and deriving real benefit from the means of grace which they so conscientiously followed.

Do we seek for such benefit from all the means of grace, and from preaching in particular? Watson counsels: “If you would have the preached Word effectual, come with a holy appetite to the Word. The thirsty soul is the thriving soul. In nature one may have an appetite and no digestion; but it is not so in religion. Where there is a great appetite for the Word, there is for the most part good digestion. Come with hungerings of soul after the Word, and desire it, that it may not only please you but profit you.”<sup>4</sup>

The Puritan outlook on life may seem totally out of date and totally unrealistic in this modern, busy age. It is not. It is what we all ought to aspire to. To “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness” was a Puritan principle because it was a Scripture command. It should be our principle also.

<sup>4</sup>*The Ten Commandments*, Banner of Truth Trust, 1965 reprint, p 214.

# Christ's Gracious Invitation<sup>1</sup>

A Sermon by *Archibald Alexander*

Matthew 11:28. *Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

As a stream of living water to a traveller perishing with thirst, as a skilful physician to someone sick with a dangerous disease, as a reprieve to a condemned criminal – so is the voice of mercy to the self-condemned sinner. In ten thousand instances, these have been blessed words to heavy-laden, weary souls; they can never lose their interest by age or repetition. As food is equally relished by the hungry appetite after being eaten a thousand times, so the precious promises of God bring the same refreshment to the soul, however often they have been received by faith already.

The Christian does not desire novelties; all he wants is a heart to relish the truths which have stood on the sacred page from the beginning. There is a fulness of riches in God's Word, if only we possess the key of faith to unlock the ark in which they are contained. One great excellence of the holy Scriptures is that they never lose their power and sweetness. After the lapse of ages, God's promises to believers are as firm and consolatory as when first made; and Christ's invitations to sinners are as full and as free to those who now hear the gospel as when they were first uttered.

If Christ, while on earth, had spoken no more than the few words of our text, they ought to be esteemed infinitely more precious than all the golden sayings of the heathen sages. Let us be truly thankful for such a gracious invitation, proceeding from the lips of Him who always spoke as never man spoke; and let us pray the Father of lights to prepare our hearts to appreciate the grace exhibited in these divine words of our Redeemer.

**1. Who does the Saviour address here?** Who are the labouring and heavy laden? As the gospel is directed to be preached to "every creature", and as this call contains the essence of the gospel, there is no reason why we should not consider that all who hear the invitation are included, especially as our Lord complains of the conduct of the proud and unbelieving among His hearers for refusing to come to Him: "Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life". All are miserable; all are "by nature the children of wrath"; all are labouring in the vain pursuit of earthly happiness; all therefore may consider themselves invited. None need feel excluded from Christ's invitation.

And to give this universal latitude to the call harmonises with parallel passages of Scripture, especially with that remarkable invitation in Isaiah 55:1-3: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath

<sup>1</sup>Reprinted, with editing, from Alexander's *Practical Sermons*.

no money: come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto Me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear and come unto Me; hear, and your soul shall live." The gracious invitation of the Spirit in Revelation 22:17 is equally free and universal: "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." And the same extent ought to be given to Christ's public invitation at Jerusalem on the last day of the feast of tabernacles: "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink" (John 7:37).

But while we think that this kind invitation ought not to be restricted, we readily admit that it is more applicable to some than others. The poor, the oppressed, the diseased, the persecuted, the lame, the blind, the friendless may have been more particularly in the eye of the blessed Redeemer, for it was given as a proof that He was the Messiah to come that "the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Mt 11:5).

But there is another class to whom the Saviour's address may be considered as still more appropriate: convinced sinners labouring under a sense of guilt, and almost sinking under a burden too grievous to be borne. Surely Christ had respect to them, for He came "not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance"; "to seek and to save that which was lost". He came to heal those that are sick, such as are conscious of their mortal maladies. Even those who are groaning under the burden of a blind mind and a hard heart, but think they have no convictions – those who are so prone to exclude themselves – are invited. Yes, Christ speaks to you; He speaks to you more particularly than to others. Do not therefore put away from you the gracious call, as if it was intended only for others; do not ingeniously argue any longer against your own souls; do not by unbelief shut the door of mercy, which the Redeemer has graciously opened.

Neither should penitent believers, burdened with a deep sense of their own defilements and continual imperfections, be omitted when the various classes of heavy-laden sinners are designated. The great Shepherd of the sheep always has special regard to the weak of His own flock. He carries the lambs in His bosom, and gently leads those that are with young. The kind condescension of the Son of God to the humble penitent is, in many parts of Scripture, set forth in remarkable words. He was described in prophecy as one who would "comfort all that mourn"; and who would give "unto them that mourn in Zion

... beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness". "Thus saith the Lord, Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word." "The bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench."

Let those then who are walking in darkness and troubled in spirit – let all who are harassed and cast down with manifold temptations and sore inward conflicts, which cause them to express their feelings in groanings which cannot be uttered – attend to the gentle accents of mercy which proceed from the lips of Jesus. Unworthy and wretched as you feel, He does not pass you by. He addresses you, not in the language of reproach or condemnation, but in that of tender affection. Yes, He calls you also to come to Him.

**2. The character of Him who gives the invitation.** Though we need to know more than the name of this divine Person, even this is "as ointment poured forth". His name is Emmanuel, "God with us". The angel told Joseph: "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins". When our Lord asked His disciples who He was, Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God". And because He was born of a woman and made flesh, He often speaks of Himself as "the Son of man". When Isaiah speaks of the child that should be born, of the Son that should be given, he adds, "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace". And in John's sublime vision of the white horse, "He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True. . . . His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns, and He had a name written that no man knew but He Himself. And He was clothed in a vesture dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God." He is also styled, "King of kings, and Lord of lords".

His names not only indicate the dignity of His person, but also the offices He executes. He is the Redeemer, the Saviour, the one Mediator, the great High Priest, the Advocate, the great Shepherd of the sheep, the Judge of quick and dead. Immediately before He uttered this gracious invitation, He declared His divine knowledge and power: "All things are delivered to Me of My Father; and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him". No one could utter these words without the highest blasphemy but He who was God with God in the beginning – He who, "being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God".

If the Redeemer was not omnipotent, His people could not trust in Him; if He was not omniscient, it would be vain to call upon Him. In Christ there is the most wonderful union of majesty and condescension, of heavenly glory



and human tenderness. While He is "God over all", He is not ashamed to call His people brethren. He took not on Him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham. And the reason why we may come boldly to the throne of grace is because "we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities". And the reason He assigns here, to induce us to come to Him without hesitation, is that He is "meek and lowly in heart".

**3. How must we come?** Not bodily, for this is impossible; where Christ now is we cannot come. Many came near the Saviour, when He sojourned on earth, who never derived any benefit from Him. His murderers came in contact with Him, when they seized, bound, buffeted, scourged and crucified the Lord; and the traitor Judas lived in His family, travelled in His company for years, and kissed Him in Gethsemane, but this will only render his doom the more intolerable. It had been better for that man never to have seen Jesus – yea, never to have been born.

Coming to Christ is a spiritual approach, in which the Saviour is grasped by the enlightened mind in His true character. It is a full persuasion that He is indeed the Son of God and Saviour of the lost. It is the act of a convinced, distressed soul, fleeing from the coming wrath to take shelter under the outstretched wings of His mercy. It is an exercise of humble confidence in the Redeemer of sinners, that He will deliver it from all the evils which are felt or feared. There is nothing difficult in this act to the soul under the influence of the Holy Spirit; nor does it require a long time. It is nothing but the soul's cordial consent to receive Christ as a complete and only Saviour.

The weary and heavy-laden sinner, almost overwhelmed with the burden of his guilt, having sought relief in other quarters, at length hears the kind invitation of Jesus, "Come unto Me". He is enabled to give full credit to the sincerity of the call and to see the excellence and suitability of Christ as a divine Saviour; and is persuaded that every blessing needed to secure eternal salvation is treasured up in Him. The sinner receives Him as He is freely offered in the gospel, and willingly commits all his immortal interests into Christ's hands and resolves to submit to Him and obey Him in all time to come. In all this, though the soul is operated on by almighty power, it is conscious of no restraint, only the sweet constraint of the love of Christ. But the more powerful this irresistible drawing towards Christ, the more freely does the soul seem to act. Under the sweet influence of grace, the affections go forth to Him spontaneously, who now appears altogether lovely; and the weary soul experiences a sweet rest by casting all its burdens on the Lord.

The principal act of faith is trust. "Blessed are all they that trust in Him." And having once tasted the blessedness of confiding in Christ, we never think of seeking any other refuge. The believer is not only persuaded that

Christ is the way, but the only way and so He is prized above all price. "Unto you . . . which believe, He is precious." Well may the name of Jesus sound sweet to the believer's ear, because there is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved. No wonder he values above rubies, or kingdoms, that precious cornerstone which God has laid in Zion – though rejected by the proud and self-righteous. He so values Christ because he is sure that it is a safe foundation on which to build for eternity, and that "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ".

Coming to Christ is not an act to be performed only once; it is to be continually repeated. Every day we need His aid, and every hour we should have recourse to Him. He allows His disciples the privilege of friends, to come as often as they will; and He invites them to come with confidence to His throne of grace "to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need". So intimate is the communion between Christ and believers that there is a mutual indwelling – Christ in them the hope of glory, and they in Christ as members of His body or as branches engrafted into Him, the true vine.

Perhaps the anxious inquirer still asks, How must I come? I answer: Come poor, naked, helpless and unworthy; come renouncing all dependence on your own righteousness. If you attempt to come with a price in your hand, you will be rejected. Christ must be received as our only Saviour. He will have nothing to do with those who place any confidence in their works or religious privileges. He will not save you on account of your religious privileges or natural amiableness or diligent attention to outward duties. In these respects you cannot go beyond the rich young ruler, who lacked one thing, the main thing. In punctilious observance of external duties and rites, you cannot exceed the Scribes and Pharisees; yet your righteousness must exceed theirs, or you can never enter the kingdom of heaven.

You must come to Christ for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. As long as sinners think they are "rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing," they will not come to Christ. But when they are convinced that they are "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked," they will be inclined to hear His counsel, and come to Him to buy gold tried in the fire that they may be rich, eyesalve that they may see, and white raiment that they may be clothed and that the shame of their nakedness do not appear. In short, do not delay, thinking that you may make yourselves better or prepare your hearts to receive Christ, but come at once; come as you are. If you are sick, apply at once to the Physician. If you are defiled, come to the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. If you are burdened with guilt, come to a crucified Saviour, whose blood cleanses from all sin. If you are miserable, Christ promises you rest if you come to Him.

Are you kept back by a deep sense of unworthiness? This is the very reason why you should come; Christ came to save sinners. The deeper your guilt, the greater your need of this Saviour. He saves none because their sins are small; He will reject none because their sins are great. He is as willing to receive the chief of sinners, as the amiable youth whose life has been stained with no acts of gross transgression. Where sin has abounded, grace shall much more abound. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom," says Paul, "I am chief." Come then with confidence, trusting in this great assurance: "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out".

As your case is urgent and dangerous, let me entreat you to come at once. Make no delay. Delays are dangerous. *Now* is the accepted time. *Now* is the day of salvation. Enter while the door of mercy is open. Work out your salvation before the night comes when no work can be done. And the work you are required to perform is to believe on Him whom God has sent. You do not need to leave your seat to do so. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Help is near. The Deliverer is present. It is as easy now to apply to Him as it ever can be. Take words and return to Him. Fall down before Him with confession and humble supplication, "for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved". Venture on Him, for you are perishing where you are, and you will only perish if He should slay you. But if you are rejected at His feet, you will be the first so to perish; for God cannot lie, and He has promised to receive the soul that comes.

**4. What will be gained by coming to Christ?** Only one thing is promised: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you *rest*". But in this, everything good is included. Only they who are in a state of happiness are at rest, and true happiness can only be found in God's favour. Can that man be at rest whose sins are not pardoned, whose passions are unsubdued, and on whom the wrath of God abides? "The wicked are like the troubled sea, which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." The wicked are like the evil spirit which went through dry places, seeking rest and finding none. They are constantly pursuing a phantom which for ever eludes their grasp. There is no foundation of solid rest in this world. Noah's dove, which found no rest even for the sole of her foot, is an emblem of the restless condition of men.

But the same dove, returning to the ark, is an emblem of the distressed soul fleeing to Christ from the deluge of coming wrath. And how kind is that hand which is stretched out of the ark to take in the weary soul! Then indeed rest is enjoyed. "I will give you rest", says the gracious Redeemer. And when He gives this precious blessing, it is found to be a sweet, permanent rest. It

is in no way different from the peace that Christ so emphatically promised: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." It is Jesus' declared will that the joy of His people should be full; so He says to His disciples, "Your sorrow shall be turned into joy"; "your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you".

Delightful indeed is that peace which Jesus not only speaks, but breathes into the soul; and sweet is that rest which the weary soul experiences when it takes refuge, under the outstretched wings of His mercy, from the gathering storms of wrath. The troubled spirit not only rests from fear and remorse, but also from its own fruitless struggles, from the unprofitable works of self-righteousness; it finds complete repose in Christ's perfect righteousness. A believing view of the cross causes the heavy burden of guilt to fall off. Although the coming soul bows to the yoke of Christ and takes up His burden, yet love makes His yoke easy and His burden light.

How sweet is the calm which the first exercise of faith in Christ produces! The light of day is not so pleasant to the eyes of one long immured in a dark dungeon as the light of his Father's reconciled face to a prodigal returned from his wanderings. It is justly a day of feasting and rejoicing when one that was lost is found. How affectionately does the believing soul repose on the bosom of Jesus! And when His love is shed abroad in the heart, how precious is the communion it enjoys! Here truly it has found rest. But while in the body, these bright views are often obscured. While the Bridegroom is present, the bride rejoices, but when He is absent, she mourns and often inquires, "Saw ye Him whom my soul loveth?" If we lose sight of the object of faith; and, especially if sin is indulged and the Spirit grieved, darkness and sorrow will again visit the soul. Rest can only be found by coming again to Jesus, from whom it was first received; and as often as we come to Him, we find his promise verified; rest is obtained.

But whatever seasons of calm repose may be enjoyed here – whatever moments of "joy unspeakable and full of glory" – these are a mere foretaste of the river of pleasure which flows from the throne of God. Here pilgrimage is through a wilderness. But soon all the sorrow of God's people shall cease, and they shall enter the rest which remains for them.

The last conflict of the believing soul is in death, for this is the last enemy. The last darkness which will ever be experienced is that of the valley of the shadow of death. "The bitterness of death" is the last which will ever be tasted. The swellings of Jordan are the last waves of sorrow which shall ever roll over such a soul. The last fiery dart which the enemy shall ever be permitted to aim at the friend of Christ will be cast then. And the last consciousness of in-

dwelling sin will be experienced in this hour. Admitting then that this is a dark passage, a painful agony, yet even here the Shepherd of Israel can give us rest. Even here, the Captain of salvation can make us more than conquerors. In the midst of the darkness of death, a celestial beam often shines to guide the heavy-laden traveller. Even the sting of death may be absent, and all fear and all doubt removed. Rest may be enjoyed on a dying bed. The pious dead sweetly rest in the bosom of Jesus. How calm, how confident, how abstracted from earth, how heavenly they sometimes appear, before they forsake their clay tabernacle, knowing that they have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens!

But we should not make too much of the comforts of a dying hour. Some of God's dear children pass through this gloomy way with scarce a ray to guide them. Some who in life enjoyed pleasing prospects of future bliss have had their day turned into night, and the death scene has been to them a tremendous conflict. The powers of darkness have been let loose to assault them; the light of divine favour has been withdrawn. Added to this, the confusion of physical derangement has contributed to spread over the pious mind a dense cloud. But still Christ is in the cloud; Christ has not forgotten His promise: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee". He will shield His own from real evil and will speedily grant a rich recompense for every pang.

He especially knows how to sympathize with those dying in agony and under darkness; it was His own sore experience. How bitter was that cry above all others: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" And in proportion as the agony is severe will He be prompt to grant deliverance. Desertion at such a time may be permitted so that the soul may know something of the intensity of the suffering of the Redeemer at that moment. But it is soon over. The passage, though dark, is short and the transition is glorious. When the sweetness of the promised rest is first enjoyed, it will bear some proportion to the bitterness of the death just escaped.

Heaven will be as truly a rest to those who die under a cloud as to those who then anticipated heaven. We need make no distinction; rest is promised to all, and the joy of all shall be full. If some experience greater delight than other believers, it is because they can take in more of the glory of that boundless ocean in which all swim. There indeed is rest: from labour, from trouble, from persecution, from sickness, from conflict and temptation, from doubt and fear, from sin – in short, rest from every evil, and the enjoyment of every good of which a purified, glorified, immortal soul is capable.

This then is the motive to induce you to come to Christ. All this and much more is included when He says, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest".

# Hugh MacDonald<sup>1</sup>

*Rev Walter Scott*

Hugh MacDonald passed away, after a brief illness, early on the morning of Sabbath, 12 March 1905, aged 82. He was a worthy representative of a generation in Australia which is now almost extinct. He hailed from the West Highlands of Scotland and was one of the early settlers of the new country. The sterling piety which he exemplified marked him as one of a different race from the younger Australian. He was a man upright in his generation, “one that feared God and eschewed evil”.

Hugh MacDonald was born at Swordle, near Kilchoan, Ardnamurchan, in 1823. It was the time of the evictions. He was only a lad of about 15 when his widowed mother, with her two sons Hugh and John, like so many others in the Western Islands at that time, left their native shores, never to return. Their departure is still remembered by a few who yet survive in the district. They sailed in the emigrant ship *Brilliant* and, after a lengthened voyage of several months, landed safely in Sydney.

Mr MacDonald retained, to the last, vivid impressions of the scenes and companions left behind. In particular, he never forgot the old school near Swordle, and the occasional preaching there of Rev Alexander MacIntyre of Strontian, latterly of Geelong and Clarence River, Australia. Mr MacIntyre was the first who afterwards ministered in the historic floating church after the Disruption. When a site for the Strontian Free Church was refused, an iron church, seated for 750, was built on the Clyde, towed to the district and moored in Loch Sunart – access from both sides of the Loch being by boats.

In course of time, Mr MacIntyre followed his countrymen to Australia. During his visits to the Clarence River, where numbers of the Scots had settled, Mr MacDonald took his turn in conveying the eminent preacher to the places of service. For many years there were no roads for vehicles, and a boat was the only means of travelling. Such assistance, for many miles at a stretch, was cheerfully rendered. Often like a lion in the pulpit, Mr MacIntyre was gentle as a lamb in private. These Australian Highlanders flocked to “Mr Alexander’s” preaching from far and near.

<sup>1</sup>Taken with editing from *The Free Presbyterian Magazine*, vol 11, which has recently been reprinted by Free Presbyterian Publications (480 pages, £18.00). This is an example of the spiritual obituaries which it contains, along with much other profitable material. During his ministry, Rev Neil Cameron contributed many obituaries to the *Free Presbyterian Magazine*. A selection of these obituaries was brought together in *Ministers and Men of the Free Presbyterian Church*, and it also has been recently reprinted (240 pages, £12.50). Both these volumes are hardbacks. At the time of writing this article, Rev Walter Scott was labouring in the Grafton area; he later became Free Presbyterian minister in Chesley, Ontario.

Mr MacDonald had been deprived of his father in childhood but had the rare advantage of a godly mother, whose maiden name was Ann Cameron. A singularly-devout Christian, her memory is still fragrant wherever she was known. Her influence and example, during so many years, were quietly moulding his character. These were especially beneficial to him under the hardships which he was so early called to face. If he had to bear the yoke in his youth, it was also given him from a child to know the Scriptures.

Strangers in a strange land, the young family made their way, on arrival, to the Hunter River, an opening agricultural district to the north of Sydney. Later Mr MacDonald went farther north with his mother and settled on land on the Upper Clarence River. More distant from Sydney, everything there was dense scrub or forest. And when at length the home was prepared, in the fields of maize and sugar cane on either side and green pasture lands stretching far behind, nowhere out of Scotland could a truer hospitality have been found than at Dunfield, for many years his well-known residence on the river bank. It was equally available for catechising or cottage services.

Two events which marked Mr MacDonald's career before he left the Hunter River may be noticed here. There, about 1847, he found his wife, Ann Macfarlane. She was a true helpmate but predeceased him by about 30 years – leaving him surrounded, however, by 11 children, all except one of whom still survive.<sup>2</sup> The other event was the spiritual change which came over him a little prior to 1850. He had long been in soul trouble. He had been attending the ministrations of Rev William MacIntyre, of Maitland, afterwards of Sydney; and – according to his own testimony to a close friend – he found peace when one of Mr MacIntyre's sermons was blessed to him. His life from that time reflected the change. When, soon after, he left the Hunter River for the Clarence, it was as one whose heart the Lord had touched. He had many vicissitudes to come through, but the profession then made was consistently maintained to the very last. That he was a fearer of God could not be hid.

He hungered for the Word and knew the voice of the Good Shepherd. Few had a keener discernment of any deviation from the truth, however veiled. He himself was scrupulous to walk in an even path in the matter of Church fellowship. He adhered to the Free Church testimony. He made conscience of attending the means of grace in connection with it, when possible, but he would not meddle with those who were given to change. He was an example in his observance of the Sabbath, and trained his family to keep it holy. Although hospitably disposed, he drew the line at Sabbath visiting – a prevailing practice with the majority – so it became generally understood that to him it was the Lord's day. The Psalms and *Shorter Catechism* were the study of

<sup>2</sup>The article originally appeared in August 1906.

his children. One drawback may be mentioned: his insistence on conducting family worship always in Gaelic – a language which the younger part of the family had never been taught to understand. Others have acted similarly, but with evident disadvantage to their children.

When there was no regular public service, he was in his element at home with his Bible and other sacred reading, in Gaelic and English. Thomas Boston was a favourite with him, Thomas Halyburton also. He esteemed very highly the elder Thomas M'Crie's writings. He had great mental vigour and such a thirst for spiritual knowledge that, with all his industriousness otherwise, he read largely in the works of the Puritans and Reformation divines. This proved most helpful to him in the comparative dearth of such public worship as he could countenance. He was latterly afflicted with a certain deafness, by which he frequently lost much of the sermon, but it would afford him pleasure to be able to add, as he often did, that he had heard all the prayers.

Yet he greatly desired "the sincere milk of the Word", and what he missed of the preaching he sought to have supplied in reading. When he lighted on anything savoury to the soul, he so feasted on it as to be lost to all around him. This continued till within about a month of his end, although for long he had the use of only one eye. When opportunity occurred, he loved to propose, for mutual consideration, a portion of Scripture, on which he had been ruminating. At last, there were few like-minded with whom he could thus converse. He sadly lamented the desolations, as well as his own felt deadness. "Woe is me, for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grape gleanings of the vintage: there is no cluster to eat: my soul desired the first ripe fruit. The good man is perished out of the earth" (Mic 7:1,2).

Mr MacDonald was cautious and deliberative in his manner, yet he was not one to hide his light under a bushel. He was not backward to question even comparative strangers as to their faith or their religious sentiments – even the Indians who were working for him. Such was his way of thinking and his superior intelligence, and much reading enabled him to speak to advantage. He liked especially to know one's attitude to the Bible, in these days of infidelity. When, at any time, the response coincided with his own convictions, the glow which lit up his face showed it. He was uniformly kind to the coloured races, and many of them loved him.

One of the old school, Mr MacDonald not only appreciated the principles of the Reformation Church, but was able to give a reason of his hope when necessary. He stood aloof from the defections in doctrine and worship of the Union Presbyterian Church, deploring their looseness, as he termed it. The expulsion of the more faithful brethren, in 1884, from the Synod of Eastern Australia likewise grieved him, in common with all the truest friends of the



cause. At that date he, with the greater part of the local congregation, ceased to attend public worship, owing to the minister siding with the prevailing party. For years there was only an occasional service by a visiting minister which he could countenance.

It was not until 1896, soon after the induction of the writer as pastor of the Brushgrove-Grafton charge, that he was able to resume regular church attendance. He was elected to the eldership, but his advanced years precluded him from acting. He proved a strength to the cause in many ways, and his tall, venerable figure is sadly missed. He was a lover of Zion. Her low condition lay much on his heart. He mourned the defection of so many of his countrymen to the Union, and the lapsing of many more from all church attendance. He felt deeply the division occasioned in 1884, and its disastrous consequences. Yet he was not in favour of moving from the constitutional position, and deprecated any union except in the truth. "The Lord doth build up Jerusalem: He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel" (Ps 147:2). He followed the events in the Scottish Churches, and was specially interested in the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, in her rise and subsequent progress. He appreciated *The Free Presbyterian Magazine* and its Gaelic sermon.

Mr MacDonald had a lifetime of almost unbroken health. He was therefore more sensitive, at the last, to the change which indicated that the night was at hand. He often testified to the warnings which such symptoms meant to him. His great concern was to have a sense of preparation in view of a near eternity. His last illness was short. He was deeply affected when he ascertained that death was considered near.

"Do you think that I am prepared?" he asked, adding, "Pray for me, that I may be prepared. I have been a great sinner." He was told that Christ is a great Saviour. "Yes," he replied; "He is a great Saviour to His own people." He was reminded that Christ is a great Saviour for sinners, and the chief of sinners; that it was to the sinner He said: "Look unto Me, and be ye saved," and, "Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out". He wept and remained silent. He was asked: "All your hope is in Christ's death, is it not?" He answered at once, "Where else could it be?" The text was quoted: "The eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy".

He was asked if he remembered how Thomas was made to exclaim, "My Lord and my God", and the Saviour's response to him: "Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed . . .". He finished the verse thus: ". . . blessed are they that saw Me not, and yet have believed." (He was wont to translate from Gaelic when quoting in English.) When he was directed to what David said: "The Lord is my Shepherd", he remarked, "That's in the Twenty-third", and he continued the quotation from verse 4: "Yea, though

I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil". He was overcome, and paused there. When John 14:18 was then quoted, he repeated it thus: "I will not leave you orphans".

At this point he said, "I have a literal knowledge of the Scriptures; but what will that avail without anything else?" In response to the statement, "But they are precious to you", he admitted that he got comfort from them. On being asked, "You would not be without them, would you?" he exclaimed, solemnly: "Ah, it would be very dark without them". Later on he expressed a longing for release from the body. It was his last day on earth. Referring to his suffering, he remarked: "God has not dealt out to me a drop more than I deserved. I needed it all. I have been a great sinner." The words were repeated to him: "Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth". Having fallen asleep, he passed quietly away early on the Sabbath morning.

"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Rev 14:13).

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## John Knox and Preaching the Gospel (3)<sup>1</sup>

*Rev H M Cartwright*

**5. The method of his preaching.** William Taylor records the well-known fact that "it was his habit to speak from a few notes which were made on the margin of his Bible, and which remained the sole written memoranda of his discourse. . . . Yet [his sermons] were as carefully premeditated as if they had been written. . . . He prepared with care . . . and remembered with accuracy. He did not speak extemporaneously, in the sense of never having thought upon his subject until he was required to speak, but he had fixed beforehand his line of thought, and there is reason to believe also, in many cases, the very words in which he had determined to express himself. Yet, though he premeditated very carefully, he was able also to introduce what was given to him at the moment."

Depending on the Spirit as he did, Knox, in his thorough preparation for preaching, drew on his knowledge of the Biblical languages and of the theological writers of ancient and modern times and used the commentaries available to him. Though he was by his circumstances a man of action, he was very much a diligent student. Taylor draws attention to one of his letters in which "he describes himself as 'sitting at his books' and contemplating

<sup>1</sup>This is the final section of a paper presented to the Theological Conference in 2010. The second part, on the content of Knox's preaching, appeared in last month's issue.

Matthew's Gospel by the help of 'some most godly expositions, and among the rest Chrysostom'".

It was his aim in his sermons to be an expositor and open up the mind of the Spirit in His Word. It seems that his sermons, which could sometimes last for over two hours, generally fell into two parts: the first, in which he carefully expounded the text in its original context; and the second, in which he applied the teaching to the hearers.

It was his custom, when opportunity afforded, to preach through books of the Bible, or extended sections of them, in series of sermons. We first find him as a tutor going through the Gospel of John with his pupils and interested hearers. At other times he is working his way through Daniel or Haggai. Provision was made in *The First Book of Discipline* for "the plain reading and interpretation of the Scripture" in the parish churches, so that "by frequent reading, this gross ignorance which in this cursed Papistry hath overflowed all, may partly be removed. We think it most expedient that the Scripture be read in order: that is, that some one book of the Old or New Testament be begun and orderly read to the end. And the same we judge of preaching where the minister for the most part remains in one place. For this skipping and divagation from place to place of Scripture, be it in reading or be it in preaching, we judge not so profitable to edify the Kirk as the continual following of one text." Such a method was considered desirable among a people who might not have access to the Scriptures otherwise.

A F Mitchell draws attention to the insistence of *The Book of Common Order* that "even the ordinary ministers of the church must all be well qualified to preach the gospel of salvation, as many of the common people were unable to read, and could only be saturated with its teaching by the living voice of the preacher". Although hearers today can read and there is much instructive literature available, we should not underestimate the extent to which many are dependent upon the pulpit for their understanding of the truth.

However, he frequently preached from occasional texts to which he was directed as appropriate for particular times and places. These he approached in the same way, seeking carefully to unfold the mind of the Spirit and to bring it home to the minds and consciences of the hearers so as to affect their experience and conduct. He did not take passages out of the context in which they were set and apply them to dissimilar situations. He brought out the meaning of the text in its original setting and then took care, as Taylor puts it, "to establish the parallelism between the original case referred to by the sacred writer and that to which he applied it". It was then that "he set himself to enforce its practical bearing on the circumstances of his hearers and his times". He was always the expositor of the Word of God.

His style was plain and to the point, Taylor attributes to him the first recorded use of the common expressions, calling “a fig a fig”, and “a spade a spade”, and records his own saying that “from Isaiah, Jeremiah, and other inspired writers, he had learned, plainly and boldly, to call wickedness by its own terms”.

**6. The manner of his preaching.** Everyone is acquainted with the teenage James Melville’s description of John Knox preaching in St Andrews in 1571. In English it reads: “I heard him teach there the prophecies of Daniel that summer and the winter following, I had my pen and my little book, and took away such things as I could comprehend. In the opening up of his text he was moderate the space of half an hour; but when he entered to application he made me so [thrill] and tremble, that I could not hold a pen to write. He was very weak. I saw him, every day of his doctrine, go slowly and warily, with a furring of matricks about his neck, a staff in one hand, and good, godly Richard Ballantyne, his servant holding up the other oxter, from the abbey to the parish kirk and, by the same Richard and another servant, lifted up to the pulpit, where he behoved to lean at his first entry; but ere he had done with his sermon he was so active and vigorous that he was like to ding the pulpit in blads [beat the pulpit in pieces] and fly out of it.”

William Taylor suggests that the pulpit “was the glass which focused all his powers into a point and quickened them into an intensity which kindled everything it touched. It brightened his intellect, enlivened his imagination, clarified his judgement, inflamed his courage, and gave fiery energy to his utterances. . . . There, over and above the fervid animation which he had in such large measure, and the glow of enthusiasm which fills the soul of the orator as he addresses an audience, he had the feeling that he was called of God to be faithful, and that lifted him entirely out of himself. He spoke because he could not but speak, and his words went *in* to men, Like these modern missiles which burst within the wounds which they have made, so his words *exploded within the hearts* of those who received them and set them on fire with convictions that flamed forth in conduct. It was apparently impossible for anyone to listen to him without being moved either to antagonism or to agreement, or – for he could be tender also – to tears.”

Knox exemplified the counsel which he gave from his deathbed to his successor Lawson: “My dearest brother Lawson, fight the good fight of faith, and do the work of the Lord joyfully and resolutely”. As M’Crie puts it, “his ministerial functions were discharged with the greatest assiduity, fidelity and fervour. No avocation or infirmity prevented him from appearing in the pulpit. Preaching was the employment in which he delighted, and for which he was qualified by an extensive acquaintance with the Scriptures and

by the happy art of applying them in the most striking manner to the existing circumstances of the Church and of his hearers. His powers of alarming the conscience and arousing the passions have been frequently celebrated, but he excelled also in unfolding the consolations of the gospel and in calming the breasts of those who were agitated by a sense of guilt or suffering under the ordinary afflictions of life. When he discoursed of the griefs and joys, the conflicts and triumphs, of genuine Christians, he described what he had himself known and experienced.”

The vehemence of his preaching when exposing and condemning sin did not arise from self-righteous satisfaction with himself but from the acquaintance he had with sin in himself. In a letter to Mrs Bowes he wrote: “Albeit I never lack the presence and plain image of my own wretched infirmity, yet seeing sin so manifestly abound in all estate, I am compelled to thunder out the threatenings of God against the obstinate rebels, on doing whereof (albeit as God knoweth I am no malicious nor obstinate sinner) I sometimes am wounded, knowing myself criminal and guilty in many, yea in all (malicious obstinacy laid aside) things that in others I reprehend. . . . I am worse than my pen can express. . . . There is no vice repugnant to God’s holy will, expressed in His law, wherewith my heart is not infected.” His vehemence in denouncing sin was that of a man who knew and repented daily of sin in his own heart and life.

It appears that Knox forgot himself in his message, or his message took such possession of him that it affected the manner of his preaching. Taylor uses the expression “sermon-possessed” and suggests that when a man is possessed by what he is saying, as Knox so obviously was, “without any consciousness on his part of what he is doing, it speaks through him – that is, not through his words only, but through his entire personality – and bears him along as with an overflowing flood”.

Knox preached in dependence upon the Holy Spirit. He said himself of these days that “God gave His Holy Spirit to simple men in great abundance”. John Calvin wrote to him in November 1559 expressing his pleasure and that of all the pious people to whom he gave the news, at hearing of the success which had crowned his labours in Scotland: “As we are astonished at such incredible progress in so brief a space of time, so we likewise give thanks to God, whose singular blessing is so signally displayed therein. This affords you ample matter for confidence for the future, and ought to animate you to overcome all opposition.” He adds a comment which shows how well acquainted he was with Knox: “As I am not ignorant how strenuous you are in stirring up other, and what abilities and energies God has endowed you with for going through with this task, I have deemed it superfluous to stimulate the

brethren". Yet his natural talents would not have produced the results which followed his labours had they not been used by the Lord.

**7. The outcome of his preaching.** The outcome of his preaching was such as could only be accounted for by the fact that it came to the people of his generation as it did to the Thessalonians to whom Paul writes, not in word only, "but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance".

While various factors contributed to the success of the Reformation in Scotland, it can be said with confidence that the establishing of a Church founded on the basis of the Bible, with preaching and practice governed by the Word of God, must be traced principally to the preaching of John Knox, and of others who declared the gospel which he proclaimed.

From the very beginning of his ministry, his preaching was blessed to the awakening and conversion of sinners and to the instruction and encouragement and motivating of the Lord's people. The hunger for the preaching and the effect it had often amazed himself. In St Andrews in the early days, in exile on the continent and in England, during his temporary visits to Scotland and after he settled permanently here, it seems that the word of the Lord had free course and was glorified (2 Th 3:1).

He was very conscious that he was but the instrument raised up to help meet the need of souls awakened by God's grace to seek the word at his mouth. On one of his temporary visits to Scotland he was amazed "to contemplate and behold the fervent thirst of our brethren, night and day sobbing and groaning for the bread of life . . . their fervency here doth so ravish me that I cannot but accuse and condemn my slothful coldness". Perhaps we do not always realise sufficiently how much influence the pew has on the pulpit and how much the preacher owes to the yearnings which the Lord has created in the souls of some among the hearers.

Many were delivered from the darkness of their natural state, in which Rome had left them. The Reformation was not only the deliverance of the Scottish people and church from the shackles of Rome but the deliverance of many individual souls from their bondage to sin.

Often his preaching was used to rekindle the hope and courage of dispirited Protestants, as when the congregation had retreated before the forces of their enemies from Edinburgh to Stirling in dismay and despondency and he preached a sermon which rekindled their zeal and resolve. You remember the message which Randolph sent to Cecil in England in October 1561: "I assure you, the voice of one man is able in one hour to put more life in us than five hundred trumpets continually blustering in our ears".

**Conclusion.** It may be thought that what we have been saying about John Knox, about his content and method at least, is just what could be said about

the ideal entertained with regard to any gospel minister today. But it has to be said that, if these have been characteristics of the Reformed ministry in Scotland, hopefully even to the present time, the instrumentality of John Knox in bringing this about must be acknowledged. He it was in Scotland, instrumentally, who restored the pulpit to its place in the Church and the inspired and authoritative Word of God to its place in the pulpit, and restored the biblical idea of the gospel minister as a man whom God has separated and called by His grace and in whom God has been pleased to reveal His Son that he might go and preach Him wherever he is sent.

William Taylor claims that "there are traces of his influence as a preacher to be discovered in the discourses of his successors almost to the present day".<sup>2</sup> The characteristics of Scottish preaching in which Taylor saw the lasting influence of Knox were "its expository character, its vehemence of manner and its unflinching courage".

Knox speaks to us down through the ages. One of the things he says to ministers is: "Let us be frequent in reading (which also over many despise), earnest in prayer, diligent in watching over the flock committed to our charge, and let our sobriety and temperate life shame the wicked and be example to the godly".<sup>3</sup>

The nearer we get to the real man and preacher, John Knox, the more we realise just how searching and humbling looking in such a mirror can be.

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## The Believer's Self-Ignorance<sup>1</sup>

*J C Ryle*

These verses show us how much self-ignorance there may be in the heart of a true believer. We see Simon Peter declaring that he was ready to lay down his life for his Master. We see his Master telling him that in that very night he would deny Him thrice. And we all know how the matter ended. The Master was right, and Peter was wrong.

Let it be a settled principle, in our religion, that there is an amount of weakness in all our hearts of which we have no adequate conception, and that we never know how far we might fall if we were tempted. We fancy sometimes, like Peter, that there are some things we could not possibly do. We look pitifully upon others who fall, and please ourselves in the thought

<sup>2</sup>That "almost" was perhaps indicative of the sad but swift decline evident in the Scottish pulpit generally at the time of Taylor's writing, 1887.

<sup>3</sup>*Works*, vol 6, p 425.

<sup>1</sup>Taken from Ryle's *Expository Thoughts on John*, vol 3, (on John 13:31-38).

that, at any rate, we should not have done so. We know nothing at all. The seeds of every sin are latent in our hearts, even when renewed, and they only need occasion, or carelessness and the withdrawal of God's grace for a season, to put forth an abundant crop. Like Peter we may think we can do wonders for Christ, and like Peter we may learn by bitter experience that we have no power and might at all.

The servant of Christ will do wisely to remember these things. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor 10:12). A humble sense of our own innate weakness, a constant dependence on the Strong for strength, a daily prayer to be held up, because we cannot hold up ourselves, – these are the true secrets of safety. The great Apostle of the Gentiles said, "When I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor 12:10).

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## New Reformed Presbyterian Constitution

*Matthew Vogan*

It is a matter for sincere thankfulness that, in a generation backsliding from previous attainments in doctrine, worship and practice, there should be any desire to make a public testimony to purity of worship and unreserved commitment to the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. This is to be found in the new constitution published by the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland (RPCS) in April 2011.<sup>1</sup> Where the Headship of Christ is set forth we can say with the Apostle Paul: "I therein do rejoice" (Phil 1:18), although sadly it may be undermined by unnecessary division.

***A lack of distinctiveness.*** One might ask, however, what makes the RPCS distinctive from other Presbyterian denominations in Scotland holding to the same principles? How does the RPCS justify maintaining a separate position? We ask these questions out of a concern for truth and the cause of Christ, endeavouring to speak the truth in love. The constitution states that the RPCS "recognises that much of her testimony is shared by members of other Presbyterian Churches in Scotland. As such, while preserving what it sees as essential to a full and genuine witness that is both Reformed and Presbyterian in nature, it wishes others who share the same vision to join with it in order to secure the existence of one established Church, truly Reformed in doctrine, worship, government, and discipline, in each nation."

These aims are right, and clear statements of differences help towards this

<sup>1</sup>There may be matters of practice in the RPCS that undermine an unreserved commitment to the *Westminster Confession*, such as the use of Bible versions which do not adhere entirely to the original texts of the Old and New Testaments that have been preserved pure in all ages by divine providence (*WCF* 1:8).



objective. The aspirations of wider unity also underline, however, the problem of a lack of distinctiveness in the new RPCS constitution. If divisions are sometimes necessary, they must come, in order that those who are approved shall be manifest (1 Cor 11:19). Yet how shall this be evident unless it is possible to distinguish one from the other? Church divisions are delicate matters and we need much wisdom in handling them in a brotherly spirit (Prov 18:19). As Thomas M'Crie observes: "When we are beside the waters of strife, O how needful the perfect illumination, the mystic Urim and Thummim which was upon Levi, whom God 'proved at Massah, and strove with at the waters of Meribah!' (Deut 33:8)".

**The RPCS.** The current RPCS survives from congregations which separated from the RPCS in 1863 and one or two which declined to join the union with the Free Church in 1876.<sup>2</sup> They maintained a separate position on the inadequate grounds that they wished to continue a testimony denying the validity of the political constitution of the United Kingdom, as it did not incorporate the National Covenant and Solemn League and Covenant. The main practical means of maintaining this position was avoiding all political activity, including voting (originally, however, it meant avoiding any interaction with the state through appearing at civil courts, applying for licences, or paying taxes). This position is not included within the new RPCS constitution<sup>3</sup> and there is no reason to suppose that this remains a distinctive of that Church.

Other Churches have the same constitutional commitment to the *Westminster Confession* and purity of worship, give a high recognition to the Second Reformation and the Covenanters and condemn the failure to reverse fully the statutes that cast aside their attainments. How can the smallest of all the denominations maintain its separate position?

The main matter of difference can only be the interpretation of one particular event in Scottish Church history, the Revolution Settlement of the Church of Scotland in 1690. The new RPCS Constitution gives a negative assessment of this event. Before turning to consider that, it may help to sketch out here the history of the RPCS.

The RPCS was established in 1743, although it had its history in the minority part of the United Societies that declined to follow their ministers into the (Revolution) Church of Scotland in 1690. They were without a minister and sacraments until John M'Millan of Balmaghie joined them in 1706. It has been stated repeatedly by the *Hebrides News* in recent months

<sup>2</sup>There was an unsuccessful attempt in 1876 to persuade the civil courts to recognise this separate body as the legal RPCS.

<sup>3</sup>It takes the place of the Historical and Doctrinal Testimony of 1839 and 1837 which was placed in "permanent abeyance" in March.

that the RPCS has a “long, yet clean, history untainted by splits, divisions and schisms”. The little-known truth is, however, that it has been at least as fissile as any other body; there were splits and divisions in 1753, 1822, 1859, 1863 and 1876.

***The Revolution Settlement.*** The new RPCS constitution summarises historical details and recognises that these are matters of contention. It claims that the Church of Scotland was established in 1690 upon Erastian grounds, by which it is meant that it maintained the supremacy of the civil government over the Church. The principles of Christ’s sole Headship over His Church and of the spiritual independence of the Church from the state were, however, fully maintained in that settlement. According to the terms of the *Westminster Confession*, in a situation where the Church is not settled or constituted in point of government, the civil magistrate has the “duty to take order that unity and peace be preserved in the Church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire . . .” (*WCF* 23:3). It should be noted that, while our fathers in the Established and Disruption Free Churches welcomed the Revolution Settlement, they also viewed it as imperfect in various aspects.<sup>4</sup>

The RPCS makes five distinct charges against the Revolution Settlement. The *first* is that, in establishing Presbyterianism, the words, “agreeable to the Word”, were used, which is deemed to be a “lower ground” than to say it is “the system of government mandated by the Word of God”. That this is unnecessarily pedantic can be seen from the fact that the phrase “agreeable to the Word” is found throughout the *Westminster Form of Presbyterian Church Government* and was also used by the Church of Scotland General Assembly – for example, in 1648 in relation to the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*.

The *third* charge is that a considerable number of former Episcopalians were admitted to the Church of Scotland at the Revolution. Yet this was done only upon their subscription to the *Confession* and Presbyterianism. So many Episcopalians were removed from their parishes, however, that it was not possible to fill all the vacancies. As James Durham, points out, failure to censure unfaithful men is not a sufficient impediment to union.<sup>5</sup> The *fourth* charge, that the Revolution Settlement allowed landowners the right to intrude ministers into congregations, is incorrect. Patronage was explicitly rejected by the Revolution Settlement of 1690.

In relation to the *second* charge, that the Settlement “failed to revive many of the free acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland which had been repealed by the King”, we may note that the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland has explicitly condemned, through a Synod resolution (1910),

<sup>4</sup>See particularly the Free Church Act and Declaration of 1851.

<sup>5</sup>*Concerning Scandal*, pp 337-39.

the failure to repeal the Acts Recissory. The *fifth* charge, that the Settlement “failed to acknowledge the Solemn League and Covenant”, is freely accepted. The requirements of the National Covenant were, however, upheld by the Revolution Settlement.<sup>6</sup>

The only substantive issue at stake in these matters is whether or not it was sinful for the Church of Scotland in 1690 to have accepted a scriptural establishment conforming to its historic terms because the same king offering the establishment was not imposing identical terms in a separate nation. The same situation had occurred under James VI and I and Charles I, when faithful men were obliged to protest against real corruptions within the Church of Scotland while remaining within her fold. The fathers of the Church were not required to approve of Episcopacy in England as a condition of the Church being established in Scotland and therefore did not believe that they were being required to sin.<sup>7</sup>

The RPCS constitution also regards the Secession of 1733 and the Disruption of 1843 “as vindication of the decision not to accept the terms of the Revolution Settlement”. This cannot be the case, however, since patronage was not implemented in 1690. It is rather the case that the spirit of separatism showed in 1690 by those who sought to continue outside the Establishment weakened the hands of faithful men in the Church of Scotland and established a precedent for further separation. Alexander Shields asked those who refused the Revolution Settlement how these principles would work out in future church life. “Shall it be in these that for every scandal, defection and corruption not confessed there must be a rupture, division and separation again? Then how long shall that Church last? . . . Must there be endless divisions and withdrawals?” (Prov 17:14).<sup>8</sup>

This question echoes strongly today. Three hundred and twenty years on, it is especially sad that these issues continue to perplex and generate contention although there is little practical import other than continued separation. It seems that there is potential at present for the RPCS to gain congregations in the Highlands at the expense of the Free Church. Are we now to expect a sixth or even in some cases a seventh Presbyterian denomination competing within the communities of Scotland? Unity must only be in the truth and without sin, but where such unity is possible it is a necessity.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup>The National Covenant of 1638 was a revision of the earlier Covenant and so remained unaffected.

<sup>7</sup>It is evident from the *Informatory Vindication* (1687), Head 4, that even the resolute James Renwick would have joined all the other ministers in the Church of Scotland in 1690.

<sup>8</sup>*An Enquiry into Church Communion*, 1747 edn, p 97.

<sup>9</sup>The present writer’s article in *The Bulwark* magazine July-Sept 2010, “Undoing the Reformation: Schism”, explores these issues in greater detail.

Israel and Judah were divided for many centuries after the reign of Solomon. The time came ultimately, however, that they were to be joined together once more (Ezek 37:19). The prophet said that this union would be marked by tears and holy resolve (Jer 50:4-5). After all that has been said, it is this “heart-melting” spirit that we so much need.<sup>10</sup> “Softness of heart in the sense of bygone sin would silence many things among us, that all disputings, writings and printings will not be able to do. Pray for this to the land, as the most effectual mean and way of curing our divisions, and of uniting us in the Lord. It joins Israel and Judah together, whose breach was much greater and of far longer continuance than ours.”<sup>11</sup>

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

*According to Mine Heart, The Collected Letters of James Kidwell Popham*, edited by Matthew J Hyde, published by Gospel Standard Trust Publications, hardback, 419 pages, £14.50.

Here are all the letters of a godly Gospel Standard pastor which are still available. His ministry lasted 63 years, most of it in Brighton. His successor stated that “the secret of his ever-fresh ministry [was] the close exercises of his own soul before God; herein he was kept continually conscious of his own sinner-ship and need, and obtained living supplies from the great fountain head”.

In addition to the letters, the book contains biographical information, a substantial introduction from the Editor and several appendices. The last of these deals with Mr Popham’s connections with Scots: in particular Revs Donald Beaton and J R Mackay, and the latter’s gracious sister Charlotte.

The letters are almost entirely spiritual, giving much sound advice, and encouragement to those who were in trouble. He tells one “friend in tribulation”: “Never give up . . . crying for mercy. . . . Cry on, hard as you feel, full of all manner of sin as you feel.” He comments to another correspondent: “Real religion is an amazing mercy. May much of it fall to us.”

One is disappointed to find Mr Popham write about C H Spurgeon: “The little that seemed right was so counteracted by the much that . . . was undoubtedly wrong”. Dr Hyde justifiably criticises Spurgeon’s support of D L Moody, the American evangelist, but it is surely improper to speak in such disparaging terms of a preacher whose sermons are so full of solid scriptural truth. But it seems clear that, at the centre of Popham’s objections to

<sup>10</sup>The expression belongs to James Durham in his comments on this passage.

<sup>11</sup>Shields, p 17.

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

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Spurgeon, lay the latter's willingness to offer the gospel freely to his hearers. However, spiritually-minded readers will appreciate the solid scriptural truth of which these letters also are full.

***John Calvin, Man of God's Word, Written & Preached***, by Peter Barnes, published by the Banner of Truth Trust, paperback, 137 pages, £5.50.

This book by an Australian minister focuses first on Calvin's attitude to the Bible. The author sums this up in the Genevan Reformer's own words: "Our wisdom ought to be nothing else than to embrace with humble teachableness . . . whatever is taught in sacred Scripture". Considerable effort is applied to refuting defective modern views on the subject.

The second, and longer, section is devoted to a discussion of Calvin's proclamation of the Word of God. The greatest usefulness this book can have is to bring people to read his sermons for themselves. Amazingly, 1500 of them have survived, though by no means all of them are in English.

***The Agency that Transformed a Nation, Lessons From the Great Awakening of the 18th Century***, by J C Ryle, published by the Banner of Truth Trust, booklet, 16 pages, £1.00.

This is an introductory chapter from Ryle's book *Christian Leaders of the 18th Century*, available in paperback from the same publishers. The book provides biographical sketches of some of the leading figures in the 18th century awakening in England. The particular chapter now reprinted as a very small but useful booklet emphasises "the instrumentality of preaching" in the awakening.

Ryle stresses "the substance of their preaching" and lists the following points: (1) the sufficiency and supremacy of holy Scripture, (2) the total corruption of human nature, (3) Christ's death on the cross as the only satisfaction for man's sin, (4) the great doctrine of justification by faith, (5) the inseparable connection between true faith and personal holiness, (6) God's eternal hatred against sin and His love towards sinners. This is the kind of preaching that needs to be heard again in these degenerate days in England – and in Scotland and the rest of the world.

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## Church Information

### Meetings of Presbytery (DV)

**Northern:** At Dingwall, on Tuesday, September 27, at 2 pm.

**Western:** At Lochcarron, on Tuesday, September 27, at 11 am.

**Outer Isles:** At Stornoway, on Tuesday, October 11, at 11 am.

**Zimbabwe:** At Bulawayo, on Tuesday, October 11, at 11 am.

### **Jewish and Foreign Missions Fund**

By appointment of Synod, the second of the year's two special collections for the Jewish and Foreign Missions Fund is to be taken in congregations during August.

*W Campbell, General Treasurer*

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## **Protestant View**

### **Rome Shifts the Blame Again**

A recent research study concludes that the cause of the abuse crisis in the Roman Catholic Church was not such factors as homosexuality or priestly celibacy but the social and sexual revolution of the Woodstock era in the 1960s and early 1970s. The study, *The Causes and Context of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests in the United States, 1950-2010*, was commissioned by the US Conference of [Roman] Catholic Bishops (USCCB), and conducted by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice at the City University of New York. It was funded mostly by the USCCB, the Knights of St Columba and several other Roman Catholic bodies.

The spokesman of an abuse victim aid organisation, Road to Recovery, said, "This report does not get to the heart of the issue, and the heart of the issue is deceit, cover-up, [and] silence. . . . They tend to look outside of themselves for the answers. . . . These were crimes committed by paedophile priests and those who covered them up." Bishop Accountability, an organisation that investigates the abuse crisis, said the study minimises the gravity of their crimes, and gives short shrift to another crime, that of enabling, concealing, and fostering abuse by the US bishops and the Vatican bureaucracy.

Karen Terry, the principal investigator for the study, confidently claims, "The abuse crisis is over". But a spokesman for Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests, doubts that this is so: "Every single time there's an independent look at clergy sex crimes, the percentage of accused child-molesting clerics jumps dramatically". Neither will the latest Vatican guidelines for dealing with the problem remedy the situation. This new document, published in May, states the obvious – that sexual abuse of children is a crime – but does not require bishops to report these crimes to police. Indeed, it reinforces the bishops' exclusive authority by stating that no secular bodies overseeing child protection can take the place of the "judgement and power" of the bishops. The Survivors Network of Those

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Abused by Priests rightly says of the Vatican guidelines: “There’s no enforcement here . . . . Until that happens . . . church officials will continue to hide and enable abuse.”

It is obvious that both the USCCB-commissioned research study and the latest Vatican guidelines do no more than deceive some into thinking that Rome is making headway in dealing with the problem. But nothing will really terminate the dreadful abuse scandal but the demolition of the whole corrupt system. “Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all” (Rev 17:21). At the very least we are to pray for the downfall of Satan’s kingdom (Ps 68:1), including specifically the Papal region of it, and that many trapped in it would be brought into the kingdom of grace (see *The Shorter Catechism*, 102). NMR

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## Notes and Comments

### Offensive Behaviour and Threatening Communications

What has been described in the media as an Anti-Sectarianism Bill (though the term “sectarianism”, undefined in Scots Law, is not used in the Bill itself) was to have been rushed through the Scottish Parliament in several days by 30 June 2011 so that it could be enforced during the new football season and help prevent “unacceptable behaviour” at football matches, especially between the supposedly-Protestant Rangers and Roman Catholic Celtic clubs. The official title of the Bill is Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Bill. The Christian Institute received a legal opinion which encouraged them, along with Care, to seek a declaration from the Court of Session that, by failing to put the Bill out to consultation, the Scottish Government was acting unlawfully. The legal opinion was circulated to MSPs and the First Minister promptly announced that he had changed his mind and would extend the deadline from several days to six months.

The Scottish Government declares that “the objective of the Bill is to tackle sectarianism by preventing offensive and threatening behaviour related to football matches and preventing the communication of threatening material, particularly where it incites religious hatred. These measures are intended to help make Scotland safer and stronger, and contribute to tackling inequalities in Scottish society.”

In the unlikely circumstance that present law is incapable of dealing adequately with genuinely threatening and intimidating behaviour in connection with football matches, responsible citizens would welcome its strengthening.

According to the Scottish Government's Policy Memorandum, "the Bill criminalises such offensive behaviour likely to incite public disorder whether it is clearly motivated by racial or religious bigotry or offensive in some other way to any reasonable person in Scotland". But while one repudiates the notion that real religion has anything to do with offensive, threatening and intimidating behaviour and accepts that inciting public disorder by such behaviour is contrary to Biblical principles, one seriously questions the vagueness and subjectivity of pronouncing that behaviour "which is likely to incite public disorder and which would be offensive to any reasonable person is a criminal offence". The Bill criminalises such behaviour even when public disorder in response is impossible.

The Bill goes beyond criminalising behaviour connected with football matches and expressing or inciting "religious hatred". It also deals with "hatred" against people because of their colour, race, nationality, ethnic origins, sexual orientation, transgender identity, or disability. The expression or incitement of hatred against such persons is certainly contrary to the Christian ethic. Once again, however, there is subjectivity in the definition of terms which could make the proposed law restrictive of religious freedom to criticise behaviour described as sinful in the Word of God and to evangelise those practising it. This is particularly so in that the Bill deals with "threatening communications".

While one endorses the outlawing of communications making threats or inciting violent acts against individuals or classes of people, as the Bill proposes, one sees danger in criminalising a communication when "the material or the communication of it would be likely to cause a reasonable person to suffer fear or alarm". This largely-subjective description of the crime is intended to cover communication "by any means (other than by means of unrecorded speech)" of "anything that is capable of being read, looked at, watched or listened to, either directly or after conversion from data stored in another form". The Christian Institute suggests that "it is not difficult to see how sermons downloaded from websites could fall foul of this offence. There is no free-speech safeguard and the offence is very broad as drafted." (It seems, however, that internet services are reserved to Westminster.) There is surely a great difference between sending bullets through the post to someone connected with a rival football team – which seems to have triggered the "fast-track" approach of the Scottish Government – and publishing in the strongest terms the hatefulness to God of false religion and immoral behaviour.

Significantly the list of groups which the Scottish Government claims to have consulted over plans to introduce legislation to "tackle sectarianism"



does not include any religious body. It is with the Scottish Human Rights Commission the Government has been in dialogue “to ensure that the new offences do not restrict legitimate freedom of expression, or the freedom to practise and promote a religion”. In the light of previous statements by prominent legislators in Scotland one can only wonder what is covered by the Government’s claim that “proper and effective use of the legislation will send a strong message that bigotry and prejudice have no place in a modern, diverse, multi-cultural Scotland” and “will help to break down barriers, moving people’s perceptions away from stereotyped and misconceived views of identity”.

As the Scottish Government affirms that this legislation is only the first step in its programme of action against what it persists in calling “sectarianism”, all who share the Christian Institute’s concerns regarding what they consider the “alarming implications” for religious liberty of proposals in this Bill must do what they can to impress on MSPs the need to ensure that legislation is framed in terms which do not impinge on the right to declare Biblical teaching freely, however offensive it may be to some. *HMC*

### **Rock Concert in Dingwall**

The beginning of July saw a further step in the moral degradation of the Highlands in the form of first open-air rock concert at Dingwall. For five hours the music blared into the summer air from the Ross County football stadium, drowning even the shrieks of the 10 000 people who had paid around £30 to be within sight of their idols. Not a few of those present were children. The concert finished soon after 10 pm and the following day, the Sabbath, was spent by the ground staff and others in such activities as dismantling the stage and removing the portable toilets.

Probably many of our readers are as unfamiliar with rock concerts as the present writer, who happened to be within earshot on this occasion. The experience, and discussion with others, suggested a number of thoughts:

(1) The selfishness of the conduct. The noise filled the whole of Dingwall making it difficult or impossible to carry on ordinary life. One felt sorry for anyone who had unwittingly arranged another event in Dingwall that evening.

(2) The puerility. Both the musicians and the fans spent a substantial amount of time in whooping and shrieking – behaviour more associated with childhood or early adolescence than with mature adulthood.

(3) The escapism. Those who dislike such music can only wonder at the motivation of those attending. We are told that the desire is to become so involved in the music and dancing as to forget the reality of the outside world. This is similar to becoming engrossed in football or television. In

particular, one forgets the guilt of sin, one's duty, impending death, and the claims of Christ.

(4) The evil nature of the music. A few of the tunes were not unpleasant but the incessant background beat is not conducive to godliness. It is an insistent call to the false excitement of the world without God: "for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 Jn 2:16).

(5) The power of true religion to sweep all this away. The crowds who heard John Kennedy in Dingwall 140 years ago would have had no interest in such empty entertainment. Those who have found Christ have no need to escape from reality because they can already offset the sorrows of this life with the substantial peace and joy that they presently have in the heavenly world: "your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col 3:3).

The Dingwall rock concert was not one of the worst – it did not involve the drug-taking and active immorality of concerts where people camp overnight – but drugs and immorality are bound up with the songs and are never far away in the world of rock music. We pray that there will not be another one. "But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness" (1 Tim 6:11).

DWBS

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## Acknowledgement of Donations

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

*Jewish & Foreign Missions Fund:* Anon, for Thembiso Children's Home, £200; P Hoskins, for Zimbabwe Mission, £50; Anon, for Mbuma Mission, £3000 per AJS.

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

**Dingwall & Beaully:** *Congregational Funds:* Friend, Caithness, £10 per Rev NMR.

**Edinburgh:** *Congregational Funds:* Anon, towards church building debt, £100; Anon, for Bible distribution, £195, £150.

**Gairloch:** *Congregational Funds:* Anon, £150; MM, Thurso, £100 per Rev AEWM; Estate of late Mrs C MacLeod, £500; Anon, £200.

**Lochbroom:** *Congregational Funds:* Friend, Elgin, £40 per JC.

**Shieldaig:** *Communion Expenses:* Anon, £120, £60, £100.

**Staffin:** *Congregational Funds:* N Pearce, £80; Anon, £25 per Rev WAW; Anon, £500. *Door Collection:* Anon, £40. *Manse Fund:* Anon, Gairloch, £50, £50; Anon, £50, £50, £100, £100, £20; Anon, £100, £200, £300, £100, £100 all per Rev WAW; IMD, £100; DA & M, £100; D & W, £60; Various, £270; DJM, £100; BW&MrsG, £50; Anon, "In memory of departed loved ones", £200; Anon friends, £200; Anon, £200 per AB; 2 Edinburgh Friends, £50 per Rev WAW; Edinburgh friends, £70; C, £22 per Mrs W.

**Stornoway:** *Congregational Funds:* Estate of late Mrs Mary Morrison, £2000; M MacD, Dun Eidean, £100; Mrs CM, £22. *Jewish & Foreign Missions Fund:* Mrs CM, £42. *Sabbath School:* Anon, £20, £30, £20; Doig, £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.
- Breasclate:** no services meantime.
- 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 (other than second and fourth Sabbaths of month), 6 pm. Thursday 7.30 pm. **Tomatin:** second Sabbath 12 noon. **Stratherrick:** fourth Sabbath 12 noon. 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; **Strathly:** Church; no F P Church services.
- Harris (North): Tarbert:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Thursday 7 pm. **Stockinish:** Tuesday 7 pm. Rev J B Jardine BD, F P Manse, Tarbert, Isle of Harris, HS3 3DF; tel: 01859 502253, e-mail: northharris.fpc@topenworld.com.
- Harris (South): Leverburgh, 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 MacKinnon; tel: 01786 451386.
- Portree:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Contact Rev W A Weale; tel: 01470 562243.
- Raasay:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Saturday 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 744411. 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, 5 pm at Portland Centre, Hopeville Ave, St Peter's; Tuesday 7 pm at Friends' Meeting House, St Peters Park Rd. Contact Dr T Martin; tel: 01843 866369.
- London:** Zoar Chapel, Varden St, E1. Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Rev J MacLeod MA, 6 Church Ave, Sidcup, Kent, DA14 6BU. Tel: 0208 309 1623.

## Northern Ireland

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

## Canada

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

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

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

## USA

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

## Australia

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

**Sydney**, NSW: Corner of Oxford and Regent Streets, Riverstone. Sabbath 10.30 am, 6.30 pm; Tuesday 7.30 pm. Rev G B Macdonald BSc, 60 Hamilton St, Riverstone, NSW 2765. Tel. 02 9627 3408; e-mail: sydneyfpchurch@aapt.net.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

## Singapore

**Singapore**: Sabbath: 9.30am and 5.30pm; Wednesday: 7.45pm. Room: "Tanglin l/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: dlevytsky@gmail.com.

## Zimbabwe

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

**Ingenya**: Church and Secondary School. Rev A B MacLean. Postal Address: Ingenya Mission, Private Bag T5445, Bulawayo.

**Mbumba**: Church and Hospital: Postal Address: Mbumba Mission Hospital, Private Bag T5406, Bulawayo.

**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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