

The Free Presbyterian Magazine

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

“Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth” Psalm 60:4

Contents

Well Pleased with Christ.....	257
God’s Promise to His Church	
Synod Sermon by Rev E A Rayner.....	260
Christianity and the First Fleet (1)	
Calvin MacKenzie.....	268
God’s Love in Harmony with Justice	
George Smeaton	273
The Vine and the Branches	
A Sermon Outline by John Kennedy.....	277
Sin and Its Excuses	
Henry Cooke.....	278
Book Reviews	
<i>John Knox and the Reformation</i> , D M Lloyd-Jones & Iain H Murray	280
<i>Prayers on the Psalms</i> , from the Scottish Psalter of 1595	281
Protestant View	282
Notes and Comments	283
Church Information	288

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The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland

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Communions

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, Shieldaig; **Third:** Lochcarron, Uig; **Fourth:** Bulawayo, Gairloch, Inverness, Raasay.

July: First Sabbath: Beaulay; **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.

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

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

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

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

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Well Pleased with Christ

After Christ's baptism, the voice of God the Father was heard "from the excellent glory" announcing, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mt 3:17). Here was the Son, in our nature, about to enter on His public ministry, which would culminate in His offering Himself up as a perfect sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, on behalf of all the sinners whom He was representing. But, already, the Father was intimating that He was altogether satisfied with His Son as perfectly suited in His Person, both in His divine and His human natures, for the whole work He was to undertake. And well did the Father know that this work would be carried out to perfection – that, by doing so, He would lay a basis for the salvation of the innumerable multitude of individuals who were given to Him in the everlasting covenant; He would "not fail nor be discouraged" (Is 42:4).

Again, on the Mount of transfiguration, after the conversation with Moses and Elijah about His "decease", there came the same voice from heaven, intimating in the same terms: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased". Yet at Calvary there was no such voice; nor could there be, for Christ must tread the winepress alone.

May we then look for such a voice after He rose from the grave? In fact, it was not necessary. By raising Jesus from the dead, the Father was bearing authoritative testimony to the fact that He was well pleased with the whole work of redemption. Justice was indeed satisfied; Christ had borne away all the sins of all His people, as the scapegoat in the the Old Testament ceremonial typically bore away all the sins of Israel "into a land not inhabited", where it could never be found again.

Isaiah's prophecy had now been clearly fulfilled in Christ: "The Lord is well pleased for His righteousness' sake; He will magnify the law, and make it honourable" (Is 42:21). In both His active and His passive obedience – in His keeping of the law, as the substitute of His people, and in His suffering of its penalty on their behalf – He had honoured the law to the fullest extent. If that sin had not been fully atoned for, if there had been the slightest defect in His offering up of Himself as a sacrifice or in His obedience to any other

part of the divine will, the Father could not have been well pleased. But every such defect was impossible, given the perfection of His Person. And because there was absolutely no defect in any part of the Saviour's work, justice was fully satisfied; the Father was indeed well pleased. And so He raised Jesus from the dead; by doing so He was announcing to the world that He was well pleased with Christ's redemptive work.

Can we say that the Holy Spirit was well pleased with Christ and His work? The first point we may note is that the Spirit also was present after Christ's baptism, in the form of a dove. It was evidence of the entire harmony within the Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – on the work of redemption which Christ was to accomplish. But, further, every time the Holy Spirit works faith in the heart of a sinner, He is intimating that He is altogether well pleased with Christ and His work of redemption.

Had we been present at the little gathering of women by the riverside near Philippi, after Paul and Silas joined them, we might not have noticed Lydia reacting to what she heard. But there was a very significant response, for the Lord opened her heart; the Holy Spirit took of the things of Christ and revealed them savingly to her; she trusted in the Saviour. What exactly Paul said in his address to the women we do not know, but we can be sure that he proclaimed Christ and His finished work as altogether suited to their needs as sinners. And the Holy Spirit applied to Lydia's soul the truths that Paul declared, for the Spirit was well pleased with the Saviour and His finished work. It was the Spirit who brought Lydia to a sense of her need as a sinner; and the Spirit, well pleased with the work of Christ as the one suitable remedy for her in her need, opened her heart so that she was able to receive the truth about that work.

On the Day of Pentecost, however, there were visible signs of the presence of the Holy Spirit, in the tongues of fire which descended on the believers. These tongues were symbols of the Spirit's power, that was to accompany the words of the disciples as they proclaimed salvation through Jesus Christ, first in Jerusalem, then throughout Palestine and, before long, well beyond its borders. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit brought 3000 individuals to see that the redemption purchased by Christ was perfectly suited to their need as sinners – for the Spirit was well pleased with that redemption.

The Spirit is still, of course, well pleased with the work of Christ; He sees that it is perfectly suited to the needs of sinners today, whatever their circumstances – no matter how great their sins, no matter how hard their hearts, no matter how ignorant they are. We need never despair of sinners who hear the gospel, or even read the Scriptures; the Spirit is able and willing to apply to sinners of every kind the truth which speaks of Christ and His finished work.

He is able and willing to make them spiritually alive, to open their hearts and apply to them these wonderful truths about the Saviour, so that they too become well pleased with Him and His finished work.

Nearly 240 years ago, in Wales, the Spirit opened the heart of young Thomas Charles, later to become a noted minister in Bala, so that he was brought to admire the greatness of the glory of Christ Jesus. He became well pleased with “a Saviour so infinitely great and all-sufficient, whose merits are of such inestimable value, whose faithfulness is so inviolable, whose love, grace and mercy are so great, so unsearchable and eternal, and His power so immense”.¹

The question for us is: Are we well pleased with Christ and His finished work? The Father is; Christ Himself is; the Holy Spirit is. Besides, we can be sure that the holy angels are well pleased; we are told that there is joy in their presence when one sinner repents – a fruit of the work of Christ. Again, all the people of God in heaven are well pleased, which they make plain as they sing sinlessly to the praise of Him who loved them and gave Himself for them. And all believers on earth are satisfied with Him. That satisfaction began when the Holy Spirit put life in their souls, opened their hearts and made them willing to look to Christ as the One who did everything necessary for the salvation of sinners like them. And it will continue for ever.

Clearly, unbelieving sinners are not well pleased with Christ as a Saviour; otherwise they would trust in Him. Thus Isaiah prophesied of Him: “He is despised and rejected of men . . . and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not” (Is 53:3). And thus it will always be, apart from the work of the Spirit making sinners willing to receive Christ in response to the call the gospel: “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Mt 11:28). That call has all the authority of God the Father behind it also. After drawing attention on the Mount of transfiguration to the Saviour as the One in whom He is well pleased, He said, “Hear ye Him”.

What encouragement there is for sinners to come to Christ! They have the authority of the Father directing them to listen to Him, to obey His call; Christ’s finished work provides them with a perfect basis on which to trust Him; there is also the willingness of the Spirit to apply the blessings purchased for sinners like them and His gracious power to make unwilling sinners ready to receive Christ and all His blessings. And what encouragement there is for believers to come to Him again and again – whatever their doubts and fears, their sins and their weaknesses! He is able to save to the uttermost.

¹Edward Morgan, ed, *Thomas Charles’ Spiritual Counsels*, Banner of Truth Trust reprint, 1993, p 122.

God's Promise to His Church¹

Synod Sermon by Rev E A Rayner

Isaiah 33:20-21. *Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby.*

This prophecy is generally considered to refer to the time when Sennacherib, King of Assyria, invaded Judea and besieged Jerusalem. Hezekiah had shaken off the yoke of Sennacherib, the oppressor. The Lord had mercy on Israel when He sent a destroying angel, and 185 000 soldiers were killed. Sennacherib returned with the shame of defeat. After he returned to Assyria, fearing that his gods were angry, he determined to sacrifice his sons to appease them. They learned of his intention and, while the King paid his devotions, they slew him with the sword.

The prophet now begins chapter 33 with this declaration concerning Israel's foe: "Woe to thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoiled; and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee! When thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled; and when thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee." Despite the terror that Israel experienced while anticipating this invasion, God gave the promise of peace, in our text. There is a two-fold application: the historical application and the spiritual application, which has a reference to the Church of God, especially in New Testament times.

1. Peace is promised to the Church; the Church will be a quiet habitation.

2. The permanence of the Church is also promised: "a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken".

3. There is provision for the Church: the broad rivers of God's provision for His people through His beloved Son.

1. The peace promised to the Church: that Jerusalem shall be a quiet habitation. Jerusalem typifies the Church – the Jerusalem which is above, which is free and is the mother of us all. The Church is afflicted by enemies. Ever since the fall of man there has been perpetual warfare – kingdom against kingdom, Satan against God. There is the conflict between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman; there is a constant struggle between the wicked

¹The sermon preached by the retiring Moderator at the opening of the Synod in May 2011.

and the godly; but we have the promise of peace to the Church through the wonderful provision that Christ has made for her.

We might consider two things that contribute to making Jerusalem a quiet habitation: first, the character of her prince, and, second, the character of her people. Consider the glorious prophecy regarding the character of Christ: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end" (Is 9:6,7). The Apostle Paul reminds us again: "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints" (1 Cor 14:33).

(1) *The character of her Prince.* As the Prince of peace He has procured peace by the blood of the cross; He is the glorious Lord that our text speaks of. Verse 21 gives us the title of this Prince, "the glorious Lord"; He is the Prince that rules in Jerusalem, the Head of the Church. We are directed to His glory, the glory of His person as God manifest in the flesh, the One who is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person. He, "being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God".

There is the glory of His deity; "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth". That is true of God, and so it is true of the Prince of peace. In the Prince of peace, the glory of His person is revealed, not only in His deity, but also in His perfect humanity. He is so glorious in His humanity that, when He took upon Him the form of a servant, there was no spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing, for He is holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. The perfection of His human nature was manifested by His miraculous birth, which was accomplished by the overshadowing power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary.

Again the glorious character of the Prince of peace is manifested in the love, grace and peace of God that is bound up with His eternal purpose to seek and to save lost sinners. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jn 3:16). Peace was proclaimed at the birth of the Prince of peace: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Lk 2:14). Also peace was proclaimed during the life of Christ. He spoke peaceably to His people. When the disciples were faced with the fact that Jesus was about to be taken from them, He spoke comfortingly to them in their turmoil. In their trouble He left them this legacy: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you" (Jn 14:27).

Moreover the Saviour spoke peaceably to His disciples after His resurrection when they met in the upper room. To alleviate their fears He said to them: "Peace be unto you". He showed Himself to Thomas, and His glory was magnified as this disciple beheld in the risen Saviour the marks of the crucifixion, saying, "My Lord and my God" (Jn 20:28). At the ascension He comforted those that were afflicted. When Stephen was about to be stoned, he looked up to heaven by faith and, being full of the Holy Ghost, he viewed the glory of God. He saw Jesus standing on the right hand of God and ready to defend His persecuted Church. So His persecuted people, with the eye of faith, rise above the turmoil, the difficulties, the trials and the persecutions when they look unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of their faith. This is what gives them peace.

He especially revealed Himself as the Prince of peace as He went forward to His death, after He rose again from the dead, and when He ascended to the right hand of God. Again He demonstrates that He is the Prince of peace by applying the peace-speaking blood of the cross. This blessing and comfort is given to His poor, needy and afflicted people: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you" (Jn 14:27). This provision of peace is the consequence of His sufferings and death, when He satisfied divine justice through the shedding of His precious blood. By His stripes we are healed, and here is the basis of peace.

There is no other foundation of peace, whereby our sins may be forgiven us for His name's sake. We look for acceptance with God through His sacrifice, through the shedding of His precious blood. And so it is called the peace-speaking blood. When the Lord passes by, He says, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you" (Ex 12:13) – as His people shelter under the blood of atonement, the blood of the cross.

Not only is peace procured by Christ, the Prince of peace; He also preserves peace because He is in the midst of His Church. "For where two or three are gathered together in My name," He says, "there am I in the midst of them" (Mt 18:20). This is true today; He is in the midst of His Church to breathe on her the words of peace and comfort. The Lord still speaks a word in season to him that is weary. He is gracious to His poor and needy people.

He is the Prince of peace because He is the Head of the Church. He has His seat in Jerusalem, "For God of Zion hath made choice; there He desires to dwell" (Ps 132:13). The Lord has given His servants the message of peace to proclaim. What did Isaiah declare? "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God" (Is 40:1). The Lord directs His servants to feed His people with knowledge and understanding, to comfort them because of what they find in the world that lies in wickedness, and for what distresses them within

their own corrupt natures. The Lord, through the ministry of the Word of God, brings peace and comfort to His Church in a world of turmoil, uncertainty, opposition and corruption. As the Prince of peace He commands His disciples to go into all the world to preach glad tidings among all people.

He proclaims peace to those who need reconciliation, peace to those brought by God's blessing to the exercise of repentance – who were formerly enemies to God by wicked works and children of wrath. The message is one of reconciliation and peace, as Christ is freely offered, even to the chief of sinners. They are called to repentance and faith: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). They are to believe the gospel of reconciliation. Therefore peace is promised to the Church because of the character of her Prince of peace.

(2) *The character of the people.* Peace is also promised to the Church because of the character of her people. The natural man is characterised by violence, pride, arrogance and self-righteousness, and these light up the flames of discord and create distress in the world. Those who are united by faith to Christ are new creatures in Christ Jesus. They are given a peaceable disposition and have a hatred of violence, contention, wrath, strife and sedition. They are to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness and meekness.

It is in the nature of grace therefore to restrain corruption and to seek reconciliation with those they have offended. The Saviour teaches us that we should forgive those who have sinned against us. "And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us" (Lk 11:4). So the Lord has taught His people to be a forgiving people. We need the wisdom which comes from above, which is pure, peaceable and easily entreated. This ought to characterise the people of God and especially office-bearers of the Church. Their qualifications state that they are to be of good behaviour; not brawlers, not proud. They are to be conscious that, in themselves, they are unprofitable servants. They are a peaceable people because God works in them both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

2. The permanence of the Church. In verse 20 we read of "a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken". Because of its heavenly origin, this tabernacle is not to be taken down. The Church of God is built according to God's Word. Notice that, in the provision of the original tabernacle, even the minutest parts were directed by God. All things were to be made according to the pattern shown to Moses on the mount. We see also that Scripture teaches the permanence of the Word of God: "the Word of the Lord endureth for ever" (1 Pet 1:25).

The tabernacle is a type of the Church. Christ said, "Upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mt 16:18). Though the Old Testament tabernacle was taken down and carried about from place to place, there is a contrast between the Old Testament tabernacle and the Church; the latter is not to be taken down. Satan may try to take it down, for Satan's policy is to divide and conquer and destroy by persecution. Everything possible is done to destroy the witness of God, the people of God and the Church of God. The Church of God may become very low. It was low in Elijah's day, when the Prophet thought he was all alone. Today we can enter into something of Elijah's feeling: "I only am left". Yet God still had the 7000 who had not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. So the Lord demonstrates the permanence of His Church.

Tents were fastened by cords to stakes such as those mentioned here. Believers are stakes and ministers and elders are pillars of the Church. The stakes and the pillars are never to be removed. Christ will always have witnesses as long as the Church is in the world, until the end of time. There will always be those who are useful in the ministry of God's Word until the end of time. The provision of stakes and pillars is permanent. It is true that, from generation to generation, God's people and servants pass away, but there will be succeeding generations; God raises up others. He not only adds to the Church such as should be saved, but He continues to raise up those who will be useful in the ministry in each age and generation. They are the stakes which are held together by the cords of the electing love of God, the grace of God and the promises of God, in an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure.

So the tabernacle, or the Church of God, is maintained according to the word of promise. To His Church, God has given His Word, which is inerrant and unchangeable. The Lord has also given her the truths of His Word, which are to continue until the end of time. In addition, He has given His ordinances and sacraments. The Lord sent His servants to go "and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Mt 28:19). He added, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world". That sacrament is therefore to continue, and this is also true of the Lord's Supper. It is permanent, for it was instituted by Christ to continue in the Church: "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come" (1 Cor 11:26). Yes, it is until He come! If the sacraments are to be maintained, the Church of God is permanent, and so is the ministry of God's Word. Until the end of time, these provisions for the Church will be continued.

Low as the cause of Christ is, here is comfort for the Church: her perman-

ence as made known in the promises about His ordinances and the ministry. We need to think of these things when the Church is at a very low ebb, when darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people, when iniquity is coming in like a flood.

Thus the permanence of the Church should give peace to His people. The Lord is in control. He is sovereign and He reassures them that the Church will continue despite the onslaughts of Satan and in spite the world, the flesh and the devil. This is the permanence spoken of: "a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken". Permanence is the security of the Church, and it gives peace to the people of God as they consider the Lord's purpose, plan and sovereignty in all these matters.

We must also take into account the permanence of the Church of God in considering the heavenly calling of the workmen. *God* sends His ministers – "how shall they preach, except they be sent?" (Rom 10:15). This was the Lord's blessing in Old Testament times when He filled with the Holy Spirit the men who built the tabernacle, "I have filled [Bezaleel] with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship" (Ex 31:3-5). The Lord raised up skilled workmen to set up the tabernacle.

In the New Testament Church, qualified and useful instruments were chosen. Christ still sends forth labourers into the harvest and qualifies them. In the early New Testament we see there were first Apostles. The apostolic era is now past; so also are the apostolic gifts. This is one matter that we need to be very clear about because of errors in Charismatic circles. When the Lord blessed Philip's ministry in Samaria, the people heard the gospel and saw it confirmed by miracles. Many of them believed and were baptised. Among them was Simon Magnus. We note that these people had not yet received the apostolic gifts of the Holy Ghost. This could only happen when the Apostles came down from Jerusalem. Then they laid their hands upon people, who thus received the gifts of the Holy Ghost (Acts 8).

Simon had seen Philip perform certain miracles. In addition to preaching the gospel, Philip exercised extraordinary gifts. But it was only the Apostles who could transmit these gifts to those who were brought into the Church. So when the Apostles came down from Jerusalem, they laid their hands upon the people in Samaria who believed. Then they received the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost. Simon not only wanted these gifts but also to be able to transmit them. He was rebuked because he thought these gifts could be

purchased by money. The privilege of transmitting these gifts belonged only to the Apostles. But though the apostolic era has passed, and the apostolic miraculous gifts of that age, the ministry of the gospel has continued.

Ministers are still raised up by the Lord to preach the everlasting gospel. There are clear directions in God's Word for those who are to serve in the ministry or the eldership. Therefore, if the sacraments are permanent and the gospel is to be preached till the end of time, God will always have servants whom He has sent out. He will prosper the preaching of the gospel so that there are added to the Church such as should be saved. The Holy Spirit makes the preaching of the gospel "the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth". The Lord has His people and His servants today. It is a great comfort to know that there are sent workmen. "How shall they preach, except they be sent?" (Rom 10:15). The Lord sends some servants to sow and some to reap. But the permanence and security of the Church are guaranteed till the end of the time.

3. God's provision for His Church. There is a reference to the supplies, the broad rivers of verse 21: "But there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams". This provision is of heavenly origin. Mention is made of a smooth-flowing, never-failing river yielding the blessings of refreshment. This proceeds from the glorious Lord; "there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers". Consider the crucified, risen and exalted Saviour, who is at the right hand of the majesty on high. There He dwells in His glorious perfections, as the Lamb that was slain. Blessings flow forth from the wounded, crucified Saviour, now exalted at the right hand of God. He is the one who accomplished redemption and cried, "It is finished". Redemption is accomplished, "for He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed" (Is 53:5).

The redemption which has been accomplished must also be applied, for God has purposed to gather in a number which no man can number from all tribes, kindreds and nations. Redemption is applied as the gospel is preached. So we must have the faithful preaching of God's Word – law and gospel. These heavenly supplies flow freely, because of the glorious Lord. His body was broken, and His blood shed, for the remission of the sins of many. He will accomplish His purposes in salvation by applying what He has procured.

The supplies are a heavenly provision from the Redeemer, who accomplished redemption. They are abundant, for they are broad rivers. They are to prevail, as all the tributaries join into one broad river. So there is an abundance of water. Think of all the streams of prophecies about the coming

Messiah, fulfilled in His birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension. That supply is abundantly fulfilled in everything that was accomplished by Christ for His Church. We have a beautiful illustration in Ezekiel 47, which describes the vision of the waters that issued out from under the threshold of the temple. Christ is the glorious Lord. He is the temple and He is also the door. Living waters flow from His pierced side by the blessing of the Holy Spirit, who makes the Word of God effectual among all the nations of the earth.

In Apostolic times we see the beginnings. Although there was a remarkable outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, it was a small beginning geographically. But these running waters were also living waters and increasing waters. Observe the progress of the gospel as we follow the illustration that the prophet gives us. Think of Pentecost; consider the Reformation, then the great revivals and the great missionary efforts of the nineteenth century. The waters reach the ankles, then the knees, till we have the water reaching the loins as waters to swim in.

The Apostle Paul speaks about the grafting in of the Jews to their own olive tree: "What shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" (Rom 11:15). He also refers to the fullness of the Gentiles, a fulfilment of Isaiah 66:12: "Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river", and of Psalm 72: "The whole earth [will] be filled with His glory" (Ps 72:19). Remember that, without a vision, the people perish. Consider the reason for our living in this world. If we have nothing to live for in view of time, eternity or the day of judgement, we perish. The Church needs the vision the Lord has given to us in His word concerning the salvation of our immortal souls and she also needs the vision of the glory and success of the gospel. Living in a day of small things, we are liable to be focused on the difficulties and on the smallness of His cause. We need the wider vision of God's purpose, and to pray, "Thy kingdom come" (Mt 6:10).

But if there is to be peace, security, provision and permanence for the Church, it must be by asking for the old paths. "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls" (Jer 6:16). This is what the Reformers, Luther and Calvin, did. It was also what the fathers of the Free Presbyterian Church did. We too are also to hold fast the form of sound words. Although the day is dark and the cause of Christ is small, we are to plead that He would revive His work in the midst of the years and in wrath remember mercy. The old paths are the established ways of doctrine, worship and practice. This is how we are to enjoy the peace of God in Christ's provision for the permanence of the Church until it is completed at the end of the world.

Christianity and the First Fleet (1)¹

Calvin MacKenzie

“**T**o you, as the instrument, we owe the pleasing prospect of an opening for the propagation of the gospel in the Southern Hemisphere. Who can tell what important consequences may depend upon Mr Johnson’s going to New Holland?”² So wrote John Newton to William Wilberforce MP on 15 November 1786. The Christian religion arrived in New Holland with the First Fleet at what was to become the infant colony of New South Wales, which was established in Sydney Cove on Saturday, 26 January 1788. Richard Johnson, an Evangelical clergyman of the Church of England, stepped ashore with a passion to serve God by preaching to and caring for the souls entrusted to his care. From that day, the ages-old struggle between spiritual and carnal priorities, between a personal and living relationship with God through the atoning merits and shed blood of His only begotten Son Jesus Christ and a cold, formal profession of attachment to established religion was waged in the great land under the southern skies.

In 1792, Richard Johnson, looking back on his calling to the colony, in a letter written to his flock, was to say: “My commission from God extends equally and alike to all the inhabitants, without distinction. It is my duty to preach to all, to pray for all, and to admonish everyone.”³ This paper aims to highlight the nature of the Christianity brought to the colony with the First Fleet against the prevailing rationalism of the day, and Richard Johnson’s struggle, in particular, to gain for Bible-believing Christianity a foothold despite the indifference and opposition of the colonial authorities. While education was also a major interest of Johnson and he took pains to establish it, this paper focuses rather on the origins and progress of Christianity in the colony during Johnson’s 12-year residence.

Beginnings. Established on Saturday, 26 January 1788, when Governor Arthur Phillip had a flagstaff erected at Sydney Cove, the infant colony of New South Wales owed its early Christian influence to a group of influential Evangelical clergymen and laymen known as the Eclectic Society. This

¹The first of a series of three articles based on a paper delivered to the first Youth Conference in Australia.

²R I and S Wilberforce, *Correspondence of William Wilberforce*, London, 1840, vol 1, p 15. Quoted in Neil K Macintosh, *Richard Johnson, Chaplain to the Colony of New South Wales*, Sydney, 1978, p 26. Australia was first called *New Holland* as a consequence of the Dutch charting parts of the coast of Australia during the years 1606-1756.

³Rev Richard Johnson, *An Address to the Inhabitants of the Colonies Established in New South Wales and Norfolk Island*, London, 1792, (facsimile edition).

Society was founded five years earlier “for mutual religious intercourse and improvement, and for the investigation of religious truth”.⁴ It was established in January 1783 in an upper room of the Castle and Falcon on Aldersgate Street, London, where 57-year-old John Newton met with fellow Evangelical clergymen, Richard Cecil and Henry Foster, and Eli Bates an Anglican layman.

Those attending this first meeting resolved to meet fortnightly as a discussion group – which, in time, having relocated to the vestry of St John’s Chapel, Bedford Row, where Richard Cecil was the minister, gained a reputation “as one in which Christian leaders from different strains of Evangelicalism could discuss important issues in a relaxed setting”.⁵ John Newton proved to be the guiding spirit of the group, which also included, among others, Henry Foster, curate to the eminent William Romaine, John Venn, rector of Clapham and founder of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) and Josiah Pratt, vicar of St Stephen’s, Coleman Street, and for 21 years secretary of the Church Missionary Society (CMS), and some laymen: William Wilberforce MP, John Thornton, a wealthy businessman and philanthropist, and his son Henry.

The Eclectic Society was formed against the background of significant political and religious change in Britain. Twenty years after the costly French and Indian war in 1763, Britain’s economy was still recovering and she was in the process of losing her revenue-producing American colonies. On 3 September 1783, at the Peace of Paris, Britain signed away its 13 American Colonies to commissioners Benjamin Franklin, John Jay and John Adams after the colonies’ seven-years war had resulted in the British granting them independence. The severance of the American colonies was a sharp setback to Britain that presented significant political, economic and social consequences, not the least of which was the need to find somewhere else to send the over-abundance of criminals⁶ clogging the prison system while, at the same time, opening up the possibilities of new sources of produce and revenue in the new world. This was a time too of religious change in Britain. A grassroots Evangelical movement had been growing steadily in the Church of England since at least the 1760s, a recent result of which had been the in-

⁴Thomas Hartwell Horne, *Reminiscences, Personal and Biographical of Thomas Hartwell Horne, DD*, London 1852, p 45.

⁵Aaron Belz, “Plotting the World’s Salvation”, *Christian History & Biography*, Issue 81, Winter 2004, vol XXIII, no 1, p 40.

⁶Criminals: for the most part petty thieves. Transportation was seen as a humane alternative to execution, which was the supreme penalty for 222 crimes during this part of the eighteenth century. The majority of these offences were crimes against property, including the stealing of goods worth over 5 shillings, and the cutting down of a tree.

stalment of Charles Simeon (arguably the Evangelical patriarch in the Church of England) at Holy Trinity Church in Cambridge.

Four matters of monumental consequence discussed by the Eclectic Society were to be: (1) the best method for planting and propagating the gospel in Botany Bay, (2) the establishment of missions, (3) the abolition of the slave trade, (4) the establishment of a periodical publication “in the interests of religion”. These discussions, in the fullness of time, led to the appointment of the Evangelical Richard Johnson as the Chaplain of the colony to be established in NSW in 1788, the founding of the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East in 1799, the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 and the founding of *The Christian Observer* in 1801. What a debt of gratitude we owe these faithful men who, under God and by His grace, had a burden to benefit their fellow men – by implementing decisions that to countless souls, with the blessing of God, were to result in their salvation. Their far-reaching agenda was to disturb and disquiet the cold and Christless rationalism of the day, and who can tell the good they did to poor hell-deserving souls? We should thank God for such prayerful men of action who took a public stance on the issues of their day; may we yet see their like raised up again!

Confining our attention at present to the role the Eclectic Society played in procuring Richard Johnson as Chaplain to the Colony of NSW, it is clear the impetus came from the missionary-minded John Newton; while the friendship of William Wilberforce with the 24-year-old Prime Minister William Pitt the younger was pivotal in providing the political leverage.⁷

During the summer of 1786, the British Government decided to set up a convict colony on the east coast of New Holland and it is highly likely, given his close association with Pitt, that Wilberforce was familiar with the “Heads of a Plan” that Cabinet had sent to the Lord Commissioners of the Treasury about the proposal. The plan included a provision for the appointment of a chaplain – a provision which, it appears, Wilberforce was instrumental in procuring after mentioning the plan in a meeting of the Eclectic Society and being persuaded by John Newton and others to lobby Pitt.

On 23 September 1786, a 31 year-old Yorkshire man, Richard Johnson, curate to Henry Foster, was asked if he “had the spirit of a missionary”, to which he replied, “No”. It is speculated that either Newton or Foster asked him the question and it is further suggested that a few days later he received a letter from Wilberforce promising he could secure him the appointment if he was interested. After some days of prayer and deliberation, Johnson

⁷John Pollock, *William Wilberforce*, London, 1977, p 137.

replied positively and steps were put in place to secure his appointment, which was verified by his commission dated 24 October 1786.⁸

The Archbishop of Canterbury, John Moore, approved of the appointment of Richard Johnson and recommended him to the Board of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK), requesting the Society to provide him with some books to use in the colony. By the time the First Fleet sailed, Johnson had accumulated over 4000 Bibles, Testaments, Common Prayer Books, Psalters, tracts and other religious publications to take with him.

Who was Richard Johnson? Richard Johnson was born in 1755 in south-east Yorkshire in the small village of Welton near Brough. Until the birth of Johnson, Welton's only claim to fame was that the notorious highwayman Dick Turpin was arrested there in 1739! Educated in the Grammar School at Kingston-upon-Hull, he pursued farming and teaching until, at the age of 24 in 1780, he entered Magdalene College, Cambridge, where he distinguished himself as a student and graduated Bachelor of Arts in 1784. During this period as an undergraduate, he was made a Deacon in Winchester Cathedral on 21 December 1783 by the Bishop, Brownlow North, and was ultimately ordained to the Christian ministry as a priest of the Church of England by the Bishop of Oxford, on 31 October, 1784. His first appointment in 1784 was as Curate of St John's, Boldre, in Hampshire. In 1785, he became assistant to Henry Foster – ten years his senior and one of the leading itinerant Evangelical preachers in London.

Johnson's first exposure to convicts like those who would become a significant part of his colonial flock allegedly came on 22 October 1786, when he was reported to have preached to 250 of them on board the prison hulk *Leviathan* moored at Woolwich.⁹ Until setting sail in May 1787, Johnson prepared for the voyage by acquiring the essentials for life in a strange and uncivilised environment. On 4 December 1786 he married Mary Burton in St John's Clerkenwell amid speculation that John Newton had played match-maker. William Bull lends weight to the suspicion when writing to Newton: "So at last you have given the good Bishop of Botany Bay a wife to take with him – a very good thing, if she be a good wife. I pity and rejoice, pray for and congratulate them both."¹⁰

Prior to sailing, Johnson received much counsel from his mentor John Newton, who advised him to spend the long days of the voyage immersed

⁸Macintosh, *Richard Johnson*, pp 27-28.

⁹Macintosh, *Richard Johnson*, p 38. (However, if, Johnson did then preach to convicts, it could not have been on the *Leviathan* hulk because she was apparently not launched until four years later.)

¹⁰Bull to Newton, December 1786, quoted by Macintosh, *Richard Johnson*, p 38.

in the Scriptures – particularly Paul’s missionary journeys. Upon departure, Newton presented him with a farewell message in the form of a poem that summed up his advice to the younger man:

Omicron to Johnson Going to Botany Bay

The Lord who sends thee hence will be thine aid;

In vain at thee the lion, Danger, roars:

His arm and love shall keep thee undismayed

On tempest tossed seas and all strange shores.

Go bear the Saviour’s name to lands unknown,
Tell to the Southern World His wondrous grace;

An energy divine thy words shall own,

And draw their untaught hearts to seek His face.

Many in quest of gold or empty fame,
Would compass earth, or venture near the Poles

But how much nobler thy reward and aim,

To spread His grace, and win immortal souls.¹¹

On 13 May, 1787, Johnson set sail from Portsmouth with his wife Mary, a servant, and all his worldly goods on the store ship, the *Golden Grove*, facing a sea voyage of some 15 000 miles that would take eight months punctuated by two stopovers of about a month each in Rio de Janeiro and Cape Town to take on supplies and make repairs. With the *Golden Grove*, sailed ten other ships under the command of Captain Arthur Phillip containing 759 convicts (568 men and 191 women) of whom 23 died on the way. On board, Johnson made the most of every opportunity to preach the gospel. In writing to his Portsmouth friend Henry Fricker he says, “We have prayer every evening in the great Cabin; the Captain has granted me leave also to preach once at least on a Lord’s Day to the ship’s crew. Accordingly, last Sunday I preached to them. My text was in Matt 5:34, designed to set forth the heinous evil of common swearing; I was pleased to hear that the sailors were satisfied and pleased with my subject – hoped that I do repeat or follow this practice throughout the voyage. Since then I have scarcely heard an oath from any of them. May God convince them of the folly and wickedness of such a conduct.”¹²

¹¹Josiah Bull, *John Newton, An Autobiography and Narrative*, London, 1868, p 287. These verses were penned by John Newton in 1787. Quoted in Iain H Murray, *Australian Christian Life from 1788 – An Introduction and an Anthology*, Edinburgh, 1988, p 2.

¹²G Mackaness, ed, *Some Letters of Rev Richard Johnson, First Chaplain of New South Wales*, Sydney, 1954, vol 1, p 13. Johnson to Fricker, 30 May 1787.

God's Love in Harmony with Justice¹

George Smeaton

John 3:16. *For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

This saying makes known more fully to Nicodemus the fact of the atonement and its source in divine love. That it forms part of our Lord's address, and is not the comment of the evangelist, is obvious to everyone who has noticed the way in which John appends his comments on the Master's words. This is never left doubtful (see John 7:39).

The allusion to the atonement is obvious in the phrase, "He gave His Son". Though some have explained this as equivalent to being sent, it rather has the sacrificial sense of being given up to death. Here it corresponds to the *lifting up* in the previous context. This giving of the Son does not go back to the divine purpose, nor go down to the individual's experience when Christ is given to the believer, but denotes a giving up to death. It is properly the giving up in sacrifice, because the presentation of the victim formed part of the act of sacrifice. The expression, *He delivered*, or *gave*, is not infrequent as a description of God's act of giving His Son to a sacrificial death; and wherever it occurs, whether as denoting the Father's act in giving the Son (Rom 8:32), or the act of the Son in giving Himself (Mt 20:28; Gal 1:4), it always describes the sacrifice which He offered to God the Father.

It will be necessary to refer to a few points mentioned here in connection with the atonement:

1. The atonement is here described as emanating from the love of God. These words of Christ plainly show that the biblical doctrine on this point is not duly exhibited unless love receives special prominence, and that it would be a misrepresentation against which the biblical divine must protest if, under the influence of any dogmatic prejudice, love is not allowed its rights. If even justice were made paramount, the balance of truth would be destroyed.

In His justice, God maintains the inalienable rights of the Godhead. He loves Himself and cannot but delight in His own perfections. Hence, in describing it, the Psalmist says, "The righteous Lord loveth righteousness" (Ps 11:7). In a just conception of the divine attributes, none of them can be said to predominate; their equipoise is so perfect that it could not be disturbed without ruin to the universe. One cannot be surprised that the opponents of

¹Comments on John 3:16 taken, with editing, from the writer's valuable work, *The Doctrine of the Atonement According to Christ*, which has been reprinted by the Banner of Truth Trust. Smeaton (1814-89) was the last of the firmly-orthodox professors in the nineteenth-century Free Church College in Edinburgh.

vicarious [substitutionary] satisfaction repudiate this equipoise of justice and love in the work of redemption; they would resolve justice into love. But these attributes are as distinct as love to Himself and love to mankind, or as giving and retaining. He gives Himself, in the exercise of love, to His creatures; but He does not give up, and He cannot recede from, those rights which belong inalienably to Himself as God. And the same principle is daily practised by the man of active benevolence made in the image of God, and acting like God in communicating goodness. He gives or communicates, but when he does so, he retains His own proper rights.

Several modern writers, in describing God's attributes, avoid calling love an attribute at all. They choose rather to call it a definition of God in His whole procedure toward men, or the concurrent action of all the attributes. There is no ground for this. But, on the other hand, the selection of this one perfection by an inspired apostle as the most descriptive name for God, furnishes sufficient ground for giving a central place to it, and for investing it, as it were, with all the other perfections, if we would arrive at the fullest and most accurate idea that can be formed of God in His relation to His Church. If we invest love with all the natural and moral attributes, and speak of omnipotent and holy love, wise and omnipresent love, we do not mistake the significance of the phrase, "God is love" (1 John 4:8). Here the love is viewed as self-originated, self-moving, free and infinite; the text before us, as Luther well describes it, is a little Bible in itself. The extent of the divine love depicted in these words of Jesus, may be surveyed from the three points here indicated: the great Giver, the infinite sacrifice of God's Son, and the unworthy objects.

But it must be further noticed that, when Jesus here sets forth the divine love in connection with the atonement, it is not stated simply to assure us of the divine love; for He shows that it mainly consisted in the sacrificial giving of the Son; it is important to apprehend this. There is a necessity on God's part, as well as on man's. While the death of Christ, as a costly declaration of divine love, removes the slavish fear and distrust which prompt men to flee from God, it does this only as it meets a necessity on God's part, and provides a vicarious sacrifice for sin. The text exhibits the harmony of justice and love – the demand of justice and the provision of love.

It is the more necessary to notice this, because it is objected that any prominence to divine justice comes at the expense of divine love. The one, however, by no means excludes the other. If a divine provision is made at all, it could proceed from no other source but love. And the greater the difficulty to be surmounted, and the more inflexible the necessity which insists on a satisfaction to justice beyond the compass of our own resources, the

greater is the display of love. If love is in proportion to the difficulties to be overcome, and if redemption could be effected only at the cost of the humiliation and crucifixion of the Son of God, the love which did not allow itself to be deterred by such a sacrifice was infinite. Then only does love come fully to light; and they who do not acknowledge the necessity of the satisfaction can have no adequate conception of love. Thus the cross displayed the love of God in providing the substitute, and was the highest manifestation of its reality and greatness. If the demand or the necessity for such a fact in the moral government of God resulted from the claims of justice, the source from which it flowed was self-originated love.

2. Another point made prominent in this text is the value of the sacrifice from the dignity of the only-begotten Son. As the Lord in the previous verses designated Himself the Son of Man, that is, by the title of His humiliation, He here describes Himself by a title which calls up before us His divine dignity; and it intimates that such a sacrifice was of infinite value and sufficient to cancel sin, though infinitely great. The divine nature united to the human, incapable of suffering in itself, gave to the suffering of the Mediator an infinite value. The infinite dignity and worth of His suffering, as the atonement of the Son of God, had a perfect efficacy for redeeming all for whom He gave Himself to death.

This saying is designed to show that the communication of divine life is attainable only when love and justice coincide in securing the acceptance of the person by the Son's expiation. All this is plainly put in as the preliminary to life. As to the clause, "He gave His only-begotten Son", the allusion is, as we have seen, to the sacrificial death of Christ; the very idea, while it involves the utmost-conceivable degree of love, implies that it has the effect of pacifying an offended God. All these terms point to the thought that God cannot forego His inalienable rights when He has been wronged, but necessarily punishes, as a satisfaction to Himself; for He cannot deny Himself. This thought is capable of solving several difficulties.

(a.) The plain meaning of this clause is repugnant to the notion, too widely current in our time, that pure love, without any tincture of wrath, is the sole principle of God's action toward man; that we are not to speak of punishment borne, or of vicarious obedience rendered; that, in a word, it is not God's relation that is to be changed but man's. The clause under consideration teaches the opposite, and shows us that the love of God specially appears in this, that He provides the very atonement which puts Him on a new relation to those whose sins had incurred His anger. The two principles, love to the race, and love to Himself, are so far from being incompatible that they can be placed together in the atoning work of Christ. Punitive justice, which is

just regard for His perfections, called for the penalty; love for our race provided the substitute to bear it. What is there of incompatibility in these two?

(b.) But, it may be further asked, as the atonement is the effect of the divine love according to this testimony, how is it also the cause of the divine favour? Does not love so great imply that He is already reconciled? Here we must distinguish between the moving cause and the meritorious cause. If we look at the prime source of the atoning work, then the incarnation and death of Jesus must be regarded as the fruit of love, and not as its cause. But if we look at our actual acceptance, or the enjoyment of divine favour, and the new relation on which God stands to the redeemed, the atonement is as much its cause as its counterpart, the Fall, was the cause of divine wrath.

(c.) God cannot impart the effects and visitations of His love while the hindrances caused by sin are not removed. If men will continue to assert that God, without the intervention of any reparation or atonement, can take them into favour, and that He actually does so in the exercise of pure love, they assert what cannot be deduced from the divine perfections, which are ever in full equipoise. They assert, moreover, what is contradicted by all the divine actions, in sending His Son and in giving Him that sinners should not perish.

The final clause intimates that the channel of divine life is opened only when the divine rights have been secured. It is the same clause which we find in the previous verse, but in a new connection. In the former verse it was placed in relation to the indispensable necessity of the atonement; in the present it is put in connection with the equipoise between love and justice in rectifying men's relation to God; and this clause indicates that the eternal life flows out of it. It is the more necessary to put this matter in the proper light, because all the parts of modern theology are so disjointed, and so much out of their due setting in respect to the whole doctrine of the communication of the divine life.

Our Lord and His apostles commonly adduce redemption or the remission of sins as the immediate end of the death of Christ. But that new and adjusted relationship is designed to secure a further end – the communication of divine life. Thus the removal of the guilt of sin opens the way for imparting eternal life, as a further end; and yet it is the result of the death of Christ, through the acceptance of the person. The spiritual life is that to which every man has a right who enjoys the remission of sins; but the immediate link is the acceptance of the sinner's person, or the remission of sins, which is in order before the communication of the divine life or the sanctification of the nature.

It must be kept in view, then, that the design of Christ, in offering Himself a sacrifice, was to free His people from the power of sin itself. But it is also true that this end is reached only through the acceptance of the person as the

immediate fruit of the atonement, and by means of the Spirit of life, for which the death of Christ paved the way. But neither the present or any similar passage represents the spiritual life as the direct and immediate end of the death of Christ. To that a man can possess no right unless the guilt of sin on the person has been removed. The person is accepted, and then the nature is renewed.

To deduce from this passage and from others similar, as many do, that life is first in order; and that the acceptance of the man and the remission of his sins do not immediately flow from the redemption work of Christ, but immediately from the possession of life, is to pervert the exposition of language. The argumentation from the tenor of the old covenant, “do” and “live”, taken up and enforced by the apostles as the competent interpreters of the Redeemer’s words (Rom 5:17), is conclusive. The opposite opinion, too much in vogue, turns all upside down. These modern writers will not have a reconciliation *through* Christ, but one *in* Him, that is merely a mystical reconciliation. They will have it that God cannot forgive sin but in a way which is in process of effecting its removal. And hence they argue that a previous atonement is superfluous – nay, impossible. But this testimony puts the relation between the atonement and the life quite otherwise.

The Vine and the Branches¹

A Sermon Outline by John Kennedy

John 15:5,6. *I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.*

In this we have the relation of Christ and His people to each other, and the fruitfulness of true believers; also the end of the unfruitful.

The Vine. Christ is the Head of the everlasting covenant.

This He is by the Father’s will and appointment.

The roots of this vinestock are deep down in the Godhead.

He has to see to the sufficiency of His covenant arrangement.

The sufficiency of the vinestock is the infinite grace of God.

Through Him alone this flows into all the branches.

The Branches. They do not have their own distinct roots.

They have no stock in themselves, but receive from day to day.

It is through Christ alone that any grace can reach believers.

¹Preached in Dingwall on 30 July 1882.

They are inserted into Him through His death.
 Thus from His fullness they receive, and grace for grace.
 There must be a continued sense of dependence.

Fruitfulness. This can only be by abiding in Christ.

It is fruit from His own grace in the heart.
 It is a contrast to what they were before.
 Their fruitfulness glorifies the Father.
 This is much in the estimation of Christ.

Fruit of practical conformity to the law and example of Christ.

Unfruitfulness. The believer cannot be united to Christ and yet fall finally.

Those who so fall never had vital union to Christ.
 The stony-ground hearers take gospel comfort apart from Christ.
 They are hurried with work to keep up the delusion.
 They become withered, only fit for the fire.
 Angels at the final separation shall place them on the left hand.

Application. This demands self-examination.

It calls for humiliation and thanksgiving.
 It sounds a loud warning.

Sin and Its Excuses¹

Henry Cooke

Genesis 3:13. *And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.*

An unconverted sinner is never found without some ready excuse for his sin, and every excuse has one of three objects. The first object is to satisfy the sinner's own conscience or, at all events, to silence its accusations; the second is to silence the rebukes of others; and the third is to palliate or justify sin in the sight of God Himself. It is impossible to enumerate all the sources from which those excuses are drawn, but it may be useful to instance a few of the most common – not to suggest them for the use of sinners, but – merely by mentioning them – to demonstrate their futility.

For example, many seek to excuse themselves by admitting their sin but pleading, in palliation, that it is a little one. Others do not plead the littleness of their sin, but argue that they do not often commit it. Others plead their ignorance of the evil of their sin and urge that, whatever has been wrong in their conduct, they did not intend it. Others charge their sin to mere lack of thought, or assert that the temptation took them suddenly and unexpectedly.

¹Taken, with editing, from *The Christian's Daily Companion*. Cooke (1788-1868) was then a minister in Belfast and a Presbyterian leader in Ulster.

Others will plead the imperfection of their natural temper, and pretend to deplore it as weak or ungovernable; while others produce, as a full satisfaction for all that is past, their purpose or determination to amend for the future. But of all excuses the chief is that which shifts the sin from the sinner's own shoulders and lays the burden of the guilt on another. This was the first excuse, urged in reply to the questioning of God Himself. And, since then, it has been the great model for most excuses for sin.

Before we can fully understand the futility of the excuse, we must examine the circumstances that led to it as a final effort to escape from the accusations of conscience and the judgement of God. Our first parents, while in innocence, had freely conversed with God. But the moment they had sinned, they were smitten by their conscience and they hid from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. From this we discover that the object of every excuse is to hide our sin in some way. "And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself. And He said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave unto me, and I did eat."

Now in this reply it is not obvious whether Adam charges his sin more to the woman or to God Himself. While he says that the woman "gave to him", he tells the Lord it was the woman whom *He* had given to be with him. So it would appear that he traces the evil back to God, and charges to His gift the shame and the guilt in which he now stands before his Judge. To this excuse, so frivolous and ungrateful, God does not pause to reply but immediately says to the woman, "What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat".

The chief thing to be noticed in this excuse is great ignorance of God. To the trees of the garden our first parents had foolishly fled as a hiding-place from the eyes of omniscience; and now they have recourse to anything but the true account, hoping to evade His searching, yet merciful, examination. They do not confess to God that, in the midst of His bountiful profusion, they had coveted the only gift He had withheld; they do not tell Him that a little food had tempted them to disregard His authority; they do not tell Him they were discontented with their state of blissful innocence and happy communion with Him; they do not tell Him that, moved by ambition, they had sought to escape from the rank of subjects and claim an equality with their Creator. But, concealing these things in their bosoms, they answer as if God could find out no more than they are pleased to reveal.

But ignorance of God's omniscience is not the only remarkable matter;

there appears an equal ignorance of His mercy and His grace. To flee, to hide, to evade, to deceive are the objects of their every act and answer; but not a word of sorrow, not a prayer for pardon is heard from the lips of these sinners. How wonderful that one simple act of sin, within a period so obviously brief, could have produced a transformation of character so sad and so degrading!

But we need not wonder at this; the natural world can illustrate the process. One single cloud can obscure the sun; one single injury to the eye can render its glories invisible – so one single sin interposing between God and the soul becomes as a cloud which the light of His favour cannot penetrate, and it totally deprives us of that purity of heart without which no man can see the Lord.

Let us learn then the utter vanity of every excuse for sin. The ingenuity of our first parents was unsuccessful. Most probably they were unsuccessful in satisfying themselves; it is certain they were unsuccessful in satisfying God. Let us learn also the danger of abiding in the way of temptation – of standing in the way of sinners, of walking in the counsel of the ungodly, or sitting in the seat of the scorner. Let us beware of the shallow selfishness that would lay down our guilt at the door of our neighbour. It is certain that we may be tempted by others, and theirs is the guilt of the temptation, for which they must give account to God. But ours is the guilt of compliance, and for this we must likewise give account.

Instead then of excusing our sins, let us confess our sins and flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us. Though we have sinned, there is an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us in His blood from all unrighteousness.

Book Reviews¹

John Knox and the Reformation, by DMLloyd-Jones & Iain H Murray, published by the Banner of Truth Trust, paperback, 142 pages, £5.50.

The first of Dr Lloyd-Jones' lectures reprinted here, "Remembering the Reformation", was delivered in 1960 to commemorate the fourth centenary of the Scottish Reformation. In conversational style he gives, not the history of the movement, but a description of it, with application to the twentieth century. He notes that "it was a pure reformation and the result was, I believe, that you had a purer Church" than in England. "What was the secret of it

¹All publications referred to here are obtainable from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom.

all?” he asks. “It was not the men . . . great as they were. It was God! God in His sovereignty raising up His men.”

The second of these lectures is entitled, “John Knox: The founder of Puritanism”, and was originally delivered at a Puritan Conference. Dr Lloyd-Jones justifies his claim by referring to Knox’s originality of thought, his bringing out clearly the guiding principles of Puritanism, and the fact that he applied his principles – following out into practice “what he believed to be the New Testament pattern regarding the nature of the Church, and the ordinances and the ceremonies, and the exercise of discipline”.

The final section, from Mr Murray’s pen, describes “John Knox and ‘the Battle’”, the spiritual battle in which he was engaged. The course of the Reformation of Scotland is outlined, with particular emphasis on Knox – on his preparation for leadership; on success and conflict, after his return to Scotland in 1559. There follows a description of him as a man, and some lessons we may learn from him. Knox’s authority came, we are told, “from the conviction that preaching is God’s work, the message is His word, and he was sure that the Holy Spirit would honour it”.

It will be good if the wish expressed in the conclusion to the Publisher’s Preface is fulfilled: “As we approach the five hundredth anniversary of the birth of John Knox, may this book encourage readers not only to remember him but also to consider the outcome of his life and to imitate his faith”.

Prayers on the Psalms, from the *Scottish Psalter of 1595*, published by the Banner of Truth Trust in their Pocket Puritan series, paperback, 152 pages, £3.25. These brief prayers were printed in the 1595 edition of the Scottish Psalter. As David B Calhoun explains in the Introduction, they first appeared in the French Psalter of 1563 and were the work of Augustin Marlorat, described as “an honoured colleague of Calvin and Beza in the Genevan Reformation”. Words in the original translation which have gone out of use have been replaced in this edition by others which are more easily understood today; otherwise the translation seems unchanged.

Corresponding to each of the 150 Psalms, there is a prayer which it would be appropriate to use after reading that Psalm. The prayers reflect the spirit of devotion which we would expect in a time when spiritual life was much more in evidence than it is today. The Introduction notes that these prayers “frequently included cries to God to deliver His people from their foes and to punish those enemies”. This, of course, reflects the content of many Psalms and was particularly appropriate during the persecutions of the sixteenth century. Professor Calhoun comments: “The whole history of the Huguenots is marked by long-lasting persecution and suffering – and

they found great support in the Psalms, especially in Psalms of judgement and deliverance”.

Note: In 1953 Rev Fraser Macdonald wrote about Lionel Thomson, a five-year-old Oban boy who “gave early and undeniable evidence” of being a child of God. This material has been reprinted as a free illustrated booklet by Mr William Murray, Lonemore, Dornoch, IV25 3RW. It also appears as a chapter in *Gospel Gleanings for Young People* (F P Publications).

Protestant View

Shaking off the Shackles of Rome

An official investigation has taken place into how allegations of child sexual abuse by priests in the Diocese of Cloyne, in County Cork, were handled by religious and civil authorities. Following the release of the Report, there was a debate in the Irish Parliament at the end of July in which the Irish Prime Minister, Enda Kenny, condemned the Vatican for its part in covering up the allegations. Most of the allegations made in 1996-2009, the Report says, were not passed on to the police, as required by the guidelines agreed by the bishops of Ireland in 1996. This non-compliance was the result of a letter from the Vatican to the Irish bishops, warning them that the guidelines violated church law and were to be treated as a study document only.

The Irish parliament therefore unanimously deplored “the Vatican’s intervention, which contributed to the undermining of child protection frameworks and guidelines of the Irish state and the Irish bishops”. Prime Minister Kenny stated, “For the first time in Ireland, a report into child sexual abuse exposes an attempt by the Holy See to frustrate an Inquiry in a sovereign, democratic republic”.

Is Ireland shaking off the shackles of Rome? A Dublin professor of modern Irish history condemned the arrogance of the Vatican, saying, “They were actually treating the sovereign government of Ireland with complete contempt. . . . We’re fed up with hearing about canon law. This is a republic, it’s about civil law.” *Time* magazine considers that the relationship between Ireland and Rome is at a historic low, and adds, “No matter what response the Church gives to the child-abuse report, one thing is clear: the days of the Vatican’s undue influence over the Irish are over”. *The New York Times* says, “It is stirring to watch people who have long been cowed finally speaking up, shedding their fear of the authoritarian men at the top who owed their power to the awe of the people”.

If indeed Ireland is struggling free from papal control, it needs to have, as much as it ever did, the superior liberty of the gospel. There can be no true freedom, either personal or national, if it be not based on the truth. "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (Jn 8:32). May that day speedily come for Ireland and all other nations duped and domineered by papal Rome.

NMR

Notes and Comments

The Fellowship Meeting

The Fellowship or Question Meeting has long been associated with communion seasons, as well as being held at other times in some congregations. It is a public and more regulated form of that speaking one with another which should characterise those who fear the Lord and think upon His name when they meet in a private way (Mal 3:16). Christian fellowship is Christian to the extent to which Christ and the things of God and His revelation are central to it.

That the Fellowship meeting as we know it is generally during the communion season and on the day when the emphasis is on self-examination means that the aim of this particular meeting is to throw light upon the reality or otherwise of our experience of the grace of God. Modern work patterns and the reduced number of men available to speak to the Question and of people free to attend are factors understandably contributing to the widespread decline of the Fellowship Meeting. We should also reflect on whether there are other factors depriving it of its attractiveness to many, either in the conduct of the Fellowship Meeting itself or in the expectation of those who might otherwise attend.

One's experience of speaking to the Question from time to time decades ago and of endeavouring in more recent times to open or close the Question makes one very much aware that public engagement in this meeting is no easy exercise. Those who attend these meetings for edification should be seeking the Lord's enabling for those thus engaged. Those who engage in them also require alertness as to what their specific responsibility is. We may briefly note the historical and ideal way in which these responsibilities have been undertaken.

The brother who "gives out" the Question should have been exercised in his mind regarding a portion of truth which is suitable as a basis for discussing the existence or otherwise of marks of grace in the soul and in the life. His work has been mainly in secret. In public he only gives out the passage

which has been on his mind and asks that the brethren would speak in the light of that passage, and of their own experience, regarding the way in which grace or its counterfeits manifest themselves.

If the presiding minister considers the passage suitable for the purpose of the meeting he “opens” the Question, which means that he gives a brief exposition of it in its context and opens up its content in a way that may indicate its usefulness for the purpose of self-examination. He himself does not endeavour to pre-empt the work of the men who are going to speak and give marks.

Ideally the men called to “speak to the Question” have experience of the Christian life over some years, though at a time when older Christians are not so numerous among us, younger men can also convey something of the freshness and hopefulness and modesty of youth in Christ. The Question has already been opened and the men do not regard it as their function to give an exposition of the passage under discussion. Neither do they take the Meeting as an opportunity to talk directly about themselves, whatever illustrative material they may occasionally bring in from their own lives. They endeavour, drawing upon their own experience, to use the passage given out to throw some light upon one or two marks of Christian experience and may contrast these with the refuges of lies to which hypocrites may resort, acquainted as they are with the power of hypocrisy in themselves. Those who speak first do not feel that they have to say everything that could be said and they consider that there are others to speak after them. Those who speak later do not feel that they have to repeat what has already been said, whether with or without acknowledgment. In this way freshness is maintained, and with that the interest of the hearers.

Another minister “closes” the Question. He gathers together the main points that have been made and, if anything has been said which was erroneous or, more likely, could be misinterpreted or misapplied, he more or less tactfully puts it right. The brother who gave out the Question is then called on to engage in prayer and this he does, usually briefly, not in a general prayer but with specific reference to the exercise in which the company has been engaged.

The above remarks indicate something like the ideal at which we aim. We know these things but, as in all areas of life, we come short, and repetition of the familiar does not go amiss, according to the principle of the inspired Apostle: “To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe” (Phil 3:1). We trust that, with the Lord’s blessing, as all aim at the ideal, the Fellowship Meeting may retain or recover its useful place in the edification of the body of Christ among us.

HMC

Reason Followed Rather than Revelation

In a letter to *The Times*, Bishop Sinclair of Birkenhead states, “When the Church [of England] endorsed the principle of ‘irretrievable breakdown’ as the ground for divorce in preparation for the reform of the divorce laws in the 1960s, *she did so paying more attention to reason and experience than revelation*” (emphasis ours). He mentions that belittling of Scripture in response to an article in *The Times* which advocated a liberalising of the Church’s stance on civil partnerships. He evidently fears that the Church may lift its ban on civil-partnership ceremonies being conducted by its clergy or in its buildings. He therefore states, “Civil partnerships give legal expression to a relationship not known in the Scriptures”, and adds, “The Church’s call is to hear what the Spirit is saying through Scripture . . .”.

While one could not agree with all of the Bishop’s views, it is gratifying that he states the need to heed the Word of God. Diverging from Scripture by individuals, churches or nations results in numerous evils and much misery, and is at the root of such social ills as immorality, sinful liaisons, ruptured relationships, and family breakdown.

Disgracefully, it is the professing Christian Church itself in which departure from biblical truth originated long ago when liberal theologians subtly questioned the authenticity of Scripture. Today much of the Church has in practice demoted the Bible to just another reference book. For all its claims to be guided by Scripture, the Church of Scotland, for example, has strayed so far from this light that it officially allows a minister to remain in office although unashamedly in a homosexual relationship.

A wholehearted return to Scripture by our national Churches is the crying need of the hour. The words of another bishop, J C Ryle (who laboured in Liverpool, across the Mersey from Birkenhead), are appropriate. In defining Evangelical religion, he said, “Show us anything, as religion, which is contrary to that Book, and, however specious, plausible, beautiful, apparently desirable, we will not have it at any price. . . . If the thing is not in the Bible, deducible from the Bible, or in manifest harmony with the Bible, we will have none of it.”

It is indeed the light of Scripture that we all need constantly and must follow faithfully. “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Is 8:20). NMR

“Our Values”

A Muslim internet blogger, who was jailed for 12 years at the Bristol Crown Court for soliciting the murder of MPs who had voted for the Iraq war, was

told by the judge: “You purport to be a British citizen, but what you stand for is totally alien to what we stand for in our country”. The judge’s statement was surprising, and calls for comment. The man holds a UK passport and therefore not only “purports to be” but is a British citizen, just as much as the judge. We quote the UK Borders Agency: “The most acceptable evidence of British citizenship is a British passport”. The man in fact also holds a Pakistani passport but, leaving that aside, Britain is legally as much “his country” as it is the judge’s. He therefore could equally have said to the judge: “What you stand for is totally alien to what I stand for in my country (that is, Britain)”.

The point that we are making is that the judge’s appeal to a supposed consensus of values is illogical and worthless when addressed to a fellow-citizen who holds different values. Politicians such as Mr Blair have been talking about “our values” in recent years, but all the while the moral values of our nation have been changing, under the influence of these same politicians. “Clause 28” on the promotion of homosexuality in schools, enacted in 1988 and repealed in 2000 in Scotland, is a case in point. What might another 12 years bring? A swing to Muslim values, perhaps?

What the Bristol judge should have appealed to is the Word of God, and its established position in the Treaty of Union of 1707, which brought the United Kingdom into existence. The Word of God condemns murder and “whatsoever . . . tends to the destruction of life” (*Larger Catechism*, 136) and says that “no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him” (1 Jn 3:15); and the judge could have put the man in mind of these truths. An appeal to Christian principles would have been (1) logical because Christian principles are well-defined and do not change with time, unlike the idea of “what we stand for in our country”; (2) historically appropriate because if there is anything of value in present British culture it derives from Britain’s Christian heritage; (3) legally valid because of the place given to the Christian religion in the Treaty of Union; and (4) morally powerful because the Word of God is “quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword” (Heb 4:12). The Word of God may yet bring the man to repentance, which humanistic reproofs will never do.

The truth is that those who seek to withhold the Word of God from others are also murderers – murderers of souls – and there are many such murderers among the politicians and judges of Britain at present. There is a Judge who is greater than all and, if they do not repent, He will tell them at the last day that all that they have lived for is contrary to His law and deserves, not 12 years in jail, but eternity. “Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire” (Mt 25:41).

DWBS

Riots

Four nights of rioting, looting and arson in English cities, causing tens of millions of pounds of damage, were mercifully brought to an end by heavy rain. The Prime Minister, stressing the “sheer criminality” involved, promised a society with a clearer code of values, a focus on better parenting and more personal responsibility. But where is this clearer code of values to come from? There is no need to repeat the comments in the previous note, just to stress that any code of values must be firmly based on the Ten Commandments.

People also need to realise that a sense of personal responsibility depends on a sense of being under authority. A sense that the government and the justice system have authority is helpful, but what really matters is a sense of the supreme authority of the true God. And that sense is very much lacking today in Britain and elsewhere. It is evident that a lack of respect for authority lay behind the disorder that began in London and was later replicated in various other parts of England.

Authority needs a solid foundation but, in the godless atmosphere that generally prevails in Britain today, the true foundation – God’s revelation in Scripture – is ignored. Yet, given the godlessness of the age, the degree of order that normally prevails in society is amazing. On the other hand, if it was recognised that “the powers that be are ordained of God”, then “every soul” would feel a responsibility to “be subject unto the higher powers” in the state (Rom 13:1).

Successive governments have much to answer for, given the extent to which they have allowed the overall ethos of the education system to become increasingly secular. It is at least a symbol of this problem that the first person to appear before Highbury Magistrates’ Court, in connection with the rioting and its aftermath, was a teaching assistant in a London school who pleaded guilty to burglary with intent to steal.

Two girls who took part in Monday night’s riots in Croydon, products of the current education system, boasted that they were showing police that “we can do what we want”. They were clearly showing that they had no respect for authority, either human or divine. Not that the criminality was confined to the younger generation; significant numbers of older people were seen carrying away armfuls of goods from the shops which mobs had broken into. The words of Hosea 8:7 are being fulfilled: “They have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind”.

It may well be that the rioting has ceased in answer to prayer. May God’s children be given the spirit of prayer to cry earnestly to the Lord, not only for permanent calm to be restored in the cities, but also for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit so that society would be characterised by true godliness!

Church Information

Meetings of Presbytery (DV)

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

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

Southern: At Glasgow, on Tuesday, September 27, at 3 pm.

Committee Meetings

Synod committees will meet, DV, in Inverness Free Presbyterian Church on Tuesday, October 4, as follows:

- 9.30 - 10.30 Church Interests Committee
- 10.30 - 12.00 Training of the Ministry Committee
- 12.00 - 1.00 Sabbath Observance Committee
- 2.00 - 3.00 Outreach Committee
- 2.00 - 5.00 Finance Committee
- 3.00 - 5.00 Religion and Morals Committee
- 6.00 - 7.30 Publications and Bookroom Committee
- 7.30 - 8.30 Welfare of Youth Committee
- 7.30 - 8.30 Dominions and Overseas Committee

(Rev) John MacLeod, Clerk of Synod

Theological Conference

This year's Theological Conference will be held, God willing, in St Jude's Free Presbyterian Church, Glasgow, on Tuesday and Wednesday, November 1 and 2. Rev G G Hutton is to act as chairman. It is expected that the following papers will be read, all except the first to be in public:

James Durham's Treatise on Scandal

Rev A W MacColl Tuesday 2.30 pm

The Authorised Version of 1611

Rev H M Cartwright Tuesday 7.00 pm

Amyraldianism

Rev N M Ross Wednesday 10.00 am

Thomas Cartwright

Rev K D Macleod Wednesday 2.30 pm

Providence

Rev Roderick MacLeod Wednesday 7.00 pm

(Rev) J R Tallach, Convener, Training of the Ministry Committee

Dominions and Overseas Fund

By appointment of Synod, the special collection on behalf of the Dominions and Overseas Fund, is due to be taken in congregations during September.

W Campbell, General Treasurer

FREE PRESBYTERIAN PLACES OF WORSHIP

Scotland

- Aberdeen:** 2 Alford Place, AB10 1YD, Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Tuesday, 7.15 pm. Rev D W B Somerset BSc DPhil, 18 Carlton Place, Aberdeen, AB15 4BQ; tel: 01224 645250.
- Bracadale: Struan:** Sabbath 12 noon; Wednesday 7 pm (fortnightly). Contact Rev J B Jardine; tel: 01859 502253.
- Breascele:** 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 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/III" (Level 2), 60 Stevens Road, Singapore 257854. Contact: Mr Bernard Yong, 4 Chuan Place, Singapore 554822. Tel: (65) 6383 4466, fax: 6383 4477, e-mail: byong1@singnet.com.sg.

Ukraine

Odessa: F P Mission Station, 3 Pestelya Street, 65031. Contact Mr I Zadorozhnyi, P O Box 100, Odessa-91, 65091; e-mail: antipa@eurocom.od.ua; or Mr D Levytskiyy; tel:00 38 048 785 19 24.; e-mail: e-mail: dlevytskyy@gmail.com.

Zimbabwe

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

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

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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