

# The Free Presbyterian Magazine

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

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

## Contents

<b>God the Creator</b> .....	161
<b>The Righteous Advocate for Sinners</b>	
A Sermon by J W Alexander .....	164
<b>Scottish Reformers’ View of Romanism</b>	
<b>3. John Knox and the Final Steps of Reformation</b>	
Rev D W B Somerset .....	172
<b>John Calvin and Attendance at Mass</b>	
A Review Article by Roy Middleton.....	176
<b>Strange Fire</b>	
Henry Law .....	181
<b>Lessons from the Sin of Judas</b>	
J C Ryle .....	185
<b>Book Review</b>	
<i>Gospel Precepts</i> , by J C Philpot.....	187
<b>Protestant View</b> .....	188
<b>Notes and Comments</b> .....	189
<b>Church Information</b> .....	192

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

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## God the Creator

The doctrine of creation is one of the most fundamental areas of the Bible's teaching. The first statement of Scripture is: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth". It was He who did so; it was not evolution – a random, uncontrolled process – that brought everything into existence. And God created all things in the way described in Genesis 1, which is part of the inspired revelation that God has given to mankind and is therefore absolutely reliable. This truth, that the eternal God created the world, should be foundational to all the rest of our thinking. God has spoken; it is for us to listen, and to submit to what we have heard. We should bear in mind that it is not only at the beginning of Genesis that we are told about creation; it is a theme that appears again and again throughout Scripture – another pointer to how fundamental this doctrine is.

If God has created us, it follows that He has authority over us – absolute authority. He has a perfect right to tell us how we should live, and we are correspondingly under obligation to obey. In Psalm 33 we find the theme of God's creative activity taken up: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth". And the earth is included in this activity, for "He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: He layeth up the depth in storehouses". Then the conclusion is drawn: "Let all the earth fear the Lord". The second part of this verse makes it clear that these words are a call to human beings, for in it the call goes out: "Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him" – the one part of the verse explaining the other. It is altogether appropriate, we are being told, that God's creatures should have a holy awe – or fear, or respect – for Him who is their Creator.

That thought implies in particular that we should stand in awe of Him as *lawgiver*. In any case, the idea of *the fear of God* points us very definitely to the obligation that lies on us, as God's creatures, to obey His commandments. As David Dickson insists, in his *Commentary*, on this passage, "the right use of the works of creation is to take up how glorious . . . the Creator of them is and to beware to offend Him".

The final part of Job 28:28, “The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding”, clearly has two parallel sections. This leads us to conclude that “the fear of the Lord” means “to depart from evil”. But how may we know what evil is? If we are to give an accurate answer to this question, we must rely on the revelation which our Creator has given. We are to stand in awe of Him when He reveals His commands, which derive their authority from the fact that He has made us. So our duty is to submit to that authority – to recognise what His commandments reveal about what is good and what is evil, and to act accordingly.

In a civilised society, even when many of God’s commandments are ignored, there is broad agreement that a few of them ought to be obeyed – for instance, the prohibitions on murder and on stealing. But because people look on these prohibitions as if they have no firmer authority than the general consensus of society, they are not applied as widely as they ought to be. Thus the unborn in most countries no longer have the protection of the Sixth Commandment, at least for their first months in the womb. And the consensus which used to exist – that the lives of the old, the terminally ill and disabled infants should be preserved as far as possible – is now also fading away. Yet these protections are backed by the absolute authority of the divine Creator; when they are rejected, it is because He is despised.

The sad fact is that the vast majority of people no longer stand in awe of God. As in the time of the Judges in Israel, everyone does what is right in his own eyes, but what is right in God’s eyes is a matter of no importance. One very important factor in that loss of awe is the controlling influence that the theory of evolution has achieved in society today, particularly in education and the media. Conversely, one very significant reason why those in the academic world who promote evolution are unwilling to give it up, in spite of the many difficulties which surround the theory, is the determination not to be subject to the authority of a divine Creator. The carnal mind is enmity against God, and that is as true of the scientific mind as of any other; it does not wish to be subject to the law of God.

The thought of being independent of God was at the core of Satan’s temptation in the Garden of Eden; that same thought lies behind the resistance to reconsidering the prevailing theories of the origin of the universe, and of the human race in particular. Man, away from God, wishes to do what is right in his own eyes in spite of all the difficulties which result from this spirit of independence. It requires no great powers of observation to recognise the extent to which such a spirit has led to, for example, criminality, family breakdown and indiscipline among children. Only a renewed recognition of the authority of our Creator will bring about healing in society.

Of all the Ten Commandments, the one which is most rejected, even despised, is the Fourth, the command to “remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy” (Ex 20:8). But it is the one which bears testimony to the fact of creation. Here the pattern of the creation week is set forth as the basis for six days of work and one of rest, during every other week till the end of time – rest from worldly activities as far as possible, so that we may be free to focus on spiritual activity. “Six days shalt thou labour,” we are directed, “and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work . . . for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it”.

Time and again, we see the significant influence of the doctrine of creation on the thinking of those whose words are recorded in the Bible. For instance, in Psalm 115, the writer – as inspired by the Holy Spirit – encourages those who would read and sing his words, throughout all time coming, to think of God as One who will bless those who fear Him: “He will bless them that fear the Lord, both small and great”. But those who fear God are often conscious, not only of their own weakness, but also of the power of their enemies and the magnitude of the difficulties which they have to encounter. In the face of their weakness, their enemies and all their other difficulties, they should remember the certainty of God’s promises. Yet, in many cases, their faith is weak. One way in which their faith may be strengthened is to think of the infinite power of God – in particular, as Creator. So this Psalmist adds: “Ye are blessed of the Lord *which made heaven and earth*”. If He has done this vast work, can anything else be too hard for Him?

Yet, although the universe – God’s creation – is as wonderfully impressive as it is, it will not last for ever. The Psalmist praises God as Creator: “Of old hast Thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of Thy hands” (Ps 102:25). Then he reflects on the non-lasting nature of all these things, in contrast with God’s eternity: “They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure”, and it is the Creator that will sweep them out of existence. And, sooner or later, each of *us* must leave this world and meet our Creator, the One who gave us our being and still preserves us in existence on earth. How appropriate the call: “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth” (Ecc 12:1).

And if we are already past the days of our youth? This moment – before death comes, which may happen very suddenly, and before the potential failure of our faculties in increasing old age – is when we should begin to remember Him, when we should seek Him, when we should trust in Christ Jesus as the crucified Redeemer, who is able to save to the uttermost.

# The Righteous Advocate for Sinners<sup>1</sup>

A Sermon by J W Alexander

1 John 2:1. *My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*

The word *Paracletos*, here translated *advocate*, has no exact equivalent in English. This Greek word often occurs and is very precious; it sometimes means someone who takes up his client's cause to carry it through by pleading and by acts, an *advocate*; it sometimes means someone who goes forth to make peace between two parties, pleading for an offender, an *intercessor*; it sometimes means someone who stands by the sinking sufferer, uttering words of consolation and strength, a *comforter*. All these offices come together in Christ Jesus, who is an Advocate to urge His people's cause, an Intercessor to make peace for them, a Comforter to fill them with joy. Hence one might almost wish the text had said, "If any man sin, we have a *Paracletos* with the Father".

Now, though this name of love is also given to the Holy Spirit, there is something delightful in regarding both the Son and the Spirit as standing towards believers in this same relationship. In thinking of divine consolation, there is no need for fine discrimination between the work of the Son and the work of the Spirit, for when the Lord Jesus comforts, it is through the Comforter. Very different, however, is the work here ascribed to Christ as the Paraclete. Here He acts, not *in* sinners, but *for* them; not on earth, but in heaven; not with creatures, but with God. The topic presented to us is: *The Lord Jesus Christ as Mediator and Head, acting above on behalf of His people, in virtue of His perfect righteousness.*

You will at once be struck with the strong contrast in the text between sin and righteousness. It is I the sinful one; it is Jesus Christ the righteous. And this has a bearing which cursory readers and superficial theologians are apt to overlook, but it is the solution of the main difficulty for mankind. This is clearly and fully before the mind of the Apostle John, who characteristically, as a thinker and writer under divine guidance, unites depth of meaning with childlike plainness of words. His truths are as solid and precious as a diamond, while they are no less simple and clear.

1. If there were no such thing in the world as *consciousness of sin*, the vast structures of all religions for procuring pardon and peace would tumble

<sup>1</sup>Taken, with editing, from *Faith*, a posthumous volume of Alexander's sermons. Born in 1804, he was a son of Archibald Alexander. His ministry began in Virginia and ended in New York; he also served briefly as a professor in Princeton Seminary. He died in 1859.

down or decay. It is a sense of sin that troubles mankind. It is conscience that anoints priests, declares fasts, keeps Lent, rears altars and even offers human sacrifices. It is the self-accused sinner who cries, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? (Mic 6:6,7). Yes, many have replied, and vainly endeavoured to offer the richest and bloodiest sacrifices, to escape the intolerable sting of sin in the conscience.

So much worse is pain of mind than pain of body, that pagans and Roman Catholics most willingly endure, and even inflict on themselves, any degree of suffering from hunger, whips, hot iron, knives and continued tortures, in order to get rid of the more appalling inward fury of an evil conscience. Under Christianity release is afforded, but only through Christian means. Christ cures this inward fever, but only in those who drink from His fountain. The consciousness of sin, with its accompanying pain, exists in everyone; it is sometimes dull and subdued but always ready, on provocation, or at the hour of death, or in eternity, to become agonising. And whenever the thought becomes explicit, whenever the soul understands itself, it leads to the idea of God as holy and as offended. Nor is this internal principle ever eradicated. It belongs to man as man; and it stings and wounds and curses sinful man as sinful man. And when a religious transformation takes place, even though there is then a new nature, conscience remains.

This present life affords abundant scope for the work of conscience, both in the righteous and the wicked. None are wholly pure; all are either wholly or partially unclean. As early as the first century, this holy Apostle found reason to guard against the shallow conceit of sinless perfection: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins [a prompting of conscience when led up to the Lawgiver and Judge], He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 Jn 1:8). Consciousness of impurity begets repentance, and so confession, and so cleansing. "If we say", John adds, "that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us" – words which strikingly convey the truth we have been asserting and which deserve our careful consideration.

Any proposition introduced by the holy writer with such unwonted and startling language must be highly important. Any error that would make the Lord a liar is not only to be forsaken, but guarded against and abhorred. This error alleges that we have not sinned. The doctrine of sin is fundamental.

This dark side of the contrast is always present, like the background of the painting, or, still more exactly, the chaos out of which order and light emerge. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." The preaching of every apostle – indeed, the entire Christian system – proceeds upon this fact. There is no such thing as becoming a true Christian by a process of making that which is not quite good grow gradually better. It is day out of night. There must be a thorough clearing away of every self-righteous figment before the first stone of the gracious building can be laid.

In this we discern the reason why Paul, as a master workman, in his great Epistle to the Romans, begins his sweeping process by utterly demolishing every ground of merit and clearing out of sight every pretence of Gentile and of Jewish righteousness. And we seem to behold him, after completing this herculean task, proclaiming, "But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe" (Gal 3:22). Corresponding to this is the secret operation of God in the heart, by which He turns doctrines into experience, the doctrine of sin into the experience of conviction; and thus He leads the soul to feel its utter condemnation and absolute need of help from without.

However deeply a man may feel discontented with a worldly life, and however much he may desire religion as a new and better means of comforting himself, he has yet done nothing, unless he now knows that he is a sinner. In truth, this is the very thing by which the Lord Jesus Christ first reveals Himself. All other and lesser benefits are only so many results of this. What the sinner needs is to be freed from his sin. This was the single matter which made the gospel welcome to thousands, both Jews and Gentiles, when it was first proclaimed.

A great eclipse had come over the nations because of sin. Athens and Alexandria had reared thoughtful minds, opened their vision to the likeness of virtue, lifted them up to behold the goodly but unattainable prospect, and then dropped them down into the depths of the ocean. When a conscience-smitten philosopher had come, pale and panting, out of the rounds of rites, penances, mysteries, sorceries, schools and systems to the Church – which filled him with rapture – it was the rising of a bright new light on his midnight of sin. And the operations of God's Spirit are no less constant in the world of grace than the shining of the sun and moon in the natural world, for the soul which God has purposed to save is invariably brought first to mourn over his sinfulness and then to hunger and thirst for the removal of sin.

In this desire, the subject does not always – perhaps does not often – distinguish the longing for pardon from the longing for purity, or justification from sanctification. The poor sick child that tosses in a hot fever on your



bosom yearns for health, for rest, for ease and for water; it does not pose academic questions to the doctor. The poor sin-sick soul is dying for the one gift which the New Testament calls *righteousness*. Everyone who has ever come to the good Physician knows the burning wish. There runs through the whole gospel, as the bass notes of a harmony, this consciousness of sin, which we discovered in our first view of the text as the gloomy part of its important contrast. And the aged and beloved disciple, always a minister of love and always sorrowing when giving even necessary pain, approaches the bedside of his patients with looks and words of unusual pity, as fearing to uncover the wound which he must probe. His desire is for their holiness: "My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not". This is the great and blessed end: sinlessness, like that of the sinless One.

"This", says Calvin, "is not only a summing up of what goes before, but, so to speak, a recapitulation of the whole gospel, that we should cease from sin." And when the soul has proceeded thus far in experience, and breaks for the longing which it has to be loosed from the loathsome and gigantic foe, which wrestles with it only to defile and poison, the news it hails on bended knees is glad news, for it is the gospel.

2. In the four or five verses before the text you may have observed the point that even true disciples sin. And the lesson before us is introduced with particular reference to sinning believers, who commit the evil that they hate. The sequence of thoughts is this: (1) All commit sin. (2) It is dreadful to commit sin. (3) If, nevertheless, we sin, there is One who is sinless: "*If any man sin, there is, in the court above, Jesus Christ, who never sinned.*"

Here again is a contrast! It is good to transfer our observation from sin to righteousness, from earth to heaven, from self to Jesus. Notice, while the principal figure offered to our gaze is Christ, it is Christ in a particular position. Our help and relief, when our consciences are disturbed by sin, are to be sought in contemplating the Saviour, not in the glory that was His before the world began, when incarnation existed only in the decree; not in the foreshadowing of the times of the patriarchs or of Moses; not in His humiliation on earth; not even dying on the cross or sleeping in the tomb of rock; but as entered "into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb 9:24) – a wonderful commentary on the words, "we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous".

This heavenly work of the Redeemer belongs, not to the humiliation, but to the exaltation. Both are priestly parts of the work of our great and only Priest, but one was below and the other is above; one was transient, the other is perpetual; one was payment of debt, the other is demand of release; one was at the altar in the outer court, the other is in the most holy place, within

the veil, before the resplendent glory of the ark. Both concern sin; both concern Christ's righteousness – but in differing respects. Sin is expiated by Christ's sufferings and death; it is removed by the Surety making intercession. Christ's righteousness was, in one of its principal parts, secured by the offering up of His own holy will in acts of obedience and suffering on earth; it is gloriously set forth, in the sight of God and the universe, in heaven as an abiding, everlasting merit and ground of the acceptance of believers and their continuance in favour.

The ancient priesthood, a succession of men transacting with Jehovah on behalf of sinners, was constantly interrupted by death. But Jesus, as Paul declares, “is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb 7:25). The chain of dying priests is summed up in One who is immutable. We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat who serve the sanctuary. We have a sacrifice, not of beasts, but of the Lamb of God. We have a tabernacle, the antitype of the tent in the desert. We have a veil, dividing the court on earth from the holy of holies in heaven. We have a High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building. “an High Priest who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man” (Heb 8:1,2).

The eye of the sinner in Israel, as he stood at the altar, was wistfully fixed on the high priest as he passed out of sight on the great day of atonement, within the holiest of all. The eye of the modern sinner, under grace, is equally fixed on the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, whom the heavens have received, the Paraclete who pleads for all His people by all the beseeching and constraining merits of His life and death, before the throne of heavenly grace. And blessed is the moment when, after long and fixed looking at itself and its sins, the soul is drawn to look at the sinless One above. Here within ourselves, there is no righteousness; there above, is all righteousness. I am all sin; He is without sin. If I sin, my Advocate never sinned, and He is there with the Father. Thus the faith of the sinner lays its emphasis on the phrase, “Jesus Christ the righteous”.

We must settle firmly the doctrinal basis of our confidence in order to escape the weakness of some people whose religion is all sentiment and emotion, without any substructure of truth. Let us then consider for a few moments *how the consciousness of sin is relieved by a view of our heavenly Advocate and Sponsor, who is sinless: Jesus Christ the righteous.*

Even in the most vague and general view of the subject, one must perceive that he who comes before a sovereign to intercede for rebels must be free

from any accusation of being a rebel himself. He who comes into court to answer for offenders must himself be free from any accusation. He who undertakes for sinners must be without sin – for who could answer for him? Looking more closely at the matter, we perceive the special nature of this mediation: that it was intended to relieve this great difficulty of the universe – how a just God can pronounce the ungodly to be heirs of heaven. What the world of sinners had lost and could never produce by itself is conformity to God's will and the power to satisfy God's law. What the inspired apostles represent our Redeemer as procuring and offering is this very conformity and satisfaction – in other words, righteousness.

It is common for those who have not gone deeply into the theology of salvation to ascribe the justification of sinners exclusively to the death of Christ. It is true that the cruel death of our holy Lord was the chief proof of His love and the culminating point of the redemptive process. Yet neither this nor all the other unutterable sufferings of the Saviour can be said to constitute the whole of that righteousness through which sinners are made righteous. For when we come to examine that aspect under which this suffering is exhibited in Him, we find it to be a mode of obedience. "He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." To endure the penalty was high obedience. The essence of all obedience is the loving offering up of the subject's will to the supreme Will. This offering up in love, this subjugation of will, was indeed remarkably manifested in the garden and on the cross. But it was manifested elsewhere. It was manifested always.

The whole life of the sinless One, from Bethlehem to Golgotha, was one offering up of Himself in voluntary self-renunciation unto God as the Surety of sinners. All His acts, words and thoughts, His habits and disposition, were pure and perfect. The obedience included conformity to precept and endurance of penalty. In both, the Lord Jesus Christ offered, in the sight of all holy beings and of God, an example of immaculate and infinitely-illustrious holiness. And such is the righteousness which He ever presents before the throne of the Majesty on high. It is because He is thus pure and glorious that He can be a prevalent advocate. His plea is unanswerable.

That the excellencies of Christ are the excellencies of one Person, while the host of sinners is beyond numbering, need cause us no scruple. Adam, the original Surety, who failed in the probation was one. "Therefore as by the offence of one judgement came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Rom 5:18,19). Enhanced as is the intrinsic merit by the infinite nature and divinity of person, it outshines what

would be the joint splendour of all creature-righteousness; even though all creatures had been holy, and men and angels had never fallen. The eye of Him who is so holy that the heavens are unclean in His sight dwells with acquiescence, approval and divine delight on such a spectacle of righteousness, and the sinner's heart is satisfied that God can now be just and yet the justifier of the ungodly that believe in Jesus.

Hear the precept: "My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not". Hear the relief: "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ," who never sinned. "Such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Heb 7:26). Behold Him as He stands for believers, within yonder veil! The shadowing forth of this was truly impressive to ancient Israel. Among all the sacred orders of the Gentiles, there was no person so majestic as Aaron and his successors. On his brow was the plate of pure gold, engraved with a signet: "Holiness unto the Lord". Fit emblem of Jesus Christ the righteous. None but the possessor of this holy crown of pure gold can fitly approach the King in His glory. On Aaron's breast was the twelfefold breastplate, with rows of gems bearing the names of the 12 tribes of Israel. Thus the forerunner is entered, even Jesus, made a High Priest for ever; thus He bears the names of His people next to His heart.

For their sakes He became man; for their sakes He obeyed and died; for their sakes He intercedes and reigns. His acts as Elder Brother are vicarious, and His very sanctity flows from them. Mark this in His prayer when near Gethsemane: "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth" (Jn 17:19). This is good news for sinners. If we sin, the Paraclete is sinless. It is in "Jesus Christ the righteous" that God looks on those who believe. Justification by faith is by the righteousness which faith appropriates. You are never further from being accepted, sinner, than when you struggle most vehemently to fabricate a righteousness of your own.

Desist, for the achievement is impossible. You have groaned under the load of sin and have worked hard to make yourself better, but without success. The stone which you roll to the steep mountain top continually rebounds upon you. The outward reforms which you sometimes attempt only serve to show you how unreformed your inward principle is. There is nothing within you which can appease your conscience. No amount of zeal for outward service and legal obedience can atone for past sin or purchase future happiness. These fruitless attempts are like those of the Jews, whose condition was such a grief to Paul: "They being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted them-

selves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Rom 10:3,4).

Attempts, by mere natural strength, to cope with sin inflaming the conscience is like fighting against the rage of fire with one’s bare hands. Attempts to cover up the wounds in the heart and smother the pang of remorse are always futile. “When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer” (Ps 32:3,4). Bring out then the long-concealed distress. Give up the effort to live without pardon and peace. Disclose the heavy secret and unbosom yourself to God. Confess that you deserve His judgement, and own that the case is blacker than your worst enemy ever charged. Go down on your knees; lie prostrate in the dust as the leper, the publican, the chief of sinners, but do not pervert those sorrows; do not turn those tears into poison by weighing them as if a certain amount of humbling would purchase a certain amount of peace.

No, this would only change the kind of payment you offer. Receive the great truth: no payment remains to be made. The Surety has paid all. The salvation is without money and without price – that is, we are saved by grace. Do not ask whether you have been convinced enough, whether you have mourned enough, whether you have repented enough – as if you had to be convinced, to mourn, to repent to some particular extent before you could have a right to believe. Your right to believe is the infinite truthfulness of God in offering Christ and His salvation to the chief of sinners.

Do you believe this? Look upwards and see heaven open and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God. Forget yourself, forsake yourself, with all your merits, all your strivings, all your tears, all you repentings. Indeed – even more and harder – forget your shortcomings, your iniquities, your hardness of heart, your unbelief. Flee from it all and leave all far behind you while you fix your eyes on the Advocate with the Father. Look to Him and be saved. This is the beloved Son, in whom the Father is well pleased.

Yes, you have sinned to the extent of utter condemnation, so as to be lost in unrighteousness, but he who pleads is Jesus Christ the righteous. The argument which He wields is His obedience unto death. As it pleased the Lord to bruise Him, so it pleases the Lord to grant Him that travail of His soul. Do you believe this? Believe in Jesus Christ the righteous, and you shall be righteous. Dare you close with the offer? Dare you make a venture, on God’s Word in promise, and Christ’s heart in pledge? No, it is no venture, but the infallible certainty of God. The Judge is ready; the Surety is ready, the righteousness, the pardon, the adoption, the kiss of peace, all are ready – except your lingering, doubting, self-righteous, self-destroying soul.

# Scottish Reformers' View of Romanism<sup>1</sup>

## 3. John Knox and the Final Steps of Reformation

*Rev D W B Somers*

(1.) *A separate congregation.* This brings us to John Knox and the congregation in St Andrews in 1547. There is no need to go over the history in detail. Cardinal Beaton was assassinated on 29 May 1546, and the assassins and others congregated in the Castle. Knox joined them in April 1547 and after six weeks was called to be their minister. This was the first regular Protestant congregation in Scotland and the first call to the ministry, and Knox, appropriately, was the first settled minister. There was the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Lord's Supper, received in a sitting posture. The people from the town could come to the Castle for public worship, and on some occasions Knox preached in the town. So here we have full separation from the Church of Rome at last. Furthermore Knox, at least, never went back.

Knox's opposition to Romanism was clearer even than Wishart's. Thomas M'Crie, senior, gives an account of his first public sermon in St Andrews, on Daniel 7:24-25: "After an introduction, in which he explained the vision, and showed that the four empires, emblematically represented by four different animals, were the Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman, out of the ruins of the last of which empires, the power described in his text arose, he proceeded to show that this was applicable to no other power but that of the degenerate Romish Church. He compared the parallel passages in the New Testament, and showed that the king mentioned in his text was the same elsewhere called the man of sin, the Antichrist, the Babylonian harlot; and that this did not mean any single person, but a body or multitude of people under a wicked head, including a succession of persons, occupying the same station. In support of his assertion that the papal power was antichristian, he described it under the three heads of life, doctrine, and laws.

"He depicted the lives of the popes from ecclesiastical history, contrasted their doctrine with that of the New Testament, particularly in the article of justification, and their laws enjoining holy days, abstinence from meats, from marriage etc, with the laws of Christ. He quoted from the canon law the blasphemous titles and prerogatives ascribed to the Pope, as an additional proof that he was described in his text. In conclusion, he signified that if any present thought that he had misquoted, or misinterpreted the testimonies which

<sup>1</sup>The last part of a paper presented at the 2010 Theological Conference. The previous article provided a historical survey of the pre-Reformation period

he had produced from the Scriptures, history, or writings of the doctors of the Church, he was ready upon their coming to him, in the presence of witnesses, to give them satisfaction. There were among the audience, his former preceptor, Major, the members of the university, the sub-prior of the abbey, and a great number of canons and friars of different orders.

“This sermon, delivered with a great portion of that popular eloquence for which Knox was afterwards so celebrated, made great noise, and excited much speculation among all classes. The former Reformed preachers, not excepting Wishart, had contented themselves with refuting some of the grosser errors of the established religion. Knox struck at the root of popery, by boldly pronouncing the Pope to be Antichrist, and the whole system erroneous and antisciptural. The comment of the people of St Andrews was that previous Reformers has ‘only sned the branches of Papistry; he struck boldly at the root to destroy the whole’.”

At the same time, Knox engaged in public debates with John Annand and Friar Arbuckle. In these, Knox maintained nine points, amongst which were the following: “(1) No mortal man can be head of the Church; (2) The Pope is an Antichrist, and so no member of Christ’s mystical body; (5) The mass is abominable idolatry; (6) There is no purgatory; (7) Praying for the dead is vain, and to the dead is idolatry”. Here again, we have a complete rejection of Romanism.

Knox’s ministry in the Castle was brief because the Castle surrendered to the French on 31 July 1547. Knox was captured and put to work as a galley slave.

(2.) *The Mass identified as idolatrous.* The next significant event was Knox’s speech in Newcastle on 4 April 1550 “to give his confession why he affirmed the mass idolatry”. This was first published in 1556 and is discussed at some length by Peter Lorimer in *John Knox and the Church of England* (published in 1875). Lorimer compares Knox’s arguments with Cranmer’s *Defence of the True and Catholic Doctrine of the Sacrament* which was published in July 1550, just a few months after Knox’s dispute. He notes that Knox’s position is essentially Puritan (and indeed he claims Knox as the founder of Puritanism) in that, for Knox, idolatry is whatever is not commanded by God. Cranmer, on the other hand, takes a more restricted and “Anglican” view, though they both agree that the mass is idolatry. To quote the Thirty-first article: “The sacrifices of the masses, in the which it was commonly said that the priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits.” This particular dispute continued after the Reformation with the publication in 1563 of Knox’s “reasonings” with Quintin Kennedy, the Abbot of Crossraguel.

(3.) *Knox’s preaching tour of 1555-56.* The next step was Knox’s preaching

tour in Scotland from September 1555 to June 1556. Apart from the fact that numerous important people were converted or strengthened, such as the (later) Regent Moray, the Earl of Argyle and other nobles, the tour was also significant because Knox urged that Protestants should separate themselves entirely from the mass. He particularly mentions a meal at the House of Dun, where John Erskine, John Willock, Maitland of Lethington and others were present, at which this point was argued. Up till that time many had assembled privately in “privy kirks” but had also continued to attend mass. Knox argued from Scripture that this attendance at mass must stop, and evidently argued with great effect. He also administered the Lord’s Supper wherever he went. Thus there was now a separate Protestant Church in numerous parts of Scotland.

(4.) *Bands against Romanism.* The next step was to draw up various “bands” or covenants against Romanism, the first one being taken by some of the nobility in 1557. In this band, they recognise “the Antichrist of their time” and they “forsake and renounce the congregation of Satan” and join themselves to the congregation of God. Similar bands were taken in 1559. Priests joining the Congregation were required to make similar renunciations. In one, they “renounce all idolatry, superstition, the mass, the Pope and all his traditions; and profess the administration of the sacraments, as they are taught and practised by the ministers, to be conformed to God’s Word”. In another, “they heartily renounce the Pope, who is the very Antichrist and suppressor of God’s glory, with all diabolic inventions such as purgatory, the mass, invocations of saints . . . worshipping of images, etc”. Thus, joining the Congregation involved separating from Romanism.

(5.) *Reforming the worship in towns.* The next step was the reforming of towns, so that, with the approval of the magistrates, the public worship in the town became Protestant. At the same time, the friaries were demolished so that the celebrating of mass was more difficult. This had happened in Dundee, Edinburgh (though undone), St Andrews, Perth, Brechin, Montrose, Stirling, Ayr and Aberdeen by the beginning of 1560. Furthermore, several of these towns had ministers, and even Kirk Sessions. In other smaller places it appears that the priest/minister simply started using the Church of England Prayer-book and the Book of Homilies.

(6.) *The Reformation of 1560.* The final step was the Reformation itself, in the summer of 1560, with the casting off of the authority of the Pope, and the outlawing of the mass. It is remarkable how completely the Church of Rome collapsed in Scotland. There was no organised resistance to the Reformation; no blood was shed after the Treaty of Edinburgh in July 1560; there were no “martyrs”; there were pockets where the mass carried on, but that



was all; and the country became Protestant. The copestone was the adoption of the Scots Confession in August 1560. In this, though the Pope was not expressly declared to be the Antichrist, yet all important Roman errors were rejected. In particular, the sacraments of Rome were to be avoided at all costs:

“We flee the doctrine of the Papistical Kirk, in participation of their sacraments, first, because their ministers are no ministers of Christ Jesus; yea (which is more horrible) they suffer women, whom the Holy Ghost will not suffer to teach in the congregation, to baptize. And, secondly, because they have so adulterated, both the one sacrament and the other, with their own inventions, that no part of Christ's action abideth in the original purity; for oil, salt, spittle and suchlike in baptism, are but men's inventions; adoration, veneration, bearing through streets and towns, and keeping of bread in boxes or buists [chests], are profanation of Christ's Sacraments, and no use of the same: for Christ Jesus said, ‘Take, eat, etc; do ye this in remembrance of Me’. By which words and charge He sanctified bread and wine to be the sacrament of His body and blood; to the end, that the one should be eaten, and that all should drink of the other; and not that they should be kept to be worshipped and honoured as God, as the blind Papists have done heretofore, who also have committed sacrilege, stealing from the people the one part of the sacrament, to wit, the blessed cup.

“Moreover, that the sacraments be rightly used, it is required that the end and cause why the sacraments were instituted be understood and observed, as well of the minister as of the receivers; for if the opinion be changed in the receiver [that is, if the receiver be in error], the right use ceaseth; which is most evident by the rejection of the sacrifices (as also if the teacher teach false doctrine) which were odious and abominable unto God (albeit they were His own ordinances), because that wicked men use them to another end than God hath ordained. The same affirm we of the sacraments in the Papistical Kirk, in which we affirm the whole action of the Lord Jesus to be adulterated, as well in the external form, as in the end and opinion. What Christ Jesus did, and commanded to be done, is evident by the three Evangelists and by Saint Paul. What the priest does at his altar we need not to rehearse. The end and cause of Christ's institution, and why the self-same should be used, is expressed in these words, ‘Do this in remembrance of Me. As oft as ye shall eat of this bread and drink of this cup, ye shall show forth (that is, extol, preach and magnify), the Lord's death till He come.’

“But to what end, and in what opinion, the priests say their masses, let the words of the same, their own doctors and writings witness, to wit, that they, as mediators betwixt Christ and His Kirk, do offer unto God the Father a sacrifice propitiatory for the sins of the quick and the dead. Which doctrine,

as blasphemous to Christ Jesus, and making derogation to the sufficiency of His only sacrifice, once offered for purgation of all those that shall be sanctified, we utterly abhor, detest and renounce.”

The *Book of Common Order* of 1564 contains a prayer (going back to Bucer and Calvin) which identifies the Pope as the Antichrist, praying for deliverance from “the furious uproars of that Romish idol, enemy to Thy Christ (Latin version: Antichrist)”. This prayer was included in Carswell’s Gaelic translation of 1567 so that the first printed book in Gaelic declares the Papacy to be the Antichrist.

This view of Romanism continued to be the position of the Church of Scotland. The mass was considered so dangerous that it was illegal, and the Pope was frequently identified as the Antichrist. For instance, in a letter sent by the General Assembly to England in 1566 – pleading, unsuccessfully, with the English Bishops to deal gently with the early Puritans – the English Bishops are referred to as those “who has renounced the Roman Antichrist”.

In conclusion, the Scottish Reformers had a fairly uniform view of Romanism and the Papacy, but a developing idea of how they should respond to the evils of Romanism. The preaching tours of George Wishart in 1544-45 and John Knox in 1555-56 were of great significance in the development of the Protestant response. The astonishing thing about 1560 is that the Protestants, in separating from the Church of Rome, took the whole Church in Scotland with them.

## John Calvin and Attendance at Mass<sup>1</sup>

A Review Article by *Roy Middleton*

Sometime during the night of Saturday 17 October and Sabbath 18 October 1534 a highly-organised clandestine network plastered broadsheets or “placards” throughout north-central France condemning the idolatry of the Roman Catholic mass. Even King Francis I awoke to find a “placard” posted outside his bedchamber at the Chateau of Amboise. The effect of the placards on Paris was tremendous. Although the placards were intended to warn of the dangers of idolatry, they were perceived by the French authorities as a sign of the dangers of an organised Protestantism. The Government reaction was swift and brutal and several Protestants were publically burned.

The affair of the “placards” was a watershed in the history of the French

<sup>1</sup>A review of *Faith Unfeigned*, by John Calvin, published by the Banner of Truth Trust, hardback, 208 pages, £14.50. All references in brackets refer to this volume. It is available from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom.

Reformed Church, and one of its negative consequences was that the persecution of Protestants increased in France, creating a climate of fear. This intensification of persecution produced not only martyrs but refugees. Among those driven out of France in the first wave of persecution was John Calvin (1509-1564), then aged around 25.<sup>2</sup>

Besides those who suffered and fled into exile, there were many that stayed in France who were broadly sympathetic to Reformation principles but refused to make a clean break with Roman Catholicism. This rather diverse group of people, whose behaviour was at first wholly motivated by fear, were called by Calvin and his associates “Nicodemites” (from Nicodemus who followed the Lord secretly at first). Theodore Beza explains the background in these terms: “The consequence was that, from that time, the name Nicodemite was held in detestation by all good men. This name of Nicodemite was applied to those who pretended to find a sanction for their misconduct in the example of that most holy man Nicodemus.”<sup>3</sup>

The developed Nicodemite theology stated that an idol had no reality, that it was not really a god. Hence they claimed it was quite possible to serve the Lord inwardly whilst outwardly appearing to be idolaters by performing all the Romish rites, such as bending the knee and bowing the head before the “consecrated host”. Calvin was horrified at such behaviour; he writes about it: “They assemble with a multitude known to entertain a pernicious veneration of the mass. So little do they pity this blindness and superstition that they outwardly imitate it. The bread, which they know to be an idol to others, they concur with them in venerating, by using the same gestures.”<sup>4</sup>

Calvin’s battle with Nicodemism was a lifelong contest in which his pen was ever active in exposing conduct that necessarily involved compromise with Popery.<sup>5</sup> His first distinct anti-Nicodemite tract was written three years after the “placard affair”, to his former room-mate Nicholas du Chemin, who had accepted an appointment to the Popish bishopric of Le Mans. Calvin’s last tract on the topic was written just two years before his death.

Besides a series of tracts on the subject, Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite polemic

<sup>2</sup>For details of the persecution that followed the “Placard affair”, see R J Knecht, *Francis I*, Cambridge University Press, 1982, pp 248-252, 390-407.

<sup>3</sup>Theodore Beza, *Life of John Calvin*, in John Calvin, *Tracts and Treatises*, Baker Book House, 1983, vol 1, p xlix.

<sup>4</sup>John Calvin, *Tracts and Treatises*, vol 3, p 397.

<sup>5</sup>For a detailed history of Calvin’s opposition to Nicodemism, see Carlos M N Eire, *War Against the Idols: The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin*, Cambridge University Press, 1986, pp 166-275. See also Eire’s article, “Prelude to Sedition? Calvin’s Attack on Nicodemism and Religious Compromise”, in *Archiv fur Reformationgeschichte*, vol 76, 1985, pp 120-145.

pervades his treatment of idolatry, in his correspondence and throughout his extensive series of Biblical expositions. His main tracts written directly against Nicodemism are as follows:

1. 1536: *On Shunning the Unlawful Rites of the Ungodly*, a letter/tract to Nicholas du Chemin. Printed in John Calvin, *Tracts and Treatises*, vol 3, pp 357-411.
2. 1537: Letter to Gerard Roussel, *De Sacerdotio Papace*.
3. 1540: Letter to some friends. This letter was later published as an appendix to item 5 below.
4. 1541: Letter to the Duchess of Ferrara, written from Geneva and reprinted in *Letters of John Calvin*, ed Jules Bonnet, vol 1, pp 295-306.
5. 1543: *A short treatise setting forth what a faithful man must do when he is among papists and knows the truth of the gospel*, First English translation 1548.
6. 1544: *Answer of John Calvin to the Nicodemite Gentlemen concerning their complaint that he is too severe*.
7. 1545: Items 5 and 6 were re-issued together, along with the opinions of other Reformers on the issue of compromise, with the title *De Vitandis Superstitionibus*. This volume was reprinted in 1549 and 1550.
8. 1552: *Four sermons from John Calvin treating matters which are very useful to our times with a brief exposition of Psalm 87*.
9. 1562: *A Response to a certain Dutchman<sup>6</sup>, who under pretence of making Christians really spiritual, suffers them to defile their bodies in all sorts of idolatries*.

The volume under review is a new translation by Robert White<sup>7</sup> of item 8 in the above list. In addition, Appendix 2 is a new translation of item 3, and Appendix 3 reprints item 1 from the Calvin Translation Society edition of Calvin's *Tracts and Treatises*. The Banner of Truth is to be commended for re-issuing this valuable material. However, *Faith Unfeigned* contains less of Calvin's anti-Nicodemite material than the volume published in 2001 by Kevin Reed entitled *Come out from Among Them* (Protestant Heritage Press,

<sup>6</sup>George Huntson Williams in his volume, *The Radical Reformation*, Westminster Press, 1962, pp 603, 774-775 has identified the Nicodemite Dutchman as Dirk Volkerts Coornhert.

<sup>7</sup>Dr White, who formerly taught in the Department of French Studies at the University of Sydney in Australia, is the translator of three other Calvin works published by the Banner of Truth. These are *Sermons on the Beatitudes*, *Songs of the Nativity* and *A Guide to Christian Living*. In an article written by Dr White in the November 2000 issue of the *Calvin Theological Journal* (vol 35, pp 282-296) he draws attention to a valuable overlooked anti-Nicodemite letter of Calvin's dating from 1541 but not included in the list above. Besides providing a most interesting introduction and detailing the background and content of the letter, first published in 1906, Dr White retranslates the document on pages 290-296.

Dallas, 2001). The latter volume contains newly translated editions of items 3, 5, 6, 8 and 9.

In Calvin's preface to the four sermons he observes, "In earlier years I wrote two fairly full treatises<sup>8</sup> to demonstrate that no Christian familiar with pure gospel teaching and living under papal rule should ever pretend to assent or adhere to the abuses, superstitions and idolatry which prevail there. Yet every day there are people who seek advice all over again, as if I had never said a word on the subject" (p 1). It was in response to these requests that Calvin issued these four sermons, which he reworked for publication. Dr White points out in his introduction that it was Calvin's practice to preach twice each Sabbath, and in 1549 he was expounding Hebrews in the morning and the Psalms in the afternoon. The four sermons, three from the Psalms and one from Hebrews, are therefore contemporaneous and were preached in Geneva just three years prior to their publication.

The first sermon is an exposition of Psalm 16:4 "Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god: their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips".<sup>9</sup> In it Calvin sets out the duty of Christians to flee from idolatry rather than "defile themselves with popish abominations which are completely opposed to the Christian religion, since in doing so they disown, so far as they can, the Son of God who has redeemed them" (p 2).

The sermon is a condensation of the ground covered in the two larger treatises referred to in his preface (items 5 and 6 in the above list). Throughout the sermon Calvin stresses that believers are to devote both their body and soul to the Redeemer. This was in opposition to the Nicodemites, who asserted that they could adhere to the truth in their minds whilst their bodies were at the idolatrous mass. Calvin retorts that the godly man will keep himself pure in body and soul. In the Psalm, David asserts he would never take part in idolatrous sacrifices. The section of the sermon on pages 10-12 is a majestic refutation of Nicodemism. One citation must suffice, "How can it be right for our bodies to be defiled before idols, since they are promised a crown of life in heaven? Is wallowing in Satan's brothel the way we enter God's heavenly kingdom?" He then shows that Israel was forbidden to witness the abominations practised by the Chaldeans and concludes with a section showing that presence at a mass, in whatever form, is a denial of Christ.

<sup>8</sup>This is a reference to items 5 and 6 in the list above of Calvin's anti-Nicodemite treatises.

<sup>9</sup>All direct Scripture citations in this review article are from the Authorised Version. The translator does not use the Authorised Version. In his introduction he notes, "Where Scripture is directly cited, I have followed Calvin's French text, not that of any standard English version" (p xiii).

The second sermon is based on Hebrews 13:13: “Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach”. The sermon deals with the problem of persecution and is an exhortation to faithfulness in the face of persecution or martyrdom. Calvin details the purpose of the sermon in his preface: “I have added a second sermon to encourage all believers to value God’s honour and service more than their own life and to strengthen them against every trial” (p 2). In the sermon he observes, “We should recognise how precious in God’s sight is the profession of our faith. We fail to understand how much it means to God when we place a higher value on our lives, though they are nothing” (p 33). For Calvin, fear of persecution and death did not serve as an excuse for participation in idolatry. The martyrs of old have left eloquent testimony how it is better to suffer as the Lord’s witnesses than deny the faith through acts of idolatry. Calvin goes on to stress that God will disown those who have denied Him before men. The sermon is full of encouraging words, promises of eternal life and admonitions to remember the martyrs.

The third and fourth sermons are from Psalm 27:4,8: “One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in His temple . . . . When Thou saidst, Seek ye My face; my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek”. Both these sermons deal with the great privilege of being in the true Church of God, where there is freedom to worship God purely. The Nicodemites were denigrating the value of scriptural worship and gospel churches by being present at corrupt worship. Their behaviour kept them safe from persecution within the communion of the Papacy.

These last two sermons provide a corrective by showing that the godly hold to right worship and also that the Church is exceedingly precious. The requirement to worship God purely made it necessary for those living under papal rule either to establish gospel churches, or to emigrate as Calvin had done himself. Both sermons stress the need to leave Roman Catholic countries in order to worship God as He ought to be worshipped. Elsewhere in his anti-Nicodemite writings Calvin cites Genesis 12:1 as the basis for this advice: “Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee”.<sup>10</sup>

In the fourth sermon he deals at length with objections that could be made to this advice.<sup>11</sup> The establishment of refugee churches throughout the con-

<sup>10</sup>Cited in Eire, *War Against the Idols*, p 260.

<sup>11</sup>Calvin’s call to exile had dramatic results: thousands of French Protestants fled their homeland in search of religious freedom. Nearly 5000 came to Geneva. See Eire, *War Against the Idols*, p 264.

minent in the sixteenth century owes much to Calvin's uncompromising stance against idolatrous Roman Catholic worship. If the path of emigration was not followed, then Calvin urged that believers must abstain from idolatry at all costs – even if this means persecution or loss of life. Robert White observes, “What underlies the Nicodemite controversy, and what, after four centuries, gives it continuing relevance, is the question of how Christ is to be confessed before men. For Calvin, light that cannot be seen is not light.”<sup>12</sup>

We highly recommend both this volume and the earlier one published by Protestant Heritage Press. At least one of these volumes should be in Free Presbyterian homes as they provide the Biblical ground for the action taken by the Southern Presbytery and the Synod in 1988 and 1989 when those bodies disciplined the then Edinburgh elder Lord Mackay of Clashfern for being present at two requiem masses. Since those events of 23 years ago, a generation of young people has grown to maturity that needs to understand the Biblical and theological basis for the action of the Free Presbyterian Synod in standing firm for Reformation principles; Calvin's anti-Nicodemite writings provide this basis.

In Calvin's 1540 letter to some friends, printed as Appendix 2 to *Faith Unfeigned*, he makes this statement: “Likewise we should abstain from all rites which are associated with superstition and error, such as attendance at services for the dead, participation in masses, and processions and other observances held in honour of saints, as is done today” (p 120).

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## Strange Fire<sup>1</sup>

*Henry Law*

Leviticus 10:1,2. *Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord.*

Sounds of high joy had just been swelling through the holy court. Sure tokens of approving love had rested on the typifying altar. The flame, which must not die, and which alone might now be used, witnessed God's smile on the appointed victims. The covenant of grace was sealed anew with blazing zeal. The obedient worshipper had proof that God was near him, with him, for him.

This sight opens heaven. Who would not ever gaze? But earth is yet our

<sup>12</sup>*Calvin Theological Journal*, vol 35, p 289.

<sup>1</sup>Taken, with editing, from *The Gospel in Leviticus*.

home. Here a vile foe is ever near. He writhes when souls are safely climbing Zion's hill. He saw the joys of Eden, and he flew to mar it. He sees the gospel of this heaven-sent fire, and he will strive to quench it. So now he comes. The place is sacred and the office holy. But he has keys for every gate. No station is too high for his foul wing. No consecrated functions scare him back.

He comes beside Aaron's first-born sons. Their calling to be priests is no protecting shield. He can ascend the altar steps. He knows the fit temptation for the holiest place. So now he fosters self-exalting zeal. He leads to worship, but the worship must be strange. He prompts an offering, but the offering is not God's. Such was his bait. Mark its success. Nadab and Abihu each take his censer. Was this God's will? Did He require this act? Their first step strays. They next add fire. Whence was it brought? God had provided what alone He would receive. It was not distant. An outstretched hand might instantly obtain it. They madly reason: What, will no other flame avail? Will this alone cause incense to ascend? Impious self-will thus reasons into ruin.

Strange fire is seized, and a strange service acted. O miserable men! Their hands feign holy work, but rebel feet tread down God's ordinance. O terrible result! To despise God is rapid downfall. His frown is withering blight. It arms each creature with destructive sting. Behold a proof! The pledge of favour inflicts sudden death. The symbol of accepted service now hurls the disobedient into ruin's gulf. The fire thus scorned put forth its mighty strength. It vindicates its sacred intent. They who rejected cannot now cast it off. It wraps them in its burning arms and lays their blackened corpses in the dust. Thus Nadab and Abihu perish from the earth.

But still the judgement lives. This story stands as a dark beacon on a rocky coast. To all despisers of the gospel scheme, it cries, Beware. It shows that they who stray from God's appointed path fall into quicksands of tremendous wrath. Reader, these lines draw near, bringing this counsel to your heart. Listen, with humble mind – with earnest prayer. And may the Lord of mercy mercifully bless!

The Bible page stands open. It courts your eyes. It craves attention. It wears no dark disguise. It is an azure sky of truth. It writes with an unerring pen the mission and the work of Christ. It tells you that, when you were ruined and undone, when condemnation's thunder roared, the Father sent His Son to bear the curse – to die the death, to suffer in the sinner's stead and save with uttermost salvation. These tidings loudly sound their silver note. The testimony is distinct: Behold the Lamb of God; look to His cross; hide in His wounds; enter the refuge of His merits; cement yourself by faith to Him. Urge Him, your all-prevailing plea. A train of faithful promises assures that none thus seeking are cast out. But threats re-echo; there is none other



name; no other sacrifice remains. Despise, reject, neglect, and death without a remedy is near, and hell without escape gates for you.

Reader, a question meets you here. Let honest truth reply. Did the attesting fire, on Israel's altar, blaze with more brightness than the clear mind of God revealed? O no! The fact denies denial. Such is the way marked out by God. Here is the door which mercy opens. Here is the refuge raised by sovereign love. Here is the cure of all sin's wounds. God gives – and God attests – His Son as full redemption for the lost.

How is such wondrous news received? Surely all earth will throb with one ecstatic pulse of joy. Surely each sinew will be strained to grasp the gift of gifts. But is it so? Draw back the curtains of man's inmost soul. Enter the chambers in which hidden imagery dwells. In many corners many Nadabs and Abihus lurk. They hear of Christ and sneer. They see the cross and count it a vain thing. The fire of their own hearts is their delight. They rather choose self-kindled sparks.

Reader, draw near, and mark some leaders of this blinded troop. Self-righteous pride claims foremost place. It is a bold, unblushing rebel in earth's camp. It lifts a daring head, and wears a helmet plumed with nature's gaudy crest. Its mouth abounds with self-invented pleas. What are they? Fancied innocence of grievous ill, a fancied treasury of virtue's deeds, a train of duties towards God, a train of charity towards man. It views this household flame and fondly asks, What lack I more? Ah, the rash madness! Ah, the wreck of soul! Take nature's best, and what is it but a noxious plant, rooted in filthy mire, laden with poison berries, plucked by polluted hand? Uplift self's purest clothing to the light of heaven. It is a tattered rag. No thread is clean; no part is whole. But still for this God's well-beloved Son is scorned; for this His righteousness is put aside.

What is the end? The judgement comes. The great white throne is set. How will these Nadabs and Abihus stand? He who alone could save is now the Judge. Where is the blood which once flowed near? There was a plea which might have fully saved, but this was cast away. Can a rejected Jesus screen rejecting foes? Can a refused shield ward off death blows? Vengeance descends, and human merit takes its own wages with the lost.

Others confess the evil of their early years. When they look back, the traversed path seems foul. They readily allow that vile transgressions soiled their hands, their feet, their hearts. But they now flee all flagrant fault. They have sown the seeds of mere reformation and gathered its fruits – and Cain-like bring the produce of their fields. Here Nadab and Abihu reappear in a patched garb. Amendments pile their censers high. This is the fire of their choice. But it is strange fire. God's altar gave not such supply.

Reader, think not that reformation is of little worth. You must be born again. None but the new born can enter heaven. But outward changes are not always grace. Lot's wife left Sodom, but she perished by the way. A new dress may be worn without a new heart. A painted surface will not purify a tomb. A Herod may reform without new birth.

Besides, where grace is real, it is no covering for past offence. This year's honesty has no receipts for last year's debts. Again, a trust in change of life is evidence of unchanged heart. The Spirit leads not to such rotten ground. He never prompts such arrogant conceits. The saintliest man increasingly sees evil cleaving, as bark to the trees – as feathers to the fowl. He knows no hope but Jesus' life and Jesus' death. This is the fire which God prescribes. And this alone the child of God will bring.

Some Nadabs and Abihus come with streaming eyes. Sin has brought loss. Some worldly prospect has been crushed. Thus Esau weeps. Conscience sometimes is quick to see the misery of guilt. Saul's flowing tears own this. So too the gospel's melody will often melt. It falls as tender dew upon a moistening soil. The feelings relax, as ice beneath the sun. In these relaxing moments, Satan whispers, There is merit here. The mourning spirit fondly hopes that mourning can buy peace. The tearful eye sees virtue in its drops. The signs of penitence are offered as a ransom price. Doubtless, no heart loves Christ which hates not self, and bitterly bewails its grievous state. Doubtless the arms of penitence twine tightly round the cross. But seas of grief cannot wash out soul stains. Sorrow, when brought as pardon's price, is but strange fire. And all strange fire calls vengeance down.

The class of formalists may not be overlooked. They crowd God's courts. Each attitude, each look, is studied reverence. Their lips drop holiest words. Their hands touch holiest symbols. Their souls seem rapt to heaven on devotion's wing. If services discharged and rites observed and outward show were Christ, their cup of safety would be full. But these are only means. In their right place, they are most salutary helps; but decked as saviours, they impose, mislead, destroy. To use them as meek handmaids of the Lord is piety's delight; to trust in them as reconciliation's price is superstition's blind conceit. Then they become strange fire.

These worshippers reject the substance and repose on signs. But ritual services have in themselves no saving power. Such planks span not the gaping gulf. Such ladders lead not to the throne of God. Their office is to lead to Christ and witness of His love. They are the channels of His precious grace. But they wash out no sin; they satisfy no wrath; they keep back no vengeance; they have no key of heaven; they snatch not from the grasp of Satan; they are no plea for pardon; they hold no title deeds of glory's kingdom. Christ

is salvation, Christ alone. Such is the work which God commissioned Him to work. He undertook it. And He gloriously achieved. The mighty truth is ever true: "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do". They then who now present another sacrifice, like Nadab and Abihu sin, and like Nadab and Abihu die.

Reader, now view your censer; now say what are its contents. Surely you hold some offering in your hands. Surely some confidence keeps conscience still. What is it? God has sent forth His Son – the only way, the only truth, the only life, the only ransom price, the one atonement, for all sin. Is He the rock on which you rest? Is He the centre of your hopes? Is He the one foundation of your trust? Is He your only argument for mercy? One sun illuminates the world. One ark delivered from the flood. One Joseph fed in times of famine. One brazen serpent healed the poison's sting. One fire came down for tabernacle use. One Saviour saves the saved. One Christ is first and last to merit life. God sends, anoints, accepts, proclaims Him. If you plead Him in real faith, you cannot fail. To grasp another is to grasp a straw.

Listen to Abel and all the saints of old, and all believers of all times, and to the one shout around the throne – they tell that eternal safety is beneath His wings. Listen to the wails of Cains and Nadabs and Abihus – they warn that other fire kindles a quenchless flame. Christ, by God's will, is heaven's gate. Strange offerings are hopeless hope. And hopeless hope must plunge in black despair.

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## Lessons from the Sin of Judas<sup>1</sup>

*J C Ryle*

Let us mark, in these verses, *the power and malignity of our great enemy the devil*. We are told, at the beginning of the chapter, that he "put it into the heart" of Judas to betray the Lord Jesus. We are told here that the devil "entered into" him. First he suggests; then he commands. First he knocks at the door and asks permission to come in; once admitted, he takes complete possession and rules the whole inward man like a tyrant.

Let us take heed that we are not "ignorant of Satan's devices". He is still going to and fro in the earth, seeking whom he may devour. He is about our path and about our bed, and spies out all our ways. Our only safety lies in resisting him from the first, not listening to his first advances. For this we are all responsible. Strong as he is, he has no power to do us harm if we cry to the stronger One in heaven and use the means which He has appointed. It is

<sup>1</sup>Comments, with editing, on John 13:21-30 from Ryle's *Expository Thoughts on John*, vol 3.

a standing principle of Christianity which will ever be found true: “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (Jas 4:7).

Once let a man begin to tamper with the devil and he never knows how far he may fall. Trifling with the first thoughts of sin, making light of evil ideas when first offered to our hearts, allowing Satan to talk to us and flatter us and put bad notions into our hearts – all this may seem a small matter to many. It is precisely at this point that the road to ruin often begins. He that allows Satan to sow wicked thoughts will soon find within his heart a crop of wicked habits. Happy is he who really believes that there is a devil and, so believing, daily watches and prays to be kept from his temptations.

Let us mark also, in these verses, *the extreme hardness which comes over the heart of a backsliding professor of religion*. This is most painfully brought out in the case of Judas Iscariot. One might have thought that the sight of our Lord’s trouble and the solemn warning: “One of you shall betray Me”, would have stirred the conscience of this unhappy man. But it did not. One might have thought that the solemn words, “That thou doest, do quickly,” would have arrested him and made him ashamed of the sin he intended to commit. But nothing seems to have moved him. Like one whose conscience was dead, buried and gone, he rises and goes out to do his wicked work, and parts with his Lord for ever.

The extent to which we may harden ourselves by resisting light and knowledge is a most fearful fact about our nature. We may become past feeling, like those whose limbs are mortified before they die. We may lose entirely all sense of fear or shame or remorse, and have a heart as hard as the nether millstone, blind to every warning, and deaf to every appeal. It is a sore disease, but one which, unhappily, is not uncommon among professing Christians. No one seems so liable to this disease as those who, having great light and privilege, deliberately turn their backs on Christ and return to the world. Nothing seems likely to touch such people but the voice of the archangel and the trump of God.

Let us watch jealously over our hearts and beware of giving way to the beginnings of sin. Happy is he who fears always and walks humbly with his God. The strongest Christian is the one who feels his weakness most, and cries most frequently, “Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe” (Ps 119:117).

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No judgement of God, on this side hell, is greater than a hard heart and stupid conscience under the Word; it were better the providence of God should blast thy estate, take away thy children, or destroy thy health, than harden thy heart and sear thy conscience under the Word. So much as thy soul is better than thy body, so much as eternity is more valuable than time, so much is this spiritual judgement more dreadful than all temporal ones.

*John Flavel*

## Book Review

*Gospel Precepts, The Believer's Rule of Conduct*, by J C Philpot, published by Gospel Standard Trust Publications, paperback, 161 pages, £5.75.

J C Philpot was a respected Gospel Standard pastor during the nineteenth century and was for 29 years involved in editing his denomination's monthly magazine. Over the years he contributed many series of "meditations". Some of these were republished in book form during the 1970s, including *Meditations on the Sacred Humanity of the Blessed Redeemer* and *Meditations on . . . the Holy Ghost*, both of which this reviewer has enjoyed reading.

The book under review contains another series of these "meditations". It has, however, a fundamental defect, highlighted by Philpot's remark that, on the subject under discussion, "Owen, Bunyan and most of the old Puritan writers" were both "confused" and "legal" (p 85); he is arguing that the moral law is *not* the rule of the believer's life. One hastens to add, however, that Philpot was no antinomian in practice; he was anxious to promote godly living – which is the theme of this book. He believed that "gospel precepts" – "those exhortations, injunctions, commands, entreaties, admonitions, call them by what name you will . . . which the Holy Ghost has revealed in the new covenant as claiming our attention and our obedience," are "intended to be influential upon our life" (p 15).

But this distinction between the will of God for the obedience of a believer under the old dispensation of the covenant of grace and for one under the new is not scriptural. The *Westminster Confession of Faith* summarises, in chapter 19, the Bible's teaching on the law. It speaks of the law as "a perfect rule of righteousness; and, as such, was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai, in ten commandments, and written in two tables; the first four commandments containing our duty towards God; and the other six, our duty to man". The *Confession* then adds, "Besides this law, commonly called moral, God was pleased to give to the people of Israel, as a church under age, ceremonial laws, containing several typical ordinances; partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, His graces, actions, sufferings, and benefits; and partly of divers instructions of moral duties. All which ceremonial laws are now abrogated under the new testament." And finally, in defining the third of the three sections of the law under the old covenant, it states: "To them also, as a body politic, He gave sundry judicial laws, which expired together with the state of that people, not obliging any other now, further than the general equity thereof may require".

Then the *Confession* goes on to emphasise that "the moral law doth *for ever* bind all, *as well justified persons as others*, to the obedience thereof; and that, not only in regard of the matter contained in it, but also in respect

of the authority of God, the Creator, who gave it. Neither doth Christ, in the gospel, any way dissolve, but much strengthen this obligation.” Indeed (though the choice of word is clearly not important to Philpot) it is striking that the word *precept* is only used in two New Testament verses and both of them refer to Moses’ precepts.

However, it must be emphasised that there is much helpful material in Philpot’s book. For example, he writes, “We can only glorify God outwardly by doing His will; we can only know that will, as regards our practical obedience to it, by the express revelation which He has given of it. Where is that revelation? In His Word . . . . It is this which makes it a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path (Ps 119:105). David therefore cried: ‘Order my steps in Thy word’; ‘Make me to go in the path of Thy commandments’; ‘O that my ways were directed to keep Thy statutes’; as feeling that it was only by walking *in* the Word and *by* the Word that he could please God and live to His praise.” There is also a helpful stress on the precepts as applying first to the “inward life” (p 65) but this is just as true of the entire moral law.

The fact is that what Philpot calls gospel precepts are all applications of the moral law. For instance, in successive verses in 1 Corinthians 10, Paul forbids idolatry (v 7 – Second Commandment), fornication (v 8 – Seventh), tempting Christ (v 9 – First), and murmuring (v 10 – Tenth). And in Romans 13:9 Paul specifically mentions the last five of the Commandments – in an Epistle written to the “beloved of God”. We can rest assured that neither Owen or Bunyan were confused about the continuing obligation of believers to keep the moral law; they were entirely scriptural.

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## Protestant View

### Irish Priests Gagged by the Vatican

Brian D’Arcy is a well-known Roman Catholic priest and journalist in Ireland who had his wings severely clipped by the Vatican 14 months ago. He is forbidden to write or broadcast on such issues as the abuse scandal and he must submit his writings on other moral matters to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) for censoring. The CDF has imposed this restriction on him because of articles he has written criticising priestly abuse (he himself was abused when a youth), the Vatican’s handling of the scandal, and Rome’s ban on priests marrying.

D’Arcy is resolved to continue speaking out. “I speak strongly about this,” he said in an interview, “and I will make no apologies. I don’t mean it to be an offence to anybody when I say this, but if people expect me, who

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was abused twice in my life, to be silent about issues and about the protection of children, I can't do that."

Five other named Irish priests, and four others who wish to remain anonymous, have also been censured and silenced by the Vatican. The anger of many Irish Roman Catholics has been aroused, and about 200 people, mostly priests and nuns (many of them wearing gags), demonstrated outside the residence of the apostolic nuncio in Dublin to protest against the silencing of the priests.

Some of the severest criticism of the Vatican has come from Roman Catholics. One blogger, in a blog entitled, "Silencing our way out of trouble", says, "It's deja vu all over again. About 150 years ago, the Vatican's first response to the 'modern world' of democratic reform and theological renewal was to silence and shame any Catholic who spoke positively about either. So we got the Syllabus of Errors. . . . Now here we are at the beginning of the twenty-first [century], and once again the Vatican (and presumably the Pope) is choosing the former path: condemnation and silencing. . . . To be honest, this smells of a bit of desperation on the part of the Vatican."

Desperation or not, the Vatican still shows that there is an iron fist in the velvet glove. A Roman Catholic columnist writing in *The Independent* says, "Quite obviously Fr D'Arcy spoke out too honestly and too often. It shows the enormous power of the Vatican and the fear it can engender, that someone such as he has kept silent on that censure for the past 14 months."

D'Arcy is certainly no reformer in the Protestant sense of the term – he does not question the unscriptural doctrines of Rome. But we pray that God, by His Word and Spirit, will yet raise up Luther-like figures from Popery, as He raised up Knox, Calvin and others from the very midst of that foul system and as He called Saul of Tarsus from his fanatical Pharisaism. "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" (Gen 18:14). NMR

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## Notes and Comments

### The Most Persecuted Religion on Earth

"Christianity is presently the most persecuted religion on earth", says the leader of the religious-freedom monitoring organisation, Open Doors. Not a month passes but Christian newspapers such as *The British Church Newspaper* report cases of oppression of Christians abroad and in the UK. And week by week instances of persecution of Christians are reported on such religious websites as International Christian Concern and The Voice of the Martyrs.

In Nigeria, reports *Christian Post*, the militant Islamic sect Boko Haram

has been attacking Christians throughout the north of the country. At the end of April, in the city of Kano, 20 Protestants were killed as they fled from a service, and four others, including a pastor, were shot dead on the same day in the city of Maiduguri.

The Chinese Government has launched an all-out campaign against Protestant house churches, ministers and believers that should be completed in ten years, says a China Aid Association report based on a Communist Party document that came into their hands. From January to June, government agents are required to “conduct thorough, intensive and secret investigations of house churches throughout the country and create files on them”, with a view to “normalising” them.

The Farsi Christian News Network reports that the Islamic Republic of Iran is “tightening its oppressive grip on the Christian community” in Esfahan. Although on April 30 and May 1 it released the pastor of a church in Esfahan and nine other imprisoned Protestants, this was only after their families had paid large sums of bail money, and pending their recall later. The pastor is charged with propagating Christianity, unlawful publication of the Bible, and performing baptism.

All such instances are a call to us to pray for those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake. “Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body” (Heb 13:3). *NMR*

### **Norwich City Council and Islam**

Alan Clifford is the pastor of Norwich Reformed Church in East Anglia. While orthodox on many points, he has embraced the doctrine of Amyraldianism and is one of the foremost proponents of that serious error in England (Amyraldianism is a form of semi-Calvinism which affirms that Christ died for all men rather than only for his elect people). It was with mixed feelings, therefore, that we heard that Norwich Reformed Church had run into trouble with the Norwich City Council.

For four years the Church has been distributing literature on Hay Hill in Norwich, and among other items a leaflet entitled “Why Not Islam”. Recently the Council received a complaint from a Muslim that the leaflet, written ten years ago, was “hate-motivated”. The Council consulted with the police, who advised that there was nothing criminal about the leaflet. Nevertheless the Council withdrew permission for any further outreach work on Hay Hill and also instructed the Council-owned Eaton Park Community Centre, where the Church has been meeting since 1994, that it was not to take any further bookings from the Church.



In response to the complaint, the Council could have taken no action. This would have been the fair response because the Church's conduct had been neither wrong nor criminal, and because the Council would certainly not have touched a Muslim organisation in similar circumstances. Alternatively, the Council could have told the Church that permission to continue the outreach work depended on its not handing out that particular leaflet any more. This would at least have showed some measure of restraint and evenhandedness. But instead the Council took the most extreme steps it could against the Church, and all this on the complaint – unfounded according to the police – of a single Muslim.

The reaction of the Council confirms two biblical doctrines. One is the hostility of unbelievers towards Christ and His Church. An opportunity to injure Norwich Reformed Church arose, and the Council seized it with alacrity. The other doctrine is the spiritual folly of unbelievers. The leaflet "Why Not Islam" can be read on the internet and, while it is robust, it contains no criticism of Islam that is not well known to be true. Everybody in Britain, Muslim and non-Muslim, knows that the intention of Islam is to turn Britain into an Islamic country, and that this process is well under way. If it happens in Norwich, then the godless, secular culture which presently prevails there will be at an end. Yet Norwich City Council is choosing to ignore the obvious danger and to do what it can to suppress the Church which, among other things, is warning about this danger.

As the Bible is correct on these two doctrines, so too is it correct on the sovereignty of Christ who has "all power in heaven and earth" (Mt 28:18). Christians, therefore, are not to be unduly dismayed by such occurrences but are to persist in well-doing, for they have the promise that in due season they shall reap if they faint not (Gal 6:9).

*DWBS*

### **Child Murder**

The baby girl in the picture on the BBC News website lies frail and weak in a paediatric ward in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. What has shocked many Indians is that, according to reports, her severe malnutrition and dehydration are the result of an attempt by her father and uncle to bury her alive. They were apparently attempting to offer her, on the advice of a guru, as a sacrifice to protect the health of their other children.

The website quotes a local journalist: "There were three similar stories in the past month alone. I've covered dozens of other cases just like this one. In almost all the cases it's due to poverty and illiteracy, because of which people rely on superstition."

Superstition it indeed is, the fruit of false religion. The journalist implies that education would rid India of superstition. Maybe it would, but one thinks

of the readiness of highly-educated medical professionals who are prepared to destroy large numbers of unborn children. And some of them are willing to leave children to die who have been born alive. Clearly the attempted murder in India is shocking, but so also is the medical killing of the unborn and the newly-born. Education is a good thing but, if such behaviour is to be brought to an end, what is really needed is true religion.

### **Sabbath Trading Laws**

The UK Parliament has approved a Government Bill to suspend Sabbath-trading laws in England and Wales on eight weekends from 22 July, during the Olympics and Paralympics. The present law limits large stores to six hours of trading. George Osborne had told MPs in his Budget speech: “When millions of visitors come to Britain . . . we don’t want to hang up a closed-for-business sign”.

The sad fact is that the principle of Sabbath trading has long since been accepted by the majority of British people. So it is not surprising that, according to a survey by the Department of Trade and Industry in 2006, 46% of British adults shopped at supermarkets on at least one Sabbath a month. And one can only suppose that, if smaller shops were included, the number would be very much greater.

But God has given us the Sabbath for our good, as a special opportunity to worship Him and to get good for our souls. Perhaps, if government and people were more concerned to honour God by keeping the Sabbath, we would see fewer premises permanently closed for business.

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## **Church Information**

### **Removed by Death**

Sadly Rev Z Mazvabo passed away on April 17. His condition suddenly deteriorated after an operation some days before. He had a large number of preaching stations under his pastoral care among the Shona-speaking people in Zimbabwe and his death has left a great blank. May the Lord raise up others to take his place.

April 26 brought further sad news: Mr Donald MacCuish, of the Applecross and Shieldaig congregation and an elder for many years, died after a long illness. We wish to extend our sympathy to both families.

### **College and Library Fund**

By appointment of Synod, the first of two special collections for the College and Library Fund is due to be taken in congregations during June.

*W Campbell, General Treasurer*

# FREE PRESBYTERIAN PLACES OF WORSHIP

## Scotland

**Aberdeen:** 2 Alford Place, AB10 1YD, Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Tuesday, 7.15 pm. Rev D W B Somerset BSc DPhil, 18 Carlton Place, Aberdeen, AB15 4BQ; tel: 01224 645250.

**Bracadale: Struan:** Sabbath 12 noon; Wednesday 7 pm (fortnightly). Contact Rev J B Jardine; tel: 01859 502253.

**Breasclote:** 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 Achany 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. Manse tel: 0131 447 1920. Contact Mr I R MacLeod; tel: 0131 334 4057.

**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@btopenworld.com.

**Harris (South): Leverburgh:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm. **Shellebost:** Sabbath 12 noon (except first Sabbath of month). Prayer meetings in **Leverburgh, Shellebost, 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. 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 6pm. 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 Sandbach and Galley. **South Manchester:** Sabbath 6.00 pm, in Trinity Church, Massie Street, Cheadle (entry at rear of building). Contact Mr R Middleton, 2 Emerald Drive, Sandbach, Cheshire, CW11 4ND. Tel: 01270 761673. 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 Peter's Park Rd. Contact Dr T Martin; tel: 01843 866369.

**London:** Zoar Chapel, Varden St, E1. Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Rev J MacLeod MA, 6 Church Ave, Sidcup, Kent, DA14 6BU. Tel: 0208 309 1623.

## Northern Ireland

**Larne:** Station Road. Sabbath 11.30 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Rev J L Goldby MA, 23 Upper Cairncastle Road, Larne BT40 2EF. Tel: 02828 274865.

#### 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. Contact Mr Joseph Smith, 13732 West 6th Street, Santa Fe, 77517. Tel: 409 927 1564. Manse tel: 409 925 1315.

#### 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; Wednesday 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. Rev J D Smith, 9 Pedlar Place, Conifer Grove, Auckland. Tel: 09 282 4195.

**Gisborne**: 463a Childers Road. Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Contact: Dr G Cramp. Tel: 02 7454 2722.

**Tauranga**: Girl Guide Hall, 17th Avenue, Sabbath 11 am, 7 pm; Thursday 7.30 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 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 Levytsky; tel: 00 38 048 785 19 24; e-mail: dlevytsky@gmail.com.

#### Zimbabwe

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

**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@gmail.com. Tel: 00254 733 731002.

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