

The Free Presbyterian Magazine

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

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

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July 2012

Vol 117 • No 7

The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland

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Website of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland: www.fpchurch.org.uk.

The Free Presbyterian Magazine

Published by The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland (Scottish Charity Number SC003545). Subscriptions and changes of address to be sent to the General Treasurer, Mr W Campbell, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LE; tel: 0141 332 9283. The subscription year begins in January. Prices are on back cover. One month's notice is required for change of address. Queries about delivery of the magazines should be sent to the General Treasurer, not the printer.

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Editorial Board: The Editor, Rev N M Ross, Rev D W B Somerset.

Deadline for sending material to the Editor: The beginning of the month previous to publication.

The Gaelic Supplement (quarterly): Editor: Rev A W MacColl MA PhD, F P Manse, Swainbost, Isle of Lewis, HS2 0TA. Available free on request.

Youth Magazine: *The Young People's Magazine*. Editor: Rev K D Macleod BSc.

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January: *First Sabbath:* Nkayi; *Fifth:* Auckland, Inverness, New Canaan.

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

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

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

May: *First Sabbath:* Aberdeen, Grafton, London; *Second:* Achmore, Donsa, Fort William, New Canaan, Scourie; *Third:* Edinburgh; *Fourth:* Chiedza.

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

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

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Vol 117

July 2012

No 7

The Testimony of God Plainly Presented

Paul spent a year and a half in Corinth preaching the gospel. He was an ambassador for Christ; so he refused to be distracted from “the testimony of God” (1 Cor 2:1). He is an example to all of Christ’s ambassadors in every age. Their preaching must come from the same mould; they must pass on to their hearers the testimony of God and nothing else. Paul makes clear the focus of his preaching: “Jesus Christ, and Him crucified” (1 Cor 2: 2). Here too Paul is a pattern for all ages; preachers must emphasise particularly the great truth that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, that He therefore had to suffer the cursed death of the cross, and that there is no other saviour. These ambassadors for Christ must also, of course, make clear man’s desperate need of salvation *because of sin*; indeed they are to make known the whole testimony that God has given in His Word.

But this article focuses on a point Paul makes about his preaching: he did not come to Corinth “with excellency of speech or of wisdom” (1 Cor 2:1). Charles Hodge comments: “As speech and wisdom are here distinguished, the former probably refers to the manner or form, and the latter to the matter of his preaching. It is neither as a rhetorician nor as a philosopher that he appeared among them.”

But why did Paul preach as he did? Why did he not allow himself to imitate the well-known orators of his day? Would it not have made his sermons more interesting, more compelling? He was clear that he must focus attention on “Jesus Christ, and Him crucified”. To follow the oratorical fashions of his time would distract his hearers’ attention from this vital subject and redirect their attention to himself. He even performed very few baptisms; Christ had sent him, “not to baptize, but to preach the gospel . . . lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect” (1 Cor 1:17). Thus, if Paul felt that for him to administer this divine ordinance might divert attention from the more central ordinance of preaching, then clearly any attempt to introduce human ornamentation into the content or presentation of that preaching was fraught with danger. It was highly likely to make the preaching ineffective and this was a risk that Paul would not take. No more may we.

When churches see that their preaching is not producing the effects they are looking for, they may search around for other means that will produce better results. And so they turn to discussion, debate, and even drama and dance. Now, even apart from the fact that these are not means which God has appointed for use in public worship (clearly discussion and debate in other contexts is another matter) these are likely to make “the cross of Christ . . . of none effect” by distracting from the unique prominence that the *preaching* of the Word should have in ministering to the spiritual needs of sinners.

Paul knew that God could be trusted to bless the means He has appointed. It was not for Paul to devise other means or even to attempt to “improve” the divinely-appointed means by the use of human techniques. In Athens, people might refer contemptuously to Paul as a “babbler”; elsewhere the Gentiles might consider his preaching of the cross “foolishness” and the Jews might see it as something that causes people to stumble. Hodge notes that “to present to them one crucified as a malefactor as their Messiah, was the greatest possible insult”. But, for Paul, the opinions of those who rejected God’s testimony did not ultimately matter.

Paul knew that “unto them which are [effectually] called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ [is] the power of God, and the wisdom of God”. He knew that the preaching of the cross is effective whenever God is pleased to bless it. And he had seen much blessing follow it even in such a wicked city as Corinth. Paul lists some of their more flagrant sins and then adds: “Such were some of you: but ye are washed” (1 Cor 6:11). The plain, unadorned preaching of “Jesus Christ and Him crucified” had been applied to their souls by the Holy Spirit. And this success of the gospel was according to the Lord’s promise to Paul in a vision: “Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace . . . for I have much people in this city” (Acts 18:9) – many elect souls who were to be brought into the family of God by means of Paul’s preaching.

But such gospel blessing was not confined to Corinth. In Thessalonica too, many sinners found the Saviour; they “turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven” (1 Th 1:9,10). We can safely assume that in Thessalonica, as in Corinth, Paul eschewed the oratorical flourishes that he described as “excellency of speech”. But the Holy Spirit was at work; that was why sinners turned to God from idols. So, when Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, he was glad to acknowledge: “Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance” (1 Th 1:5). The fact that people in Thessalonica were assured that God’s testimony to sinners was absolutely true, and therefore submitted to its authority, was evidence that the Holy Spirit was at work in their hearts. Paul could not bring about such submission.

If, as probably did happen, he was able to convince some hearers, perhaps through the excellency of his speech, that Christianity is true, they experienced no more than an intellectual change. There could be no change of heart; there could have been no exercise of saving faith. But it was otherwise with those on whom the Holy Spirit worked savingly; they believed to the saving of their souls. Having so often seen such effects, Paul was “not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (Rom 1:16). The truth itself – the plain, unsophisticated preaching of the cross – has power. Accordingly, besides being dishonouring to the Holy Spirit, “excellency of speech” is unnecessary.

If God was to be glorified, it had to be seen that the operative power in the salvation of sinners was divine – the power of the Holy Spirit, not that of any human being. This was what God had ordained. Paul states emphatically that “it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor 1:21). It is God’s will to use means in applying to sinners the blessings of the gospel, but the means He has chosen in His wisdom are despised – considered foolish – by the world. God must have the glory in it all, not man. Preachers must not take glory to themselves when their hearers are converted, and the temptation to do so would be all the greater if preachers were to succumb to the folly of making a display of their excellency of speech. But the gospel does not need such a display; the subject matter is itself altogether glorious; it is, in Paul’s own words, “the glorious gospel of the blessed God” (1 Tim 1:11).

It has to be said that this is not an age when excellency of speech is a major problem; public speakers today generally use plain language; politicians would be mocked if they spoke in any other way. But, within the Church, many are ignoring the testimony of the all-wise God and are proclaiming human ideas instead, while others mix God’s testimony with human ideas. God will never honour such preaching.

God is still the same. The power of the Holy Spirit remains unchanged. But we do not see large numbers of sinners gathered in to God’s kingdom today. We must recognise that God is sovereign in giving His blessing, and also in withholding it. And we must recognise that the world is under judgement today, and the most solemn of judgements is to withhold the Holy Spirit. Yet, even in an age like this, we are not to pass by these words as if they could not apply to us: “Thus saith the Lord God; I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock” (Ezek 36:37). May we then, by God’s grace, pray earnestly that He would do such wonders of grace today as when the testimony of God was proclaimed in Corinth without “excellency of speech or of wisdom”.

God Still Rules¹

Synod Sermon by Rev K D Macleod

Psalm 115:2,3. *Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is now their God? But our God is in the heavens: He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased.*

It was manifestly a time when it was common to use idols in worship. You would not need to go far beyond the borders of Israel, even in her best days, to find idolatry; and through much of the Old Testament period you would find idolatry in Israel itself. These idolaters would see this Psalmist and other true followers of Jehovah offering sacrifices and performing other ceremonies, but they would ask, Where is their God?

The answer was, “Our God is in the heavens; He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased”. He is the true God, beside whom every other, supposed, god is as nothing. He is out of sight, but His works can be seen. We are to worship this God as One who has revealed Himself, and that was true of the Psalmist all these years ago. He had an inspired answer when the heathen were asking this ignorant question, “Where is now their God?” Yes, there is a God; He is the true God; He is the living God; He is in the heavens and He is ruling. And whatever blasphemous questions might be raised today, whatever might be said in opposition to the true God, we should have an answer ready. This is one of the answers provided for us in Scripture, and they are reliable answers – good, solid answers – because they have been revealed from heaven. Our God is in the heavens and He is doing as it pleases Him. He is not subject to anyone. He is ruling over everything.

As the Lord may help us, let us first consider *the question*, then *the answer*.

1. “Where is now their God?” The heathens had their gods, but they were the work of men’s hands. Here is a contradiction: people were worshipping, and people are still worshipping, objects that they have made themselves. “They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; they have ears, but they hear not; noses have they, but they smell not.” They have hands, but they cannot use them; they have feet, but they do not walk; they do not speak through their throat. People may claim that there is something divine behind the idol, but these idols were merely the result of people’s fallen imaginations and, perhaps, people’s artistic talent.

Now such idolatry is not the general problem in this country today. What still gives rise to the question, “Where is now their God?” is very largely the absence of religion. People are much more fond of using the word *spirituality* than *religion*, but their spirituality is under the same condemnation as idolatry; it is the result of man’s fallen imagination going its own way. And many,

¹Preached in Glasgow by the retiring Moderator at the opening of the Synod in May 2012.

through writing and broadcasting, are spreading their ideas in all kinds of directions – as they ask the question, “Where is now their God?” The idea is being put about that we live in the post-Christian age. The Church is weak – that is undeniable – but people go on from there to say that what the Christian Church represents has no reality. And much of what lies behind that claim is the false philosophy of evolution. Men and women with great intelligence are spinning their theories, and many argue: If that is what *they* believe, then it is only reasonable that everyone else should believe it too. So they ask, “Where is now their God?”

You know what Psalm 14 says, “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God”. It is not only a human being who thus describes the fool. There was indeed a human writer, but the Holy Spirit inspired him so to speak. And if the fool says in his heart that there is no God, he is expressing his desire. How much bolder people are today when they make such statements openly! Fallen human thinking is behind such insubordination to what God has revealed. People may imply that science has proved there is no God. Well, science has not proved it; science cannot contradict the Book of Genesis. And all this rebellion did not begin yesterday; nor did it begin in 1859, the year when Charles Darwin’s major book was first published.

Unbelief takes many forms; there was the unbelief of the spies who went through the land of Canaan. They saw how big the men were whom they would have to fight; they saw how well fortified their cities were. How, they asked, can we advance into the land of Canaan? Thus it was not only the heathen who were saying, “Where is now their God?” but also those who professed to be followers of this God. Notice Moses’ concern, when the Lord then said He would cut Israel off and raise up, from Moses, a nation whom He would take as His own people. The Lord was putting great honour on Moses. Yet he was concerned that, if the Lord would do so, the heathen would say, However Israel got out of Egypt, however they got through the Red Sea, their God was not able to bring them into the promised land.

Moses found this painful, and you find the same feelings expressed in Psalm 42: “My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?” and again: “As with a sword within my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is now thy God?” It is painful to see the Lord denied, as is happening today on a large scale. The Church in Britain has lost its influence and we can partly trace that to the unbelief that rose up within the Church. As a separate denomination here this evening we can see what the unbelief that arose within the old Free Church in the second half of the nineteenth century has led to, and similarly the unbelief within professing Churches throughout much of the world. For

one thing it has led to multitudes asking, “Where is now their God?” It gives strength to people to deny the Christian God; they feel they can stand back and despise the true God of heaven, who still lives.

We might well confess with the Psalmist: “We see not our signs: there is no more any prophet” (Ps 74:9). Now, the gift of prophecy is in the past, and we need not expect signs, in the sense of miracles. But every time a sinner is brought by divine grace to the footstool of Emmanuel, a spiritual miracle has taken place. Yet we have very largely to say that, even in that sense, we see not our signs, though we should be thankful that the Lord has not forsaken us altogether. He is still bringing a few sinners into His kingdom, but not in the numbers that would make an impression on the world. The world still feels that it can very easily ask, “Where is now their God?”

The Psalmist went on to ask, “Why withdrawest Thou Thy hand, even Thy right hand?” He acknowledges that it is God who must work and expresses the desire that He would “pluck His hand out of His bosom” – that He would begin to work again. But meantime God is not working; He is leaving many to go on in their own ways and, solemnly, go down to everlasting destruction, saying in unbelief: “Where is now their God?” We cannot see any signs of His work, they say. There is no doubt much willful blindness, but how many among the multitudes in this city have seen true religion? They see one church after another close, and perhaps, even if they had investigated, they would have seen very little solid religion, and so they just go their own secular, careless ways and ask, “Where is now their God?”

Think of Rabshakeh outside the gates of Jerusalem, when about to withdraw because of problems elsewhere. He sends a letter to Hezekiah, saying, “Let not thy God in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly: and shalt thou be delivered? Have the gods of nations delivered them . . . ? (2 Ki 19:10-13). In his description of Assyria’s conquests he was, no doubt, speaking the truth, but he ignores one very serious matter: Hezekiah’s God has not lost His power.

At particular times in history He may withdraw His hand; He may not show His signs; He may not send out prophets. But He still reigns, in spite of Rabshakeh’s bluster and in spite of those militant atheists today who write as they do and in spite of professed ministers in the Christian Church who believe very little. Indeed, these ministers may be doing more damage than the most militant of atheists; their unbelief is leaving this question in the minds of ordinary people: “Where is now their God?”

Rabshakeh was not the last to make this willful denial of the existence of

God. Consider Psalm 2, where David describes the rulers taking counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, "Let us break Their bands asunder and cast Their cords from us". We can see this especially fulfilled in the way the rulers of Israel dealt with the Messiah when He came into the world. And many a time since then has the same thought, "Let us break Their bands asunder", been prominent in people's attitude to God and true religion. You see such deliberate opposition to the truth in this country when, for instance, the rulers take counsel together to pass ungodly laws – to permit sins that were previously illegal.

2. "Our God is in the heavens: He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased". Where is their God? While it is true that we cannot see Him, the Psalmist answers that He is in heaven; He is ruling, and nothing can interfere with His purposes. He is doing whatever pleases Him, and there is much mystery in that. Would we expect that the Lord would allow Rabshakeh to speak as he did? Would we expect that the way from Egypt to Canaan would have been as difficult as it was? Would we expect that, in Scotland, which had such a pure Reformation, the Church of God would be in such a weak state today? Would we expect that, in places like Ephesus and Philadelphia and Sardis, where the Church was once so strong, it would disappear altogether and people feel free to ask, "Where is now their God"?

Here is the answer: "Our God is in the heavens: He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased". Whatever we see of the weakness of the Church of God today, it is still His Church; He is in control. Christ was appointed King over Zion, and anointed. How does the Lord in heaven react to what is going on in this world, when the rulers take counsel together? He laughs! He that sits in the heavens – He that is ruling – He shall laugh. How was Rabshakeh's bluster treated in heaven? The One in heaven laughed. And whatever you see of opposition to the Church of God, people rising up in opposition to professing Christians in various generations and persecuting them, the Lord has allowed it. But He is above it all and He sees the ridiculous nature of human rebellion. The Lord laughs.

Of course, this is to speak after the manner of men, but these are the words of Scripture. Again we read: "The Lord shall laugh at him, for He seeth that his day is coming". This person may be great in intellect or strength or authority, on the human level, but compared with God, he is puny. The Lord sees how absurd his opposition is, and we too should see how absurd it is for human beings to speak and act as this person does. Apart from anything else, time is short; before long every one of those that are asking, "Where is now their God" – everyone who is exercising their power against the great God of heaven, whether it is mental or physical power – will pass into eternity.

The Lord has anointed His King over Zion. The King may be in heaven, but He is ruling. "The Lord hath prepared His throne in the heavens;" we are told, "and His kingdom ruleth over all" (Ps 103:19). What do you say about that great sin that took place in Jerusalem, when the Saviour was hung on the cross? What rejection of Christ there was then! What conspiring of princes and rulers against the Lord and against His Anointed! But it was all according to the determinate purpose and foreknowledge of God; nothing went out of control, and it never will. He is saying, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure" (Is 46:10). There is a determinate purpose in connection with all human wickedness which we may not be able to understand. Yet we can understand some things in the light of the Word of God, and we should have a sense that the Lord is always ruling.

He is ruling today, although the Church has been allowed to become as weak as it has, and although atheism and false religions have been allowed their present success. Of course, false religion is nothing new; that was the context in which this Psalm was written. But we must bear in mind the truth expressed in Psalm 96: "All the gods of the nations are idols: *but the Lord made the heavens*". This is obviously something fundamental to God's revelation of Himself: He is the Creator. No doubt Satan knows what he is doing in giving a great deal of his attention today to undermining the doctrine of creation. I have mentioned evolution already, but this is the true doctrine: the Lord made the heavens and the earth. And if you were to search through the Scriptures, you might be amazed at the number of times God is affirmed to be the Creator. It is obviously something fundamental to the view God would have us to take of Himself.

Now, if He is not the Creator, what is He? When people believe that everything has come into existence through natural, undirected processes which just happen to work as they do, it is no wonder that they ask, "Where is now their God?" It may not be the subject that should be preached on most often, but it should be fundamental to our thinking that this great God whom we are to worship – whom we are to obey and in whom we are to trust – is the One who made all things. Even Nebuchadnezzar was made to realise the power and authority of God. "He doeth according to His will", he confessed, "in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" (Dan 4:35). You see the independence of God: He is high above all things that are on earth.

This generation needs to have a sense that God is absolutely in control of everything. And the people of God, in particular, need a stronger sense that, even today, when spiritual things are as low as they are, God is in control. He is working according to His own counsel; He is doing what pleases Him.

If we look around us with unbelieving eyes we will see human activity; we might also recognise that the devil is busy. But above it all God is ruling. Although what Rabshakeh was saying was largely true, this is what ought to influence our minds: God is doing whatever pleases Him.

Now let us notice Hezekiah's reaction. He took the letter from the messengers and read it; then he went up to the house of God, spread it before the Lord and prayed. And when we today see the blasphemy of atheists or those who follow false religions or are militantly promoting unnatural practices, where can we go? Let us follow Hezekiah's example. Here is his prayer: "O Lord God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, Thou art the God, even Thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth". And notice, in particular: "Thou hast made heaven and earth" (2 Ki 19:15). God as Creator was fundamental to Hezekiah's thinking – under the influence of divine revelation. What he had in mind when praying to God as Creator was His infinite power. He knew that God was ruling, not only over Israel but over all the kingdoms of the earth. Even when an Assyrian army invaded, the Lord was ruling and He was infinitely powerful.

"Lord, bow down thine ear", Hezekiah prayed, "and hear . . . the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent him to reproach the living God" (2 Ki 19:16). Perhaps the fundamental matter with Hezekiah was that the living God had been reproached. He acknowledged, "Of a truth, Lord, the Kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands, and have cast their gods into the fire: for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands . . . Now therefore, O Lord our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that Thou art the Lord God, even Thou only." And he was very quickly assured that his prayer was heard. Here is an example for us. We are to commit ourselves and our needs – and the Church and the whole generation – into the hands of the great God who rules over all the nations of the world, even those which are most militantly promoting atheism or Islam. He is ruling over those nations that are trying to grind out of existence the slightest indication of Christianity.

Notice now Moses' concern after the fearful outbreak of idolatry in connection with the golden calf. He asked, "Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did He bring them out, to slay them?" Then he asked the Lord: "Turn from Thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against Thy people" (Ex 32:12). Should we not ask the Lord, for Christ's sake, to turn from the fierce wrath that would pursue sinners down to a lost eternity, the fierce wrath that is leaving sinners in their carelessness and rebellion?

And in the incident that we glanced at previously, after the report of the spies and Israel's rebellion, Moses prayed, "Let the power of my Lord be

great” (Num 14:17), and he quoted back to God what He had said: “The Lord is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression”. In prayer we are to bring before the Lord what He has revealed to us. So Moses prayed, “Pardon, I beseech Thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of Thy mercy”. See the faith of this man receiving the testimony of God and saying, “Pardon according to *the greatness of Thy mercy*”. The transgression was great; it was rebellion. But here is something to put over against that: the greatness of God’s mercy as revealed. How suitable for us to receive that testimony to the mercy of God and bring it before Him in prayer, asking for mercy for ourselves and for our generation – a generation so determined to dismiss God so lightly!

At the same time there is great need for the great Head of the Church to send out preachers. Thus He commissioned the first generation of ministers: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk 16:15). They were to go and proclaim everywhere the good news that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. And men are still sent out with a commission to preach the gospel to the whole world. The preaching of the gospel is the power that will bring down atheism, idolatry, false religion – indeed all opposition against the truth. Yet the power I am really referring to is that of the Holy Spirit accompanying the Word.

There are subsidiary instruments; there is a place for defending the faith, for writing against atheists, for example. But preaching is *the* instrument God is pleased to use to subdue opposition to the truth. “It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor 1:21), in Corinth in particular – with all their vile sins, all their idolatry, all their irreligion, all the natural opposition in their hearts to the truth. It pleased God to use this weak instrument of preaching although it appeared so foolish to those who opposed it. Yet many of them were subdued by it. Whatever else is in the counsel of God, this is: to gather many souls to Shiloh, to Christ. “Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be” (Gen 49:10), and we are to look forward to that.

We have been speaking about the purposes of God, but Paul speaks of what is “predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will” (Eph 1:11). What is predestinated? To gather many sinners out of Satan’s kingdom into His own kingdom, just as He had gathered those Corinthians who had practised idolatrous religion and gross sins. But Paul told them: “Such were some of you, but ye are washed” – according to the predestination of God. And a great work of saving grace is yet to be done, whatever may be immediately before us. We cannot tell where we are in the purposes of God, but the Lord is in control and He will

yet bring many souls to Himself, so that at last there will be a multitude of saved souls that no man can number. Yet they are numbered in His purposes as individuals and He will bring them all in.

He gives us encouragement in this Psalm: "The Lord hath been mindful of us: He will bless us" (v 12). Then: "He will bless the house of Israel". We may put it in New Testament terms: He will bless the Church of God. "He will bless the house of Aaron." In New Testament terms you might possibly say: He will bless those who preach the gospel. "He will bless them that fear the Lord", every true believer. He will bless them; He will keep them; He will bring them to glory, "both small and great". Then: "The Lord shall increase you more and more, you and your children". We are to take that as a promise that He will not forsake the Church, but that He will increase her more and more, though not in every generation. Here is His counsel, which He will put into effect. He will do whatever He has pleased, and this is part of what He has pleased.

One thing we must not omit in glancing at this Psalm is the word *trust*: "O Israel, *trust* thou in the Lord: He is their help and their shield". However low the Church has come and however low it may yet come, we are to trust in the Lord as One who is ruling, who has everything under His control. "Ye that fear the Lord, *trust* in the Lord: He is their help and their shield." Though we are not able to identify what exact stage we are at in the history of the Church, we can be sure that the Lord will bless her, whatever the appearance of His providential dealings with her. The *extent* of blessing is one thing; the *fact* of blessing is another. The fact is that the Church has continued in existence; it has not been completely swallowed up by the prevailing apostasy. Indeed, we as a branch of Christ's Church, with all our weakness, with all our difficulties, are still in existence; we still have the testimony that the Lord gave us from the beginning of our separate existence in 1893.

Then you notice how the Psalm concludes: "We will bless the Lord from this time forth and for evermore". That is our duty and, as it was the Psalmist's resolve, it would be good if we had grace to follow him. We are to praise the Lord even in our weakness, even if to a large extent we do not see our signs, even if there are many who ask, "Where is now their God?" Yes, and we have much to praise Him for; we have the gospel, and we are seeing some fruit from the gospel. And in spite of all the ungodliness of today, we have promises of better days. We have the promise, if we have looked to the Saviour, of a blessed eternity. And He is calling on us all to trust in Him. "Look unto Me," He says, "and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else" (Is 45:22). All who in faith look to Christ will have a blessed eternity, and it will be one of endless praise.

Thomas Cartwright¹

1. Making the Apostolic Church a Model

In 1534 Henry VIII declared himself the supreme head of the Church of England and crystallised the split from Rome. England now had a Church which was, at least nominally, Protestant, however far that Church might still be from the scriptural ideal. It was probably the following year, 1535, which saw the birth, in Hertfordshire, of Thomas Cartwright, whose writings were most influential in pointing the way towards what could have been a much more scriptural form of government for the English Church.

Cartwright began his studies in the University of Cambridge in 1547, when, if the traditional date for his birth is correct, he could only have been 12 years old, but this was not altogether unusual in that age. It is said that “he never used to sleep above five hours in a night, which custom he continued to his dying day” (p 5).² In 1550 Cartwright became a scholar in St John’s College and, possibly in early 1551, qualified for his BA. St John’s was the College where Thomas Lever, an eloquent preacher and a staunch Protestant, became Master a year later.

It is said that the cause of the Reformation flourished in this College during Lever’s time there, and this, wrote a historian, appeared clearest “in the day of trouble”, when Lever and 24 others gave up their positions “to preserve their innocence” (p 6). This time of trouble occurred after Mary Tudor came to the throne in 1553 and brought the English Church once again under the sway of Rome. Cartwright, however, did not then leave the University – probably not till 1556. The fact that he continued so long in Cambridge suggests that his Protestantism may as yet have been none too strong.

In 1558 Queen Elizabeth ascended the throne and tried to position the Church of England exactly where it was when her father Henry VIII died. Cartwright returned to St John’s probably in 1559 and, less than a year later, became a Fellow of the College. In 1562 he became a Fellow of Trinity College and, when the Queen visited two years later, Cartwright found himself in the rather uncomfortable position of opposing the proposition up for debate before her: that God’s sovereignty supported an earthly monarchy.

In late 1565 or early 1566 Cartwright left Cambridge and crossed to Ireland to become the domestic chaplain of Adam Loftus, who was Archbishop of Armagh. (In later years Elizabeth was to express suspicions of his Puritan tendencies.) Cartwright’s appointment would have ended around the autumn

¹The first section of a paper delivered by the Editor at the 2011 Theological Conference.

²All references in brackets are to A F Scott Pearson, *Thomas Cartwright and Elizabethan Puritanism 1535 to 1603*, Cambridge, 1925.

of 1566, when Loftus gave up his post because of ill-health. Cartwright resumed His studies in Cambridge and in 1567 graduated BD. In December of that year, after Loftus had moved to Dublin as Archbishop, he was recommending Cartwright as his successor in Armagh. Loftus describes him as “so godly (during his abode with me in Ireland) both in life and doctrine that his absence from hence is no small grief and sorrow for all the godly and faithful here” (p 23). In spite of the glowing reference, Cartwright was not appointed. He was, however, elected a university preacher for the following academic year. His gifts were such that when he preached in St Mary’s, Cambridge, on a weekday some years later, “there was a great confluence of all sorts to hear him; grave men ran like boys in the streets to get places in the church” (p 24).

If Cartwright had been seeking worldly advancement he would have been extremely pleased with his appointment in 1569 as Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity in Cambridge; it was to be the most significant position he ever attained. Yet what he did with it was to seize the opportunity of promoting a more scriptural state of affairs in the English Church. Had he been a man who was focused on the advancement of his career, it would have been a huge miscalculation. But clearly what he most had in view was the glory of God.

He began his teaching with a series of lectures on the first two chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. In the course of his exposition he dealt with important points related to Church order and government. His later writings suggest that he would have used Acts 1 to show, for example, that congregations should have a role in the election of their ministers, who must be fit to teach and ought to be examined as to their fitness for office before being ordained. Such points inevitably drew attention to significant defects in the existing arrangements in the Church of England. Many of its ministers were unable to preach, for instance; they were not elected by congregations but appointed by bishops. As A F Scott Pearson points out, Cartwright “read Presbyterianism in the constitution of the early Christian Church” and “proclaimed that the Apostolic Church was the model for all time. He could not consistently approve of what, in his opinion, was the only allowable system, without condemning that which subverted it. . . . If Cartwright was right, the organisation of the Church of England must be radically altered and the existing hierarchy must go” (p 26).

Cartwright’s lectures caused a sensation; he was eloquent and scholarly and his subject matter had a whiff of novelty about it. Many came to listen and some were powerfully influenced. But men in positions of authority were concerned. Among them was William Chaderton, the previous occupant of Cartwright’s chair. In June 1570 he was writing to William Cecil, Elizabeth’s foremost adviser for much of her reign and Chancellor of Cambridge Uni-

versity. “One Mr Cartwright”, Chaderton complained, “lately chosen into my place, reader of the divinity lecture founded by Lady Margaret . . . does now in his daily lectures teach such doctrine as is pernicious and not tolerable in a Christian Commonwealth”. He objected in particular to Cartwright’s comments on the choosing of ministers and bishops and described him and two others as attempting “to overturn and overthrow all ecclesiastical and civil government as now is, and to ordain and institute a new-found policy”. This was typical of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities’ reaction to Puritan attempts to reform the existing church situation and even their discussion of more scriptural proposals.

Cartwright was to draw up a summary of his ideas in response to an investigation by the Vice-Chancellor of the University. They have been summed up as follows: “The names and offices of archbishops and bishops should be abolished. In their stead the offices of bishops and deacons, as described in the New Testament, should be established. The bishop should have a purely spiritual function and the deacon should care for the poor. . . . Each minister should be attached to a definite congregation. No one should, like a candidate, seek the office of the minister and none should be created ministers by the authority of bishops, which should be elected by a church. All should promote this reformation according to their several vocations – that is, the magistrate by his authority, the minister by preaching, and all by their prayers” (p 29).

Also, Cartwright maintained, the government of the Church should not have been entrusted to officials acting on behalf of bishops and archdeacons who, says twentieth-century historian Professor Patrick Collinson, “were more often than not laymen, civil lawyers whose attitude can be described without prejudice as professional rather than evangelical and pastoral”;³ instead the administration of discipline should have been placed in the hands of the minister and the presbytery. Effectively, Cartwright was calling for the abolition of Episcopacy and for it to be replaced by Presbyterianism, and he was doing so on the basis of his study, in the Acts of the Apostles, of the early Church.

In response to Chaderton’s letter, Cecil indicated that he would support any efforts to put down disorderly preaching and teaching. The first such effort resulted in Cartwright being refused the degree of Doctor of Divinity. Soon, however, 18 of his supporters, mostly Fellows of Cambridge Colleges, sent to Cecil a testimonial in favour of Cartwright. His character, they insisted, was beyond reproach; he was a strong bulwark against “Romish adulteration and the cult of novelty”; he was entirely scriptural; he was highly proficient in Greek, Latin and Hebrew; his lectures were tremendously popular (p 31).

³Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, Clarendon Press 1991 reprint, p 38.

They particularly pointed to the opinion of foreign scholars who lived in exile in England and regarded Cartwright as on a level with well-known Continental scholars.

Cecil assumed that Cartwright had only dealt with the disputed matters as part of an academic discussion but, as Chancellor, charged him for the time being “not to deal any further in these kind of questions in his readings [of his lectures] or sermons, or any other wise” (p 35). But he left the final decision to the Vice-Chancellor and the College heads. It was August, and most of them were away, but three of them decided, as they reported to Cecil, that it was appropriate to suspend Cartwright from lecturing. Among them was John Whitgift, another previous holder of Cartwright’s present position, a future Archbishop of Canterbury and a lifelong opponent of the Puritans.

This decision resulted in a letter from 22 members of the University in support of Cartwright, pointing out how much they missed his teaching and pleading that they might have the benefit of it again. Two months later Adam Loftus wrote from Dublin to ask Cecil to show his “honourable loving favour to my dear friend, Mr Cartwright of Cambridge, a man both for his profound learning and sincere and godly life right worthy to be . . . much esteemed. . . . I, having had good experience of him . . . do verily believe that he will prove a rare and a singular ornament to the church and realm of England” (pp 36,37). Cartwright himself informed Cecil that the content of his lectures was not merely academic, but that he strongly believed in reforming Church government along the lines laid down by the Apostles. He emphasised that the case he was making was not a novelty; it was 1570 years old. He was prepared to accept Cecil’s demand, that he should omit controversial matter from his lectures but, he pointed out, the College heads would not permit him to lecture at all.

While proceedings against Cartwright were in process, new statutes came into effect in the University of Cambridge which made it easier to get rid of the troublesome Professor and his Presbyterian views. Soon afterwards Whitgift was made Vice-Chancellor of the University, and on 11 December 1570 Cartwright appeared before a panel headed by the new Vice-Chancellor and, when he refused to change his views, he was duly dismissed from his chair.

By June of the next year, Cartwright was in Geneva. He was appointed to teach theology, under Theodore Beza, to the students of the Geneva Academy, which had been founded by John Calvin. However, in July there was a severe outbreak of the plague and by September part of the school had to be closed down for a time. Even in the spring of 1572 Beza was complaining to John Knox that the city was no longer as the Scottish Reformer had known it, referring particularly to the empty benches in the Academy.

Cartwright's lectures were appreciated in Geneva also, and in that Presbyterian city he did not have to face opposition. But an avalanche of letters descended on him from his fellow Puritans in England pleading with him to return home, presumably to give leadership to the Puritan movement. Before he left, Cartwright sought permission, successfully, to attend a meeting of the local consistory, wishing to gain a modicum of practical experience of the Presbyterian system; up till then his knowledge had been entirely theoretical. It is interesting to note that, at this time, Andrew Melville also, soon to become a noted Presbyterian leader in Scotland, was teaching in Geneva. Cartwright set off for England in February 1572.

Benefiting from the Lord's Supper¹

1. What We Are to Do Before We Come

Thomas Manton

We must first consider ourselves and reflect on our own state. Does my heart react towards God as He requires, knowing what His spiritual laws are and what temptations a Christian is subject to? Can I in the strength of God resolve to take the duties required in the covenant as my work, and the privileges offered in it as my happiness? And how does my heart agree or disagree with the nature of this institution: "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup" (1 Cor 11:28)?

The great thing that is required of me is to discern the Lord's body, that I may come with that hope, joy, delight, reverence and all those affections that are necessary. But in vain do we discern the Lord's body, unless we have all things that are necessary to participation in this body and are prepared to receive what God offers. What will it profit us to know that Christ has precious benefits to bestow, unless we have a right to them, or mean to take the way wherein we should receive them?

When we press people to examine themselves, they ask us what we must examine ourselves about? Why, examine whether you have received the covenant of God, whether you are in the faith: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith" (2 Cor 13:5). It is our duty to have faith, and it is an advantage to know that we have it, so that we may celebrate the sacrament in a right manner and that nothing may hinder our feasting and holy rejoicing in God; for we must rejoice in God as those that have "received the atonement"

¹The first section of the application of a sermon on Hebrews 11:28: "Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them". It comes, with editing, from *By Faith*, a volume of Manton's sermons on Hebrews 11.

(Rom 5:11), when we actually have an interest in that salvation Christ has purchased. Without faith we shall lack an eye; we cannot discern the Lord's body or have a true sense of these spiritual mysteries. Without faith we shall lack a hand thankfully to take what God offers – even Christ and all His benefits. Without faith we shall lack a mouth to feed upon Christ, that we may suck and draw life and strength from Him. Without faith the whole duty will prove an empty ceremony, scarcely a reasonable service, much less spiritual nourishment to our souls.

See then that you believe, and that you know that you do believe. Without the first this ordinance will not profit your souls; and without the other you will lose much sweet communion with God. To know what Christ has done and suffered and merited is to know the ground of our rejoicing; but something is still missing to make it full peace and joy to us till we can in some measure see that faith has been wrought in us. Therefore do not blindly and without feeling rush upon such a duty. How can you, without great presumption, assume you have Christ crucified and all the benefits of His death?

Draw near, then Christians; do not stand aloof from Christ. We draw nigh with most rejoicing and thankfulness when “we draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water” (Heb 10:22) – “with a true heart”, that is, having a sincere purpose to perform the duties of the gospel; “in full assurance of faith”, absolutely depending on the promises of God and expecting the privileges of the gospel; “having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water”. When you have applied the blood of sprinkling, you may confidently look up to God.

Objection. But you will say, Is the assurance of our sincerity, and of our interest in Christ always necessary; and will you persuade no one to come to the Lord's table but those that are assured of their own sincerity? Then what shall poor souls do that are in a dark and doubtful state?

Answer. I am far from saying this. It is the thing, not the certainty of the thing, that is necessary. What is necessary is sincere saving faith, but it is not absolutely necessary that we should know it. I would have you come believing and to get it as clear as you can. Why should you doubt your own sincerity? Though it is comforting to know our sincerity, it is not absolutely necessary, for Christ will welcome a doubting believer. But He takes more pleasure in those who draw nigh in full assurance of their own interest in Christ. And He certainly expects it from us, because He has condescended to our infirmities and has added seals to the covenant for our greater confirmation, so that the heirs of promise might have “strong consolation” (Heb 6:18). We suffer when, by our laziness, we do not bring the doubts of our souls to a resolution.

Therefore we should aim at assurance and not lose such a benefit through our negligence.

But it is not absolutely necessary; therefore, though we have our doubts, I would advise no doubting Christian wholly to abstain from God's ordinance, which was appointed for a help to a weak faith, and a relief to them. Here is represented the blood of Christ shed for the remission of sins (Mt 26:28). Here we have a sign and seal of the righteousness of faith (Rom 4:11). Here God reaches out His hand to us from heaven, and in a special way applies His benefits to our souls. Here we have Christ offering Himself to us by name and stirring up our souls to lay hold of His benefits. You consent to the duties of the covenant, only you are afraid it is not deep and strong enough; but usually mists and clouds are dispersed in the sacrament. As Jesus was made known to His disciples in the breaking of bread (Lk 24:30,31); so all misunderstandings between God and His people are removed, and the evidence of our being in Christ is more clearly seen, which was before dark and doubtful. Therefore examine yourselves and come.

Obituary

Mrs Dina MacPherson

Dina MacPherson was born in 1929 in the Netherlands in the province of Zeeland; her maiden name was Karelse. She spent the years before the Second World War in the place of her birth. Together with her siblings she had the advantage of a religious education, not only at home, but also in the school she attended and in the church where she was taken on the Sabbath.

Her early years were marked by the deepening worldwide recession, followed by the War with all its trauma and misery. Dina probably would have understood little of God's judgements on Europe and other parts of the world during those early years of her life, when moral decline was evident on a large scale. The worldwide recession of the 1930s may not even have been viewed as a divine judgement, and the emerging Nazi regime in Germany was seen as a national problem instead of a danger for the whole world – and a judgement. There is no doubt, however, that the war years made a deep impression on the young girl. The occupation by the Nazi forces and the presence of German soldiers, razzias to round up young men for slave labour, deportation of Jews, curfews and bombings were just some of the many hardships.

After the allied landings in Normandy, the war was brought much closer. Within four months of fighting, the liberating forces were on the borders of

the Netherlands and within striking distance of Zeeland, a province which had been heavily fortified by the Germans. Dina's most terrifying experience came in October 1944, when she and the rest of her village had to spend a night and part of a day in an underground shelter while the conflict raged above ground. The battle for Zeeland became a crucial phase of the war, as the allied armies desperately needed a supply route up the Schelde estuary to the port of Antwerp. A war journalist described this battle as the fiercest of the liberation campaign, at the great cost of over 13 000 troops, dead, missing or wounded, in only five weeks or so.

Little wonder such a deep impression was made on the mind of the 15-year-old girl that she wanted to get away from the scenes of war as far as she possibly could. She told me this was the reason she left her native country to migrate to New Zealand. When she had finished her schooling and had trained as a nurse, she set sail for New Zealand in the early 1950s, while she was still in her early twenties.

In New Zealand she found employment at Cook Hospital, Gisborne, and there she met some young people who knew and visited Mrs Molly Harvey, a member of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Dina had no inclinations toward the modernistic practices and doctrines of such denominations as the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand. She became a regular visitor at Molly's hospitable home at 7 Herbert Road, Gisborne. There in due course Dina met Campbell MacPherson, whom she married in 1955. Their home initially was on the farm Campbell had taken over from his father, about 80 km north of Gisborne, near Tokomaru Bay. This is where Rev J P MacQueen in 1935, and Rev Finlay Macleod in 1948, had preached the gospel, as church deputies from Scotland, and baptized the MacPherson and the Harvey children. Their deputation work was followed by that of Rev D J Matheson in 1957-58 and Rev William MacLean in 1958-59.

From the beginning of her contact with the Free Presbyterians, Dina took a keen interest in the truth and, when ministers came to preach, she would take copious notes to aid further her already-strong memory. Mr MacLean came to have the greatest influence on Dina's life as his deputation work was eventually followed by a call to the Gisborne congregation which resulted in his settlement in New Zealand in February 1962.

By this time the growing MacPherson family found the distance to the public means of grace too great and Campbell and Dina decided to sell their farm and purchase a property closer to Gisborne. This enabled the family to be present at all the services; Dina continued her note-taking and experienced considerable spiritual benefit under Mr MacLean's ministry. Her assurance of faith so increased that she more and more felt it her duty to obey the

Saviour's dying commandment, "This do in remembrance of Me". In October 1963 she met with the Kirk Session and was enabled to sit at the Lord's table for the first time. It was a large step in this spiritual warfare, which had its feeble commencement in the war-torn Netherlands province of Zeeland. From the battle of Zeeland she had decisively moved into the battle of the kingdom of God, that "suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force". There is every evidence that she needed every bit of strength she could get from the Lord's Supper, the divinely-appointed ordinance instituted for strengthening the believer. She made good use of this holy sacrament in Gisborne, and also later in Auckland if she had an opportunity.

The Saviour's parting prophecy to the disciples, that in this world they would have much tribulation, had its ample fulfilment in Dina's warfare. In 1969 she and her five children stood by the grave of her still-young husband. Campbell had suddenly passed away as the result of a massive heart attack. It was now time to use the needed strength, and by grace she was enabled to experience the truth, "My grace is sufficient for thee", and she was given strength to overcome.

She took much interest in the Jews and on two occasions she visited Israel to see prominent and interesting places for herself. She also met regularly for prayer with Molly and one or two other ladies. I am sure there would have been regular petitions for the conversion of the Jews and the enlightenment of her family.

The last ten years of her earthly life were marked by illness. The time came for her to be cared for in a residential home for the aged; this was followed by a number of years in a home with greater facilities. She passed away on 22 January 2011 in the presence of some of her family, and her remains were buried in the same grave as her husband's, to await the resurrection of the just and the unjust.

(Rev) J A T van Dorp

Church of Scotland General Assembly

Rev N M Ross

The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland has not featured as much in the news this year as in previous years – no doubt because the issue of greatest concern (whether or not to allow the ordination of homosexual ministers) is on hold until the Theological Commission on the subject reports to the 2013 Assembly. The Church of Scotland has already shown that it is in favour of ordaining those in homosexual partnerships, not only by allowing the Aberdeen homosexual minister, Scott Rennie, to continue in office even

although he lives with a male partner, but also by permitting the induction, to pastoral charges, of ministers in same-sex relationships if they were ordained before 2009.

A former moderator and principal clerk of the Church of Scotland, Rev Dr Finlay Macdonald, has made light of the awful solemnity of this gross departure from biblical morality. He has written a novel about “the run-up to last year’s big General Assembly debate on the issue”. In a *Scotsman* report, on the day before the General Assembly met, he is quoted as saying, “I incline to the liberal side of the argument”. He believes that the Church “will decide to accept gay ministers”. In the Church, he added, there are different forms of worship and different ways of interpreting the Bible. “We do already accommodate differences. Is there not a way of accommodating this one?” He should ask another question, “What concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? (2 Cor 6:15).

This was a pertinent question for the General Assembly on its first day when it considered the proper use of church buildings. A tabled motion asked the Assembly to “instruct the [Legal Questions] Committee to bring to the General Assembly of 2013 legislation which ensures that acts of worship within all church property is Christian worship, offered exclusively to the one God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit”. The background to the motion lay in the Aberdeen Presbytery, when Rev Scott Rennie was challenged about giving regular use of his church to local Hindus for their worship. In moving the motion, Rev Ian Watson asked, “Do I really have to stand in front of this Assembly and remind commissioners that, as Christians, we believe in the one God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and that all other so-called gods are not gods?”

One would think that any Christian denomination, let alone the national Church in Scotland, would unhesitatingly support such a motion. In the event the General Assembly voted against it (289 against, 253 for). No doubt many commissioners were swayed by the the apparently-pious pleas of the opposition – that the Church is to be “loving”, “welcoming”, “gracious” and “hospitable”. The minister who raised the matter at Presbytery level said at the time that there are ways in which Christians may be friendly to those of other faiths, but that “Christians believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate. It is therefore inconceivable that Christians would knowingly allow or encourage, on their premises, other-faith worship that breaks the Commandments and which denies all that Christians hold dear and believe to be essential. They are, in effect, encouraging idolatry.”

As might be expected, Hindus take exception to such criticism. The *South Asia Mail* reports that Hindus have strongly objected to their deities being

referred to as “false idols” in the General Assembly, and that the “President of Universal Society of Hinduism asked apology from Church of Scotland for this inappropriate language as these deities were highly revered in Hinduism”. He said of the USA, where he lives, “The landscape of our country is no longer solely dominated with the steeples and crosses of Christian churches, but is peppered by the arches and domes of temples, synagogues, gurdwaras and mosques”. When Scotland is similarly changing, there is all the more reason for our national Church to herald unequivocally the divine claim, “I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside Me” (Is 45:5), and to proclaim unashamedly the unique claim of God the Son: “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me” (Jn 14:6).

With regard to Israel, this General Assembly, like previous ones, was more sympathetic to the Palestinians, especially those of Gaza, than to the state of Israel. “One commissioner,” says an Assembly report, “claimed that the full on-line report on Gaza does not give the Israeli side of the argument, and implies that the Israeli Government is not a caring Government. All he asked for in his amendment was that Israel’s narrative be presented. In his response, the Convener said there could never be a truly balanced view between Israel and Palestine and he hoped the Assembly would reject the amendment, which they did overwhelmingly.” Withholding one side of the argument is neither Christian nor just.

The Assembly also dealt with the issue of “Sunday sporting events” – not upholding the sanctity of the Lord’s Day but because such events impede access to churches. The Assembly’s decision was simply to urge congregations to continue dialogue with local authorities about “start times of Sunday football matches, and other Sunday sporting events”. One commissioner did succeed in getting the Assembly to accept, as an addendum, an “affirmation of the importance of regular worship for the spiritual growth and equipping of Christians”. However, the final decision included the deplorable statement “that Church people were by no means kill-joys, and indeed many Church members happily participate on Sundays in supporting their club, or joining a marathon, half-marathon, charity fun-run or other event”. But what else can be expected when, on the Sabbath of the Assembly, the Church of Scotland itself held an event, Heart and Soul (similar to last year’s Roll Away the Stone event) in Princes Street Gardens, Edinburgh. It was intended to showcase the Church and attract people to it, but the fare given to the thousands of people who attended included music by several bands, comedy, performing clowns, a pipe band, and creative arts workshops.

Such methods will not bring the blessing of God upon any Church, but His displeasure. How then can the visible Church in its various branches

reverse the decline in numbers? Certainly not by adopting the ways of the world. As surely as God was to increase the “house of Israel . . . with men like a flock” (Ezek 36:37), so He will increase His spiritual Israel, His Church. But how? Verses 25-27 show that there can only be spiritual prosperity and growth through the outpouring of His Holy Spirit. While we are to proceed apace with the primary work of preaching the gospel and teaching the truth, we must seek to fulfil the condition of the promise: “Thus saith the Lord God; I will yet for this be *enquired of* by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock” (Ezek 36:37).

“Search the Scriptures”¹

J Julius Wood

John 5:39. *Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me.*

Suppose the last will and testament of some individual disposing of a large property were put into your hands, your conduct would be regulated by the interest which you supposed you had in such a deed. If you were a public officer to whose keeping it was entrusted for preservation, you would proceed without opening it and lay it aside in the usual depository. If you were a lawyer appointed to defend or impugn its validity, you would read it carefully, with reference to its legal construction and the signatures attached to it. If it was a very ancient deed and you had a taste for antiquarian researches, you would examine the forms of expression used and note the information regarding old places and customs which it contained. But if it was a last will and testament in your own favour, you would read it carefully with much interest, to ascertain the amount of property bequeathed to you.

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments have been put into your hands. These two Testaments relate to the same things. They record a free gift by God, to sinners, of Jesus Christ and all His unsearchable riches. They reveal things which you could never have discovered, things which are essential to your salvation – the offer of blessings surpassing in value all else besides. They are put into your hands invested with all the interest of a testament bequeathing to you a rich and desirable inheritance. They testify of Jesus Christ, God’s great gift to sinners, and of eternal life by Him. Therefore search the Scriptures.

And to read the Scriptures seldom or carelessly is not what is meant by

¹Taken, with editing, from *The Christian’s Daily Companion*. Wood (1800-1877) was at this time minister of New Greyfriars’ church in Edinburgh.

searching them. They must be perused frequently and diligently. On the very face of it, it is absurd to say that a man searches the Scriptures who, in a whole week, only spends an hour or half an hour, or perhaps less, on the Sabbath Day, reading the Bible. You need your daily bread to nourish your body, but you also need daily nourishment for your soul. Perhaps you have no relish for the daily reading of the Scriptures, no appetite for the spiritual food which they afford. But be persuaded to take a little of that food daily; its tendency is to produce an appetite for more; it will make you hunger and thirst after righteousness. The Word of God is both medicine and food to the sin-diseased soul. It purges away corruption; it heals the disease of sin and it nourishes and strengthens the renewed nature of the spiritual man.

I believe that there are professing Christians who make conscience of reading a portion of the Scriptures daily, but do so merely to fulfill what they consider to be a duty, and not with any earnest desire to obtain a saving knowledge of divine truth. Conscience would reprove them if they neglected their morning or evening chapter, but they feel no uneasiness at learning little or nothing from that chapter. They read for the purpose of reading, not to be instructed by reading. Now though they read daily, they cannot be said to search the Scriptures. They do not seek for anything in the Scriptures; yet this must surely be implied in searching.

And most necessary of all, whenever you read or meditate on the Word of God, breathe the devout earnest prayer that the Holy Spirit may give you an understanding heart and an obedient will, for this essentially pertains to a right searching of the Scriptures.

Do I thus read my Bible? Do I read it very seldom, or read it without searching it? If I do, may the Lord pardon my sin, and cause me to cease from it. Whenever I open my Bible, let me have in my mind a desire to be made wiser and better by it. Let me remember that what I am going to read has divine authority – it is the Word of God, and not the word of man’s wisdom – and that it testifies of Jesus Christ, in whom alone we have everlasting life. Taking up the Bible with these solemn, reverential feelings and thoughts occupying my mind, let me search it for the purpose of becoming wise in the things of Christ, of obtaining more knowledge of His person, His works, His doctrine, His precepts.

Let no one begin to make excuses. Some allege that they have no time to read the Bible every day, to search into its meaning, to ponder what it says. But you regularly provide nourishment for your body; is it absolutely impossible for you to provide for your soul? No, the busier you are with worldly matters, so much the more frequently do you need to go to the Word of God. For the more you have to do, the more need you have of guidance and direc-

tion; the more you are occupied with the things of this life, the more you need to come in contact with the Scriptures to prevent you from becoming altogether worldly-minded and from utterly forgetting your immortal interests. But the time! Where is the time to be found by someone who is very busy? Find the will, my friend, and I shall have little difficulty in finding you the time. If you are to have time for anything, you should have time for taking counsel from God in His Word.

Do not say that the Scriptures are full of mysteries and that you cannot understand them. To almost all those who allege this as an excuse for neglecting it, the Bible is a mystery just because they do not search it. There are indeed mysteries in it which none of the people of God have ever fathomed, and their opening up is perhaps intended to minister to their enjoyment during the ages of eternity. But much that you deem mysterious would become clear as noonday, and beautiful as the truth of God if you were daily and diligently and humbly to search the Scriptures

Book Reviews

The Love of Christ, by Richard Sibbes, published by the Banner of Truth Trust in their Puritan Paperback series, 376 pages, £6.50.¹

The contents of this book have been taken unabridged from volume 2 of Sibbes' *Works*. It consists of a series of 20 sermons on the Song of Solomon 4:16-6:3. For Sibbes, the Song of Solomon "is nothing else but a plain demonstration and setting forth of the love of Christ to His Church, and of the love of the Church to Christ". As such, as Michael Reeves puts it in the Foreword to this book, "it gets to the very heart of the gospel as he [Sibbes] understood it. Christianity, he believed, was essentially a love story in which Christ the bridegroom, comes to win the bride, the Church."

Richard Sibbes (1577-1635) is perhaps not quite so well known today as some of his fellow Puritans but, in his own day, he was highly influential and much appreciated. He was called the "heavenly doctor" because of the tender way he dealt with the troubled and downcast among the Lord's people. Many examples of this could be given from the book but we confine ourselves to one.

In answer to the question: "How shall we know that Christ is present in us?" Sibbes replies: "To know this, we need not pull Him from heaven. We may know it in the Word and sacraments, and in the communion of saints; for these are the conveyances whereby He manifests Himself, together with

¹This and the next book are obtainable from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom.

the work of His gracious Spirit in us; for, as we do not need to take the sun from heaven to know whether or not it be up, or be day, which may be known by the light, heat and fruitfulness of the creature; and as in the spring we need not look to the heaven to see whether the sun be come near us or not, for looking on the earth we may see all green, fresh, lively, strong, and vigorous; so it is with the presence of Christ. We may know He is present by that light which is in the soul, convincing us of better courses to be taken, of a spiritual life, to know heavenly things, and the difference of them from earthly, and to set a price upon them.

“When there is, together with light, a heat above nature, the affections are kindled to love the best things, and to joy in them – and when together with heat, there is strength and vigour to carry us to spiritual duties, framing us to a holy communion with God, and one with another; and likewise when there is every way cheerfulness and largeness of spirit, as it is with the creatures when the sun approacheth. For these causes the Church desires Christ, that she may have more light, life, heat, vigour, strength, and that she may be more cheerful and fruitful in duties. The soul, when it is once made spiritual, doth still desire a further and further presence of Christ, to be made better and better” (p 30).

Sibbes is not always the easiest of the Puritans to read and one has to proceed slowly, carefully and prayerfully through those sermons to appreciate the profound points which he makes, but the reviewer has no doubt that such an approach will be amply rewarded. (Rev) W Weale

Christian Marriage, by D M Lloyd-Jones, published by the Banner of Truth Trust, paperback, 196 pages, £7.00.

These 11 sermons on marriage have already been published in the author’s *Life in the Spirit*, in his series on Ephesians. They deal with the principles, blessings and difficulties of this God-given ordinance in a helpful way, on the basis of Scripture and common sense. They also handle, at length, the relationship between Christ and His Church, on which Paul’s teaching about marriage is based. The book would prove useful reading for a young couple.

Just two points of dissent. First, contrary to Lloyd-Jones’ comment (p 39) much may be appropriately said to an unconverted couple at a marriage service. And, in line with the *Westminster Confession*, one could point to scriptural authority for divorce in the case of wilful desertion.

Trophies of Grace, Four Remarkable Conversions, published by the Roundwood Trust, booklet, 24 pages, obtainable free from Mr Stephen Sharpe, Arisaig, Crowborough Hill, Crowborough, TN6 2EA; tel: 01892 655222; e-mail: sjsharpe@live.co.uk. This attractive booklet contains four well-known stories of conversion: of

Muckle Kate, Luke Heywood, the Highland Kitchenmaid and Yeddie. There is a Preface by Pastor Paul Relf, Chatham, and the booklet also includes two further pieces: one is a letter to a seeking soul by Robert Murray M'Cheyne and the other an extract from *Grace to Glory* by Rev Murdoch Campbell.

Conversion is a vital matter for everyone; “except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3). Those who have read these stories in the past should find it refreshing to read them again. And those who have not should make a point of obtaining the booklet. It is also excellent for distributing to those who are not as interested in the Christian religion as they should be. Although the booklet is free, a donation would be appreciated. (Rev) D A Ross

Protestant View

A Corner of the Vatican Veil Lifted

The *New York Times* reports that the “widening leaks scandal has made the seat of the Roman Catholic Church appear to be a hornet’s nest of backstabbing and gossip”. “VatiLeaks”, as the scandal is now dubbed, came to light, says *Time* magazine, “on May 17, with the publication of a book, *Your Holiness: The Secret Papers of Benedict XVI*, in which . . . [were] reproduced dozens of leaked letters, memos and cables, many of them from within the office of the Pope”.

“The most amazing fact”, says *Time*, “is the extent to which things have been revealed at all.” *Reuters* reports that Thomas F X Noble, an expert in papal history at Notre Dame University in Indiana, states, “The Vatican has an unmatched capacity to draw a veil of secrecy over its doings. It lacks the kind of transparency that we associate with government and corporations in the modern world.” But now revelations are made “in the full light of the sun”, as the editor of the Rome-based website “Chiesa” (or Church) puts it.

What is the meaning of it all? “As with troubled waters, the chaos on display hints at happenings deep beneath the surface,” says *Time*. The arrest of the Pope’s butler, Paola Gabrielle, for the alleged theft of secret Vatican documents, seems to point to others in the background. The *New York Times* says that Gabriele is most likely a “lower-level figure in a scandal with at least three shadowy Vatican machinations that are revealed in the leaks: a campaign to undermine the Vatican secretary of state, Cardinal Bertone; controversy over the management of the Vatican bank; and intense infighting between Italian cardinals vying for position in the Conclave that will one day elect Benedict’s successor”. Alberto Melloni, director of the John XXIII

Centre in Bologna, believes that “the ecclesiastical right wants to put the Ratzinger papacy in crisis”.

“VatiLeaks”, say various Vatican watchers, gives the impression that the Pope is “unable to rein in his infighting underlings”, “that the Vatican has lost control of its public image”, and that the affair “looks poised to become one of the most destructive crises” of the present papal reign. According to one of his lawyers, Gabriele has agreed to co-operate with Vatican investigators. So the end of the story is not in sight.

As once again we see secrets of the papacy being uncovered, we are reminded of the truth, “But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets” (Dan 2:28). These and other revelations about the “mystery of iniquity” are undoubtedly pointers to the time when “that Wicked”, “that man of sin”, “shall be revealed” (see 2 Th 2:3-10). *NMR*

Notes and Comments

Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Celebrations

In her Diamond Jubilee message, earlier this year, the Queen stated, “I hope this Jubilee will be a time to give thanks for the great advances that have been made since 1952 and to look to the future with a clear head and warm heart”. Only recently, in her annual speech in December, she gladdened the hearts of many of God’s people by speaking well of the “Saviour with the power to forgive”. It would seem from these two speeches that she has a desire to thank God, as well as her people, for His goodness over the 60 years of her reign. Only once before in our history as a nation, when Queen Victoria celebrated her Diamond Jubilee in 1897, has a sovereign been spared to reach such a milestone. There is much to thank God for.

Queen Elizabeth II’s reign began on 6 February 1952 when, during a visit to Kenya, she was told that her father, King George VI, had passed away. The burden of the monarchy, at a time of great grief, was then placed upon her young shoulders. Since that day she has shown a remarkable sense of duty and dignity in carrying out innumerable exhausting engagements at home, visiting 116 countries overseas, and in dealing with 12 British Prime Ministers.

Now looking back, at 86 years of age, how much change she has seen! Great advances indeed have been made in technology, medicine and many other spheres, but there has been a fearful downward spiral in morality and true godliness. During her reign, our society has become increasingly permissive. In 1965 capital punishment was abolished. In 1967 the infamous

Abortion Act was passed, legalising the murder of several million unborn children. Also in 1967 the Sexual Offences Act legitimised sodomy. In 1993 the Matrimonial Causes Act introduced easier divorce, giving Britain one of the highest divorce rates in Europe. In 1997 the Obscene Publications Act gave greater freedom to those promoting pornography. Of course we certainly do not hold the Queen personally responsible for this moral and spiritual decline; indeed we believe she may be concerned about it, but we hold her counsellors guilty, over the years, of giving foolish and evil counsel on many issues – and not least now, in the context of the Jubilee celebrations which took place from Saturday, June 2, to Tuesday, June 5.

It was heartening to see a service of thanksgiving held at St Paul's Cathedral on the Tuesday. Here there was some acknowledgement of God, but what about the Sabbath, God's holy special day? This is the day God gave us to worship Him, when we are commanded to leave all other works, except those of necessity and mercy, and "keep it holy". Yet it was on this day that a great Jubilee Pageant took place on the Thames. One thousand ships from all over the world gathered to make, possibly, the grandest spectacle ever seen on the river. A seven-mile convoy sailed from Battersea Bridge to Tower Bridge. The Royal Barge was at the centre of this flotilla, carrying the Queen with Prince Phillip and other members of the Royal family on board. The pomp and ceremony were lavish. Ten music barges led each section of the pageant. Bells rang, music played and a great noise of trumpets heralded Her Majesty's ship as it passed under each London bridge.

Is this the way to thank God for His goodness and mercy towards our Sovereign? Did the Queen herself feel uneasy in such an environment? Enhanced security was recruited to ensure protection in our terrorist-threatened land, so exacerbating the Sabbath desecration. Additional police and military personnel had to be employed across London on the Lord's Day. Some roads were closed, thus interfering with those who desired to go to church to worship God in public. Surely God is grieved and we provoke His long-suffering nature to wrath. Our ungodly, hedonistic society does not heed the commandment, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy", nor does it heed the words of Isaiah 58:13,14: "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord".

We are reminded of how, in Lachlan Mackenzie's time, some men arrived at Lochcarron on a Saturday night and wished to engage the local boatmen to ferry them over to Skye the next day. The boatmen were adamant in their

refusal. This was the Lord's Day and no work would be done except that of necessity and mercy. However, such was the persistence of the visitors that the boatmen yielded thus far: a letter could be sent to the minister asking his opinion and they would abide by that decision. When "Mr Lachlan" read the letter in silence he returned it with these words: "There, deliver that letter in heaven; the Sabbath is not mine at all". That settled the matter. How sinful, then, to have the crews of a thousand vessels and tens of thousands of spectators trampling God's day underfoot!

We are to plead with the Lord to return to our land in mercy, to give our Queen godly and wise advisors and to give her spiritual wisdom. May He revive us all again by His Holy Spirit, who is so greatly grieved not only by our personal, but also by our national, sin! KHM

Free Church Paraphrases

The Free Church of Scotland has recently published a collection of 34 "Paraphrases", three from Isaiah and the rest from the New Testament. The intention, which we do not approve, is that they should be used in public worship.

As translations, they appear, on a cursory reading, to be commendably faithful to the Word of God, though there is a savour of modern Bible versions and even of political correctness in the reluctance to use the word *man*. As poetry, they are mixed in quality: one on Isaiah 53 is reminiscent in places of Lachlan Macbean's English translations of Dugald Buchanan. Others are less successful, reminding the present writer irresistibly of "Hiawatha" and of humorous Scripture parodies that he picked up in his childhood; while verse 7 of number 8 (Rom 5:7) is simply dire. Lyrical poetry has to be concise and to move rapidly and the attempts to render narrative passages from the Gospels are a failure in poetic terms, though those from the Epistles and Revelations are generally more satisfactory.

If people wish to versify Scripture they are free to do so, but when they seek to introduce their verses into the public worship of the Church, their conduct is unwarranted and divisive. There is a warrant in Scripture for using the Psalms in public praise, and the Scottish Church already has the 1650 Psalms, but there is no warrant for using arbitrary passages of Scripture. We are sorry for those congregations who are about to have this new book imposed upon them. We anticipate that the 1650 Psalms will long outlast these paraphrases and will remain in print when these have become a scarce item on the secondhand book market. DWBS

Government Sends Authorised Version to All English Schools

Items of Government news that would encourage lovers of God's truth are

rare indeed in these days. It is remarkable therefore to learn that around 24 000 Bibles are being distributed to schools at the present time by the Department for Education in order to mark last year's four-hundredth anniversary of the Authorised Version. The Bibles state on the spine that they have been presented by the Secretary of State for Education and are accompanied by a letter from the Education Secretary, Michael Gove.

He speaks of the Authorised Version as the most "important book written in the English language". "The King James Bible", he says, "has had a profound impact on our culture. Every school pupil should have the opportunity to learn about this book and the impact it has had on our history, language, literature and democracy."

It is thought the Prime Minister, while supportive, was anxious that the initiative should be funded by private donors rather than public funds. Predictably, however, some secularists have protested. Thankfully they do not appear to reflect a widely-held opinion. Even the atheist Richard Dawkins praised the Authorised Version recently: "You can't appreciate English literature unless you are, to some extent at least, steeped in the King James Bible. . . . Not to know the King James Bible is to be, in some small way, barbarian".

John Pritchard, Bishop of Oxford and chairman of the Church of England Board of Education, said that the initiative "symbolically places the King James Bible at the heart of the educational process which it inspired". And Melvyn Bragg, in a recent volume, *The Book of Books: The Radical Impact of the King James Bible 1611-2011*, calls the Authorised Version "the prime educating force in the English-speaking world. People learned to read in order to read the Bible and they learned to read by being taught through the Bible itself."

While our society is rapidly removing the foundation provided by its Christian heritage, we are thankful when it is acknowledged in any way and for whatever motive. It reminds us that "the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will" (Prov 21:1).

The Education Secretary also provides us indirectly with something of an encouragement to pray for and extend the work of some of our congregations in seeking to place the Scriptures in local schools. The Trinitarian Bible Society also distributes the Scriptures to many hundreds of schools across the nation in this way. "The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple" (Ps 119:130). We cannot estimate the full impact that this may have in the sovereign purposes of the Most High. We recall a friend from university days who had been converted from a Sikh background after receiving a New Testament at school. "So shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it

shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Is 55:11). MV

Church Information

Editorial Board

At this year's meetings of Synod, Mr K H Munro, an elder in the Dingwall and Beaully congregation, was appointed to the Board. His first contribution appears in this issue. He takes the place of the late Rev H M Cartwright, whose contributions were widely appreciated.

Theological Conference

This year's Theological Conference will be held, God willing, in the Inverness Free Presbyterian Church on Tuesday and Wednesday, October 30 and 31. It is expected that the following papers will be read; the first paper of each day will be in private, the others in public:

Louis Berkhof

Mr Roy Middleton

Jonah

Rev J B Jardine

Antinomianism

Rev J R Tallach

The Great Ejection of 1662

Rev K D Macleod

The Fall

Rev Donald Macdonald

We look forward to good gatherings and spiritually profitable papers.

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

Acknowledgement of Donations

The General Treasurer acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:

Jewish & Foreign Missions Fund: P Hoskins, for Zimbabwe Mission, £25.

Legacy Reserve Fund: Late Mrs J Curtin, Broadford, £2000; Late Mrs J McPherson, Inverness, £77 319.29 per AML.

Congregational Treasurers acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:

Dingwall: Dutch Friends, US \$50; Caithness Friend, £10 per Rev NMR.

Fort William: Anon, for the Lord's Cause in Fort William, £50 per WC.

Glasgow: Anon, £5; £30; £45; £100; £100; Friend, North Uist, £100. *Bus Fund:* Anon, £10; £20; £20; £20; £20; £20; £100. *Eastern Europe Fund:* Anon, £10; £10; £10; £10; £15; £20; £20; £20; £20; £60; £60; £60; £60; £60; £60; £60; £60; £60; £60; £60; £60; £65; £70; £100. *Sustentation Fund:* Anon, £100. *TBS:* Anon, £130.

Greenock: Anon, £5; £40. *Jewish & Foreign Missions Fund:* Anon, £20; £20. *TBS:* Anon, £40; £40. *Where Most Needed:* Anon, £20; £20; £20; £35.

North Tolsta: Anon, for church heating & lighting, £50; Anon, In memory of beloved parents, £20; D Cameron, £100 per Rev DC. *Communion Expenses:* Anon, £40; Mrs MacLeod, 10 New Tolsta, £35. *Door Collection:* Anon, £50. *Where Most Needed:* Mrs Morrison, Southview, £20; D MacIver, Scone, £200.

Portree: Anon, for property maintenance, £30. *TBS:* Anon, for Bible distribution only, £50.

Uig: Family of late Mr J M Morrison, £60; J M, Ness, £100. *Communion Expenses:* Anon, £30; £30; £30.

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 4BO; tel: 01224 645250.

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

Breascelte: 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 A MacPherson; tel: 01569 760370.

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, Olahuu, 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 I/II" (Level 2), 60 Stevens Road, Singapore 257854. Contact: Mr Bernard Yong, 4 Chuan Place, Singapore 554822. Tel: (65) 6383 4466, fax: 6383 4477, e-mail: byong1@singnet.com.sg.

Ukraine

Odessa: F P Mission Station, 3 Pestelya Street, 65031. Contact Mr I Zadorozhnyi, P O Box 100, Odessa-91, 65091; e-mail: antipa@eurocom.od.ua; or Mr D 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.

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

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

New Canaan: Church: Rev Z Mazvabo. Postal Address: Private Bag 615, Zvishavane. Tel 00263 512196.

Zenka: Church. Rev M Mloyi. Postal Address: Private Bag T5398, Bulawayo. Cell phone: 0026311 765032.

Kenya

Sengera: Rev K M Watkins, PO Box 3403, Kisii; e-mail: watkinskenya@gmail.com. Tel: 00254 733 731002.

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