

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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Communions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Number 1

Joshua's Encouragements

After 40 years of weary wanderings through the wilderness, the Children of Israel were now on the verge of the promised land. It was the land which God, while they were still in Egypt, had pledged to give them; it was to be “a land flowing with milk and honey”, and a place where they could be free from the bondage which they had so long suffered under Pharaoh and his cruel taskmasters.

Moses was now dead and Joshua had just taken over his responsibilities as leader, under God, of the Israelites. No doubt Joshua felt the weight of the duties which were now falling on his shoulders. He had to bring the people to the other side of the River Jordan at a time when it was overflowing its banks. And once across the river, there would be enemies to face – among them the Anakims, who so overawed 10 of his fellow spies 39 years previously. Those Anakims were indeed tall and powerful; their cities were large and well fortified; but these 10 spies ignored the unlimited nature of God's power. While Joshua, along with Caleb, trusted in Almighty God and brought back a believing report, they were well aware that it would not be easy to conquer Canaan. And as Joshua was now taking up these heavy responsibilities of leadership, he would have been very conscious of the various difficulties that he and the people might have to face.

But why could Joshua be so sure of conquering the land? Why did he not consider it a task too hard for him to undertake? The most effective answer to these questions is that his was not a human appointment; it was the Lord who had commanded Moses to lay his hands upon him – which, John Calvin says, “was no empty symbol of God's grace”. Accordingly Paul asks, “Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges?” (1 Cor 9:7). He clearly expects the answer, No one. God, especially, does not send out His servants without promising to make provision for them. And He was not going to send Joshua out and leave him to find from within himself the resources he would need to undertake all the duties that lay before him as he stood on the east side of the Jordan.

Joshua might then have thought back to the words he and Caleb had used

39 years previously: "If the Lord delight in us, Then He will bring us into this land, and give it us" (Num 14:8). But he might have asked himself: How can the Lord delight in someone like me, who am a sinner?

One answer lies in the fact of divine forgiveness, vividly illustrated again and again in the sacrifices offered at the tabernacle. In particular, we may think of the goats offered in sacrifice for the people on the Day of atonement. After the first goat had been killed, the high priest took its blood, the evidence of the animal's death, to sprinkle it inside the veil, where God was present in a special way. When the high priest came out alive, it could be understood that the sacrifice had been accepted for the people, Joshua included. Of course, Joshua was looking beyond such sacrifices to the promised Messiah, who would come in the fullness of time, to take away sin. As Joshua thought of the sacrifices, he could understand that God could indeed delight in such sinners as he was and in all others who were trusting in the divine provision to take away sin, for God was not looking on these sinners, but on the sacrifice that was offered in their place.

Another answer lies in what God saw when he looked on Joshua. Yes, He could see a man who was still a sinner, yet the Holy Spirit had begun to work in him. And God could not but delight in His own work in Joshua's heart and life, and in the good works that he was enabled to perform.

But God had made specific promises to Joshua. Speaking on behalf of God, Moses had said, "Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the Lord hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it. And the Lord, He it is that doth go before thee; He will be with thee, He will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed" (Deut 31:7,8; see also Jos 1:1-9). Joshua would therefore not be alone in bringing the Israelites across Jordan and directing their military operations in the conquest of Canaan. God had promised to be with them and Joshua could be sure that this is what would happen; his faithful God could not possibly fail him as he went on with the work that had been given him to carry out.

This did not mean that there would be no problems. It did not mean that there would never be a humiliating defeat such as took place at Ai, after Achan disobeyed God's command not to take any spoil from Jericho when it was conquered. But God's promises did mean that the various problems could be overcome in dependence on God's pledge of help. Yet sins such as Achan's must be dealt with before Ai could be conquered and the campaign be continued successfully.

As we stand on the verge of another year, some people may tremble at the thought of the duties that lie before them as they face the future, whether

these duties arise in the ordinary course of providence or are specifically spiritual. Though these duties *may* seem less important than Joshua's when he and his people were on the east bank of the Jordan, yet the principles which have already been outlined are relevant.

It may seem a huge responsibility, for instance, to bring up children, particularly in such an evil generation as ours. But God who, in His kind providence, is entrusting you with the duty of training up your children in the way that they should go, encourages you by saying about such a child: "When he is old, he will not depart from" that way (Prov 22:6). Or if you feel impressed that God is laying on you some spiritual duty, such as making a public profession of your faith in Christ, remember that He does not send you to undertake such a duty at your own charges. He undertakes to give you the necessary grace and support; He will never fail those who take Him at His word and depend on Him for strength to obey.

Yet you may be very conscious of your sin and of your weakness in the face of temptation; so you may feel that in undertaking some duty you are in great danger of bringing a reproach on Christ's cause. But consider the extent to which your position is so much more advantageous than was Joshua's. Yes, you can look back and take encouragement from the sacrifices offered, for instance, on the Day of atonement and from the fact that God accepted them; He is a God who forgives. But how much more encouragement you can take from the fact that "by His own blood [Christ] entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb 9:12), which shows us very clearly that the Father accepted His perfect sacrifice for all who will look by faith to Him. It is on this basis that the promise is renewed to believers in the New Testament age: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb 13:5). And it is on the same basis that the Lord delights in every individual in whose heart and life the Holy Spirit has begun His sanctifying work.

Whatever your responsibilities, the Lord promises to be with His children – as surely as He was with Joshua, who, at the end of his days, was to record with thankfulness: "Not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake" (Jos 23:14). This had proved true, not only for himself personally, but for the people whose leader he was. God has not changed, and He never will. His promises, and the principles on which He works, are still the same. Whenever He calls a sinner in His grace, that individual is under an obligation always to live to the glory of God, whatever other responsibilities also may become his. But the Lord is saying, in connection with *every* obligation which He may impose: "My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor 12:9).

The Breastplate of Righteousness (1)¹

A Sermon by Mackintosh Mackay

Ephesians 6:14b. *Having on the breastplate of righteousness.*

In addressing you from the first part of this verse, we endeavoured to bring before you the nature of the duty it enjoins. We must remember that the special use of the armour of God, here commended to the believer, is to defend the soul from the assaults of its spiritual enemies. We have tried to show that those enemies are, in the first place, the devil, the author of all sin; and that the evil affections, passions and feelings, inherent in us by nature, are his work. They are spoken of here as the enemies of the soul – the very emissaries of Satan. They join in league with him to destroy the soul, alluring it away from God and from godliness, and making an alliance with the sinful and vain objects of time and sense, which are also in a sense under the power of the adversary.

Although the believer's soul has a new, spiritual life, it is surrounded with snares, difficulties and hardships against which he has to contend, but the Lord will grant him certain victory over them at length. It is not enough for the believer to have his loins girt about with truth and be prepared to meet his enemies in the contest, and hold firm the garment of his profession – in belief and experience of the truth – continually well secured to his soul; he must put on the armour of God to enter into the realities of this spiritual conflict. The next of his defensive weapons is here commended to him, as provided by Christ, his King and Leader: "the breastplate of righteousness". We must now explain the term and show you its importance in the actual business of true Christian conduct.

It is almost unnecessary to explain what is meant by a breastplate literally. It is a covering of metal that ordinary weapons of attack cannot penetrate, placed over the breast to defend that most vital part of the body. So our text must mean that righteousness does the same service to the soul when put on as part of the spiritual armour of God. Our explanation may then be confined to the term *righteousness* and to the practical use of it here enjoined.

The term *righteousness* has a wide meaning in scripture language, and in the economy of grace. (1) It refers to an attribute of God's character, and is equivalent to what we mean when we speak of the justice of God in administering His moral government and in all His dealings with His rational creatures. It is that essential perfection in the nature of God which disposes Him to give to all beings their due. In this sense, men cannot be said, in their

¹The first of two sermons on this text; taken, with editing, from Mackay's *Sermons on the Christian Warfare*. For an account of his life, see the February 2007 issue of this Magazine.

fallen and lost estate, to have the righteousness of God as a living principle in their minds; indeed they do not even have any semblance of how it is in the mind of God. But there is a sense in which the righteousness, which is an essential perfection in the eternal and unchangeable character of God, becomes truly a breastplate to the believer's soul. We can refer to this with more propriety when we have first spoken of the other meanings of the term, in which it is obviously intended to be understood here.

(2) In the gospel, this term signifies the righteousness of Christ – that is, the full and perfect obedience which He, as the surety of sinners in the covenant of grace, gave to the whole law of God in His life upon earth, when He was manifested in the flesh, to fulfil the law in the place of sinners, and to endure the full penalty of a broken law. He endured the wrath of God in body and soul – the punishment of all those sins which God saw that His chosen people would commit. This finished work of Christ, commonly distinguished by the two terms, His active obedience and His passive obedience, constitute His righteousness, in His capacity as Mediator between God and man. Now the abundant and glorious grace of the gospel is imputed to the believer – in other words, to the sinner whenever he believes the offer of the gospel, which testifies of this righteousness and conveys to him the offer, pressing it on his acceptance.

The imputation to the believer of the righteousness of Christ absolves him from God's sentence of condemnation – from the sentence of eternal death. His sins are pardoned and he is held judicially, in the sight of God, to be now righteous, just as if he himself had obeyed the law. But although this wonderful provision is made for perishing sinners, through the eternal grace of God, it is another thing for it actually to do good to the soul. To receive this provision, by believing the offer thus made, is the duty and the privilege of the believer; indeed it is the duty of every individual to whom the gospel is addressed. Nothing can make it do good to the soul unless the principle of faith is established there. The establishment of that principle in the soul is the work of God, but He promises to bestow it on those who ask Him for it. Thus our special business is to come to God, feeling and confessing our natural unbelief, and beseeching Him to bestow this faith upon us.

It is true that the offer made to sinners in the gospel is rejected by those who obviously neglect the matters of eternal salvation, and who do not make it the business of their mind and life to have their salvation made sure. But it is also true that those who are awakened to a serious care for their soul, and careful attention to the testimony of God, will experience many doubts and fears about their actual interest in the precious provision thus made by God to suit their needs, and freely offered to them.

When the sinner is aroused from his habitual carelessness to feel his guilt and danger and to recognise something of the character of God, he sees that the Bible warns about God's wrath against sin and sinners. He is now conscious that these warnings are addressed to himself; he knows that he is indeed guilty – that he does not deserve favour from God. He has anxious doubts about the possibility that God freely offers the righteousness of Christ to him personally, that he may be blessed with full pardon and have his soul accepted by the holy God.

Now, while the Spirit of God leads the mind to contemplate the offer of grace through Christ Jesus, there is no concealing the fact that the principalities and powers of spiritual wickedness will strive with the soul to keep it back from trusting in the offered righteousness of the Lord Jesus. When the individual would strive to rest his soul on this righteousness, he experiences slavish fear and is thrown back, as it were, on his own personal unworthiness and guilt. In such a state, the righteousness of Christ has not yet become his breastplate, for the arrows of Satan pierce his soul, destroy his peace and lead him to dishonour, in his mind, the love and grace of God in Christ, by refusing to believe that these can be as great as the gospel represents them to be.

Notice that it is not your feeling of your guilt in the sight of God which is wrong or dangerous, but it is that feeling keeping you back from trusting in the righteousness of Christ, and from believing that God freely offers to impute it to you as an individual. The conviction of sin, if indeed it is wrought in you, is the work of God; the doubts and terrors, the suspicions you have about the sincerity and freeness of the gospel offer are the work of the devil. Conviction of sin would indeed lead you to esteem the tidings of the gospel precious to your soul; the fears make you question whether those tidings are addressed to you individually. Thus you remain under the influence of temptation's power and are excluded from all true consolation and joy, which is set before you in the gospel of Christ.

It is worth noting particularly that the way the enemies of the soul keep it separated from the armour offered in our text is by bringing before the soul its own unworthiness. This sense of unworthiness often appears to be a very deep and desirable humility, saying, I am not worthy that God should show me such mercy and favour; it is in vain that a sinner such as I am should strive for faith in Christ. When such are your reasoning and fears, they obviously do not come from Him who calls you; He tells you that He came "not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance". In your fancied humility you are sinning with a lofty spirit of rebelliousness against God.

Does not God show you, in all His testimony and His doings, that He does

not offer the benefits of the way of salvation because anything in man deserves His favour? You are actually rebelling against His testimony when you do not lay hold of the righteousness of Christ as the safety and strength of your soul. You are denying, in fact, the sovereignty and righteousness of God in devising such a plan of salvation. You are telling Him that it is for good people that He ought to have provided it. And what can be more guilty than this in God's sight? What can be more dishonourable to Him? But those who do not – because, they say, of their own unworthiness – gladly embrace the gospel offer of Christ's righteousness contract even more guilt.

The next evil which they commit is imagining that their spiritual modesty and distrust of themselves form together a qualification which merits the favour of God. They come now, as they fancy, to Christ with such preparation and merit of their own that they think He must bless them. Such is the result of those proud reasonings which find a place in many a soul through the adversary's wiles and evil suggestions. Yet, after all this, they are still subject to slavish fear; they assuredly do not have the beginning of the spirit of children before God, as a God in Christ. While you come with any price in your hand, you can never so feel under obligation to saving grace that it will set you free from this spirit of bondage, or generate in your soul true love to Him who first loved sinners. You have the feeling – maybe unconsciously, till you search and try your own heart – that you have paid the price for the benefit, that you have such a frame of mind as makes you not unworthy of the lovingkindness of God.

The true state of the matter is that you have been yielding, in all this experience, to the suggestions of your spiritual enemy since the very first moment when you acknowledged, in your mind and conscience, your need of a righteousness other than your own. And when you also saw that such a righteousness was offered in the gospel, your very first doubts that it was offered *to you* were the work of the enemy within you. Your soul has been wounded by this and kept back from entering that stronghold in which you could find everlasting safety and strength.

Such convictions of sin showed you your need of the righteousness of Christ, and such a measure of light made clear to your consciousness as a rational being that the offer is made to all. So it is *your* duty to resist all doubts about the sincerity of the gospel offer to you personally and to lay hold on the Word of God as your authority for believing, for putting your confidence in the Lord Jesus at once as your righteousness and strength. You will indeed feel your inability to do so, and the evil suggestions of which we have now spoken will enter your mind, but you must strive against them and still look to the testimony of God, which is faithful and sure. Feeling your

inability to believe, you must come to God with your unbelief as your special sin, and wait on Him for that power from on high which will enable you to receive the offer and embrace it cordially.

In such a situation as we have tried to describe, your duty most assuredly is to consider God's testimony with increased diligence, to set your mind to recognise in it the sovereign freeness and fullness of divine grace, manifested to guilty, lost sinners in the man Christ Jesus. In thus obeying, or striving to obey, His word of counsel and invitation, and looking to Him for the power of His Spirit to work in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure, you will not be put to shame but will experience that His word is true and that His righteousness is altogether sufficient for you.

We would also observe how unworthy are sentiments we often meet among those who seem to have serious convictions of their sinfulness. It is their unworthiness they continually complain of, their unfitness to be objects of God's favour; whereas your complaint ought to be that you cannot honour the grace of God by simply and honestly trusting in it, as it is indeed offered to you personally. Your lack of faith in God ought to be the feeling of your soul, urging you to go to a throne of grace as a poor and needy suppliant. This ought to keep you there, pleading with God till it pleases Him to send you His Spirit, by whose heavenly strength you would be enabled to trust fully in the perfect righteousness of Christ, setting you free from all condemnation. "Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength." This is the language of the true Church of God in every age, and of every individual who is led to receive cordially the gospel offer which is freely made to them.

But we do not doubt that some will say that they have been led thus to cast themselves on the free offer of the gospel and fancied they had obtained this saving view of Christ as their righteousness and strength, but that unbelief still seems to prevail against them, and that they continually forget both their obligations to redeeming grace and the practical course of holiness to which the gospel calls them. This indeed is sin. But consider how this forgetfulness of yours, in the first place, originates, if indeed you ever have come to entertain clear and settled and believing views of the righteousness of Christ, as the surety and safety of your soul. You have been found – and recollect now your own past mental history – looking more to your own views, feelings and experience for safety and acceptance with God than to the righteousness of Christ. By thus trusting to your own strength, you have fallen away from your steadfastness, and the enemies of your soul have not found it difficult to obtain the victory over you.

The righteousness, or finished work, of Christ, is the way through which

you can derive any blessing from God. Not only does the sinner receive the pardon of his sins and justification through this work, but it is also how God continues to bestow on His people every other spiritual blessing which they constantly need. We fear that many think so unworthily of the righteousness of Christ as to imagine that, if they obtain pardon of sin through it, or even experience in themselves a hope of pardon, they have no more to do with it; they have to look to other sources for the other blessings they need.

This is altogether at variance with the covenant of God, which brings salvation. It is through the righteousness of Christ – His having fulfilled all righteousness as the surety and sacrifice for sinners – that God bestows every grace and benefit. It is for the sake of the Lamb who was slain and is alive again and His intercession with God in heaven – as He presents before the eternal throne His own finished work, in His body and soul – that God can look in mercy on any sinner or even that He continues to bestow any gift on those who believe. Now has this view of the righteousness of Christ been upheld in your mind? We fear that it has not but that you have been putting your confidence for continued blessings in other sources. When this is the case, you cannot continue to receive strength from God, or the disposition with which to remember, serve and glorify Him.

As this righteousness of Christ is the only way through which God can bestow mercy and favour, so it must form the continual stronghold of all your hopes. When you cease to look to it, you begin to ask amiss; you ask and you receive not. In consequence of your repeated disappointments, you again doubt the good will and faithfulness of God towards you personally, when the truth is that you refuse His testimony in this matter and put away from you the breastplate by whose strength alone you can be upheld in the paths of practical obedience. Then the sins you commit will rise before you, in condemning and terrifying power, and the spiritual enemies of the soul will add to your fears until you think that all practical religion is vain, that you are making no advance in spiritual life – that you do not arrive at any of the parts of the Christian character which, the Word of God states, belong to His children.

Such doubts often prevail with those who are, we trust, under the guidance of the Spirit of God. But remember that the cause of these doubts is not continuing to look to the righteousness of Christ as your only defence – turning away from Him who says, “Behold Me, behold Me”; “Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth”. Seek then to have a more enlarged, more settled, more habitual knowledge of the righteousness of the Lord Jesus – His perfect work as the Mediator of the new covenant. When this is the breastplate of your soul, the enemy can never triumph against you; a believing

view of the righteousness of Christ will continually impress you that you owe all to God, and that it is your duty and privilege to give yourself wholly to God. Looking to what Christ has done and suffered for sinners, you will see more and more how high is the privilege of serving and glorifying Him with your spirit and body.

With such views of His character and everlasting love, sin will not continue to have dominion over you. You will be actuated by higher motives than those which prevail with the people of this world, who are led captive by sin. And when you turn away from contemplating the person and work and intercession of Christ, seek again that God would bring you back to the Shepherd and Bishop of your soul, to be implanted in Him through a living faith. To set Him continually before you is the only way in which you can obtain safety, peace and spiritual strength. In thus looking to Him, you will have the well-grounded hope, through His own righteousness and merit, that you will continue to receive those supplies of grace which will keep you from evil and strengthen you in the ways of the Lord.

When the fiery darts of temptation, evil desires and passions assail you, your safety lies in considering the nature of those sins in the light of Christ's righteousness. Consider how He obtained this righteousness – by enduring the wrath of God which was due to you. Think how He must look on such sins in you, when they crucified Him who is the Lord of glory and put Him to shame. Consider the love which led Him to undertake the work of salvation, and which sustained Him in patience and meekness amid the sufferings due to those very sins which now seek ascendancy in you. Surely then you will be animated with new courage and strength to make a stand against the power of evil. Coming to Him who is made your righteousness, He will also be made your sanctification and redemption – for a believing view of His person, character and wonderful works will repel from your soul those unworthy, unholy and rebellious workings of mind and conduct, by which the world dishonours God and through which Satan deceives them and allures them to their everlasting ruin.

This might all be well, you may say, if we had faith to appropriate Christ's righteousness and believe that we really have a personal interest in it. But your lack of assurance is no excuse. Do you see that His righteousness is precious in itself – that it is worthy of all reverence, because of the eternal love which provided it and now freely offers it to you? Are you not called to receive this precious offer and devote yourselves to the service of Him who makes it? It is in thus looking to Christ that His righteousness becomes the breastplate of the soul. And if you do not feel that it is effective in quelling the risings of sin and resisting temptations, then you have not yet seen

it aright or learned its value. You must submit to God, to be taught by Him, so that your eyes may be enlightened to see your need of it in a way you have not yet learned.

If your views of the righteousness of the Lord Jesus do not make sin hateful to you, and do not quicken your desires after true holiness of heart and conduct, it is because you have not yet believed the testimony of God about your personal character and standing in His sight and the greatness and sovereignty of His redeeming love and grace. The assurance that, through faith, you have an interest in Christ's righteousness is a different thing from faith itself. And the view of the righteousness of Christ, as offered to you in the gospel, which awakens you to righteousness in your own life is a believing view, whether or not you are yet assured that you have believed.

Seek for such assurance as your duty; ask it from God as a privilege which He alone can bestow. Even if you do not yet possess it, strive to obtain not only an assurance of your personal interest in the righteousness of Christ, but increased knowledge and understanding of that righteousness as the foundation of the soul's hope, and the soul's breastplate to defend it from the attacks of every spiritual enemy. You must surely obtain a knowledge of it before you can attain an assurance of your interest in it. And true knowledge of it is evidenced by the effect it produces in the soul, slaying there the enmity of the natural mind against the authority and commandments of God, and repelling the assaults of sin and temptation when these would lead you to forget God and act dishonourably to His name and cause.

It is this view of the righteousness of Christ – your need of it, your absolute dependence on it for every good and perfect gift – which will bring you to pursue that active, sincere righteousness of life, which is one of the fruits of the Spirit. This righteousness is also profitable to show forth the praises of the Lord and to make His grace, in its blessed effects, manifest to all. Time will not now permit us to enter that part of our subject, but we would not consider our labour lost if any individual soul was brought to feel, more than ever before, its need of experiencing the power of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ – the value and excellence of His righteousness.

If any of you do thus feel your need, do not delay to come to Him who faithfully promises to listen to the voice of your supplications. Bear in mind that it is in Christ that all fullness dwells; and that through His righteousness, all that fullness was purchased which will supply all the sinner's needs and defend him from all his enemies. And when Christ's righteousness is made available to you, you must be seen and known of all men as showing forth a practical righteousness in your life also. Then sin shall not have dominion over you, because you are not under the law but under grace.

Free Presbyterian Church in Australia¹

1. Background – Presbyterianism in NSW before the Disruption

Calvin MacKenzie

“There has never been such an irruption of heaven-defying infidelity, throughout the professed Christian world, as there is at this moment, both on the continent of Europe and in our fatherland. The inspiration of Holy Scripture is now formally denied and ridiculed by a large proportion of the intellectual classes of society; the miracles both of the Old and of the New Testaments are regarded as the myths and fables of a semi-barbarous and credulous antiquity; the divinity of Christ and His resurrection from the dead are treated as the exploded doctrines of an ill-instructed age, and man himself is represented as a mere material organisation in no way superior, either in his origin or his destiny, to those of the beasts that perish.”

So commented John Dunmore Lang² in 1868 as he noted the spirit of declension behind the increasingly broad interpretation of doctrines that had been held sacrosanct in the Presbyterian Church since the Reformation. The increasing influence of higher criticism and so-called scientific discovery concerning the origin of man, in the second half of the nineteenth century, provide the background against which this paper will briefly combine key events in the historic, Australian Presbyterian timeline, together with some of the factors that led inexorably to the formation of the first Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland congregation in Australia in 1911.

Our focus will not permit an exhaustive discussion of every circumstance related to every division with which Presbyterian churches seem sadly to be afflicted. It is to be noted, however, that the history of the Presbyterian Church in New South Wales (NSW) has involved no less controversy than that of the Church in Scotland, although smaller in scale and without immediate connection to the rich, Reformation heritage of the Church in Scotland. In the interests of brevity, I am confining this paper to events in NSW, fully aware there is much of a relevant, parallel nature we could examine from other states like Victoria and, to a lesser extent, South Australia.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, orthodox Presbyterianism gradually gained a foothold in the religious landscape of the Australian colonies. Factors militating against a more rapid establishment of Presbyterianism

¹The full title of this paper was: The establishment of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland in Australia against a background of Presbyterian decline in the mid to late 1800s. The paper was given to the Australia and New Zealand Youth Conference in 2012.

²J D Lang, *The Characteristics of the Present Age Identical with Those of the Age Immediately before the Flood*, Brisbane, 1868, p 9.

were: firstly, the proportion of Presbyterian convicts transported was fewer than 5% of the total, mostly comprising Anglicans and Roman Catholics and, secondly, the immigration of Scottish Presbyterians did not gather pace until after 1824, when the indefatigable John Dunmore Lang made the first of nine voyages back to Britain to procure ministers, probationers and Christian free settlers.³ Of the early Presbyterians, the Assistant Surgeon Dr Thomas Arndell, was perhaps the most notable; he arrived with the First Fleet in 1788 and settled on land adjacent to the Hawkesbury River, 60 km from Sydney. There he became associated with the Presbyterian free settlers led by elder James Mein, who arrived in the Coromandel on 13 June 1802 and settled in the Ebenezer district nearby.⁴

John Dunmore Lang was the first ordained Scottish Presbyterian minister to arrive in NSW, on 23 May 1823. However, it was not until 1832 that the first Presbytery was established, comprising John Dunmore Lang, Sydney (by this time a Doctor of Divinity); John McGarvie, St Andrew's Scots Church, Sydney; John Gregor, minister of Maitland; John Cleland, minister of Portland Head and Pitt-town; and Kirkpatrick Dickson-Smythe, minister at Bathurst. The earliest official record of a meeting of this Presbytery seems to be that of 2 November 1837. It was held in St Andrew's Church, Sydney.⁵

During the absence of Lang in Britain in 1837, the Presbytery applied to the Legislative Council for a "Temporalities Act", which was passed on 9 September 1837. It was entitled, "An Act to regulate the temporal affairs of Presbyterian Churches and Chapels connected with the Church of Scotland in the Colony of New South Wales". Under this Act, the Church of Scotland recognised the Colonial Presbytery, giving it legal standing and the sole authority to pay a salary to its ministers.⁶

It is useful to remember that the Presbytery in NSW was still under the authority of the Established Church of Scotland, in what was essentially a "mother / daughter" relationship at this time. Between 1823 and 1840, 27 ministers of the colonial Church had originated in Scotland; five came from Ireland and just one from England.⁷

³James Cameron, *Centenary History of the Presbyterian Church in NSW*, Sydney, 1903, p 7.

⁴M D Prentis, *The Scots in Australia*, University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 2008, p 48.

⁵Cameron, *Centenary History*, p 9.

⁶C A White, *The Challenge of the Years – A History of the Presbyterian Church of Australia in the State of NSW*, Sydney, 1951, p 9.

⁷M Prentis, "The Presbyterian Ministry in Australia, 1822-1900: Recruitment and Composition", in *Journal of Religious History*, vol 13, no 1, June 1984, p 58. Cited in Peter Barnes, *Theological Controversies in the Presbyterian Church of New South Wales, 1865-1915 – The rise of Liberal Evangelicalism*, New York, 2008, p 16.

The Church of Scotland was subject to the interference of the state, encroaching on the spiritual jurisdiction of the Church. One major problem was the way ministers were appointed to parishes – known as “patronage”.⁸ The contentious and unscriptural Patronage Act was passed by the British Parliament during Queen Anne’s reign, in 1712; it became such a cause of contention and controversy that on 5 December 1733 the eminent Ebenezer Erskine, together with Alexander Moncrief, James Fisher and William Wilson, seceded and constituted the first meeting of the Associate Presbytery – their response to having been thrust out of the Established Church because of their opposition to patronage.⁹ These men became known somewhat disparagingly by their opponents as the “Marrow men” – because they held as scriptural the fundamental Christian doctrines outlined in Edward Fisher’s publication, *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*, which was annotated by Thomas Boston.

Ultimately, the contention and disquiet over patronage led to the historic event in Scotland, on 18 May 1843, that came to be known as “The Disruption”, when 450-500 ministers from a total of some 1200, led by the highly respected Evangelicals, Chalmers, Gordon, Cunningham, Guthrie and Candlish amongst others, solemnly walked away from the Established Church – leaving their manses, salaries and, in many instances, their congregations, to form the Free Church of Scotland.¹⁰ This Church, while holding to the establishment principle, held likewise to the view that the state had no right to interfere with the spiritual jurisdiction of the Church of God, recognising God alone as the great Head of the Church. William Cunningham, in his peerless *Discussions on Church Principles*, puts it most succinctly: “The Church and the State are two distinct societies, each supreme in its own sphere, and neither dependent on the other in respect to jurisdiction or authoritative control”.¹¹

Although this Scottish disruption was yet six years hence, the NSW Presbytery experienced its own mini-disruption in 1837 when Lang, having just returned from a voyage to Britain to escort another eight ministers and four probationers to NSW, found, to his dismay, that he could not settle them quickly in spheres where they could do most good and have their right to a salary recognised by the state, through the Presbytery. This came about

⁸For an interesting history, consult James Begg, *The history of the act of Queen Anne, 1711, restoring church patronage in Scotland: with a List of the Patrons*, Edinburgh, 1840.

⁹Thomas M’Crie, *The Story of the Scottish Church*, Free Presbyterian Publications reprint, 1988, pp 465-474.

¹⁰Peter Bayne, *The Free Church of Scotland, Her Origin, Founders and Testimony*, Edinburgh, 1893, p 301.

¹¹William Cunningham, *Discussions on Church Principles – Popish, Erastian and Presbyterian*, reprinted Edmonton, 1991, p 210.

because, in 1833, a Declaratory Act was passed by the Church of Scotland defining her attitude towards ministers of the Church in the Colonies, authorising them to form themselves into Presbyteries, but claiming “a certain jurisdiction over them”. According to the terms of this Act, only ministers settled in charges could be admitted as members of presbyteries, and only on the certification of the Moderator of the Presbytery could the salaries of Presbyterian ministers be paid.¹²

On 11 December 1837, Lang and the recently-arrived ministers who supported him organised themselves into a separate body of ten ministers and one ruling elder which they called the “Synod of New South Wales”. It comprised three Presbyteries: Sydney, Windsor and the Hunter Valley. They elected Lang as the first Moderator. The standards of this new body were essentially those of the Church of Scotland, with this major difference: that it alone held supreme authority over all connected with it and it would not tolerate any appeal from its jurisdiction to any “Church or Churches beyond seas”.¹³ This division was not of long duration, however; the Presbytery and Synod were reunited almost three years later, on 3 October 1840, as the “Synod of Australia in connexion with the Established Church of Scotland”. Just two years thereafter, Lang, even more strongly attached to “voluntaryism”¹⁴, separated from this body and remained – mutually and, it would appear, with some ill-feeling – unattached to any Presbyterian denomination for the next eight years.¹⁵

“Because the Preacher Was Wise”

Rev G G Hutton

In the Old Testament, there is the unique little book entitled Ecclesiastes – the book of “the Preacher” or, to quote John Gill, “the preacher’s sermon”. Although Solomon’s name does not appear throughout the book, we concur with those who believe that the preacher was Solomon because of the references to the preacher being the son of David, king in Jerusalem, as

¹²C A White, *The Challenge of the Years – A History of the Presbyterian Church of Australia in the State of NSW*, Sydney, 1951, p 8.

¹³Cameron, *Centenary History*, p 10. These men were: J D Lang, John Dougall, G Anderson, James Fullerton, Hugh R Gilchrist, Cunningham Atchison, Robert Blain, Robert Stewart, M Colquhoun, and William McIntyre. The ruling elder was James Smith, of Scots Church, Sydney.

¹⁴The belief that religious institutions – the clergy, parishes etc – should be maintained by voluntary contributions rather than by state aid.

¹⁵Peter Barnes, *Theological Controversies*, p 39.

well as being himself king in Jerusalem (1:1,12). The preacher is the speaker to the Church.

Solomon is the royal preacher addressing the Church in every generation. Being particularly notable for his God-given wisdom (2 Chr 1:7-12) it is not surprising that we read, “And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge: yea, he gave good heed The preacher sought to find out acceptable words” (Ecc 12:9,10). Every preacher therefore ought to learn from Solomon’s example. He ought to give heed to Solomon’s words of counsel: “Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding” (Prov 4:7).

In the New Testament Paul wrote, “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor 1:21). Preaching is therefore the instrument by which God purposes to save sinners. Yet the activity itself is not to be confused with its results. Noah, Peter reminds us, was “a preacher of righteousness” (2 Pet 2:5) but we know from the biblical record that his ministry was basically one of condemnation, because his exhortations and warnings were rejected by his generation. Paul himself acknowledged that while the preaching of the gospel will be blessed to the salvation of some, others will harden their hearts under it (2 Cor 2:15,16).

It is very natural for men commencing their ministry to preach, pray and look for positive results from their labours, particularly the conversion of sinners. Indeed they ought not to be in the ministry if this is not the case. Nevertheless, they must be willing to be used as it pleases God, for the fulfilment of His own sovereign purposes. While a faithful ministry will always produce results, the nature of the results remains with God alone. Every preacher must therefore humbly acquiesce in what pleases the One who has sent him to his particular field of labour. Some both sow and reap; again some sow and others do the reaping. Some are even sent to labour in conditions that require them to plough and harrow before any real sowing can commence. Every preacher should have a personal conviction about what is required of him in his own particular ministry – speaking wisely and applying words appropriate to his particular situation.

Seeking to learn from Solomon, every minister of the gospel ought to observe the seriousness with which this wise preacher approached his duty. He wrote: “The preacher sought to find out acceptable words” (Ecc 12:10). He thought carefully and wisely about what he would say, in order to deliver the most appropriate message to his hearers. Personal wisdom was essential if his ministry was to be effective. It was “because the preacher was wise,” that he gave so much attention to finding appropriate words (Ecc

12:9). A wise ministry is therefore one with a contemporary, relevant and appropriate message.

Some ministries are distinguished for their intellectual presentation; others for their zeal and enthusiasm; others for their popular appeal; and yet others for their apparent success. The gospel minister, however, who seeks divine approval, will endeavour to his utmost to exercise a ministry marked by God-given wisdom. Yet such a ministry may not always meet with common approval. Wisdom, in the estimation of God and in the eyes of men, may be two different matters. Paul wrote: “The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God” (1 Cor 3:19); while God pronounced: “Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes and prudent in their own sight!” (Is 5:21). Paul defended his own ministry among the Corinthians: “My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought” (1 Cor 2:4-6). With such a clear distinction between worldly wisdom and spiritual wisdom, where and how does the preacher seek out appropriate words with which to address his fellow sinners?

The first requirement is faith in the One who commissions him. When Jesus sent His disciples to their duty as preachers, He promised them, “I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist” (Lk 21:15). The ministers of Christ sometimes feel inadequate before the great intellects of this world, who are often “men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth,” or “men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith” (1 Tim 6:5; 2 Tim 3:8).

However, it must not be forgotten that the great Head of the Church has “chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise” (1 Cor 1:27). Peter informs us that in the days of their ministry, when the people “saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13). Their words, and the authority with which they spoke them, testified to the Saviour’s influence on them. Peter, spoke for the other disciples: “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life” (Jn 6:68). Like the disciples, the minister of the Word needs to be inseparable from his Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. He should go from the presence of his Lord, carrying His words to the people whom he addresses.

The second requirement for every preacher is to be personally intimate with his Saviour. Jesus, during His earthly ministry, condemned His generation: “The Queen of the south shall rise in judgement with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to

hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here” (Mt 12:42). The Lord Jesus Christ is indisputably greater in wisdom than even Solomon. Paul wrote of Him as the one “in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col 2:3). Unless the preacher of the divine Word is intimate with Christ, he cannot draw from this fountain of true wisdom. He may have a very scholarly knowledge of the facts about Christ, and yet have no real intimacy with Him. In the case of the learned Paul, such intimacy caused him to abandon everything “that I may know Him” (Phil 3:10). It is this close relationship between the preacher and the Saviour which is the secret to a spiritually-wise ministry.

Another requisite must be the exercise the prophet Jeremiah described. In the midst of his trials and discouragements, he addressed God thus: “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart” (Jer 15:16). Not only did the prophet find words, but he inwardly digested them. As the prophet personally experienced the power of the words he found, every preacher needs to feel the power and efficacy of the divine Word before he attempts to declare it to others. His utterances need to be more than fine words from a manuscript or interesting thoughts gleaned from the pen or the experiences of others, but rather God-sent messages coming with conviction from his innermost soul.

When the preacher is preparing for the pulpit, his mind is automatically focused on the spiritual needs of his congregation. He desires their spiritual improvement. However, like the seven churches in Asia, in the Book of Revelation, the spiritual condition and needs of every congregation are varied. Some needs are, of course, essentially the same, for everyone stands in need of salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. Nevertheless, as the Apostle John reminds us, words need to be addressed specifically to those who spiritually are “little children”, while others need to be addressed to “young men”, and others still to “fathers” (1 Jn 2-3).

As a pastor becomes familiar with his congregation, he becomes acquainted with their differing needs, arising from the varied degrees of knowledge they possess, the variety of experiences they encounter and the many stages of spiritual development they exhibit. He may be required to alarm the careless, encourage the weak, educate the ignorant, stimulate the minds of the more advanced in the faith, confront prejudice, overcome antagonism, and win their hearts and minds. Thus, he must wisely seek out and find “acceptable words”. Such words are found with the One of whom it was said, “Never man spake like this man” (Jn 7:46). The task of the congregational pastor is therefore not one for the faint-hearted or the slothful. As he endeavours to feed his flock wisely, he does so with the burden that Paul expressed to the

Philippians: "I have you in my heart . . . for God is my record how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ" (Phil 1:7,8).

The Holiness of a Believer's Children¹

Robert Stewart

1 Corinthians 7:14. *For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.*

Speaking to the people of this world, the Lord says, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways" (Is 55:8). Indeed, no two things can be more unlike than the estimate the men of the world form of the world and the estimate God forms of it. In the judgement of worldly men, saints or believers are the most useless, if not the most contemptible, portion of society. Their scruples, peculiarities and self-denials are considered senseless and unreasonable, and their answers and rebukes are condemned as ill-natured and uncharitable. In the judgement of God, on the contrary, they are the excellent of the earth, the pillars of society.

"Ye are the salt of the earth", said Jesus to His disciples. He was implying that the world, which is a mass of corruption, would be lost in rottenness but for them. "Ye are the light of the world", He said again, implying that, but for them, the world would speedily be overwhelmed with darkness. In the opinion of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot was an insignificant stranger who came in to sojourn among them upon sufferance. But had there been ten such men in those cities, they might have remained until this day. In our Lord's parable of the field in which the enemy sowed tares, the wicked are represented as permitted to continue until the day of judgement for the sake of the righteous.

And in the passage we are considering, the "unbelieving husband" is said to be "sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife by the husband". There are two kinds of sanctity, or holiness, spoken of in Scripture. The sanctity of *dedication*, whereby persons or things are appropriated to God, so they cannot without sacrilege or injustice be used for any other purpose. And the sanctity of *purification*, which refers only to persons, consists in deliverance from what God hates or disapproves of, and a conformity of all the powers of body and mind to God's will. It is in the sense of dedication that cities, lands, houses and household utensils are said to be sanctified or holy, for they can-

¹Taken, with editing, from *The Christian's Daily Companion*. Stewart (1783-1852) was minister of Broughshane, near Ballymena, in Northern Ireland.

not be holy in any real sense; to set them apart exclusively to God's service could not effect any change whatever on their internal structure.

It is in the same sense that the firstborn in Israel, when they were delivered from Egyptian bondage, are said to be sanctified, or holy (Ex 13:2). No real change was made on their mind or feelings by being set apart to God, and the same is the case with the sanctity of the tribe of Levi in general, and that of the priests in particular. In fact, the sanctity of complete purification, or of unspotted holiness, was never true of anyone, except the man Christ Jesus. All others have hearts which are more or less deceitful and wicked; if weighed in an accurate balance, they must be found sadly lacking. Christ, however, knew no sin. He never did evil, nor was guile found in His mouth; He was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. As He bore the griefs and carried the sorrows of His people, He is able to "present them without spot or wrinkle . . . holy and without blemish" (Eph 5:27).

The sanctity of the believing husband or wife includes both kinds of sanctification. This is the sanctity of dedication to God, which every believer is enabled to do when he is united to Christ; and from Christ in justification and through the Holy Spirit in sanctification, he receives holiness, or spiritual purification. The sanctity of the *unbelieving* husband or wife, however, is merely the holiness of dedication. The husband and wife are one in the eye of God, and because one of the parties is truly dedicated to the Lord, and truly made holy, the other is considered as federally holy – or holy by the bond and covenant of marriage.

The unbelieving husband or wife, who is joined in marriage to a believer, is, on two accounts, nearer to God, and is more valuable in His sight than the unbelieving husband or wife of an unbeliever. He or she is nearer to God because having a spouse in close communion with God. And he or she is nearer to God because more likely to be converted to God, "for what knowest thou, O wife," says the Apostle, "whether thou shalt save thy husband? Or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?" If God for the sake of ten righteous people, would have tolerated the wickedness of Sodom and saved its many guilty inhabitants, much more, for the sake of a believing spouse, will He spare an unbelieving husband or wife and protect them.

Indeed, so valuable and dear in God's sight is every believer, that the offspring of the Christian husband or wife, although the other parent may be an infidel, is viewed as holy and privileged to approach God. Jehovah will not overlook or neglect the humblest servant (Is 42:3); rather than the faith of one believing parent should, with regard to a child, be barren and unfruitful, the unbelief of the one party is swallowed up in the faith of the other, and the children of both are considered holy.

The holiness here ascribed to the child is obviously the holiness of dedication, for the infant could derive no personal or spiritual holiness from a parent. So this passage triumphantly demonstrates that the infants of members of the visible Church have a right to baptized. Paul speaks as though the holiness of a child, born in such circumstances, was well known. "Else were your children unclean," he says, "but now are they holy." He does not lay it down as a doctrine to be received in future in all like circumstances: that the child of parents, of whom only one was a believer should be considered holy. But he refers to it as doctrine already established, and from it he draws the inference that the believing husband or wife ought not to forsake the unbelieving partner.

Baptism then is the gate of admission into the Christian Church, or the only path by which, in dedication, we can approach God. The apostles judged the child of one believing parent to possess the holiness of dedication. It is therefore obvious that the children of believers generally must have been, at that time, constantly presented to God at baptism, just as the children of believing Israelites were, under the preceding dispensation, dedicated or presented to God in circumcision.

Church Union

The Wrong Approach and the Wrong Reasons

Matthew Vogan

In a climate of bewildering social and technological change, the rapid decline in church attendance and increasing Sabbath desecration present a colossal challenge to the values held by the Church. The situation facing the Church in Victorian Scotland compared with today was not as different as might be assumed. Not surprisingly perhaps, some began to think that a union of Presbyterian Churches would provide increased strength to meet the advancing tide. Actual achievement of that union was not, however, to be the beguilingly simple and attractive task that it appeared. There is much that we can learn from the serious mistakes made in such endeavours.

Union Controversy of 1863-73. In the Union Controversy of 1863-73 involving the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church, there were significant differences in relation to the establishment principle and the nature and extent of the atonement. George Smeaton of the Free Church entered the debate in 1871 with a pamphlet entitled *National Christianity and Scriptural Union*. While the bulk of the pamphlet deals with a defence of the establish-

ment principle as central to the constitution of the Free Church, it also considers issues relating to the proposed union between the two denominations. Smeaton introduces the key questions at the heart of the controversy: “How far is it incumbent on Churches situated in the same country, possessing corporate unity, and having much in common in everything relating to doctrine, discipline, worship and government, to enter into ecclesiastical union with one organisation? And, next, whether diverging views on minor points may not be left as open questions?” These questions have an abiding relevance.

The Wrong Approach. There were two phases in the negotiations for union. First, the parties drew up certain articles which were intended to define the amount of common agreement between the negotiating Churches and to minimise any differences. Smeaton recalled various historical examples of the devastating failure of pursuing this principle and commented: “Nothing satisfactory could be expected to come out of this device, when we reflect that it proceeded on the principle of throwing every thing into the crucible”.

When this failed, a second phase was projected in which it “was proposed to unite on the Standards” (that is, the *Westminster Confession of Faith*). This appeared more hopeful but, in reality, the Churches did not adhere to the *Confession* with the same understanding and to the same degree. Smeaton protested that “this is not Union on the Standards”; rather it would mean one party “surrendering to the other” by relaxing the strength of adherence to the *Confession* in any united body. The Free Church were all too ready to make such compromises in return for union. Such dangers frequently present themselves in such discussions for union; truth may be sacrificed to clever and powerful arguments and negotiation tactics.

This would compromise certain “distinctive points of the Free Church as compared with other Churches, without which, indeed, she could only be viewed as an impertinence [that is, irrelevance] in the world. Without these she was but a sect or schism, and the sooner she hid her diminished head and passed out of sight the better.” This is a vital point. Where a denomination has lost its confidence in its own distinctives, the honourable thing is to abandon its separate position and unite with those who share the same testimony. Anything else is undoubted schism.

Smeaton refers to two main false approaches taken to ecclesiastical union:

1. One approach is to reduce the extent of a Church’s confession of faith by removing articles or to declare, “that certain truths shall no longer be terms of communion, that is, terms of office. This is a convenient device, by which any one Church may unite with any other; but whether it is worthy of men who are held by truth, and loyal to it, is a different inquiry.” The union that formed the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church in America in 1786

was constructed upon this principle by expressly laying aside or stating “in ambiguous terms, every thing about which the parties could not agree”.

2. Another approach is to distinguish between essential and non-essential truths. This had been the basis of the union of Burgher and Antiburgher Churches in Scotland, at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Yet Scripture gives no basis for making such a distinction. Thomas M’Crie (the elder) in a previous generation exposed the error of this point. While there are truths highlighted by Scripture as foundational, their “priority or posteriority in point of order, in conception or instruction, does not determine the relative importance of doctrines, or their necessity in order to salvation, far less does it determine the propriety of their being made to enter into the religious profession of Christians and Christian churches”. Smeaton comments on the establishment principle: “It will not do to allege that this is but a non-essential point, on which no man’s salvation can be said to depend; for we are intrusted with a sacred deposit, and dare not abandon it, as we would be found faithful at the appearing of Jesus Christ”.

The Wrong Reasons. Why were men willing to go so far and compromise so much in order to secure union? Smeaton identified two great errors: (1) the duty and advantages of union had been greatly exaggerated, so that no cost now seemed too great; (2) distinctive principles had not been “estimated at their proper value, or duly conserved”.

The first great error is of greatest interest. It must be remembered that all such “humanly concerted schemes of external unification . . . have their dangers as well as their advantages”. At the conclusion of the pamphlet, Smeaton refers to the wrong motivations behind the union movement: “With some, union is a sentiment; with others, a doctrinaire theory; with a third, a determined purpose, well-nigh fanatical, to have liberty from what they are pleased to view as old traditions. A fourth class, after changing their position, say that there is no difference; or, if there be, that it may be left over till the millennium. Under these prepossessions, they will not allow their minds calmly to ponder the Scripture evidence.” Unless a union movement is to be pursued for the truth’s sake and without sacrifice of truth, it is no more than a scheme of carnal reasoning and wisdom. Others were simply looking to manage resources such as finances and property more efficiently by bringing about a union. Smeaton asked: “And, for ends like these, will they compliment away great Scripture truth?”

The Right Basis. Smeaton helpfully states his convictions as to the conditions of true scriptural union. He stresses that it is founded upon the truth. “Ecclesiastical union has its limits marked out by harmony of Confession. That can be no true union which requires either party to recede by a hair’s

breadth from the acknowledged truth of God, or induces either side to hold any article, or doctrine of religion, of small account. That can be no lawful union which lays all stress on mere external unification, and little on the scriptural terms which enable the contracting parties to unite, or which magnifies love and concord at the expense of truth. True union can be based only on the fact that full exercise is secured for the expression of every conscientious conviction.” Here he seems to allude, perhaps unconsciously, to a memorable saying of Samuel Rutherford: “Give not an hair-breadth of truth away; for it is not yours, but God’s”.

To allege that divine truth can be abandoned for any ulterior object, however desirable, is in the last degree presumptuous. Divine truth is not ours; and when it has been publicly confessed, it cannot be dropped at the demand of any body of men, however distinguished. There is nothing in Scripture to lend the slightest countenance to the idea that we may recede from any single truth. We have to act the part of faithful stewards.

Smeaton’s principle on this point could be summarised pithily as follows: “so long as there is not unity of the spirit in doctrine and confession – so long there is a warrantable separation”. It was on this same basis that Rev Neil Cameron and others sorrowfully resisted agitations for union by others that refused to remove evident obstacles but rather required compromise on matters of principle and truth. Indeed, in the booklet written to counter a pamphlet published by Rev J R Mackay in 1918, he quoted from Smeaton’s tract.

Conclusion. Smeaton states his “firm conviction” that the negotiations between the Free Church and United Presbyterians could not “constitutionally be carried out” and, if forced through, would be “a great sin”, especially if it rode roughshod over the consciences of the minority who opposed union. It would be schismatic to change the constitution in this way. This is frequently the irony of unions that sacrifice truth; they only increase and enact schism by not achieving union on scriptural grounds. The protracted negotiations of the 1860s were already fomenting extreme division within the Free Church – another sad result of adopting such methods in this process. We can conclude with Smeaton’s closing solemn warning of the collateral damage from union agitations:

“The highest interests of the Church must of necessity suffer. Men’s minds are chafed. Godly ministers, conscientiously taking opposite sides, already view each other with suspicion. Happy would it be if the Church, liberated from these distracting disputes, were set free to do her proper work in the land. By a prolongation of a harassing internal warfare, the disputants may bring down the frown of the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, and grieve His Spirit from the Church.”

While schism is a great evil and scriptural uncompromised union is greatly to be desired, Smeaton's alarm still needs to be heard today because, wherever there is movement towards union, the temptation to pursue it in the wrong way and for the wrong reasons is very strong indeed. The temptation needs to be recognised in order to be resisted.

Book Reviews¹

Silent Witnesses, Lessons on Theology, Life and the Church From Christians of the Past, by Garry J Williams, published by the Banner of Truth Trust, hardback, 258 pages, £14.50.

Garry J Williams is the Director of the John Owen Centre at the London Theological Seminary. In the acknowledgements he states that the chapters of this book originated in talks that he gave over a period of 13 years at various conferences around the United Kingdom. The list of conferences at which the papers were given includes the Westminster Conference and those associated with the Banner of Truth Trust, the Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches, the Evangelical Movement of Wales and the Protestant Truth Society. *Silent Witnesses* contains 14 papers along with a preface and a prologue which helpfully advocate the need for a distinctly Christian approach to history.

The book is divided into three sections. The first is titled, "On the Essentials", and includes six chapters dealing with William Tyndale and the Bible, the Council of Chalcedon's discussions on the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, Jonathan Edwards on the infinite love of the dying Christ, John Owen and the atonement, Augustine and the grace of God, and John Calvin on justification.

The second section, "On the Christian Life", has four chapters, the first of which deals with the Puritan view of loving God with all your heart. The second is a quite outstanding chapter and outlines the experience of John Calvin on trusting God in the midst of trials. The remaining two chapters of this section deal with Anne Bradstreet, a New England poetess, and John Laing, a Brethren businessman, and seem a little out of place in a book dealing with men like Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Tyndale, Ridley and Edwards. However, the chapter on Laing, who built up a small family firm into one of the UK's largest construction companies, is most instructive. Amidst these activities he retained his Christian business principles of diligence and hard work along with his sacrificial giving to advance the cause of Christ.

¹The titles reviewed here can be obtained from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom.

The third section is given the title, “Primarily for Pastors and Elders”, and contains the final four main chapters. The first deals with Calvin’s assessment of the Church’s priorities. This is followed by two chapters on preaching and a final and most useful one on Nicholas Ridley, the Protestant martyr, and his scholarly opposition to transubstantiation.

The book contains many very helpful insights and abiding lessons from the historical narratives with which Dr Williams deals and as such our readers would benefit from the perusal of this volume. The reviewer cannot approve, however, of all the views Dr Williams expresses, and as Free Presbyterians we regret his use of a modern version of the Bible – the English Standard Version. This is all the more lamentable considering his high praise of William Tyndale and his observation that nine-tenths of his translation of the Bible is retained in the Authorised Version (p 5). Sadly the use of modern versions of Scripture is now not an uncommon feature of many books published by the Banner of Truth Trust.

Neither can Free Presbyterians approve of Dr Williams’ advocacy of hymns in worship (p 110) and his use of the term “lucky” (p xiii), nor illustrating his opposition to defective views on the immutability and impassibility of God by an incident in a film (p 183). The day has not long passed when serious Evangelicals, not to speak of experimental Calvinists, regarded the watching of films as worldliness incompatible with a profession of Christ.

Roy Middleton

The Faith-Shaped Life, by Ian Hamilton, published by the Banner of Truth Trust, paperback, 156 pages, £5.50.

In 43 short chapters, the author seeks to present to believers the life of faith in its varied aspects and relationships. “Not only is faith the instrument that unites us to Christ,” he writes, “it is the reality that shapes how we live in union with Christ.” Chapter titles include: “Faith’s Highest Privilege” (communion with God), “Faith, the Protestant Watchword” and “Faith’s Present Experience” (continuing sinfulness). Chapters such as “Faith and Christian Unity” would be best read in the light of the article on Christian unity which begins on page 21 in this issue. The book presents much useful material but we would have welcomed the use of the AV rather than the ESV.

Protestant View

The Pope Entrusts the World to Mary

While it seems that the new Pope, Jorge Bergoglio, intends to mark his pontificate by effecting reforms, one thing he will not reform is his mariol-

atry. We need not expect it when the Roman Catholic *Catechism* teaches: “The Church’s devotion to the Blessed Virgin is intrinsic to Christian worship”. It will be remembered that, on his first morning as Pope, he prayed before the image of Mary at the principal Marian shrine in Rome.

On October 13 he went further when he formally entrusted the whole world to Mary in the presence of a gathering of more than 100 000 in St Peter’s Square. He did so before a statue of Mary which had been transported from Portugal to the Vatican by an Italian Air Force helicopter the previous day. In concluding an address he said, “We thank you for our faith, and we renew our entrustment to you, Mother of our faith”. He also prayed, “We are certain that . . . nothing of all that lives in our hearts is unknown to you. . . . Guard our lives in your arms.”

Only to God, who is omnipotent and omniscient, can we so entrust ourselves – let alone others, or the world – and only to the divine Giver can thanks be rendered for faith, which is “the gift of God”. To present such petitions and thanks to a finite person, albeit in heaven as to her soul, is nothing short of blasphemous. As to the world, it is already under the constant dominion of the King of kings, however much His enemies exert their power. “The earth belongs unto the Lord, / and all that it contains; / the world that is inhabited, / and all that there remains” (Ps 24:1 metrical). And He shall reign until His enemies be made His footstool. NMR

Notes and Comments

Debate in Parliament on Persecution of Christians

It is encouraging that the House of Commons has debated the persecution of Christians worldwide. In introducing a motion on behalf of the Democratic Unionist Party, MP Jim Shannon said that “100 000 Christians will be massacred this year because of their beliefs, and 200 million will be persecuted due to their faith”. The motion called on the Government to do more through foreign policy and aid work to support Christians.

In giving many well-informed examples of persecution in numerous countries, Mr Shannon said, “In Africa, due to Islamic extremism, the persecution of Christians has increased significantly in 2012 and 2013, most notably in Mali, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Niger. Sharia family courts have been introduced, which ignore Christians and their beliefs. The north of Mali is similar to Saudi Arabia in that Christians are simply no longer allowed there or to practise their beliefs. In the Maldives, one cannot read one’s Bible; indeed, people are not allowed to have one.”

Although a very broad definition of Christians was used, the House was informed “that the persecution of Christians is increasing, that one Christian is killed around every 11 minutes around the world, and that Christianity is the ‘most persecuted religion globally’”. MP Nigel Dodds said that the “persecution of Christians is not new” but that it is “staggering” how many Christians are killed today. It was vexing that the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, in responding to the motion, deflected attention from the seriousness of the situation for Christians by referring several times to people of other religions being persecuted – and this despite the debate being specifically on the Persecution of Christians.

The motion was passed, but it remains to be seen if the Government will give substantive help to persecuted Christians when it is generally so dismissive of Christianity. However, the debate is a call to us to “remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them” (Heb 13:3), and to pray for those who are “persecuted for righteousness’ sake” (Mt 5:10). *NMR*

Abortion Clinic Closures and Drop in Teenage Pregnancies

It is heartening that, from 1994 to 2010, the teenage pregnancy rate dropped by almost half in 16 of the 26 counties of the Panhandle region of Texas, according to Texas government figures. The principal reason is that, during that period, the 19 abortion clinics of American Planned Parenthood in these 16 counties ceased operating, due to strong opposition from communities and the promotion of abstinence among teenagers.

The agenda of Planned Parenthood, says one pro-life organisation, is to promote promiscuity “but that resultant pregnancies are to be avoided or eliminated at all cost”. Business is thus generated for their abortion clinics. It is estimated that in 2011, abortions accounted for 57% of the income of American Planned Parenthood’s clinics nationwide.

Small wonder that “abstinence before marriage and faithfulness within marriage” – the essence of the advice given to young people by pro-family groups and various churches – is detested and scorned by the Planned Parenthood Federation, which has much to answer for in promoting sexual immorality and undermining proper parenthood. How solemn were the divine words pronounced on those who “made Israel to sin”! *NMR*

Right to Refuse to Work on Sabbath Upheld

Many Christians will be glad to know that the Court of Appeal in London has recognised the right of Christians to observe the Christian Sabbath as a day of rest. The court ruled in the case of a Miss Mba, who was pressurised to work on the Lord’s Day but refused. When her employers refused

her offer to “take unpopular shifts and work anti-socials” instead, she had to resign.

An employment tribunal found against her, arguing that, “because not all Christians observe Sunday as a day of rest, it could not be considered a core component of the Christian faith”. The Court of Appeal, however, found “that Sunday observance is an important part of the worship and practices of many millions of Christians, and cannot therefore be simply dismissed”.

The Christian Legal Centre said, “We pray that the tide is turning. Many Christians will now be able to argue that their employer must respect their rights of Sabbath worship.” May it indeed be so. “The Lord saith . . . Them that honour Me I will honour” (1 Sam 2:30). *NMR*

A “Church” for Atheists

Richard Dawkins and other atheists are well known for their vociferous attacks on Christians. He cannot tolerate theism in any form; his lifework seems to be one continuous campaign to eradicate the concept from people’s minds. Possibly the last place where this man would want to be found is in a church. Yet strangely, within the last few months, we have heard of those who, equally as atheistic as Dawkins, have set up a “church” for atheists in several parts of the world. There is no end to the schemes that Satan uses to deceive souls for eternity and here is another: a “church” without God, a place of “worship” for the faithless.

British comedians, Sanderson Jones and Pippa Evans founded the so-called godless “church” last January in Islington, London, when about 200 people gathered. They wanted a forum where “non-religious folks” could “commune and edify” one another. The “church”, called the “Sunday Assembly”, has been “championed as a chance for disillusioned former believers, nostalgic atheists and anybody searching for a sense of community, to meet and turn good intentions into actions”. At their first meeting the “congregation” focused on “beginnings”, discussing how success can be achieved by letting past failures go. How solemn! No God, no Saviour, and no confession of past failures to the God against whom we all have sinned.

Jones reveals his fearful ignorance when he states that he went to a church six years previously and “there was so much about it that I loved. . . . It’s a shame because, at the heart of it, it’s something I don’t believe in. If you think about church, there is very little that is bad. It is singing awesome songs, hearing interesting talks, thinking about improving yourself and helping other people and doing that in a community with wonderful relationships. What part of this is not to like?” He wants “the best things”

from public worship “without the one thing I am uncomfortable with . . . the religious part”.

A typical gathering led by the duo would have Evans enter the assembly, with a band playing a pop song. People sit clapping; more songs are sung; there are readings, discussions, reflections with periods of silence, and then comes the “sermon” on some scientific topic such as quantum physics or the origins of the universe. Money is gathered in collection bags before talks are given on gratitude and helping one’s neighbour. One particularly sacrilegious meeting had a poem read while a cup of wine was passed around the “congregation”. This was followed by a talk on “the fruits of the vine”. We should tremble at the God-provoking depths of such profanity.

Such blasphemous confusion has spread across North America and beyond. The comedians have embarked on a tour called “40 days, 40 nights” raising money to build churches so that godless Americans can become “churchgoers”. In Los Angeles last November, 400 people gathered at an inaugural assembly. Similar gatherings have taken place across Canada and Australia and are growing weekly into “large churches”. The idea is to use “spiritual” language without God. In this “day of blasphemy and rebuke” atheism has become a pseudo-religion.

Jones and Evans sum up their aims on their website: “The Sunday Assembly is a godless congregation that celebrates life. Our mottos are: live better, help often, and wonder more. Our mission is to help everyone find and fulfil their full potential. Our vision is a godless congregation in every town, city and village that wants one.”

Long ago the inspired psalmist spoke of such people: “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God” (Ps 14:1). However, Paul wrote to the Philippians of the fact “that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . . and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil 2:10,11). How good if these spiritually-blind men and women, and indeed all of us, would bow the knee whilst still on mercy’s ground, and come to believe that God “is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him” (Heb 11:6). KHM

Two Kingdoms

A writer in *The Herald*, commenting on the case of Mr and Mrs Bull (who were ordered to pay £3600 in damages to a homosexual couple for refusing to allow them to share a double room in their guest house), said that watching their case being appealed to the Supreme Court was “like watching two worlds colliding—the sceptical, confident, secular modern world where widely supported societal values are asserted by Supreme Court judges, and the

increasingly weak and marginalised faith-based world of old in which a higher authority holds sway. It was obvious which would win.”

To the *Herald* writer, it was obvious that the “secular modern world” was more powerful and was going to win. But to the Christian, who takes a longer view – surveying the whole history of the world – and a higher view, incorporating not only earth but heaven, it is equally obvious that the apparently “weak and marginalised” kingdom of Christ will prevail, and that the “sceptical, confident, secular” kingdom of Satan will be destroyed. It was interesting that the journalist was constrained to speak in these terms, although she came to the wrong conclusion. “Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth” (Dan 2:35). DWBS

Continuing Declension in the Free Church

The Kiltarlity Free Church website announces, unashamedly, a carol service and a carol-singing outing in the village. Perhaps these unbiblical activities, though recently introduced, are now not uncommon in the Free Church. Error tends to spread, and “a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (1 Cor 5:6). More surprising, however, was the announcement on the website that a woman in the congregation had been baptised by immersion in the River Beauy under the supervision of a local Baptist pastor. This, it seems, was the way of welcoming her into Kiltarlity Free Church. Furthermore the website virtually conceded the position that baptism by immersion was original: “It is amazing to think that the first missionaries who came to Kiltarlity so long ago probably baptised the first Christians in Kiltarlity in the river”. These happenings were endorsed by the Free Church website, so there seems to be little prospect of restraint or discipline from the wider Church.

Baptism by immersion is allowed by *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, but there is no necessity for great quantities of water to be used in this sacrament, nor for the ostentation of going out into the middle of a river. We are reminded of the thoughts of Neil Macmichael, quoted by Principal John Macleod, on the fathers being baptised into Moses in the cloud and in the sea (1 Cor 10:2). “1. The Israelites were baptised, both adults and infants; for the apostle declares it. 2. They were not immersed, a fact which Moses and other inspired writers testify. 3. The Egyptians who pursued them were immersed. 4. The Israelites had baptism without immersion, and the Egyptians had immersion without baptism. 5. The baptism of the Israelites was salvation,

and the immersion of the Egyptians was drowning.” Since the Reformation, baptism in the Reformed Church of Scotland has been “rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water on the person”, and this is the practice that should be maintained.

DWBS

Church Information

Meetings of Presbytery (DV)

Northern: At Dingwall, on Tuesday, January 7, at 2 pm.

Australia & New Zealand: At Auckland, Friday, January 24, at 9.30 am.

Southern: At Glasgow, on Tuesday, February 25, at 3 pm.

Western: At Lochcarron, on Tuesday, March 4, at 11.30 am.

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

Zimbabwe: At Bulawayo, on Tuesday, March 11, at 11 am.

Mr Ken van Kralingen

This elder of long standing in the Auckland congregation passed away on November 18. We send our sympathy to all his relatives.

Acknowledgement of Donations

The General Treasurer acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:

College & Library Fund: M Cameron, £25.

Jewish & Foreign Missions Fund: Anon, £420; Anon, for Thembiso Children’s Home, £200.

Legacy Reserve Fund: Estate of late Mrs C MacInnes, £400.

Congregational Treasurers acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:

Duirinish: Glendale Friends, £100 per RAC.

Fort William: Mrs Buchanan, £20 per AHW. *Communion Expenses:* Anon, £40.

Glasgow: Anon, £30, £30, £20; Mr MacDonald, £5000. *Bus Fund:* Anon, £20, £10, £40, £100, £20, £15, £5, £20, £20, £30, £10. *Eastern Europe Fund:* Anon, £60, £60, £60, £60, £60, £60, £60, £15, £60, £25, £10, £60, £60, £70, £50. *Jewish & Foreign Missions Fund:* Anon, £30. *TBS:* Anon, £250.

Greenock: *Bus Fund:* Anon, £20. *Jewish & Foreign Missions Fund:* Anon, £20, £10, £10, £20, £10, £10, £95, £10, £20, £10, £10. *TBS:* Anon, £10, £35, £35, £10, £20, £30. *Where Most Needed:* Anon, £10, £10, £35, £10, £60, £10.

Lochbroom: Friend, Elgin, £30.

Ness: Estate of late Miss Ishbel MacDonald, £1000; Estate of late Miss Janet Morrison, £27 589.96; Friend, £20. *Communion Expenses:* Friend, £20; Anon, £120, £20; Friends, Northern Ireland, £50 per Rev AWMC.

North Harris: Friend, North Uist, £40 per Rev JBJ.

North Tolsta: A G Munro, £50. *Door Collection:* Mrs Morrison, Southview, £20. *Communion Expenses:* Anon, £20, £40, £20; Mrs MacLeod, 10 New Tolsta, £40.

Staffin: *Manse Fund:* Anon, £50.

Sydney: *Manse Extension Fund:* Anon, \$400 per GBM; Anon, £5000, £10 000, £100; Anon, Ps 60:4, £100 per WC.

FREE PRESBYTERIAN PLACES OF WORSHIP

Scotland

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

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

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, 10 Achary Rd, Dingwall, IV15 9JB; tel/fax: 01349 864351, e-mail: nmross2001@yahoo.co.uk.

Dornoch: Sabbath 11.30 am. Manse tel: 01862 810615. **Bonar:** Sabbath 6 pm. Wednesday 7.30 pm (alternately in Dornoch and Bonar). **Lairg:** Church and Manse; **Rogart:** Church; no F P services. Contact Rev G G Hutton; tel: 01463 712872.

Dundee: Manse. No F P Church services.

Edinburgh: 63 Gilmore Place, Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Thursday 7.30 pm. Rev D Campbell, 35B Barnton Avenue West, Edinburgh EH4 6DF; tel: 0131 312 8227.

Farr (by Daviot); Sabbath 12 noon. **Tomatin:** Sabbath 12 noon. **Stratherrick:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm. (Each of these services is held once in three weeks as intimated). **Farr:** Thursday 7.30 pm (weekly). 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. **Sheilebost:** Sabbath 12 noon (except first Sabbath of month). Prayer meetings in **Leverburgh, Sheilebost, Strond** and **Geocrab** as intimated. Rev K D Macleod BSc, F P Manse, Leverburgh, HS5 3UA; tel: 01859 520271.

Inverness: Chapel Street, Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Rev G G Hutton BA, 11 Auldcastle Road, Inverness, 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. Manse tel: 01851 890325. Contact Rev J R Tallach; tel: 01851 702501.

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 9HY; 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. Contact Rev J R Tallach; tel: 01851 702501.

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 Gatley. **South Manchester:** Sabbath 6.00 pm, in Trinity Church, Massie Street, Cheadle (entry at rear of building). Rev K M Watkins, 1 North Street, Barnoldswick, BB18 5PE; tel: 01282 850296.

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, 5222 Kendal Glen Court, Rosharon, Texas 77583; tel: 409 927 1564.

Australia

Grafton, NSW: 172 Fitzroy Street. Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Contact Rev G B Macdonald; tel. 02 9627 3408.

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:sydneypchurch@aapt.net.au.

New Zealand

Auckland: 45 Church Street, Otahuhu, Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Rev J D Smith, 9 Pedlar Place, Conifer Grove, Auckland; tel: 09 282 4195.

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

Tauranga: Girl Guide Hall, 17th Avenue, Sabbath 11 am, 7 pm; Thursday 7 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 5.30 pm; Beacons International College campus, 1A Short Street, Level 2, Room L2---A, Singapore 188210; Wednesday: 7.45 pm, #03-04A, SCN Industrial Building, 11 Sims Drive, Singapore 387385. 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, e-mail: skhumalo.byo@gmail.com.

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

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

New Canaan: Church.

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

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