

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

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

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

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

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

September: First Sabbath: Chesley, 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; **Fifth:** Chiedza.

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

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Abundance of Grace

The doctrine of sin is fundamental to any scriptural understanding of life in this fallen world. But where there is sin, there is death – and not only the separation of soul from body at the end of our time in this world. Charles Hodge, in his doctrinal remarks on the last part of Romans 5, explains that “the term *death* is used for any and every evil judicially inflicted as the punishment of sin”.¹ It includes spiritual death – the total lack of spiritual life – which is to be discerned in the absence of spiritual activities, such as faith, repentance, and love to God, to His cause, to other believers, and to holiness. It also includes eternal death, which is the final, permanent separation of the unbelieving sinner from God and from all conceivable blessings, even in the smallest degree.

In Romans 5:17, Paul comes to the third in a series of contrasts; the first part of it is: “If by one man’s offence death reigned by one”. It is not that death has merely impinged on human life – interfering minimally with our relationship to God, our relationship to other human beings, and our own welfare in time and in eternity. No, it has *reigned*; so that “there is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God” (Rom 3:10,11). It reigns over all of humanity, and its reign over every individual is total. Except by divine power, it is impossible to escape from the dominion of death.

But the other part of the contrast is this: “much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ”. Here is good news, even for those over whom death is reigning: they may be saved from death, and from the sin which is its cause. Indeed, they may receive an abundance of grace, which is God’s kindness to the unworthy. If only sinners will receive it by faith in Jesus Christ, this abundance of grace will be theirs. No matter how sinful they have been, no matter how dead they feel spiritually, no matter how ignorant they are, an abundance of grace is set before sinners in the gospel.

Consider the greatness of the One who came to provide salvation for

¹Hodge, *A Commentary on Romans*, Banner of Truth reprint, 1983, p 184.

sinners. He is the eternal Son of God. He finished the work that was given Him to do; He suffered the full punishment for the sins of all whom He was representing; He kept the law of God perfectly, in their place. And we can be sure that His work was accepted by God the Father, because on the third day He was raised from the dead; death could not hold Him.

Thus it should be clear that the salvation Christ worked out is a great salvation; there is abundance of grace for all who will trust in Him. Satan and unbelief in the person's soul may combine to focus attention on the greatness of their sin, but no matter how great anyone's sin is, the abundance of grace makes forgiveness possible even for the greatest of sinners. We cannot earn it; it is a free gift. Who can earn what is of infinite value?

Whatever other spiritual needs people may be conscious of, they can be supplied, and supplied fully because this grace is abundant. The stream of God's grace can never run dry; it can never be exhausted. When, through abundant grace, Legion – who was possessed by many devils and was a danger to himself and to others – was delivered by Jesus, he could be seen “sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind”. But every sinner has a polluted nature. That is why outwardly-moral sinners reject Christ and His salvation: there is enmity to God and His Son in their polluted hearts. It is only because God's grace is so abundant that it is possible for the sin of rejecting Christ, and every other sin, to be forgiven. All sinners need to be delivered from spiritual death and transformed by the abundant grace of the Holy Spirit so that they are made alive and are given a right mind – a mind which receives the whole revelation of the Word of God as true, authoritative and in every way relevant.

So Paul, looking back on his conversion, acknowledged that “the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant” (1 Tim 1:14). This was true when the Saviour met him as a persecutor on his way to Damascus, and this grace was abundant till the end of the Apostle's life. So it is with all God's children; His grace is abundant in bringing them into the narrow way, and it continues to be abundant until they are brought to heaven – whether or not they are always properly conscious of that abundance. Because God is so gracious, they can be sure that He “shall supply all [their] need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Phil 4:19). The “riches in glory” are the treasures of blessing that He is distributing from His throne in heaven, in the abundance of His grace.

So, if believers are oppressed by indwelling sin and a corrupt, untrusting heart, let them realise that these needs can be supplied through that abundant grace, from Christ's treasures of blessing. Let them receive, by faith, the supply of their needs from the provision that has been made for all God's

children – a provision for indwelling sin to be subdued and so that temptation may be resisted. God has not willed that the power of sin should be removed in an instant – not until the soul parts from the body at death – but He assures all His children that, in His abundant grace, provision has been made for their continuing sanctification. Again, they will always be vulnerable to temptation while they continue in this world, but let them look to the Lord, pleading that, graciously, He “would either keep [them] from being tempted to sin, or support and deliver [them] when [they] are tempted”.²

Peter, when he denied his Master, was not the first or the last to fall into serious sin. But even then God’s grace towards him was abundant; his suffering Master looked on him, and it was a look that brought him to repentance. Besides, there was his Master’s intercession, as He had told Peter when he was utterly unwilling to accept that he was in danger of falling: “I have prayed for thee”. Abundant grace is still being exercised today in reclaiming backsliders and in making intercession for them and for all God’s children, as the Mediator presents the merits of His finished work before His Father. How clearly the abundance of God’s grace is illustrated in Paul’s words: “Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 8:38,39)!

God’s children may be stumbled by the call to “grow in grace”, when they feel they are too weak to make any progress in the Christian life. But they never will make any progress if they look only to themselves; they must look to the One who has procured for them an abundance of grace. Yes, they must make use of the means of grace; in particular, they must grow also in knowledge. But obedience to the call to “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pet 3:18) can only come through the gracious work of the Holy Spirit in the soul.

Whatever trouble or difficulty, spiritual and temporal, that believers may experience on their way through this world, let them remember the abounding grace of Him who loved them and gave Himself for them. God’s assurance to the Israelites was: “The Lord thy God, He it is that doth go with thee; He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee” (Deut 31:6); their God would bring them safely through the Jordan and into the promised land. So God assures all His spiritual Israel that He will go with them; He will never leave them, but will bring them safely through this world and on to eternal life at last. It is certainly not what they – sinners that they are – deserve, but it is what they will receive, for Christ’s sake, through the abundance of divine grace.

²*The Shorter Catechism*, answer 106.

To Be With Christ¹

A Sermon by R M M'Cheyne

Philippians 1:23. *I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.*

It is a happy thing to live, to breathe the fresh air of heaven, to move from place to place, to see and hear. But the Bible says that to be in Christ is better than life. "In Thy favour is life, and Thy loving-kindness is better than life." To be converted by the Spirit of God, to be convinced of sin and of righteousness, to be led to a hearty, saving acceptance of Christ, as my all-sufficient Saviour, is better than life. Indeed, I am quite sure that those of you who have been thus converted are feeling at this moment that this life of the soul is better and more pleasant than even natural life – that the light of God's countenance is far sweeter than the light of the sun, that the saving health of His countenance gives more joy than the joyous current of health and life that bounds through youthful veins. Yes, brethren, you never knew what life was till you could say, "Christ liveth in me". But the words before me point us to greater things than these. To live is good and happy. To be *in Christ* is better than life. But to be *with Christ* is far better than all.

The words of my text are much more expressive in the original than they are in our English translation. Indeed, they are so full of meaning that it is impossible to translate them perfectly. The word here rendered, *I am in a strait*, is the same as Christ uses when he says, "I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I *straitened* till it be accomplished". It implies great anxiety of mind: not a sudden overwhelming anxiety, but an abiding anxiety ever pressing on the mind. The word rendered *desire* is the same which Christ uses when He says, "With *desire* have I desired to eat this passover with you", and indicates an intense desire of the mind. The word rendered *to depart* signifies to be unloosed, like a vessel set loose from its moorings. The words rendered *far better* would, if translated literally, be *by much more better*. To depart to be with Christ appeared so excellent to Paul that he heaped up more words than our language can hold in order to express it: I am continually in a strait betwixt two, having an earnest desire to depart – to be unmoored from the shores of this world – and to be with Christ, which is much better, aye, far better.

The *doctrine* taught by the passage is: To be *with Christ* is far better than to be *in Christ*.

To be with Christ is far better than to be in Christ, *because then we shall never have any doubts about our salvation*. When God brings a man out of

¹Another sermon taken, with editing, from *Revival Truth*.

the horrible pit and miry clay, and sets his feet upon a rock, he is safe for eternity. When a sinner, under a sense of the awfulness of his natural condition, closes with Christ as the Saviour of lost sinners, he becomes a member of Christ's body; he is therefore as sure to be saved as if he was already sitting on the throne with Christ.

When the sinner feels that his feet are on a rock and has a sense of being accepted in the Beloved, this sense of safety is what is called the rest or peace of believing. It is a calm feeling poured over the anxious breast, a sense that God's anger is all turned away, a feeling that all past sins are cast behind God's back – buried in the depths of the sea. Though the believer's safety never changes, yet his sense of safety very much changes. When he is once founded on Christ, the only foundation stone, he never can be shaken off; but he may often lose all sense of being safe. When once a member of Christ's body, he can never be torn off, yet he may, for a time and through sin, lose all feeling of being a member. He may become so cold that he altogether doubts whether he is, or ever was, a saved person. As long as we are in this world, there are many things to obscure the peace of believing.

When the believer falls into some *open sin*, by so doing he brings guilt on his conscience. He begins to hear the condemning voice of the law. A cloud seems to intercept his view of the Saviour. If he falls into sin he should fall from all sense of safety; it would be a calamity to feel safe while in a back-sliding condition.

Suppose he is betrayed into *worldly company* and there hears nothing but worldly conversation. All around him are thinking what they shall eat and what they shall drink. The name of the Saviour is not once mentioned. To introduce it would be like bringing in a poisonous serpent, from which everyone would shrink back with horror. The believer sits silent and is half ashamed of Christ. He is ashamed to show he is a Christian. And when he comes home at night, is it a wonder if prayer and the Word are distasteful to him and he has lost all sense of safety?

Suppose the believer *wearies in well-doing* and thus also loses his sense of safety. Once he put his hand to the plough in every good work, but now he draws it back. He grows weary of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and visiting the sick and those in prison. The work has turned burdensome; he has wearied of it. The poor have been ungrateful, or his time is too much occupied; on some such pretence, Christ's service is neglected, and darkness is the consequence. He begins to doubt his safety, and well he may.

The *approach of death* often clouds the view of Christ. Pain is often dreadful; the mind is often taken up with it; so the eye is lifted away from Christ and the dark valley becomes very dark. Clouds and darkness rest upon

it. Often the believer who rejoiced all his life has a long night of darkness on his deathbed – much doubt and perplexity. And though the everlasting arms are underneath him, yet he has no full sense of his safety.

But to depart and be with Christ is to be *freed from all these doubts* and all obscuring of the Sun of righteousness; therefore it is far better. When the soul of the believer has left its body, it finds itself in the arms of the angels. These angels rejoiced when he was born again into the world of grace; now they rejoice when he is born a third time, into the world of glory, for at death the souls of believers do immediately pass into glory. No sooner do they leave the body than they are with Christ, where they are not only safe – for they are no safer than they were – but their *sense* of safety is now complete. It shall never be clouded any more. Not another doubt shall ever darken their joy, nor another fear disturb their perfect peace.

No more shall that soul fall into sin and *lose his sense of pardon and acceptance*. No more shall he mix with worldly company, for nothing that defiles can enter heaven. The name of the Saviour shall gladden every feast of love and joy. The praise of the Saviour shall be the only melody; no more shall worldly friends and worldly talk darken his sense of acceptance. No more shall he weary in well-doing, for those before the throne serve God day and night in His temple. No more shall sloth creep over the soul; no more shall vain excuses prevent deeds of love. No more shall unchristian coldness take away the sense of safety. No more shall God take away the light of His countenance. He shall be with Christ, admitted to closest fellowship, always in sight of the Lamb that was slain, “for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and lead them unto living fountains of waters”.

Often the believer wept on earth because Christ had withdrawn from him, but now God shall wipe all tears from his eyes. No more shall the pangs of a dissolving body take up his thoughts; no more shall clouds obscure the face of the Saviour. He is with Christ, and his sense of safety is complete. He sees the hell from which he is delivered. He feels the heaven into which he is brought, and he is filled with an unvarying sense of safety. Like some spent swimmer to whom a rope is thrown, he is safe as soon as he has tied it around him. He may have a lively sense of safety even in the waves, but his sense of safety is only complete when he is brought ashore safely and looks on the sea from which he has been saved. Just so when a poor sinner, spent with vain struggles to save himself, at length submits to be saved by Christ, he is safe for eternity. He may have a real sense of safety even amid the billows of this world’s trials, but it is only when he is brought ashore, to be with Christ, and looks on the hell from which he has been saved that his sense of safety is complete. It shall never be darkened any more.

Believer, the joys of faith are sweet beyond expression! “Though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.” But what shall the joys of sight be, when we are with Christ and shall see Him as He is, when we feel we have reached the shore, when we see the King in His beauty, and we are put in possession of the land that is very far off? It is far better to be with Christ! Why then cling to the world as if it were your all? Why tie yourselves to riches, houses and friends? Even in the brightest sunshine of this world, when friends are dearest and all things go most smoothly, if you are taught of God you will say, To be with Christ is far better. The more doubts you have, feeble believer, so much the more let thoughts of departing be pleasant unto you, for there are no doubts yonder.

It is far better to be with Christ, for then we shall *be like Him in holiness*. When a sinner flees to Christ, he has been born again by the Holy Ghost; a new life has begun in his soul which shall never end. A spark has been lighted that shall never be quenched. The seed is sown and there shall yet “be a harvest. The Spirit has come to his soul and will never wholly leave it. He who “hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ”. But as long as the believer is in this world, there are many things to retard the progress of this life of holiness.

There is *a body of sin and death*. The believer is quite different from the world. He hates all sin, strives against all sin, prays against all sin; yet he has a body of sin and death. Sin does not reign in him as a king; yet it dwells in him as a hated guest. This is what most keeps back the life of holiness. The world is full of temptation suited to his natural heart. He cannot go into any company but he will meet with something drawing him to sin. The believer may have wicked acquaintances, who side with the evil part of his nature and try to draw him into complying with the world. Besides, his old habits return upon him again and again. Before he was a believer he followed in some path of sensuality, covetousness or passion, and now he will at times experience almost irresistible impulses to go back to his old courses.

Above all, *Satan*, the accuser of the brethren, *tries to beguile him* from the simplicity that is in Christ. He knows that there is but one way in which a believer can walk holily – by abiding in Christ. Then Christ will abide in him, and he will bear much fruit. Therefore, Satan directs all his energies against this. In this way, most of all, Satan tries to keep down the life of holiness. But when we depart and are with Christ, all these hindrances shall drop off; therefore it is far better to depart.

The believer at death is *made perfect in holiness*. Nothing that defiles can enter paradise, nothing that loves a lie. The body of sin and death has been laid in the grave. No more does the believer cry out, “O wretched man that

I am, who shall deliver me?" The world is left behind, with its busy hum, its fascinating company and pleasures of sin. The dead ear cannot hear its siren melody; the glazed eye cannot see its vain show; and the spirit is safe with Christ. Wicked companions are all left behind; their jests are heard no more. No more does friendship tempt to sin. There are no wicked companions with Christ. Old habits are put off for ever. No fear now of returning to old ways of sin. His heart is now perfect in holiness. He is led by the Lamb to living fountains of water. And Satan, his great enemy, the prince of the power of the air, cannot reach him now. But to be with Christ is to be above the air, in paradise. Satan cannot enter this paradise. "There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination."

Not only shall the soul be freed from all that would draw it to sin, but *everything there shall incite to holiness*. In this world, almost everything we see or hear or handle may lead the soul to sin. In that world everything leads the soul to holiness. We shall see Christ. We shall see God. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." But how can we see His loveliness without loving Him? How can we love Him without serving Him? If we love Him, we will keep His commandments. Professed believer in Christ, do you love holiness? If not, you are no believer. Do you long after holiness and pray for it? Do you groan under sin, wearied to be rid of it? To be with Christ is to be rid of it for ever. How plain then that it is better to depart and to be with Christ!

Why then will any of you cling to this world, as if it were your all? Why will you labour to be rich and pierce yourselves through with many sorrows? And why are you so afraid of death? Why do you shudder at the very word? It is a dark avenue, but it opens into the world of holiness and never-ending life. To depart and be with Christ is far better.

It is better to be with Christ, for there will be *no more tribulation*. When a sinner flees to Christ, he is pardoned, justified, has peace and rejoices in God his Saviour. He is also enabled to glory in tribulations. The God of providence is his Father; so he will not fear what man can do unto him. He has the ordinary troubles of other men: pains, losses and bereavements; but he feels that a Father's hand administers every cup of suffering. He has troubles which other men do not – persecutions and hatred from the world – yet he has joy here too, for he knows that God is able to shut the lions' mouths. Still this world is a world of sorrow to the believer. This fact cannot be concealed. The Bridegroom is not here. But to be with Christ is to be free from all tribulation and therefore far better.

When Christ ascended to His Father, He bade farewell to sin and sorrow for ever. No more will He bear the pains of hunger in the wilderness; no

more will He sit down wearied by the well of Sychar; no more will He sleep for weariness in a boat; no more will He bear the pain of false friends; no more will He bear the kiss of the betrayer; no more will He feel the pains of His pierced hands and feet; no more will He feel the shame of the cross; no more will He say, My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of My bowels; no more will He bow His head in dying agony. All His pains are past; His is now a glorious body. His raiment is white as the light, and His face is as the sun shining in its strength.

If you are members of Christ's body, you too shall be *free from tribulation, sin and suffering* when you die. You shall bid farewell to sin and sorrow for ever. Now you may be often hungry and thirsty, often faint and weary toiling in the sun. But then you shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on you nor any heat. In this world you may have much tribulation, but at death you shall come out of it and serve Him day and night in His temple. Here the world may scorn you and point the finger, but with Christ you shall be free from it all. Is it not far better to depart and be with Him?

It is better to be with Christ, for then we shall *praise God more heartily*. When a sinner is first brought to cleave to Christ, he praises God heartily for the first time. Unconverted men may join in singing "psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs," but they never praise God from the heart. Often the first words of a sinner brought to Christ are praise. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name."

Nothing gives more joy to a true believer than to praise God. The singing of psalms of praise has always abounded most in the best times of the Church. Hence it may clearly be seen how small the company of believers is in our day, when there is so little singing of psalms in families and so few join heartily in the praise in church. But the believer cannot always praise in this world. He is often afflicted, and even if he is merry and sings psalms, yet how cold are his praises compared with what might be expected! How little proportioned to the glory of Him whom we praise! How seldom does the believing heart glow with a flame of praise! But when we are with Christ, we shall always praise Him in the highest degree; therefore it is far better to be with Christ.

We shall always praise because we shall always have a vivid sense of *what we are saved from*. On earth we have poor conceptions of God's wrath, and these only at times; so we are not very thankful for being brought to Christ. But in heaven we shall see the wrath of God poured out upon the Christless; we shall see their dismal faces; we shall hear their sad cries and the gnashing of their teeth; we shall see the smoke of their torment ascending up before

God for ever. How believers shall praise God for His electing love that chose them to salvation! How they shall praise Christ for His redeeming love, for enduring such pains instead of them! There shall be no end to that praise, and it will be rendered with all their heart.

In heaven the saints shall always have a sense of *what we are saved to*. On earth we have low conceptions of the blessedness of God's favour, friendship and love; therefore we are not very thankful. But then we shall feel more fully the warmth of His love; we shall drink the rivers of His pleasures; our joy shall be full; we shall be like vessels filled to overflowing. In His presence there is fulness of joy; at His right hand there are pleasures for evermore. We shall feel that we were redeemed to enjoy all this. How we shall then praise Christ for His obedience in our place, and God the Father for His love in sending His Son to be our Substitute and Surety!

We shall have *a constant sight of God's beauty and glory*. On earth we conceive of the infinite loveliness of God in a very poor way. Only now and then does a believer enter so fully through the rent veil as to see His beauty and inquire in His temple; but then we shall be like pillars in the temple of our God and go no more out. Only in the works of creation and providence, and sometimes in the Word or in the broken bread, can we see God. It is, at best, as in a glass darkly; but then face to face. We shall know even as we are known. No more in a glass, but in reality, shall we see God and eternally gaze on His uncreated loveliness. What praises this shall draw from our hearts to all eternity! "This God is our God for ever and ever." Is it not then better to be with Christ, so that we may love and praise God more?

Even on earth, much of the believer's happiness consists in praise. The happiest Christians are always most engaged in praise. The more heavenly-minded you grow, the more you will abound in praise. The work of heaven is often described as praise. Every description of heaven in the Book of Revelation contains much praise. The true happiness of a creature consists in giving praise to the God who made him. How much better to depart and be with Christ! It is far, far better.

This should *reconcile us to the death of believing friends*. They are now with Christ, and that is far better. And shall we grudge them their happiness? When friends are removed to a distance in this world; when they go to India, or when they make money or settle well in the world, we do not grudge them their happiness. And why would you grudge believing friends to be with Christ, which is far better than thousands of gold and of silver?

This should *reconcile us to die*. If indeed we are believers, to die is to be with Christ, which is far better. Do you reject the testimony that it is better to be with Christ than to be here? Then you are no believer.

You say, I am a feeble believer. Then it is most of all blessed for you to be with Christ. The feeblest swimmer is the one that should long most for the shore. The ship that is most shattered in a tempest should long most for the harbour; so you, if you are a feeble believer you should, more than others, see it desirable to be with Christ. If you have many doubts and fears, if there is much opposition to your holiness, if you cannot bear the world's scorn, if you have but seldom a full heart of praise – then you, most of all, should long to be with Christ, for to you, more than to others, it is far better than to be here.

How sad to be Christless! This whole day I have spoken to God's children. Do not think that I have been speaking to you, poor Christless souls! It is not better for you to depart; it would be far worse for you. This world is your only heaven. Beyond it is hell. May God write this truth upon your hearts: If you are not Christ's in time, you will never be with Christ in eternity.

The Reformation in Spain¹

5. Bearing Faithful Testimony

Various Protestant prisoners were kept in prison until Philip II returned from the Netherlands. He and other royalty attended the second *auto-da-fé*² in Valladolid, which was held in 1559. When the Inquisitor General administered the oath to him, the King rose from his seat and drew his sword, indicating his readiness to use it in support of the Inquisition. There were 29 prisoners, of whom 16 could be identified as penitents, including two men who were not Lutherans but were guilty of other offences.

One of those condemned to be burnt was Don Carlos de Seso, a distinguished nobleman who had served Charles V. Later he served the cause of the Reformation by circulating books and giving instruction about the true faith. When, the night before his death, he was told his sentence, he asked for a pen, ink and paper and proceeded to write down a confession of his faith which filled two sheets of paper.

He then gave it to an official, saying, "This is the true faith of the gospel, as opposed to that of the Church of Rome, which has been corrupted for ages. In this faith I wish to die and in the remembrance and lively belief of the sufferings of Jesus Christ, to offer to God my body now reduced so low"

¹Last month's article told about some of those persecuted by the Inquisition for their Protestant faith and the cruel burnings they suffered. This is the final article in the series. Page references in the text are to Thomas M'Crie, *The Reformation in Spain*, 1824.

²A ritual of public penance by heretics; those who did not recant might be burnt to death.

(p 294). Friars spent that night and the next morning trying to persuade him to recant, but without the least success. At the stake, the gag was removed from his mouth and the friars again attempted to make him confess that he was wrong. He replied, loudly and firmly, "I could demonstrate to you that you ruin yourselves by not imitating my example, but there is no time. Executioners, light the pile which is to consume me" (p 294). He was 42.

Domingo de Roxas, the pastor of Valladolid, was arrested as he sought to flee the country. He was repeatedly examined by the Inquisition, who then ordered him to be tortured in the hope of discovering some information they were anxious to possess. He was more afraid of torture than of death and, deceived by the prospect of a merciful sentence which was offered him, he made some profession of sorrow, but was soon undeceived. Being led past the King on the day of the *auto-da-fé*, he appealed to Philip: "Can you, Sir, thus witness the torments of your innocent subjects? Save us from so cruel a death." The cold-hearted monarch replied, "No, I would myself carry wood to burn my own son, if he was such a wretch as you" (p 296).

At the beginning of the persecution of Protestants in Valladolid, a Juan Sanchez fled to the Netherlands, then under Spanish rule. From there he wrote to a Spanish lady who, unknown to him, had been arrested as a suspected Lutheran. The letters fell into the hands of the Inquisition, and Sanchez was arrested and sent back to Valladolid. He was condemned as an impenitent heretic. When the fire had consumed the ropes which tied him to the stake, he ran, no doubt unthinkingly, onto the platform where the confessions of those who had recanted were heard. Recollecting himself, he saw on one side some prisoners on their knees doing penance; on the other side he saw Don Carlos de Seso standing in the midst of the flames. He said, "I will die like de Seso", and walked deliberately back to the fire. He was just 32.

A nun, Dona Marina Guevara, was denounced to the Inquisition. She acknowledged that she had thought about some Lutheran teachings, but only with hesitation and not realising their meaning. She asked to be reconciled to the Church, but this was refused because she would not acknowledge other matters which had been reported to the Inquisition and because she persisted in claiming that she had not yielded a cordial and complete assent to the heresies which she had considered. She pointed out that it seemed as if they wished to put into her mind errors of which was ignorant rather than persuade her to abandon those to which she had listened. She pointed out that the oath she had taken prevented her from adding to her previous confession and from acknowledging things of which was not conscious and facts that she did not remember. She was related to the Grand Inquisitor, who tried to rescue her, but in vain.

Since she would not tell lies to save her life, she was strangled and then burnt. M'Crie comments, "This act proclaimed . . . that there was no safety in Spain for any who harboured a thought at variance with the Roman faith, or who was not prepared to yield the most implicit and absolute obedience to the dictates of the Inquisition" (p 300).

The *autos-da-fé* which took place in Seville saw even more prisoners paraded before the crowds than in Valladolid. Among these prisoners was Don Pedro Ponce de Leon. No one was more obviously attached to the Reformation cause; for years he had avoided giving any place to superstition and had tried to prepare himself for suffering by visiting the sites where others had been punished. But in the day of testing he failed. As he was a member of the nobility, the inquisitors were particularly anxious to have him recant. Under torture, they had him confess to some of the charges against him. With their customary deceit, they persuaded him that he would not only save himself but others if he confessed everything. He agreed to do so, but very quickly changed his mind and, as a result, he was martyred.

Among others who suffered were four monks from the San Isidro monastery. One of them was Garcia de Arias. After being imprisoned, he gave up the cautious policy that had left the monks continuing to say mass while embracing much scriptural doctrine and practice. He made an explicit confession of his faith and offered to prove that the Roman beliefs were highly erroneous and superstitious. At his trial he pointed out the ignorance of the inquisitors and of the theologians who gave them assistance, for they had been forced to admit that they were unable to interpret the Bible. An old man, he went to the stake leaning on a staff, but the expression on his face indicated happiness.

Another monk from San Isidro had followed his previous companions to Geneva and, after Elizabeth came to the throne, was on his way to England along with some of the English exiles who had fled during the reign of Mary. However, at Strasbourg he was betrayed to a spy and he was arrested while boarding a ship bound for England. Brought back to Spain, he was tortured and he also developed consumption. But, however weak he now was physically, he was sent to the stake. There, briefly but emphatically, he confessed the faith for which he was about to suffer.

Among the women who suffered was Dona Isabel de Baena. Just 20, she was well educated and so was able to read the Bible, and expositions of it, in Latin. M'Crie describes her steadfastness before the Inquisition: "She avowed her faith, defended it as the ancient truth, which Luther and his associates had recovered from the rubbish by which it had been hid for ages, and told her judges that it was their duty to embrace it instead of punishing

her and others for maintaining it” (p 309). She was severely tortured because she would not answer questions which were intended to implicate her friends.

Some clerics visited her the night before she was to suffer martyrdom, in the hope of turning her back to her childhood faith. She was very polite to them but told them plainly that she had more concern about her salvation than they could possibly have, and that she would have given up her beliefs if she had been in any doubt of their truth. Indeed she was now more convinced about them because of how easily she had been able to answer the arguments of all the Roman clerics who had so often come to visit her. On the day of the *auto-da-fé*, when she was to be burnt, she looked cheerful. She was given an opportunity to confess that she was in error but she replied clearly: “I neither can nor will recant” (p 310). As she was being tied to the stake, a priest asked her merely to repeat the Apostles’ Creed, presumably as a sign of submission to Rome. She began to do so, but explained some of its statements in the Protestant sense. She was not allowed to continue and was at once strangled and burnt.

The second large *auto-da-fé* in Seville was held in December 1560. Julian Hernandez, who had brought Bibles into Spain, was one of those who suffered that day. When being brought out to the *auto-da-fé*, he encouraged his fellow sufferers: “Courage, comrades. This is the hour in which we must show ourselves valiant soldiers of Jesus Christ. Let us now bear faithful testimony to His truth before men, and within a few hours we will receive the testimony of His approbation before angels and triumph with Him in heaven” (p 313).

Eight women were burnt the day; among them was Maria Gomez, who had betrayed the congregation in Seville when she was suffering from a mental disorder. She had recovered and had been received back into fellowship with the congregation, before falling into the hands of the Inquisition. Along with her at the stake were her three daughters and her sister. One of the nieces specially thanked Maria for the religious teaching she had given her. In response, Maria encouraged her by reminding her of the support which Christ had promised them in the hour of trial and of the joys which they would immediately have after their brief sufferings.

These *autos-da-fé* continued for many years. From 1560 to 1570 at least one of these cruel events took place each year in all 12 cities where provincial tribunals of the Spanish Inquisition had been established. At each of them, condemned Protestants appeared. At an *auto-da-fé* in Madrid in 1571 two Protestants were burnt alive, as was the effigy of another. One of those who suffered was Dr Sigismond Archel, a Sardinian who had been arrested in 1562. After several years’ imprisonment in Toledo, he had escaped but was re-arrested at the French border. He acknowledged the charges laid against

him but pleaded that he was a better catholic than the Romanists, meaning no doubt that his was the faith of the universal Church as found in Scripture. He pointed out also the ignorance of the priests who were sent to turn him back to Rome.

A great part of the work of inquisitors in eastern Spain was to search for Protestant books, which came into the country either by sea or across the border from France. In 1568 the Spanish ambassador in London reported that the English were boasting of the converts which their (Protestant) doctrine was making in Spain. And reports from France indicated that large quantities of literature were to be sent to Spain; some of the books were placed in wine casks and got past customs officers without being discovered.

In the end, the Inquisition's brutal methods were, in their own terms, successful. After 1570 the Inquisition was still discovering some Protestants and bringing them to *autos-da-fé*, but the numbers were much less. So when 57 prisoners were brought out at an *auto* in 1654 at Cuenca, a town in central Spain, only one of them was charged with being a Lutheran. And among 118 condemned at a similar event at Madrid in 1680, only one was a Protestant, and he had already died in prison, but his effigy and bones were cast into the flames. Effectively the Reformation in Spain had been ground into the dust. It may be that the fact that the Church in Spain was no longer characterised by outward scandal meant that it was more difficult for the average Spaniard to recognise that there was a problem with it, in contrast with the situation in other countries where the Reformation took hold. Yet the main point to recognise is the sovereignty of God, when one country is taken and another is left in its superstitions.

It is worth noting that some Spaniards were able to practice the true religion in other lands – for instance, the former monks who reached Geneva – and there was a Spanish congregation in London from 1559. Yet, sadly, among those who fled Spain for religious reasons were some who denied the doctrine of the Trinity. The most famous of these was Michael Servetus, who himself was burnt to death by the Genevan authorities because of his heresies.

We are used to hearing that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church. That was indeed so, for instance, in the early centuries of Christianity, but certainly not in sixteenth-century Spain. In M' Crie's words, "Persecution may be carried to such a pitch as will, without a miracle,³ crush the best of causes; for, though it cannot eradicate the truth from the minds of those by whom it has been cordially embraced, it may cut off all the ordinary means of communication by which it is propagated" (p 344).

³Perhaps more accurately, a special providence.

Biblical Fellowship¹

2. The Believer's Fellowship with God the Father

Rev J R Tallach

We read in 1 John 1:3: “Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ”. Believers in those days were despised and rejected by the world at large. Why should anyone wish to be connected with them or join them? This question was answered blessedly: “Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ”.

The saints of God then have fellowship with Him – a holy and spiritual communion. Owen makes the point that by nature, as fallen creatures, we are alienated from the life of God “through . . . ignorance” (Eph 4:18). Through the Fall we are far off from God, “having no hope, and without God in the world” (Eph 2:12). “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” (Amos 3:3). What fellowship has light with darkness? (see 2 Cor 6:14).

The union between the Father and believers was not made fully evident until Christ came. Yet the Old Testament figures and types were striking and clear in themselves. Consider the promise to Israel in their High Priest, as he drew near to God in the holy of holies to present the sacrificial blood and the incense: “There I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat” (Ex 25:22).

It is also true that the Old Testament saints had spiritual communion with God. Enoch (Gen 5:24) and Noah (Gen 6:9) walked with God. Abraham was a friend of God (Is 41:8) and David was a man after God’s own heart (1 Sam 13:14). But, with all their light and privilege, the way into the holiest was not yet made manifest. Only the coming of the High Priest that “became us”, the Lord Jesus Christ, and His entrance into the holy of holies above through the rent veil of His flesh, would make evident the new and living way to God (Heb 10:20). “Through Him we . . . have access by one Spirit unto the Father” (Eph 2:18). This is the foundation for our fellowship with God and with one another within the Church of God.

Fellowship may be experienced at other levels and in other contexts. A common humanity is a basis for fellowship in the world. “For what man knoweth the things of man, save the spirit of man which is in him? (1 Cor 2:11). We are of the one “flesh and blood” (Heb 2:14). Christ Himself came into that same communion by taking to Himself a true body and a reasonable soul. Bad actions also bring us into fellowship with the ungodly, the way of

¹The first part of this Theological Conference appeared last month. It dealt with fellowship within the Godhead.

the sinner and the seat of the scornful (as in Psalm 1). Good actions, on the other hand, arise from the fellowship of the way on which all God's children are walking. "The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous (Ps 1:6). Paul was on his journey to persecute those in Damascus who were in fellowship together on this way.

Owen writes, "Our communion with God consists in His communication of Himself unto us, with our return unto Him of that which He requires and accepts, flowing from that union which in Christ we have in full".² Owen notes that in heaven this fellowship will be perfect, while on earth the fellowship is initial and imperfect.

This fellowship is held distinctly with the Father and distinctly with the Son and distinctly with the Holy Spirit. This is demonstrated in 1 John 5:7: "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost". They individually bear witness to the Sonship of Christ and salvation by Him to all believers. Thus testimony is given to believers, and they give back these truths as light and salt in the world.

To the same effect 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 states, "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit [that is, the Holy Ghost]. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord [the same Lord Jesus]. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all [even the Father]." Thus gifts and grace are given and received. All our approaches to God are thus characterised: "For through [Christ] we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph 2:18). Each Person has His distinct engagement with the believer. Owen gives an example of how the three Persons of the Godhead are distinctly, yet together, involved in conveying grace to the believer. He takes as his example the matter of each believer being taught:

By the Father. "It is written in the prophets," said Christ, "And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me" (Jn 6:45). The teaching whereby we gain a saving interest in Christ is from the Father. He gives new life to the soul. The Father teaches by original authority.

By the Son. He is declared by the Father from heaven to be the great teacher: "This is My beloved Son. Hear Him". As the divine Prophet, His teaching is so powerful that the spiritually dead hear His voice and live (Jn 5:26). His teaching gives light and life as He pours out His Spirit upon dead hearts. The Son communicates from a purchased treasury.

By the Holy Spirit. In John 14:26 we read: "The Comforter . . . shall teach you all things". The Spirit is given to us "that we might know the things that

²Works, vol 2, p 8.

are freely given to us of God” (1 Cor 2:12). The Spirit teaches by way of immediate efficacy.

Although the works of God outwardly, towards all His children, are common and undivided – there is a concurrence in the operation of the whole Godhead, yet the saints specially have communion with the Father by free, undeserved and eternal love. Thus John declares that “God is love” (1 Jn 4:8). His gracious and loving nature is declared in Exodus 34:6,7: “The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth”, while John goes on to say, “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 Jn 4:10). This love came before the sending of Christ and all the benefits He received. This love is identified in the Apostolic benediction: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all” (2 Cor 13:14).

In John 16:26,27 the Lord says, “I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father Himself loveth you”. The Saviour assured the disciples, by His words and deeds, that He loved them; but they may have wondered about the Father’s love to them. The Saviour answers that love towards them was already in the heart of the Father, and they were to rest in it. Paul writes, “The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us” (Rom 5:5). Paul ascribes love to the Father, speaking of Him distinctly and separately from the Spirit and the Son. Thus all who dwell in fellowship with God must know that “God is love”.

As what was said above is true, believers are required (1) to receive this love from Him, (2) to make proper returns of this love to Him.

(1) As communion consists in giving and receiving, the Father’s love must be received before any fellowship takes place. There is no coming to the Father but by the Son. “I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me” (Jn 14:6). As the rays of the sun demonstrate the presence of the sun, and the rivulets from the fountain speak of the existence of the fountain, so Jesus leads us to the love of the Father. By Christ, the design, love and good pleasure of the Father toward His people are made known and by faith the soul rests in that love.

(2) The return required consists also of love. “My son, give Me thine heart” (Prov 23:26). “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind” (Lk 10:27). This faith working by love is the ground for all acceptable service (Deut 5:10, Ex 20:6). This is the reason for choosing His people. “According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love” (Eph 1:4).

Owen identifies differences and similarities between the love of the Father to His people and their love to Him. They are alike in that each is a love of rest. God's love to His people is so: "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty . . . He will *rest* in His love, He will joy over thee with singing" (Zep 3:17). He is fully satisfied and sees every reason to rest in His people and rejoice in them. The believer sings his praise to God, but here God sings of His resting in the believer.

The return that the believer makes to this love is of the same character. "Return unto thy *rest*, O my soul" (Ps 116:7). God is her rest. "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee" (Ps 73: 25). "In Thee the fatherless findeth mercy" (Hos 14:3).

This mutual love of God and the believer agrees also in this: the way of communication of this fellowship is only by Christ, who is the Priest and the Mediator in the house of God. "It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell" (Col 1:19). So also all the believer's response to the love of the Father is in and by Christ. As He bears their iniquities – and their iniquities were a mountain between them and God – He is the only way for them to go to God in faith and repentance.

On the other hand, the love of the Father comes first, and the love of the believer arises as a result of the Father's love. The Father's love is bountiful, as the rain falling on the earth or the fountain gushing forth water, but the love of the believer is a duty and a matter of thankfulness. "If then I be a father, where is My honour?" (Mal 1:6).

Chinese Presbyterianism

Past, Present and Future

Matthew Vogan

The phenomenal growth of China is now familiar to many – not only in economic terms, but also the number of professing Christians. Its population of 1.35 billion people is unique amongst the world's nations. About 6.3% of this total are Evangelical Christians; making it the most Evangelical nation in the world. There are more professing Christians in China than there are atheists or Buddhists.

This is truly astonishing when we consider the great onslaught against the Church during the middle of the twentieth century. It was so systematic and brutal that in 1970 it was estimated that the Mao regime had successfully wiped out Christianity. It is surely an evident miracle of God's sovereign grace and special providence that Chinese Evangelical Christianity is flourish-

ing today. Just as China is expected to dominate the world economically, it is also anticipated that it will play a leading role in relation to Christianity. The BBC observed in recent years that more people attend church in China each week than in the whole of Europe combined.

*China's Reforming Churches: Mission, Polity, and Ministry in the Next Christendom*¹ highlights the Reformed dimension of this growth. The subtitle of the book alludes to the notion that a new Christendom is expected to emerge comprised of the rapidly growing Asian, African and South American churches. The growth in these regions of the world easily offsets the decline in the West but also means that a shift in global leadership and influence is inevitable.

Past. China's Presbyterian past extends back to 1807, when the Scottish Presbyterian Robert Morrison commenced his labours. He was later joined by William Milne. It was 30 years later, however, that missionaries from the Presbyterian Church in the USA were sent to Chinese-speaking people. They began their work in Singapore before they were able to move to mainland China five years later. Benjamin Peach Keasberry remained in Singapore to establish the first Presbyterian congregation in Prinsep Street. Other noted missionaries included William Chalmers Burns, whose work in producing Chinese-language metrical psalms can be found on our Church's website.

Various Presbyterian and Reformed Churches established missions in China. Allowing for the vast geography, this presented a somewhat disjointed effort and did not encourage a united indigenous Chinese Church. There were also other challenges presented by overseas connections. Oversight by Church courts was hindered by language and communications barriers, lack of knowledge and the sheer distance involved.

John L Nevius was one of the most prominent of Presbyterian missionaries to China in this era. An old school Presbyterian from the United States, who had studied at Princeton under such men as Archibald Alexander and Charles Hodge, his influential principles involved planting churches that are self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating – in other words, led by local nationals rather than foreign missionaries. These principles were to have their greatest impact in Korea. Missionaries today, however, still struggle for various reasons to ensure that their missions move on from dependence upon foreign help and support.

It was a period of growth but not without its sad persecutions. In the 1900 Boxer Rebellion, 135 foreign missionaries and 53 missionary children were killed; 1912 Chinese Protestants lost their lives. By 1919 eleven different

¹Edited by Bruce P Baugus, Reformation Heritage Books, 2014. This article is not intended to be a review of the book but draws most of its information from it.

Presbyterian Churches had established missions in China. The first General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Korea took place in 1912 following the spiritual revival of 1907. It was a relatively short time before Koreans were themselves sending missionaries into China.

In the 1920s there were more than 8000 Protestant foreign missionaries labouring within China. The numbers of Chinese Protestant believers and leaders were significant also. The collapse of such extensive Protestant missions was unforeseen. It was due, not only to Chinese nationalism, but also to theological liberalism with its destructive biblical criticism. The heretical views of liberal Protestants included a denial of the need to labour for the conversion of their fellow men to Christianity.

There followed the expulsion of missionaries, both liberal and conservative. Korean Presbyterian missionaries were able to remain on the Chinese mainland a little longer, but the last were expelled in 1957. From 1950 to 1990 China was isolated from the outside world; yet there were some elements of Reformed influence during this period. Most notable was the Reformation Translation Fellowship under Charles Chao. Yet the major influences on the Protestant Church in China were not at all Reformed in doctrine.

The persecution from the Communist regime was brutal and intense. It resulted in the systematic destruction of Christian literature as well as imprisonment of church leaders. "In countless places, Christians were put through such abuse that many did not survive the ordeal."² The persecution had a purifying effect, in that few liberal missionaries have returned to China since it has reopened. The prohibition of Christian books also ensured the purging of erroneous and harmful literature. Christians were also brought to depend more heavily and entirely upon the Word of God alone. Even the state-sanctioned Three Self Church is theologically far more conservative than many churches in the West.³

Present. There is a strong movement towards Reformed theology in China today. "Reformed theology is being disseminated and embraced throughout China; Reformed confessions of faith are being translated or written and adopted; and new attention is being paid to worship, preaching, and leadership".

Theological education and the publishing of Reformed literature are two opportunities for providing solid teaching to Chinese Christians. Bruce Baugus notes that "the great works of the Reformed tradition are being brought into open circulation" (p 306). Much can be done through legal publication of Christian literature in a country with 95% adult literacy, but it is expensive

²Daniel Bays, *A New History of Christianity in China*, quoted in Baugus, p 14.

³Points made in Michael M, *China's Reforming Churches*, Reformation Heritage Books, pp 56-7.

and strictly controlled. The vast majority of “Christian” books in legal circulation in China are not Reformed. Yet there is an almost insatiable appetite developing for Reformed literature. Some books are even being officially published in China. Other organisations have sprung up besides the continuing work of the Reformation Translation Fellowship: the Robert Morrison Project and Hudson Taylor Ministries, in particular. Publishers such as the Banner of Truth have also had some of their books translated and published for a Chinese audience.

It might seem that the climate of persecution in China precludes the visible and ordered structures of Presbyterian church government. One of the effects of persecution has been that Churches that are not sanctioned by the state can exist in something of a chaotic state where visible and extensive organisational structures are difficult. House churches have frequently had arrangements where controlling figures preside and govern as bishops. Persecution is now much less common than we tend to assume, however.

It is said that culturally also Chinese tend instinctively to choose the least resistant and easiest way. This would seem to make Presbyterian order less attractive to them, because it requires thorough conviction, consideration and diligent application. Yet Presbyterian church government appears to be gaining some ground amongst Chinese Christians. Bruce Baugus summarises the current situation as follows: “Local congregations and in a few cases entire networks are being organized or reorganised along Presbyterian lines; Reformed seminaries are being established throughout the country; a Chinese Presbyterian polity has been drawn up; presbyteries are being formed in various places and are in communication with one another; ministers are being trained, examined, and ordained” (pp 306-7).

Future. As Bruce Baugus notes: “All of this is just the beginning of an attempt by Chinese pastors and church leaders to meet the needs of God’s people and lay a firm foundation for the future”. There are many challenges, including the lack of resources and of teaching. Consumerism is likely to become as much of a threat to the Church in China in the future as it is in the West. It may well be a greater challenge than persecution.

The extent of Christ’s kingdom is described in Isaiah 49:12. “Behold, these shall come from afar; and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the Land of Sinim”. Rather than the east it speaks of Sinim. This is widely recognised by interpreters of Scripture to be the Far East, particularly China. (Chinese-related things are often referred to with the prefix *sino*: for example, *sinology* is the study of things Chinese). The Chinese Bible translates *Sinim* as “Chin” which is a root word for China.

The future of Presbyterianism in what has been termed the world’s largest

mission field appears optimistic. This in turn offers an interesting perspective on the potential for an influential role for Presbyterian church government in the future. Though we are not drawing any direct connection, one cannot help but be reminded of how Jonathan Edwards describes the ultimate latter-day glory. He speaks in his *History of Redemption* of Africa, India and Great Tartary (the Far East and China) producing prominent theologians and outstanding Christian literature at that time. Scripture certainly highlights the Far East or the lands of the rising sun in describing the latter-day glory. “For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same My name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto My name, and a pure offering: for My name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts” (Malachi 1:11).

China is the world’s largest mission field (it also contains the largest concentration of unreached peoples). In the view of some it is also rapidly poised to become the nation that sends out most foreign missionaries. Some Chinese having been talking for some time about taking the gospel “back to Jerusalem” by establishing missionary work all along the Silk Road.

A growing number of Chinese Christians are hungry for biblical teaching that is clear, sound and has depth. The internet offers many resources for them. Western organisations of a Reformed character are registering a significant number of visitors to their websites. Puritan Publications speaks of 30 000 Chinese visitors to its website in a month. It is encouraging that (DV) a Chinese website is to be established under the Website Committee of our Church and in connection with the Singapore congregation. We have a rich heritage and a duty to share this with those that are seeking the truth in China. Another important development being supported is the Trinitarian Bible Society project to provide a faithful Bible translation for the Chinese people.

Bruce Baugus concludes his book by saying: “China needs Presbyterianism now”. He asserts that those of Presbyterian convictions in the West must make it a priority to encourage this growth into something robust and enduring. “Surely this is one of the great kingdom projects of our generation” (p 307).

None [are] fit to rule but such that are rich in grace. . . . What a world of good may a man do with worldly riches in a parish, in a city, in a nation! But that is nothing to the good that a man may do that is rich in grace. O the sins that he may prevent! O the judgements that he may divert! O the favours and blessings that he may draw down upon the heads and hearts of people!

I presume you forget not what a blessing Moses, Joseph, Job, Nehemiah, Mordecai and Daniel proved to the people among whom they lived, and these were all rich in grace.

Thomas Brooks

Mbuma Mission Meeting 2015

Rev J R Tallach

At the invitation of the Mbuma Zending Committee, my wife and I travelled to Holland on April 24 to attend their annual gathering, which was held an hour's drive south of Utrecht. On the Sabbath I supplied the Old Reformed congregation (some 45 in attendance and considered small by Dutch Reformed standards) and on the Monday I was asked to address the 4000 gathered for the Mbuma Zending meeting.

I spoke on Psalm 85:6: "Wilt Thou not us revive again, that Thy people may rejoice in Thee?" Taking the Psalm to have been penned after the return of the southern kingdom from their captivity in Babylon, in the light of the words, "Thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob", we noticed that the prayer was for the revival of vital religion among themselves. Their return had been of the Lord and brought great joy, but shortly thereafter they were embroiled in many difficulties from those around them. Plots were hatched and threats made and an appeal to the Emperor resulted in the cessation of the work for a time.

But it is their own spiritual deadness that concerns the Psalmist: "Wilt Thou not us revive again?" The Cause of Christ has many enemies in these days, but our concern over a day of small things ought to begin with ourselves. There is a reminder also of the Lord's kindness and power in the past, "revive us again". They had been revived at the Red Sea by the Lord's deliverance, and again in the wilderness by the water from the rock and the manna from heaven, and their prayer was for such a blessed visitation again. The New Testament Church has had its times of revival, as at Pentecost (the Jews) and Antioch (the Gentiles). Is this not one of those petitions about which the Lord says, "I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them"?

Where there is such a revival, the Church rejoices in the Lord: "that Thy people may rejoice in Thee". The latter part of the Psalm plainly speaks of Christ. The first Adam bore the image of God in knowledge, righteousness and holiness, but righteousness and truth were lost at the Fall and peace therefore departed. What was scattered and lost by Adam is gathered together by Christ. Truth was honoured, righteousness was established and the requirements for true peace were exhibited in the blood of Christ when "the kindness and love of God appeared". Revival involves a looking again to that holy temple and a fresh experience of that great truth, "Salvation is of the Lord" (Jnh 2:9).

The collection for the day amounted to 45 000 euros. It was a remarkable gathering for numbers, generosity and, above all, the prayerful interest in our Zimbabwe Mission by so many people. We were very hospitably received by the Bart and van Haafen families and made welcome by the Old Reformed Congregation in Utrecht.

Rules for Self-Examination¹

John Love

1. Self-examination is obligatory by God's command. It is a piece of work which God has set us; and if we were faithful and obedient servants, even though we could see no reason for it, we would do it without asking a single question. But here the case is otherwise: for the divine command is evidently necessary and for our good.

2. Self-examination is necessary, because of the danger of our being found wanting, when weighed in the divine balances (Dan 5:27). This argument is used by the Apostle Paul: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith: prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (2 Cor 13:5).

3. In performing this duty, let me observe the following rules: (1.) Choose the best times for it. (2.) Pray for the illumination of the Spirit. (3.) Lay aside self-love, when called to act the part of a judge; and be willing to be found a hypocrite, if really one. (4.) Look to the judgement seat of God. (5.) Lay marks of grace before the Lord, seeking His assistance in discriminating between true and false marks. (6.) Distinguish between sins which are proper grounds of humiliation, and sins which are proper grounds of doubting whether one is in a state of grace.

4. Let me examine myself: (1.) As to knowledge: knowledge of God, and His holy perfections; of the law, and of sin and holiness thereby; of the gospel of Christ; of Christ, as made of God wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. (2.) As to faith. (3.) As to sense of sin. (4.) As to sense of weakness. (5.) As to fighting against self-love, and the desire of pleasure and honour in this world, and obtaining victory over these. (6.) As to love to God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. (7.) As to the constraining influence of the love of Christ. (8.) As to love of the law, and of holiness. (9.) As to heavenly-mindedness. (10.) As to love to the saints. (11.) As to looking for, and loving, the coming of Christ. Let me call forth all these graces into as high a degree of exercise as I can attain, and then examine

¹Taken, with slight editing, from Love's *Memorials*, vol 1. See also page 224.

them. Let me compare them also with the former motions of the same graces in my soul, to discover whether, and how far, I am growing in grace.

Book Review

Institutes of the Christian Religion, by John Calvin, translated by Robert White from the first French edition of 1541, published by the Banner of Truth Trust, hardback, 883 pages, £19.00, obtainable from the F P Bookroom.

The translator's Introduction to this volume reminds us that "the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* has gone through a number of translations into English, of which the first by Thomas Norton dates from 1561". This was "replaced in the nineteenth century by the version of John Allen (1813) and later by that of Henry Beveridge (1845). These have now been largely superseded by the two-volume work published in 1960 in the Library of Christian Classics series, edited by John T McNeill and translated by Ford Lewis Battles."

All these translations, however, were from a later expanded version of the *Institutes*, which was completed in 1559. To understand the history and the background of the present work we need to go back to 1536, when the first edition was penned in Latin and presented to Francis I of France, in the hope it might persuade the King to protect the Huguenot Christians. This work was soon recognised as a masterly summary of biblical truth, and the demand for it led to further expanded editions.

The present edition is based on the second-earliest version and hence is briefer than later versions and is contained in one volume. It was also written in French in order "to satisfy the needs of those who, as yet, knew little of the gospel, but who 'were hungering and thirsting for Christ' and who ultimately 'might be trained in true piety'". Being written for such a readership and in Calvin's native French, the language is more informal and relaxed in style than those editions written in scholarly Latin, as is well conveyed in Robert White's translation.

Calvin's *Institutes* follows the order of Apostle's Creed, which falls into four major sections: (1) Knowledge of God and of Ourselves; (2) Christ and Salvation Accomplished; (3) The Holy Spirit and Salvation Applied; (4) The Church. In the present volume this is laid out in 17 chapters: The Knowledge of God; The Knowledge of Man and Free Will; The Law; Faith, with an Explanation of the Apostles' Creed; Repentance; Justification by Faith and the Merits of Works; The Similarity and Difference between the Old and New Testaments; The Predestination and Providence of God; Prayer, with

an Explanation of Our Lord's Prayer; The Sacraments; Baptism; The Lord's Supper; The Five Ceremonies Falsely Called Sacraments; Christian Freedom; The Power of the Church; Civil Government; and the Christian Life. Those chapters are also helpfully divided into sections with equally-helpful sub-headings within those sections. In addition to this, there is at the end of the volume a comparative table of the 1541 and the 1560 *Institutes* which is most useful for reference.

In order to get a flavour of this book it may be helpful to give here a couple of examples of Calvin's treatment of subjects. First, on false faith, Calvin makes reference to Simon Magus: "It is said that Simon Magus believed, although he shortly afterwards gave proof of his unbelief (Acts 8:13,20-23). Given that Scripture testifies to the fact of his faith, we cannot agree with some that his faith was mere pretence, a matter of words having no reality in the heart. Rather we believe that, overcome by the majesty of the gospel, he had come to some sort of faith in it, recognising Christ as the author of life and salvation, so as willingly to accept Him as such. Thus our Lord declares in the eighth chapter of Luke that there are those who believe for a time, but in whom the seed of the Word is choked before it bears fruit, or else is parched and destroyed before taking root (Lk 8:13,14).

"We do not doubt that such people are touched by some taste for the Word, receiving it with some relish and being impressed by its power, so that in their hypocrisy they deceive not only men but their own hearts too. For they persuade themselves that their reverence for God's Word is the truest form of piety there is, since they can conceive of no greater impiety on earth than that which openly reviles or scorns the Word. Yet however the gospel is received, it does not penetrate the heart and remain firmly planted there. And although it sometimes seems to send down roots, they have no life in them, for the human heart is so futile, is so full of different and deceitful hiding places, and is so entangled in hypocrisy that it even cheats itself? Those, however, who boast in this pale image of faith should understand that they are not, in that respect, any better than the devil" (Jas 2:19).

The second example deals with true repentance. After referring to the publican's confession, "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Lk 18:13), Calvin goes on: "Someone may say, 'Must not each sin be confessed? Is there no confession acceptable to God but that contained in these few words, I am a sinner?' My answer is that we should strive, rather, to open our own heart to God as much as possible, and not only to confess that we are sinners but truly to think of ourselves as such; to recognise with all our mind how vast and varied is sin's dark stain; to recognise our uncleanness, but also to judge it as it is, in all its depth and with its many parts; to recognise ourselves as

debtors, but also to know how many are the debts which burden and oppress us; to recognise that we are wounded, but also to see how grievous and fatal are the injuries we bear.

“Nevertheless, even when a sinner opens his heart to God with full awareness of his sin, he must consider in truth and judge in all sincerity that he is left with many more feelings than he can number, and that his misery is so profound that he can neither take it in nor tell where it ends. Therefore let him cry with David: ‘Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me, O Lord, of my hidden faults!’ (Ps 19:12)”.

Many such examples could be given from what is a goldmine of wonderful instruction. The one slight irritant to be mentioned is that the quotations from Scripture do not always run as in the Authorised Version, although we would understand that this is because the translation is from French.

How important then is it for people to obtain a copy of this work? Calvin’s *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, it can be said, was the first textbook of systematic theology in the Reformed Churches and, while many other works have been produced since, it still ranks among the best. The reviewer, who has perused the more expanded versions of the *Institutes* over the years, has no hesitation in recommending the present translation as the most readable, helpful and user-friendly yet and has no hesitation in concluding that anyone who makes a careful and prayerful study of this volume should not fail to profit from it.

(Rev) *W A Weale*

Notes and Comments

Church of Scotland Assembly

The main news from the Church of Scotland Assembly in May was the decision to permit congregations to call ministers who are in civil partnerships. The vote carried by 309 to 182, a narrower margin than might have been expected given the number of office-bearers who have already left the Church of Scotland over the matter. There were 74 dissents. With regard to homosexual marriage, it was decided to remit the issue to the Presbyteries under the Barrier Act for further discussion. This carried by 205 votes to 195 with over 300 abstentions.

It was also reported that the minister of Queen’s Cross, Aberdeen, who is openly homosexual and already in a civil partnership, quietly converted his civil partnership into a “marriage” last December, in continued disregard for the present laws of the Church. One does wonder what the difference is between civil partnership and homosexual marriage, given that both are human

inventions without biblical foundation. True marriage involves a divine “joining”: “Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Mt 19:6). Homosexual marriage, however, has no such divine element to it and the attempt to grasp the elusive bond between husbands and wives must result in either delusion or disappointment.

The Moderator of the Assembly was Rev Angus Morrison, a former Free Presbyterian and APC minister. Commenting in the *Stornoway Gazette* after the Assembly, he quoted Professor Iain Torrance to the effect that the debate at the Assembly on homosexuality was not “between those who love Scripture and those who do not, as it is sometimes portrayed”. Whether those who opposed homosexuality loved Scripture, we are not sure – some of them were women ministers and elders, whose own position is condemned by Scripture – but it is certain that those arguing against the scriptural position on sodomy did not “love Scripture”. The issues are not “complex”, as Mr Morrison claims. Sodomy is a great evil, and neither its practitioners nor its proponents should be office-bearers in the Christian Church.

One other thought, which comes from the Puritan John Flavel, is to consider what Muslims and others make of the Church of Scotland decision. Any Muslim dissatisfied with his own religion and seeking something in Christianity is liable to be deterred by this endorsement of uncleanness in the largest Protestant Church in Scotland. This deterrence is part of Satan’s purpose in perverting the Church, and those who play along with his purpose may have more part in the destruction of souls than they realise. *DWBS*

The Asher Bakery Case

Attacks on religious freedom and expression in the United Kingdom have increased over recent years; the Ashers bakery case is a case in point, ironically brought by the Equalities Commission of Northern Ireland (ECNI) – a Commission which one would expect to uphold equal rights for Christians. After the quango’s complaint, a judge ruled in May that it was unlawful and discriminatory for a Christian bakery to refuse to provide a cake with a slogan distinctly in favour of same-sex marriage.

Ashers Baking Company is a family business started by Colin and Karen McArthur in 1992 which successfully runs several shops in Northern Ireland. They took the name *Asher* from Genesis 49:20: “Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties”, reflecting the company’s Christian ethos.

In May 2014 volunteer activist Mr Gareth Lee came to Ashers’ Belfast shop and ordered a cake to be decorated with the slogan “Support Gay

Marriage”, along with the emblem of a campaign group “Queerspace” and two male cartoon puppets embracing each other. The cake was to be presented to the first homosexual to be elected mayor in Northern Ireland, Andrew Muir. The Belfast staff initially accepted the order, but after reflecting with the rest of her family, Mrs McArthur believed they could not conscientiously carry out the contract. Three days later she contacted Mr Lee explaining their position and offering him his money back.

Their son Daniel, who is General Manager of the company, makes it very clear that they accept orders from anyone, but in the past have refused those displaying lewd images or bad language. He confirms that they did not even know that Mr Lee is a homosexual; their issue was with the message, which contradicted their Christian belief that marriage is between a man and a woman. They wished not to be forced into promoting a cause with which they disagreed. It is worth noting that same-sex “marriage” in Northern Ireland is still illegal although the last vote on the issue was very close.

The next month, Mr Lee complained to the ECNI, whose legal department sent a letter threatening the McArthurs with court action for sexual discrimination if the situation was not remedied within seven days. By October 2014 the Commission were alleging that the bakers had also breached political discrimination laws. It could be argued that the taxpayer-funded Equality Commission is itself biased as it apparently states on its website: “The Commission supports the introduction of legislation supporting same-sex marriage” with “safeguards for religious organisations”. We wonder what they really mean by safeguards, when the head of ECNI, Michael Wardlow, is alleged to have said, “Christians who want to run their businesses according to their beliefs should either look to the law or change career”. A spokesperson for the McArthurs said, “It is outrageous to suggest that people who want to live their lives according to their beliefs must change jobs”.

In March this year the case came to court and Judge Isobel Brownlie announced her finding on May 19. She stated that the McArthurs “must have known or had the perception” that Mr Lee was a homosexual and they were therefore guilty of discriminating against him and not just the message. The judgement has dismayed Christians and has been heavily criticised by some sections of the media. Alison Pearson, a journalist with *The Daily Telegraph*, asserts that Judge Brownlie’s ruling was wrong. She writes, “That is not actually true, is it? Ashers didn’t refuse to sell the cake to Mr Lee because he was gay. They refused to ice a slogan on the cake that attacked their most cherished beliefs.” Then she adds, “A gay activist should think twice before asking a well-known Christian baker to make a cake with a slogan he knows they will find deeply upsetting, let alone bringing a prosecution”.

Melanie McDonagh of *The Spectator* says the verdict is “simply astonishing” and complains that it is “wrong and intolerant and discriminatory” for the ECNI to act against committed Christians, “persecuting them for holding to their moral principles”. She concludes, “If Gareth Lee had turned baker and was asked by a customer to ice a cake with, ‘Sodomy is sin’, would he have obliged?”

The McArthur family have appeared very gracious throughout this ordeal and for the present are cautiously restricting their range of products. Before the hearing, Daniel said, “Since the Commission does not accept our explanation, we will be in court, because we believe that the Word of God is of far greater importance than the words of the Equality Commission”. After the verdict he warned that this ruling now “suggests that all business owners will have to be willing to promote any cause or campaign, no matter how much they disagree with it”. Karen MacArthur added, “We’ve really depended a lot on God’s Word seeing us through. Isaiah 43 verse 1 was very good and very encouraging.” The verse reads, “But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and He that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine”. Mrs McArthur continues, “He [God] told us not to fear in that verse, and it was one of the verses that we read together on the morning of the trial, and we just held on to that”.

The family are currently appealing against the judgement, but we fear there will be little prospect of redress in the current immoral climate. Whatever homosexuals and earthly judges decide and whatever persecution Christians may have to endure in this world, the solemn reality is that God is the ultimate Judge. “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” (Gen 18:25). How good to have Him as our Saviour on that Judgement Day! *KHM*

Protestant View

Ireland and Rome

The referendum on “same-sex marriage” in the Republic of Ireland demonstrates that the power of the Church of Rome over the Irish people has been greatly weakened in recent times. The result means that Ireland is now the first country in the world to legalise such abominable unions through a popular vote. Responding to the result, the Archbishop of Dublin, Diarmuid Martin, pointed out that “most of these young people who voted yes are products of our Catholic school system for 12 years. I’m saying there’s a big challenge there to see how we get across the message of the Church.”

But the “message of the [Roman Catholic] Church”, however well it might be communicated, will certainly not arrest the frightening pace of moral decay. Only the revival of true, biblical Christianity and an outpouring of a spirit of repentance can stop the further erosion of common decency and morality which is now so dreadfully apparent, not only in the Republic of Ireland and in the United Kingdom but throughout the western world. AWM

Church Information

Theological Conference

This year’s Theological Conference will be held, God willing, in Glasgow, on Tuesday and Wednesday, October 27 and 28, with Rev N M Ross as chairman. It is expected that the following papers will be read, all in public:

Effectual Calling

Rev D A Ross

Revival

Rev W A Weale

The Book of Revelation

Rev A W MacColl

Cambuslang and the Seceders

Rev D W B Somerset

Learning from Scottish Church History

Rev D Campbell

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

Free Presbyterian Publications

As intimated last month, Archibald Cook’s sermons, translated into English, have now been published, under the title, *Eternal Reality*.

John Love’s *Memorials*, an extract from which appears on page 217, is being reprinted and should be available within the next few months. It is to contain a biographical introduction by Mr Roy Middleton. Love (1757-1825) was a highly-regarded minister in Anderston, Glasgow, and had been the first secretary of the London Missionary Society.

In addition, the following three valuable titles are being reprinted and should be available by the time this issue of the *Magazine* appears in print: *Memoir & Remains of Rev Donald Macfarlane, Sermons by Noted Ministers of the Northern Highlands* and Alexander Stewart’s *The Tree of Promise*.

Acknowledgement of Donations

The General Treasurer acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donation:

College & Library Fund: Anon, £100.

Congregational Treasurers acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:

Dingwall/Beaully: Estate of the late Miss M MacKay, £1000; Estate of the late Mrs C Gillies, £1000; Estate of the late Mrs C Campbell, £100.

Glasgow: *Bus Fund:* Anon, £20. *Eastern Europe Fund:* Anon, £60, £70.

Greenock: *TBS:* Anon, £70. *Where Most Needed:* Anon, £10, £10; £10; £70.

North Harris: KB, £100; Anon, In memory of C & J N MacLeod, MacQueen St, for minister’s car, £500. *Communion Expenses:* JFM, £20; CMK, £30; Anon, £100.

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 N M Ross; tel: 01349 864351.

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. (Each of these services is held once in three weeks as intimated). **Farr:** Thursday 7.30 pm (as intimated). Contact Mr M J Schouten; tel: 01463 221776.

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; Thursday 7.30 pm. Manse tel: 01847 831758. **Thurso:** Sabbath 5 pm; **Wick:** 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 (as intimated). Prayer meetings in **Leverburgh**, **Sheilebost** and **Strond** 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. Contact Mr A MacRae; tel: 01463 790521.

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: Church. No F P services at present. 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 Rev D Campbell; tel: 0131 312 8227.

Portree: Sabbath 12 noon, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Rev I D MacDonald, F P Manse, Achachork, Portree, IV51 9HT; tel: 01478 612110.

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 12 noon. 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; Monday 11.00 am. Contact Rev K M Watkins; tel: 01282 850296.

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 7.30 pm. Rev G G Hutton BA PhD, 174 Fitzroy Street, Grafton, NSW 2460; tel: (02) 6643 5692.

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

New Zealand

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

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

Tauranga: Girl Guide Hall, 17th Avenue, Sabbath 11 am, 7 pm; Thursday 7 pm. Contact: Mr Dick Vermeulen; tel: 075443677.

Wellington (Carterton): Senior Citizens' Hall, 150 High Street North. 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; Beacon International College, 70 Martaban Road, Singapore 328667 (entrance is opposite 37/39 Mandalay Road); Wednesday: 7.45 pm, Lion Building B, #02-11, 12 Arumugam Road, Singapore 409958. 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 Levyskiyi; tel:00 38 048 785 19 24; e-mail: dlevyskiy@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.

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

Mbumba: Church and Hospital. Rev N Sibanda. Postal Address: Mbumba 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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