

The Free Presbyterian Magazine

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

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

Contents

Profit from Public Worship	289
God’s Chief Mercy (2)	
A Sermon by John Maclaurin	292
Effectual Calling	
3. The Need for the Spirit’s Work	
Rev D A Ross	300
Christ as Priest – Some Lessons	
Thomas Boston	303
No Other Gods	
Mackintosh Mackay	304
What the Gospel Is	307
Character of the Scottish Reformation	
2. God Speaks Plainly in His Word	
D Hay Fleming.....	310
Teaching on Election	
John Newton	313
Grace Abounding	
W K Tweedie	316
Protestant View	317
Notes and Comments	317
Church Information	320

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Communions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

November: First Sabbath: Aberdeen, **Second Sabbath:** Glasgow; **Third:** Chiedza, Singapore.

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

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Profit from Public Worship

Paul speaks of God as One “that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think” (Eph 3:20). It should be obvious to us, as we *think* about God, that He is able to do wonderful things – if we accept that He exists, and He has given more than sufficient evidence that He does, beside what He has revealed about Himself in the Bible. Indeed He is all-powerful, but a god who is limited is not a god in any real sense. If then we think about God in the light of Scripture, we should be conscious that He can do what is truly wonderful, altogether beyond what we can imagine.

Further, we should *ask* God to do wonderful things for us, and for others. We must pray; and when we pray, we should believe that He is able to go far beyond what we ask Him to do. Paul is anxious to express these matters very strongly: not merely that God can do *more* than we ask or think, not merely that He can do *abundantly* above what we ask or think, but that He can do *exceeding* abundantly beyond that. There is no limit to God’s power in answering prayer; nor is there any limit to His understanding of the situation which calls for prayer; nor is there any limit to His wisdom in the way He answers the petitions asked of Him, for the sake of Christ.

We could apply these principles to many aspects of life, but let us try to understand what a Sabbath and, in particular, public worship on a Sabbath, might result in if God is pleased to answer our prayers for a profitable day, in a way “exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think”.

How should we think about the Sabbath? We should recognise it as a gift from God, an opportunity to put the things of the world away as far as possible and to focus on spiritual realities. In particular, we should all seek to get spiritual good for our souls. When we read the Bible, we should ask the Lord to bless it to us; when we hear the Word of God preached, we should again ask for spiritual good.

When unconverted people ask for such things, they may well be praying in a mechanical fashion – because they know that this is what they ought to do. But they may also be driven to pray if they feel some sense of danger because of the lost eternity that is before them. They may as yet have no

sense of the blessedness of a godly life, but they wish to avoid being cast down to hell and, instead, to enter heaven at last. But, even so, they may wish to postpone their turning from sin to Christ until their life in this world is almost over, for they assume that a life of sin will be much more pleasant than one which involves submission to God and His commandments. Yet God may graciously hear their prayers, although all they are asking for is to escape His wrath in a lost eternity.

But when God answers such a prayer, He not only delivers sinners from the wrath to come; He brings them into His own family. Then they begin to see the wonder of having God as their Father, and His other children as their brothers and sisters. God's law no longer seems unreasonable or oppressive; it is good; it provides helpful boundaries for their way through life, keeping them from harm and danger. They discover that God has done "exceeding abundantly above all" that they ever asked or thought.

Sinners may go to church with no hope of finding deliverance from their burden of sin; they may try to pray but there seems to be no answer. Yet God is not rejecting their prayer when they feel there is no answer. They may come close to despair, but in their reading of the Scriptures or in the preaching they hear, the Holy Spirit may apply to their hearts the truth that there is a Saviour whom God has appointed for sinners like them, One who is able to deliver them. And when they can hope that they have indeed been delivered from the guilt and power of sin, God has done "exceeding abundantly above all" that they asked or thought.

And what Sabbath blessings should people pray for? First perhaps, that they would not be distracted unnecessarily by the ordinary affairs of this world. In doing so they are asking for two things, one of which has to do with God's providence: that He may so order their affairs that the time which has to be devoted to the things of this life, such as preparing food, can be kept to a minimum. The other matter they are asking for is that their minds would be so restrained that they would not wander unnecessarily away from thinking about spiritual things.

We might assume that, if our prayer is answered, nothing would happen to interrupt, for example, profitable meditation. Yet God's thoughts are higher than ours (Is 55:9); He may allow distractions to come our way to test us. Are we then willing to turn our attention, as far as possible, from the interesting things happening outside our window, say, to the higher things that involve God and our eternal destiny? If we live in the spirit of the original petition, we will follow it up with further petitions. God tries His people in order to bring them to realise their weakness and to trust all the more firmly on the One who died for them and is now making intercession for them before

His Father's throne. And He is training them to resist temptation. We should learn that, when God seems not to answer prayer, He has higher ends in view than those which result from our limited outlook.

God's children may be troubled by their continuing ignorance. They may pray about the matter, conscious that they understand so little of His Word and so little of His dealings with them in providence. But they go prayerfully to the Bible and they get further light on, for instance, the way of salvation and God's faithfulness to those who trust in Him; they go to public worship and get some light, perhaps, on God's providence and how "all things work together for good to them that love God" (Rom 8:28). To be conscious of receiving God's blessing on His Word will make a Sabbath truly memorable and is further evidence of how God can answer prayer.

Believers should be seeking growth in grace as they pray, as they read the Scriptures and, not least, as they go to hear the Word preached. We should notice the connection that Peter makes (in 2 Pet 3:18) between growth in the knowledge of Christ and growth in grace: there cannot be growth in grace apart from coming to know the Saviour better, and that includes learning more about Him. And the preaching of the gospel is an important means ordained by God to teach His people about the One who came into the world to save sinners; so preaching is an important means of growth in grace. Thus it is a profitable Sabbath when, through the ministry of the Word, Christians have their faith strengthened, their love made firmer, and their other graces advanced also.

When someone has prayed, before going to church, that some sinner would be converted, this person may consider it a wonderful answer to prayer if it becomes clear that the Word was indeed blessed on that occasion. And wonderful it truly would be. Yet if more than one sinner received a blessing, does it not show that God "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think"? And should that thought not encourage us to ask for greater things – to ask, for instance, that many sinners would be brought into the kingdom of God, rather than just one?

We should never lose sight of the fact that God is able to work in such ways. Yet we must never presume that God will answer our petitions according to our ideas of what is best. We are fallible; He knows everything and has a perfect understanding. At best we have an imperfect grasp of what is most for God's glory; His grasp is perfect. We are shortsighted; He sees everything from an eternal perspective. None of this should restrain us from praying; rather it should encourage us; the One who "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" knows what is the best way to answer the petitions addressed to Him. And we should be content with that.

God's Chief Mercy (2)¹

A Sermon by John Maclaurin

Romans 8:32. *He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?*

But there was something beyond this. He would have died as a reputed criminal had He died only as a martyr, by the sentence of an unjust persecutor. But there was more than Pilate's sentence here; the Saviour was brought before the tribunal of the just Judge of the universe, and under His sentence. He laid on Him the iniquities of us all, and therefore put Him to grief; it pleased the Lord to bruise Him. Other condemned persons are charged, but only with their own crimes. A right view of this great Sufferer will show Him to be charged with all the abominable crimes of innumerable multitudes. Only He could descend so low, or come under such a burden.

If further, in the lowest character in the world of criminals condemned, we distinguish their treatment; if any disgrace is lower than another, the Redeemer condescended to the lowest: the punishment of the meanest of men for the greatest offences – the ignominious death of the cross. To the lowness of His sufferings, we may add the lowness of the instruments. This was what made Abimelech lament his death. The sorrows of this great Sufferer did not come from the honourable hands of God or angels, but from the hands of man (who is but a worm), from the worst of sinners, in the vilest manner, when His judge gave in to the fury of a mob.

Yet what completed all was that He was forsaken of God. Saul tells that he was sore distressed, for God had departed from him (1 Sam 28:15); but Saul knew little of God's presence. He did not say, *My* God is departed from me. David knew God better. While he had God's presence, he feared no evil, not even in the valley of the shadow of death; but when that was gone, there was nothing but a dry, parched land; there was nothing but the crying out of flesh and soul after the living God, like a hart after water. It was into a far more dismal wilderness that the blessed antitype of the scapegoat was driven, with all the sins of the people upon Him, each of them sitting heavier on His innocent soul than the effects of the cursed tree on His body. Instead of the bright face of God, the sins imputed to Him were staring Him in the face, although He was the greatest hater of sin in the world.

¹Taken, with editing, from Maclaurin's *Works*. It was preached immediately before the Lord's Supper and addressed primarily to believers. In last month's section, Maclaurin spoke first of "some principal, edifying truths included in redemption" and then began to show that the gift of Christ is superior to all God's other gifts; his last point was to ask: How could "Christ make Himself lower than to be a reputed criminal in the sight of man?"

This could not but cause a painful thirst of soul incomparably beyond David's, but there was nothing but vinegar and gall for Him – from man or from God. The first was but scanty; He only tasted it, but the ocean of divine wrath must be drunk till He could say, "It is finished". There was never a request for pity till now. He sought none from Pilate; He would receive none from the sympathising daughters of Jerusalem, telling them not to weep for Him but for themselves. But now He who was like a sheep dumb before the shearers was dumb no more, and the Lamb being brought to this dreadful slaughter must open His mouth. The upbraiding language of His murderers was, What has become of His God? No wonder the world grew dark and the rocks rent to hear the blessed Jesus forced to say that His God had forsaken Him. When we consider how much a son will suffer from a father before He divulges it to others, especially enemies, it may make us reflect how much Christ suffered from God when He who loved Him so much expressed His sufferings from Him before such company.

This condescension is often illustrated by Jacob's ladder, and it is our duty to admire the height and depth of that condescension, though we cannot measure the distance between the throne of glory and the cursed tree, between heaven and Mount Calvary, the Father's bosom and Joseph of Arimathaea's sepulchre. Yet our thoughts should, like Jacob's angels, ascend and descend as far as we can, considering the various steps of that condescension, how low the condition of its objects, how low its acts, and how glorious its effects. Nor should we forget that the humiliation of the Saviour and the exaltation of the sinner are in effect but different views of Christ's condescension. It is by the same power of mysterious love and condescension that the sinner is raised from the brink of hell to the highest heaven, and the Saviour brought from the highest heavens to the lowest parts of the earth, as Paul expresses it. But though they are acts of the same love, the latter has pre-eminence. The humiliation of the Redeemer is a far higher display of love than the glory of His people which follows it.

After considering the greatness of the Redeemer's condescension in His satisfaction for sin, we must consider the value of that satisfaction. Whatever shows the value of Christ satisfying God's justice shows also the value of God's gift to sinners. It is right to say that Christ's satisfaction is of infinite value; it would be good if it was as usual to be suitably impressed by it. We cannot say that all of created glory in the world has infinite value. God's perfections are infinite in their nature; it is not merely that they are superior to other objects, but when something has infinite value, the value of other things is nothing to it. No wonder Paul counts all other things comparatively but loss, as Isaiah counts all nations before God as less than nothing.

A satisfaction of infinite value is something more than merely to execute infinite justice. Such justice is carried out in hell, but justice is not properly satisfied till the uttermost farthing is paid; never will more than a part be paid there, and scarce a part, since the remainder is still infinite. But when justice found Christ's ransom, not one tittle passed from the law, but all was fulfilled. Therefore He is able to save to the uttermost, having satisfied to the uttermost, because He was God's own Son and because He was not spared.

When we speak of Christ's satisfaction to justice, we speak of God's gift to sinners. Satisfaction is a complete manifestation of justice; it is a complete manifestation of mercy and goodness. We may allude to that remarkable passage where Moses seeks to see God's glory, and God promises to make all His goodness pass before him. We may admire the expression, "all His goodness", for God's goodness is infinite. Moses saw many types of Christ: and we may look on this as an emblem of what was to be seen on Calvary, where His glory was veiled more than ever so that goodness might be manifested. Then He who is all goodness, the tender-hearted Samaritan passing by sinners lying in their polluted blood, with no eye to pity them, washed them in His blood, poured wine and oil into their wounds. He poured out His blood and His soul to heal them and to make them live.

But to return to the value of this gift: it is called in Scripture a pearl of great price. We should consider its value by what it purchases. We express but part of the value of *this* pearl when we say it is worth the everlasting kingdom of heaven; it not only purchases that eternal inheritance, but also pays an eternal debt. If a poor man who has nothing, but is free of debt, is given an estate, it would not be so great a gift as if another who is drowned in debt is gifted a pearl that would both pay all his debt and purchase an estate over and above. The former is the case of angels; the latter is the case of redeemed sinners.

It is evident then that the value of the object we are speaking of is greater when considered as a gift of mercy than when it is considered only as a satisfaction to justice – redeeming us from the curse of the law. Justice is justified when deliverance from the curse is purchased. But that deliverance is but a part of the purchase of this pearl of great price; there is at least as much happiness in the inheritance granted to the sinner as there is misery in the punishment from which he is delivered.

The value of this unspeakable gift transcends the value of satisfaction to infinite justice, and also that of the eternal inheritance, because it contains both. No gift greater or equal to it can be bestowed on any creature. No wonder the angels desire to look into these things. They and the believer receive the same inheritance, but not in the same way: the sinner owed an

infinite debt to justice, but the angels were always free. This may naturally bring to our minds Christ's parable about the debtor to whom most was forgiven. And we may think of the deliverance and the inheritance together as, in a manner, making a double heaven. The joy of the deliverance must greatly enhance the joy of the inheritance. To humanity, deliverance from great danger doubles the pleasure of any prosperity that follows, and surely what doubles the believer's eternal prosperity must double his obligations, and consequently his love; and what increases his love must increase his joy.

But in considering the fruits of God's chief gift, we should take care not to lose sight of the gift itself. When an earthly prince gives a condemned criminal both pardon and an estate, he shows very great kindness, though at the expense of justice. But if the nature of human justice allowed it, and human pity could bring the prince to sacrifice his son for the criminal, it is plain that this act of love to him would be far greater than giving him both life and fortune without such expense.

Thus we have seen that the superiority of God's unspeakable gift consists in the dignity of the Redeemer's person, the manner in which He is given – particularly the mysterious condescension involved – and the value of His satisfaction. Some scriptures lead us to notice further a particular superiority in this gift when we consider those to whom it is given: "Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." Those who receive Christ are indeed the same persons who receive heaven, but in a spiritual sense they were not the same creatures when Christ was given to them as they are when heaven is given. After receiving Christ, the sinner is a "new man" or a "new creature". There is therefore a plain difference: heaven is given to the perfect saint, the faithful servant, the child of God. Christ was given to the sinner, the stranger, the enemy.

Heaven is a blessing that fully satisfies the highest desires of a rational creature; but this other favour is above the highest desires. We can think of a sinner seeking heaven from God before God intimates His purpose to give it; but we cannot imagine any sinner seeking Christ, unless God had revealed His purpose of giving Him. This gift was found of them who sought it not. How could all the world have presumed to desire the Son of God to come down and die on a cross for them, to redeem them by His own blood? Paul speaks of God giving His people more than all they ask or think.

Sinners could not have asked for Christ's incarnation and sacrifice; it is scarcely possible that they could have thought of it. Even among men, no criminal ever seriously asked the judge to bear the sentence himself,

especially a sentence for crimes committed against the judge himself. Yet how small is the distance between a judge and a criminal, either as to standing or guilt; between us and Christ the distance is infinite.

So, when we praise God for His mercy, we praise Him for what we could not have prayed for – indeed what we could not have thought of. It is the chief thing God prepared for His people, which eye had not seen, nor ear heard, nor could enter into the heart of man – nor, we may add, into any mind below infinite wisdom. The expressions of Scripture about angels looking into these things seem to indicate surprise. No one can pretend that the principalities and powers of heaven ever knew so much before of God’s love, or of God who is love. Before this was revealed, they did not know before how much God could love, especially such unlovely objects; and how far His pity could go, and how low His condescension.

Finally, as to the *application* of this doctrine, it is plain we ought to apply it in meditating on every other doctrine of Christianity; it is the centre of, and serves to give light to, them all. We will mention only a few inferences.

1. For any of us to pretend to have faith in Christ, without good works is to be desperately lacking in gratitude and understanding; so also if we pretend to be impressed by God’s chief mercy, without loving and obeying Him, and to be impressed by the chief manifestation of the evil of sin, without warring against it.

2. On the other hand, let those who neglect this gift of righteousness, and place their own good works in its place, consider what was said about that gift, that pearl of price. It shows them that any good works that are preferred to it must atone for rejecting the gift.

3. Particularly we should carefully apply the doctrine, with dependence on God’s grace, to the holy exercise of divine worship relating to the work of redemption – our proper work at this sacrament. The doctrine insisted on shows that this work is the noblest and highest we are capable of. We may obtain some impression of this by comparing it with any of our other works.

Man is endowed with various faculties, all useful, but some higher than others. And the highest exercises of the soul relate to the most excellent objects. Highest of all is the worship of God, in which the mind is occupied about an infinitely-excellent object. We noted that God’s mercies are above all His other works. Worshipping Him should therefore be above all our other works. Christ is above all other mercies; so worshipping God for Christ should be absolutely above all other worship. It is the highest kind of spiritual exercise that we are capable of.

Scripture represents the angels as enraptured with it – they have much greater skill in it – but it concerns us more directly and we are under a greater

obligation. Paul distinguishes between glorifying God and being thankful to Him: "When they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful". We should even glorify God for all His works towards others. Thankfulness is the debt we owe for His favours to ourselves. Instead of treating it as a burden, we should triumph in it as an inestimable privilege. To be obliged to great thankfulness and love is to be obliged to a high degree of joy. If we dare not give thanks for an actual interest in that chief gift, we are obliged at least to give thanks for the offer of it. Till we have a sure interest in it, our chief ground of thankfulness and joy is that the chief gift of God is offered to the chief of sinners.

Praise and thankfulness are not our whole work. Praise is common to us with angels; praise and thanksgiving are common to us with the saints made perfect. It is all we know of their work, but *we* also are to pray – desiring what the saints enjoy. The angels look into these things admiringly, but there is a difference between that and receiving them. It is not good to be a mere spectator at the Lord's Supper, but to be a mere spectator of what it represents is the worst work of a sinner. For a destitute sinner to see such danger without desiring relief – to see such relief without embracing it; to see such a pearl, such a gift of infinite value, offered to him without grasping it – is the greatest affront to God and cruelty to himself that he is capable of.

The doctrine insisted on shows that we should use, through divine grace, great earnestness, like Jacob's holy, humble wrestling in believing prayer – taking the kingdom of heaven with spiritual, reverent violence. We show the greatest reverence for God when we are most earnest to be delivered from His just displeasure and from those sins that procure it. The doctrine shows how appropriately faith is called precious, since it receives the pearl of great price. This should make us renew our consent to the covenant and receive the seal of it cheerfully. And what is required of us, in order to obtain a title to all things, is to receive what is more than all things.

Next we should apply the doctrine to eating our passover with the bitter herbs of repentance. The greatness of God's mercy proves the greatness of guilt if we are ungrateful for it. As all of us are more or less thus guilty, the believer's guilt is specially aggravated; it is not only against the offer of this mercy but against its actual application. No wonder then that the most eminent saints are those who have the greatest sorrow for sin, as well as the greatest delight in duty, and sorrow for sin is one of the chief means of delight in duty.

The evil of the sin against the Holy Ghost is no objection to this assertion that ingratitude for Christ is the chief sin; this rather confirms it, because that sin is a particular kind of this ingratitude; it shows the evil of all such ingratitude, since the worst act of it is unpardonable. The sin against the Spirit of

Christ shows special disrespect to the gift of Christ, disrespect which applies to all His other gifts; it shows the danger of abusing any of them. It is sufficient for our purpose to note that it is called trampling under foot the Son of God, and crucifying Him afresh; this shows that it is the greatest abuse of His greatest gift. Since it can never be forgiven or repented of, it should stimulate us to repent of every abuse of that gift which may be forgiven.

We should reflect that despising redemption involves special guilt, beyond other sins which make us need redemption. The folly which poisoned our souls and brought us under the sentence of death is wisdom, if compared to the folly of refusing the cure and rejecting the remission. This is especially so when the cure is prepared with such kindness that it is the Physician's own heart's blood. Besides it is offered so freely that the best blessings which can be desired are ours if we sincerely desire them – offered not only so freely but with such tenderness that the Sovereign beseeches the criminal by His inspired ambassadors, and the remission is joined with the offer of an endless inheritance. And the gift that purchased both is of infinite value. This shows how far divine mercy could go; so the sin of rejecting it shows how far human wickedness can go. And the greatness of this gift of God, compared with man's treatment of it, shows His condescension and our ingratitude at its uttermost.

“If I had not come”, says Christ, “they had not had sin”; and that is the sin that will at last make the case of Capernaum more intolerable than that of Sodom, since it is the sin that has no parallel on earth, or even in hell. It is a sin the devils know only by speculation, by seeing it in us, having no experience of it themselves. When the devil tempts people to many other sins, he sets a pattern before he lays the snare; when he tempts to lying or murder, he is himself a liar and a murderer from the beginning. But when he tempts them to despise redemption, he tempts them to a sin of which he is innocent. Whatever example the devils give in other cases, the despiser of redemption sets a pattern which these angels are not capable of following.

Though we do not know the nature of their first sin, Scripture shows that the condescension involved in the Son of God assuming their nature would not have been quite so great as in assuming ours. We should consider that, though they oppose the work of redemption, it was not their redemption but ours. Such considerations should not only excite sorrow in those who have never embraced this chief mercy and in effect renounce all benefit by it; it should excite sorrow even in sincere believers, who have embraced it but have not been careful enough to show due gratitude for it. This is an accusation from which no one can free themselves; not only have we many times neglected to praise and give thanks for it, in directly addressing God – for our very

acts of praise and thanksgiving most clearly show our ingratitude for it, on account of how we performed them. Even if there was no other argument for the corruption of our nature, the cold and indifferent way that we praise God for Christ is a demonstration of it.

Repentance for this ingratitude and unbelief is one of the best exercises of faith and love, and one of the best helps to prayer and other spiritual exercises, so suited to the time of the Lord's Supper. But not only at this time are they suitable, but before and after it, and always. To communicate assumes they are our habitual practice, and it is designed to promote them, yet we should engage in them more at this time than any other. To partake of the Lord's Supper is beyond prayer, praise and meditation because it joins these together and adds to them. It is beyond mere spiritual exercises of worship, because of how it involves not only the soul but also the body. It is more like heaven than communion with God, because this takes place in the visible communion of saints. It is beyond private duties, because it is public; and beyond other public ordinances, because the use of them is joined to it.

In the Lord's Supper we not merely commemorate God's chief gift, but receive Him solemnly; what it especially communicates is the very consummation of the Redeemer's death. It is an honourable distinction that the Redeemer Himself appointed it, when He was entering upon those last sufferings which it chiefly commemorates. That should not make it seem a burden but a delight. It is more the Lord's work than it is ours. His work at His table is to give, ours is to receive.

If we could look at our own work from outside ourselves, we would easily realise that we cannot imagine any work on earth so honourable. The chief sight that the world ever saw was the King of kings dying on a cross for His guilty subjects. But next to that, can there be a greater sight than a crowd of such subjects, once condemned criminals, now assembled at their reconciled Sovereign's table, at a feast, to receive a sealed remission of all their guilt, be granted an everlasting inheritance, and receiving a foretaste of it, having as it were the pearl of great price in their hands, jointly doing honour to God's greatest mercy and chief gift, jointly employed about the noblest spiritual exercises we can conceive any creature on earth or in heaven is capable of?

The excellence of the work shows its solemnity, the importance of carrying out the duty aright and the danger of the opposite. If therefore we consider our work as a receiving of Christ, we should seriously consider that we can never receive any gift like Him to all eternity. And when we come to receive Him at His table, we make the most solemn appearance before Him that ever we can make on earth till He comes again.

To His name be glory and honour and immortal praise for ever and ever.

Effectual Calling¹

3. The Need for the Spirit's Work

Rev D A Ross

Effectual calling is initiated by God, not by man, but evidence of it will appear in the saved sinner. The state of the dry bones, in Ezekiel 37, was intended to highlight the national calamities of Israel, and it also brings home to us the extent of spiritual death in the soul of man. And their resurrection shows the power of the Almighty to reverse the situation.

Again we are told in Ezekiel 11:19-20 of a total change in the hearts of those who previously were thoroughly devoted to abominable idolatries: "I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: that they may walk in My statutes, and keep Mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be My people and I will be their God". Thus when the Holy Spirit calls sinners effectually, He convinces them of their sin and misery and their lack of the perfect righteousness that the moral law demands. He further brings them to understand that this perfect righteousness is found in Christ alone, and finally enables them by faith to receive Christ and His unspotted righteousness as the one answer to their guilt and condemnation.

As well as saying something further about effectual calling, we wish to show that such is the awful spiritual darkness and corruption in the heart of man that it is necessary for *the Lord* to bring about the saving change in a sinner. We have already pointed to man refusing gospel invitations; we will now show a little of man's spiritual corruption and darkness.

The doctrine of the work of the Holy Spirit in the soul of man is clearly taught in the Scriptures; Psalm 110 states, "A willing people in Thy day of power shall come to Thee". We are not looking at persons who are in any way willing to adopt God's way of salvation, or who have some degree of grace tending to the salvation of their soul, or who through great oratory may be persuaded to receive Christ as Saviour. They are in fact deeply opposed to the way of salvation; so they need to be renewed in the whole man after the image of God, "by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Tts 3:5).

Indeed we can have no conception of the abysmal spiritual state of the human soul. It is not merely that man is unable to recover himself; there is also strong opposition to any such deliverance. Fallen man has no desire to be delivered from sin, or for God to work a spiritual change in him. He is

¹Last month's section of this Theological Conference paper showed that effectual calling is based on the complete salvation wrought out by Christ.

perfectly happy to continue in sin. “Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways” (Job 21:14). This shows the need for God to work.

The more we ponder the spiritual darkness of the soul, the worse it appears. All the spiritual corruption in the heart is in active rebellion against our Maker. This is spiritual death – but a spiritual death that is by no means dormant. It does not matter who the person is, whether amiable, polite, mild-tempered – even if he is the gentlest of people – in him there is the carnal mind, which is enmity against God. Our spiritual disposition is in constant opposition to God. As those who lived before the flood were evil continually, so it is with us. There is a total rejection of God’s dominion and holiness. It is war against God, as represented in Christ’s parable: “His citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us” (Lk 19:14). The highest point of this rebellion was the crucifixion of Christ, the Son of God. Thy said, “Away with Him”, and, “Crucify Him”. Evidently some extraordinary intervention is needed to rescue such a creature from this bitter frame of mind. Noah found grace in the sight of God, but this grace was from God. This is what we also need.

Pilate, the heathen judge, discerned the deep enmity of the people to Christ, but he wondered: if he gave them a further opportunity, would they perhaps prefer to release Christ, since it was the custom at the time of the passover to release a noted prisoner. The people, however, did the opposite of what Pilate expected; they chose Barabbas the thief and rejected Christ. They cried, “Not this man but Barabbas”. This was true to God’s description: man will call evil good and good evil.

To make matters worse, they spat on the Saviour, the source of gospel blessings. This testifies loudly to corrupt man’s spiritual disposition towards Christ and His Word, for they spat on the fountain of salvation, pardon and eternal peace. Such are the realities of depravity, and they speak loudly of the necessity of a saving change.

I have intentionally been repetitive, again and again speaking about rejecting the gospel, as well as the corruption of the human heart that lies behind this rejection. This was to emphasise the fact that nothing short of a saving change will save man from the spiritual darkness to which he is hopelessly in bondage. I may say too that the fact of Christ Jesus coming into the world to save such sinners will be an eternal wonder to the saints in glory, as will the fact of the Holy Spirit entering into such a cesspool of spiritual corruption to give a clean heart. Not an iota of praise is due to those who are saved; the praise all belongs to the Triune God who chose these vile sinners, redeemed them and applied redemption to them.

Fallen angels are eternally lost, but mankind also is lost. And were it not for the wisdom of God in providing for a new creation, man would be eternally lost. The Prophet Ezekiel said of the dry bones of the valley: "Lo, they were very dry". The Lord then asks, "Son of man, can these bones live?" Ezekiel, knowing the wisdom of the Lord, said, "O Lord God, Thou knowest". Afterwards God directed Ezekiel to prophesy to these bones: "Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live". Then there followed a wonderful resurrection of these bones, which had been so "very dry".

While the first intention of the vision was to show that God would revive Israel from its political, religious and social poverty, the vision also reveals the Most High's purpose to bring about a great saving change in the souls of sinners, by making the outward call of the gospel take effect in their souls and bringing them to repentance and new obedience. The Most High brings this about in those He has elected to eternal life. He has set His love on a particular number of those to whom the gospel comes, to bring them to a saving interest in Christ.

The Bible tells us that God made such a choice, while other sinners were passed by. Christ told His disciples: "I have chosen you out of the world" (Jn 15:19). Paul reminds the Ephesian believers: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 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: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved" (Eph 1:3-6). This is entirely the doing of the Lord. "Ye have not chosen Me," He says, "but I have chosen you" (Jn 15:16).

This doctrine is very much detested by sections of the visible Church, who put their their own interpretations on such statements of the Saviour, to make it mean something other than what was intended. But had there been no election, no one would be saved. Where would Zacchaeus be were this not so, to whom Christ said, "This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham" (Lk 19:9)?

Election does not mean those who were chosen to eternal life have certain moral qualities that made them fit to be chosen, in preference to others who do not have these qualities. Not so: rather from the one corrupt mass of mankind it pleased God to choose a particular number of sinners and leave the rest to perish in their rebellion. And why did God choose one sinner to eternal life and leave another to a sinful lifestyle? Paul tells us: "Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth"

(Rom 9:18) – that is, He leaves them to their own sinful wishes, and justly so: God has done them no wrong. But is it not true that those elected have this sinful disposition, and why then did God chose them? The answer is the same: “Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy”. A great wonder indeed! And more so, because among them were those who wickedly slew the Lord of glory, as is evident from Christ’s prayer: “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Lk 23:34).

It is not only that they were chosen to eternal life, but the Father chose Christ Jesus to be their Redeemer. Which means in turn that the atonement for sin made by Christ is specifically for those elected to eternal life. Christ speaks to the Father about “them which Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine” (Jn 17:9).

This, however, does not mean that the gospel call is limited to those elected to eternal life, as hyper-Calvinists maintain. Rather, as we have already noticed, it is to be proclaimed to all. One reason for this is that the atonement is suited to all sinners to whom the gospel comes, but it is chiefly so that those elected may hear the gospel way of salvation. For it is impossible for them to be saved apart from hearing about sin and salvation. Thus Ezekiel was directed to prophesy, or preach, to the dry bones: “O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord”. Yes, a sincere offer of salvation is made to all who hear the gospel; but only the elect, by the effectual work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts, will receive Christ as their Saviour. As we have pointed out, the unregenerate always refuse this sincere offer of Christ as their Saviour.

There have always been those in the Church who object strongly to a limited [or, definite] atonement, and strive to prove that the atonement is universal – that Christ died for all men equally. But this must mean that Christ died for sinners who go at last to a lost eternity. In the light of the Word of God, this is totally untenable. It demeans all the offices of Christ and the effectual work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of all for whom Christ died.

Christ as Priest – Some Lessons¹

Thomas Boston

1. How wonderful is the love of God in appointing an Intercessor for us, not an angel, but His own beloved Son! Were we left to ourselves, and to our own pleas, our least sins would ruin us, and all the grounds of intercession we could plead upon would be rejected, as unworthy of acceptance before the throne of God.

¹An edited extract from Boston’s *Works*, vol 1.

2. How wonderful is the love of our Redeemer, in condescending to act so friendly a part to us, notwithstanding all our unworthiness and foul transgressions against Him! How it should fill our hearts with wonder, that He who is our Judge, should take upon Him to manage our cause in the court of heaven; that He who has a mouth to condemn us, and wrath to consume us for our sins, should bind the arms of His wrath, and employ His tongue to pursue our cause in the court of heaven, and procure us the richest blessings!

3. Then true believers have a friend in the court of heaven, who is their agent in their cause, managing their concerns, and will make all things work together for their good. Whatever their cause is, and however fearful they may be about the outcome, all shall go right at length, through the interest of their mighty Intercessor.

4. Believers cannot finally and utterly fall away: for they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. Their Redeemer ever lives to make intercession for them. So that neither their own sins, nor all the temptations of Satan, nor the frowns or allurements of the world, shall ever prevail to make them fall from their steadfastness, or from the favour of God: for Christ, as their High Priest, has died for their sins, and will never intermit His pleas to God in their behalf till they are safely brought to glory.

5. Use the Lord Jesus Christ as your High Priest, to bring you to God, depending on His merit as the ground of the expiation of your guilt, and giving you a title unto eternal life. And make use of Him as your Advocate with the Father, to procure you all the blessings you stand in need of for time and eternity.

No Other Gods¹

Mackintosh Mackay

Exodus 20:3. *Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.*

Surely the heart of man is indeed a heart of stone, unfeeling, impenetrable, senseless, hard and resistant in relation to God, in receiving knowledge of Him, and acknowledging His being and His dominion. How great and marvellous were the works of God to the people here addressed! How wonderful the ways in which He manifested His being and supremacy to them!

Was it possible that any of the hundreds of thousands of Israelites who came out of Egypt could ever cease to remember that verily He is God, and

¹Taken, with editing, from *The Christian's Daily Companion*. Mackay (1793-1873) was at this time a minister in Dunoon.

that there is none besides Him? When He condescends to say to them, “I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage”; we would suppose that God was uttering a truth which they must already have known most thoroughly, in their inmost souls. They had seen much idolatry in Egypt – a whole nation esteeming themselves learned, wise, civilized and powerful, beyond all the other nations of earth. They were bowing down to idols and serving them – changing “the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things” (Rom 1:23).

But they had seen how God, the true God, had mocked all these things, when His mighty arm was revealed to deliver His people from bondage. They had beheld the mighty doings of the Lord, the stupendous miracles He had wrought, and the inability of all other wisdom and power to withstand His working. And while all this was revealed, in terror and destruction to the enemies and oppressors of the children of Israel, they particularly experienced Almighty God’s wonderful mercy to themselves.

It was on their behalf that God’s almighty arm was revealed, His divine faithfulness in His promises to their fathers confirmed, established and ratified in His works of wonder. And would they not now trust Him? Was it likely that any of them would ever think that there was any other God but this one true, almighty and merciful God, who had so revealed Himself to them and had delivered them out of the hands of those who had hated and oppressed them?

How foolish to think well of our own hearts! Lord, what is man? What a monster of vile ingratitude, what a rebel against Thee! Could any commandment be more reasonable than this? Did they not already feel its authority in their very souls? “The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity” (Ps 94:11). They had already forgotten God; they had murmured against Him; and they soon showed – even before this commandment had issued from the glories of His presence that rested on the mount of Sinai – that idolatry was in their hearts and that they did not regard the true God. Not even all His works toward them had reclaimed them.

There is much that is penetratingly instructive in the very form of the precept: “Thou shalt have no other gods before Me”; or, “Thou shalt not have any other gods before Me”. This looks to the heart within, beholding how prone the evil heart of unbelief is to depart from the living God. It speaks to a rebellious heart, while it speaks in mercy and love. The heart is prone to forget and to deny God; indeed, there is enmity against Him, which rebels against His holy authority and tramples His benefits and His mercies under foot. It is a wonder to see God remonstrating with the sinner, and by

His mercies, His manifested kindnesses, and the evidences of His wonderful, sovereign love, proclaiming His mercy to be over all His works; but proclaiming also that there is, in the fallen, debased, guilty soul of man, the deep principle of rebellion against Him.

And here, God speaks to them personally: *thou*. He takes them one by one, letting none escape. “*Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.*” The evil is in the individual heart: the root of bitterness, the poison of sin, the disease of unbelief, the source of all practical ungodliness and actual sin. To the individual heart the commandment of God is addressed.

But taking this commandment in its most literal sense, if we consider the state and the history of the whole world ever since sin entered, do we not see why this commandment should take precedence of all others in God’s holy law? Idolatry is the reigning outward sin, the universal and prevailing evil; the open and bare-faced denial of the true God which He beholds rising from His own fallen rational creatures, insulting His majesty and destroying the souls of His intelligent and moral subjects. And, when we trace the progress of all this to its source, we trace it to the individual evil heart, that does not like to retain God in its knowledge (Rom 1:28). This is the evil tendency of sin and proofs of it are sadly many.

Think, my soul, does not this commandment speak to you the words of divine, almighty and eternal authority? Is not this the evil disease of my heart – denying God, putting the remembrance of Him away from me and rebelling against His authority and His will? If there is in me what resents the strictness of His requirements, is this not to wish that God is other than He actually is – a God more accommodating to the sin that is in my nature? Behold then the source of all error, the source of all idolatry, in the individual soul polluted by sin, that has become the enemy of the one living and true God.

Surely the first and most important of all truths is that there is a God, and that I, as an individual, have to do with that God. This commandment therefore stands at the head of God’s unchangeable moral law; it is its true place. The eternal importance of the subject itself demands it. The cause of God’s glory requires it. The sin that has the mastery over the soul also demands to be met by this most solemn requirement. And transgression of this precept in the heart produces, as its bitter and evil fruit, the habitual, practical violation of every other commandment of God. Here, then, let the sinner and God meet: God challenging this as His eternal, rightful claim of supremacy; the sinner denying it to Him, not acknowledging God in his heart, not liking to retain God in his knowledge.

And are you, my soul, guilty of breaking this commandment? Guilty! The word is but faint and feeble to express the amount of my guilt. Let God write

it in the face of heaven against me, in flames of fire more awful than blazed on Sinai's summit, and let Him say to me from heaven, in a voice of louder thunders than made Sinai quake: Thou art the man. Then all would set forth the awful fact of my individual guilt.

Let my soul ponder this; let my stony heart be broken and melted to feel it. What have I ever been doing but breaking this commandment? What was all the idolatry of Egypt, or of the nations of Canaan, compared to that of the natural heart, from which those outward abominations resulted – that guilty preference given to every other object above God, by which He is denied, by which His holy name and being are treated by the soul even as if there is no God?

But here, blessed be His own gracious name, He offers Himself to the soul as God in covenant, through Jesus Christ, to be my God. He has wrought – and He has put on record – greater wonders than those done in Egypt. A greater than Moses is here: the Lord Jesus Christ, having overcome the enemies of the soul, having made atonement for guilt. And God is in Him reconciling the guilty to Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. Let my soul know Thee, O Lord, as Thou art revealed in the Son. And embracing Him as the way to the Father, may Thy Holy Spirit, baptizing my soul as with fire, melt the heart of stone and make it a heart of flesh on which Thy laws shall be written. Let me not be satisfied without that experience of Thy saving grace which enabled thy servant to say, “I delight in the law of God after the inward man” (Rom 7:22.)

What the Gospel Is¹

The gospel, strictly taken, contains neither commands nor threatenings, but is glad tidings of salvation to sinful men through Christ, revealed in doctrines and promises; and these revealed to men as sinners, stout-hearted, and far from righteousness.

In the gospel, taken strictly and as contra-distinct from the law, for a *doctrine of grace*, or *good news* from heaven, of help in God through Jesus

¹An extract from *The Old Gospel Way*, edited by Andrew A Bonar. This small book should be available in October, God willing, from Free Presbyterian Publications. It contains extracts from a volume compiled by John Brown of Whitburn (a son of John Brown of Haddington) entitled *Gospel Truth accurately stated and illustrated*. In this work, Brown had collected extracts from the writings of the Marrow men (Thomas Boston, the Erskines and their associates) which illustrate the heart of their teaching in defence of Evangelical truth (see also footnote 2). More recently, Bonar selected some of the best of Brown's extracts. The footnotes that follow indicate the authors of the individual quotations.

Christ, to lost, self-destroying creatures of Adam's race (or, the glad tidings of a Saviour, with life and salvation in Him to the chief of sinners), there are no precepts. All these (the command to believe and repent not excepted) belong to and flow from the law, which *fastens the new duty* on us, the same moment *the gospel reveals the new object*.

That in the gospel, taken strictly, there are no precepts seems evident from the holy Scriptures. In the first revelation of it, made in these words, The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent (Gen 3:15), we find no precept, but a promise, containing glad tidings of a Saviour, with grace, mercy, life and salvation in Him, to lost sinners of Adam's family. And the gospel preached unto Abraham, namely, "In thee [that is, in thy seed, which is Christ] shall all nations be blessed" (Gal 3:8, compared with Gen 12:3, 22:18; Acts 3:25, is of the same nature).

The good tidings of great joy to all people, of a Saviour born in the city of David, who is Christ the Lord, brought and proclaimed from heaven by the angels (Lk 2:10), we take to have been the gospel, strictly and properly so called; yet is there no precept in these tidings. We find likewise, the gospel of peace, and glad tidings of good things, are in Scripture convertible terms (Rom 10:15). And the word of the gospel, which Peter spoke to the Gentiles that they might believe, was no other than peace by Jesus Christ, crucified, risen, and exalted to be Judge of quick and dead, with remission of sins through His name, to be received by everyone believing in Him (Acts 15:7, 10:36).²

This is in proper terms the gospel: namely, the special doctrine touching man's redemption and reconciliation with God, by means of Jesus Christ: the revelation whereof was indeed the gladdest tidings that were ever brought to the ears of mortal man. Which gospel, in strict terms, the angels preached (Lk 2:10), and afterward Christ, and His apostles, fully explained the mystery of it to the world.³

By way of eminence and excellency, it signifies the most happy and pleasant news of the comforting coming of our Redeemer Jesus Christ – though it is sometimes taken in a general, and at other times in a special sense. When taken generally, it contains the gospel promise of Christ, and the

²The Representers' *Answers to Queries*. When *The Marrow of Modern Divinity* was condemned by the Church of Scotland General Assembly in 1720, twelve Marrow men appealed against the decision by producing a document called the *Representation and Petition*. In the debate that followed, the Assembly summoned the Representers to respond to a series of queries submitted to them by the Assembly. Their *Answers to Queries* was the response of the Marrow men.

³William Pemble (1592?-1623) was a Puritan divine and an able preacher. He was the author of many books, all of which were published after his early death.

accomplishment thereof (as Gal 3:6). But taken more especially, and when restricted to the coming of Christ, (1) it denotes the history of Christ manifested in the flesh (as Mark 1:2); (2) it is taken for the joyful doctrine and publication of the reconciliation of sinful men unto God, by the gracious pardon of their sins, purchased to them by the expiatory death of Christ, offered indefinitely to all, revealed to the poor in spirit, and to babes, but applied particularly to believers for their salvation, and that for displaying the everlasting praise of divine mercy mixed with justice.⁴

1. The gospel is a report from heaven of salvation for poor sinners from sin and from the wrath of God; however dear[ly] bought, yet freely made over to you in the word of promise, so as that ye may freely take possession of it. This report being brought to the sinner, faith trusts it as a true report, believing that God has said it; and trusts to it as good, laying our salvation upon it. So the soul greedily embraceth the Saviour, and the salvation brought to it in that report; as ever a drowning man would take hold of a rope let down to bring him out of the waters.

2. The gospel is the report of a crucified Christ made over to sinners, as the device of heaven for their salvation. It is proclaimed by the authority of heaven that Christ has died and, by His death, purchased life and salvation for lost children of Adam; and that they and every one of them may have free and full access to Him. Faith trusting this report as true and good, the soul concludes the Saviour is mine, and leans to Him for all the purchase of His death, for life and salvation to itself in particular.

3. The gospel is the report of a righteousness wherein guilty ones may stand before a holy God. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: and by faith one believes there is such a righteousness, that it is sufficient to cover him, and that it is held out to be trusted on for righteousness. And so the believer trusts it as his righteousness in the sight of God, disclaiming all other, and betaking himself to it alone.

4. The gospel is the report of pardon, under the great seal of heaven, in Christ, to all who will take it in Him. "Be it known unto you . . . that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him all that believe are justified from all things" (Acts 13:38,39). This pardon is proclaimed openly by the authority of heaven, full and free without exception of any of lost Adam's race, to whom the report comes. The soul by faith believes this to be true, and applies it to itself, saying, This pardon is for me, it is good and suitable to my case. I will therefore lean to this word of grace for my pardon, and come in, for this is the word of God that cannot lie.

⁴Leyden Professors. This is a reference to the Theological Faculty of the University of Leyden in Holland, which included many eminent Reformed theologians.

5. The gospel is the report of a physician who cures all the diseases of the soul infallibly and freely, and respects no patients. The soul believes it, and applies it to his own case, and says, Then I will trust Him for removing the stony heart out of my flesh, for curing me of the evil of backsliding, the fever of raging corruption, the running issue of my predominant lust, and the universal corruption of my nature.

6. The gospel is the report of a feast for hungry souls, to which all are bid welcome, Christ Himself being the matter and maker of it too. The soul, weary of the husks of created things, and believing this report, accordingly falls a-feeding on Christ (His flesh, which is meat indeed; and His blood, which is drink indeed), believing and applying to itself all that Christ was, did, and suffered, as that whereof the soul shall reap the benefit, which is the feeding by faith on a slain Saviour.

7. The gospel is the report of a treasure. In it are the precious promises, within them precious Christ, with His merit, like the gold mentioned in Revelation 3:18: "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich". The field it is hid in may be yours (in possession); the gospel offers you the covenant as that field. Faith believes this report, and the soul lays hold on the covenant, and trusts entirely to the treasure hid there, for the payment of all its debts, for its through-bearing during life and through death, and for procuring it eternal happiness.

8. The gospel is the report of a victory won by Jesus Christ over sin, Satan, death, and the world, and that in favour of all that will join the glorious conqueror. Faith believes this report, and trusts to it for its victory over all these, as already foiled enemies.⁵

Character of the Scottish Reformation¹

2. God Speaks Plainly in His Word

D Hay Fleming

An Act passed, on 29 November 1581, by James VI with the advice of his Three Estates, ratifying and approving previous Acts "for maintenance of the liberty of the true Kirk of God and religion now presently professed within this realm and purity thereof" specifies the first three of the four Acts

⁵Thomas Boston.

¹Taken, with editing, from Hay Fleming's *The Reformation in Scotland*. Last month's article began to give evidence that the Scottish Reformation was a thorough work. The leaders of the Church wanted "the grave and godly face of the primitive Church to be restored, ignorance expelled, and true doctrine to appear again".

already mentioned, and also “the *Confession of the Faith* professed by the Protestants of Scotland”. And so, within a period of little more than 21 years, the papal jurisdiction was abolished, the mass prohibited, and the *Confession* of 1560 approved, by three Scottish Parliaments. On the other hand, the *First Book of Discipline*, drawn up by the same six men in the same year, was never ratified by Parliament.

In Knox’s opinion, the approval or ratification of the *Confession* by kings or parliaments was not a matter of much importance; for our religion, which is from God, “has full power, and needeth not the suffrage of man but in so far as man hath need to believe it, if that ever he shall have participation of the life everlasting”. But with the *Book of Discipline* it was otherwise. Unless ratified by the civil authority, some of its most important recommendations could not be carried out: for example, those concerning the stipends of ministers and teachers, the support of the poor, and the reorganisation of the universities. The Book was duly presented to the nobility. Some approved of it, and wished it to be ratified; but others, “perceiving their carnal liberty and property somewhat to be impaired thereby, grudged, insomuch that the name of the *Book of Discipline* became odious unto them”. Their reasons were obvious. Some of them were licentious, some had greedily seized the possessions of the Church, and some expected to share in the plunder. Those who obtained most of the Church rents were the most unmerciful to the poor ministers.

But at a Convention of the Estates held in Edinburgh in January 1561, the *Book of Discipline* was again brought forward and, according to one contemporary, “six whole days were spent in examination and reasoning thereon, the matter well debated, divers well satisfied, and in the end approved by common consent”. Yet this convention as such did not approve or authorise the *Book of Discipline*, although a considerable number of the nobles subscribed it and promised to promote its objects to the utmost of their power, provided the prelates who conformed to the new order should enjoy their revenues for life. The preachers urgently pressed for the formal establishing of the *Book*, and Knox used his *History* to show what worldlings had refused, and what the godly ministers had desired, and that posterity might “either establish [something] more perfect, or else imitate that which avariciousness would not suffer this corrupt generation to approve”.

In the Preface, the object of the *Book* is said to be: that a common order and uniformity may be observed in the realm concerning doctrine, administration of the sacraments, election of ministers, provision for sustaining them, church discipline, and government of the Kirk. The *Book of Discipline* refers to “the *Order* of Geneva, which now is used in some of our kirks,” and to

“our *Book of Common Order*”. Thus the *Book of Common Order* was not only used in some Protestant congregations in Scotland at least three months before Parliament overthrew the papal jurisdiction, but was recognised at that early date by those who framed the *Book of Discipline*. As there were then no presbyteries, synods, or general assembly, the congregations must at that time have acted with considerable independence. The first General Assembly did not meet until 20 December 1560, four months after Parliament had ratified the *Confession of Faith*, seven months after the *First Book of Discipline* had been framed, and at least as many after some congregations had adopted the *Book of Common Order*.

The thoroughness of the Scottish Reformation is shown in the *Confession*, the *Book of Discipline* and the *Book of Common Order*, not only by the vigorous language which these documents apply to the Church of Rome, but also and more effectively by the broad lines of demarcation laid down in them. Of the seven sacraments of the Church of Rome, only two were retained: baptism and the Lord’s Supper. And these two, stripped of their accretions and administered in their pristine purity and simplicity, were declared to be more than bare signs.

Unlike their brethren of England, the Reformers of Scotland did not retain confirmation in any shape or form. They not only renounced “holy order” (ordination) as a sacrament but, in the admission of ministers, they approved of no ceremony beyond the public approbation of the people, and the declaration of the chief (or, presiding) minister that the person admitted was appointed to serve that kirk. They explained that they did not think that the imposition of hands was necessary, for, although the apostles used it, the miracle had ceased.² As for apostolical succession, it was repudiated, along with antiquity, as being no sign or note of the true Church.

The Church of Scotland, like that of England, held that the canonical Scriptures contained everything necessary for salvation, but the *Confession* of 1560 differs from the Thirty-Nine Articles in not recognising the apocryphal books in any way – not even as profitable “for example of life and instruction of manners” (Article 6); and the *Confession* declares that the interpretation of Scripture appertains neither to private nor public persons, nor to any Church, but to “the Spirit of God, by the which also the Scripture was written”. In the event of controversy as to the meaning of any part or sentence of Scripture, or for the reforming of any abuse in the Church, “we ought not so much to look what men before us have said or done, as unto that which the Holy Ghost uniformly speaks within the body of the Scriptures, and into

²In the *Second Book of Discipline*, however, “imposition of hands of the eldership” is mentioned as one of the ceremonies of ordination, the others being fasting and earnest prayer.

that which Christ Jesus Himself did and commanded to be done”. And the framers of the *Confession* go on to show that they did not wish either themselves, or others, to be restrained by the opinions of fallible men.

No interpretation of any teacher, kirk, or council which was incompatible with a plain passage of Scripture could be right, no matter how universally it had been approved. As the *Confession* has it, everything necessary to be believed for the salvation of mankind “is sufficiently expressed” in the Bible; or, as the *Book of Discipline* has it, “In which books of [the] Old and New Testaments we affirm that all things necessary for the instruction of the Kirk, and to make the man of God perfect, is contained and sufficiently expressed”.

The practical outcome of all this, so far as the individual was concerned, Knox thus laid down to his queen: “Ye shall believe God, that plainly speaketh in His Word: and farther than the Word teaches you ye neither shall believe” Protestant or Papist. “The Word of God is plain in itself; and if there appear any obscurity in one place, the Holy Ghost, which is never contrary to Himself, explains the same more clearly in other places, so that there can remain no doubt, but unto such as obstinately remain ignorant.”

Teaching on Election¹

John Newton

As you profess that you are an inquirer and desire to form a judgement agreeable to the Word of God, without being influenced by the authority of names and parties, I willingly embrace the occasion you offer me. You say that, though you are not prejudiced against the doctrines of election and perseverance of the saints, they appear to you attended with such difficulties that you cannot yet heartily and fully assent to them. May the Lord the Spirit, whose office it is to guide His people into all truth, guide my pen and accompany what I shall write with His blessing. I shall only offer a few unpremeditated hints, in the same manner as if I was personally conversing with you.

Permit me to remind you, in the first place, of that important statement, (which, by the way, seems to speak strongly in favour of the doctrines in question): “A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven” (Jn 3:27). If you should only accede to my opinions through my persuasion, you would be little benefited by the exchange. The Lord alone can give us the true, vital, comforting and useful knowledge of His own truths.

¹An edited extract from a letter from Newton to someone who was not fully convinced of this doctrine (taken from Newton’s *Works*, Banner of Truth reprint, 1985, vol 1).

We may become wise in ideas, and so far masters of a system of doctrine, as to be able to argue, object and fight in favour of our own hypothesis, by dint of application and natural abilities, but we rightly understand what we say only if we have a spiritual perception of it wrought in our hearts by the power of the Holy Ghost. It is not by noisy disputation, but by humble waiting upon God in prayer and a careful perusal of His holy Word, that we are to expect a satisfactory, experimental and efficacious knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. I am persuaded that you are seeking in this way; if so, I am confident you shall not seek in vain. The Lord teaches effectually, though for the most part gradually. The path of the just is compared to the light, which is very faint at the early dawn, but shines more and more to the perfect day.

If you sincerely seek the Lord's direction by prayer, you will of course make use of His appointed means of information and search the Scriptures. Give me leave to offer you the following pieces of advice, while you are reading and comparing spiritual things with spiritual. First, do not lay too great stress upon a few detached texts, but seek for that sense which is most agreeable to the general strain of Scripture. The infallible Word of God must doubtless be consistent with itself: if it does not appear so to us, the obscurity and seeming inconsistency must be charged to the remaining darkness and ignorance of our minds. As many different locks are opened with equal ease by one master-key, so there is a certain comprehensive view of scriptural truth which opens hard places, solves objections and reconciles, illustrates and harmonises many texts, which to those who do not have this master-key – frequently styled *the analogy of faith* – appear almost to contradict each other. When you obtain this key, you will be sure that you have the right sense.

Again, you will do well to consult experience as you go along. Though this is not to be depended upon in the first instance, but must itself be subjected to the rule of the written Word, yet it is a good subordinate help. Consider which sense is most agreeable to what passes within you and around you, and which best corresponds to the dealings of God with yourself and to what you can observe of His dealings with others. Farther, when you are led (as I think you will be) to view the Calvinist doctrines in a favourable light, do not be afraid of embracing them, even if there are some objections which, for want of a full possession of the key I mentioned, you are not able to clear up. But consider that there may be objections against the other side that are as strong or stronger. We are poor weak creatures; to clear up every difficulty is not what we are immediately called to do, but rather to seek the light which may strengthen and feed our souls.

Lastly, compare the tendency of different opinions. This is an excellent rule if we can apply it fairly. Whatever is from God has a sure tendency to

ascribe glory to Him, to exclude boasting from us, to promote the love and practice of holiness, and increase our dependence upon His grace and faithfulness. Calvinists have no reason to be afraid of resting the merits of their cause upon this issue, notwithstanding the unjust misrepresentations which have been often made of their principles, and the ungenerous treatment of those who would regard the sins of a few individuals as the necessary consequence of embracing those principles.

But I must check myself, or I shall finish my letter before I properly begin my subject. You have objections to the doctrine of election. You will, however, agree with me that Scripture does speak of it, and in very strong and express terms – particularly Paul. I have met with some sincere people, as I believe, who have told me they could not bear to read his ninth chapter to the Romans but always passed it over; their prejudices against election prejudiced them against a part of Scripture. But why so, unless because the dreaded doctrine is maintained too plainly to be evaded? But you will say that some writers and preachers attempt to put an easier sense upon the Apostle's words. Let us judge then, as I have proposed, from experience.

Admitting what I am sure you will admit – the total depravity of human nature – how can we account for the conversion of a soul to God unless we also admit an election of grace? The work must begin somewhere. Either the sinner first seeks the Lord, or the Lord first seeks the sinner. The former is impossible – if by nature we are dead in trespasses and sins, if the god of this world has blinded our eyes and keeps possession of our hearts, and if our carnal minds, so far from being disposed to seek God, are enmity against Him. Let me appeal to yourself. I think you know yourself too well to say that you either sought or loved the Lord first. Perhaps you are conscious, that for a time, and so far as in you lay, you even resisted His call; and must have perished if He had not made you willing in the day of His power and saved you in spite of yourself. In your own case, you acknowledge that *He* began with you, and this must be the case universally with all that are called if the whole race of mankind are by nature enemies to God.

Then, farther, there must be an election unless *all* are effectually called. But we are assured that the broad road, which is thronged with the greatest multitudes, leads to destruction. Were not you and I in this road? Were we better than those who continue in it still? What has made us differ from our former selves? Grace. What has made us differ from those who are now as we once were? Grace. Then this grace, by this very term, must be distinguishing grace; that is, in other words, electing grace.

To suppose that God should make this election, or choice, only at the time of our calling, is not only unscriptural, but contrary to reason and the ideas

we have of God's perfections, particularly those of omniscience and unchangeableness. They who believe there is any power in man by nature, whereby he can turn to God, may contend for a conditional election upon the foresight of faith and obedience; but while others dispute, let you and I admire, for we know that the Lord foresaw us (as we were) in a state utterly incapable either of believing or obeying, unless He was pleased to work in us to will and to do according to His own good pleasure.

Grace Abounding¹

W K Tweedie

Mark 16:15. *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*

Who would limit the good news from God to man? Who would circumscribe the outflowing of divine love? Who would monopolise the antidote to misery? Who would fence round the fountain opened for sin? Barbarian, Scythian, bond and free, all need the healing power; and let them enjoy it freely as the wind or the sunlight of heaven. Man may fetter what Jehovah makes free. Man may limit to a caste, a tribe, a sect, what the only wise God commanded to be spread wherever there are sinners to be saved, or sorrows to be soothed; but that is because man is prone to oppose the mandate of his God.

Come then, my soul, and freely rejoice in what your God so freely offers. Beware lest you place limits where God places none; you will only mar your peace by marring God's gospel. True, many are called, while few find the narrow way; but that is because people will not come to Christ that they may have life. Come then to the fountain, and there rejoice in the loving-kindness of the Lord. And while you draw nigh, be encouraged by the thought that, as the Saviour was condemned on the believer's behalf, they that believe need fear no evil, for the Holy One cannot condemn both the sinner and the Substitute. He cannot exact payment of the same debt twice; that is the impregnable principle on which the hopes of the believer repose.

Every form of human religion is founded on some fiction – Romanism, Islam, Hinduism. All that man has invented is built upon something in man: his sufferings, his righteousness, his prayers. The Saviour alone has based His religion on the justice of God, and there the soul is safe, for the very holiness and truth of Jehovah are now on his side. And on his side for what? Perhaps to allure man into the wilderness. But why? Is it to destroy him, as natural conscience is prone to suggest? No, it is to speak words to our heart

¹Taken, with editing, from Tweedie's volume, *Glad Tidings of the Gospel of Peace*.

– to give us vineyards from the very wilderness, and make even the valley of Achor a door of hope.

Protestant View

Gross Immorality

The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, Diarmuid Martin, has voiced doubts as to whether St Patrick’s College, Maynooth, in County Kildare is a suitable place to train priests after it has been alleged that a number of the seminarians were using a homosexual social-media website which, the Archbishop states, “would be fostering promiscuous sexuality, which is certainly not in any way the mature vision of sexuality one would expect a priest to understand”. He has actually gone as far as to send some students to the Irish College in Rome rather than leave them at Maynooth.

Such a sad, sordid matter is a shame to relate, but it serves to emphasise the extent to which the practice of enforced clerical celibacy helps to nurture deviance and immorality in the Roman priesthood and in those who aspire to it. It also highlights the terrible dangers associated with many social-media websites.

At the same time, it has been revealed that the Anglican Bishop of Grantham, Nicholas Chamberlain, is a homosexual. Church of England sources say that he is living in “a long-term, committed” – yet apparently “celibate” – relationship. It is believed Dr Chamberlain is the first Church of England bishop to admit publicly to being a sodomite. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, was fully aware of this when he ordained Dr Chamberlain to his position last year and has even stated that “his sexuality is completely irrelevant to his office”. Those who take the Bible’s position on such matters to be authoritative can only be disgusted with Dr Welby’s grossly unbiblical approach to this matter. It is, on the other hand, no surprise to see such sinful toleration of atrocious moral evil in the Church of England, now so far advanced in its declension. *AWM*

Notes and Comments

The Crisis Facing Britain

The rise of Islam is confronting Britain with a very serious crisis. The demographics indicate that the proportion of Muslims is increasing rapidly and it

is evident that little cultural assimilation is taking place. There are increasing numbers of Muslim mayors and Muslim members of Parliament, and with the influx of migrants the visibility of Islam increases daily. If present trends continue, Britain may become a Muslim country in the lifetime of some of our readers (the example of the SNP in Scotland shows that even a minority of the electorate can dominate in politics, if they are sufficiently united).

Most or all the countries of Western Europe are facing the same problem, and some of them have made feeble efforts to address it. None of these efforts recognise the root of the problem, which is that God has sent Islam as a scourge to chasten or punish the secularism of the western world. In France, attempts have been made to ban the burkini – the reason being given is that the wearing of the burkini does not “respect secularism”. In other words, women are expected to dress in a less modest fashion in honour of secularism. This is not the sort of opposition to Islam that God is likely to bless.

In Britain, our rulers steadfastly refuse to acknowledge the danger from Islam. The promotion of sodomy continues unabated, especially by the BBC, and the hatred of the secularists is directed, not at Islam, but at Christianity. This open hatred manifests itself at “gay pride” marches and on internet sites. Nevertheless, Christianity is (we think) the only thing that can save Britain from becoming an Islamic country. One great need is the compulsory teaching of the Bible in schools, so that children growing up in Britain are confronted with the truth and the authority of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is the true “British value” that should be promoted. As long as the secularists and humanists and sodomites oppose this remedy, they will find that every other effort to resist Islam is in vain. It seems almost inconceivable at the moment that the Bible will be restored to our schools, but this is what we should be praying for. “When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream” (Ps 126:1). DWBS

Humanist Campaign Against Christian Education

The humanist campaign against Christianity continues relentlessly, and nowhere is this more evidently seen than in the sphere of education. The secularists are convinced – as are promoters of all anti-Christian systems – that if young minds can be prejudiced against religion at an early stage, in spite of what their parents may believe, they can be won over to a secular outlook. In England and Wales, since 2006, pupils have been free to withdraw from religious lessons without any parental intervention. The Humanist Society Scotland (HSS) wants to have this “liberty” extended to Scotland – the ultimate aim being to eliminate statutory religious education.

The HSS has published two new pamphlets, *A Guide for Non-Religious*

Parents and A Guide for Non-Religious Young People. Copies of both have been sent to all Directors of Education in Scotland accompanied by a letter highlighting the “necessity” that all parents (and their children) be made aware of the right to withdraw pupils from religious education. The booklets give advice on how to opt out of religious assemblies and observance, and how to complain when they feel their wishes are not being respected. A template is provided to help compose opt-out letters.

The Society says, “The guides are a helpful tool to empower the two-thirds of non-religious young people in Scotland to have a greater say in their education”. Gary McLelland, HSS head of communications and public affairs, states, “Many people across Scotland feel uncomfortable about the religious content of the school system but are unsure about what their legal rights are. Every week, we hear from parents asking for advice about opting their child out of religious observance, or pupils wanting to include non-religious views – such as humanism – in their own RME [religious and moral education] classes, but are not sure how to do it”.

Unashamedly he adds, “It is our ultimate aim to see religious observance scrapped and replaced with a more inclusive activity, such as philosophy, but until then we will campaign to make sure that all parents and young people are aware of their rights.” Clearly the aim is to rid all schools in Scotland of religious education.

However, we are thankful for some restraint. Earlier this year, humanists’ appeals to the Scottish Government for pupils to have the right to opt-out were rejected – in spite of a United Nations report recommending that ministers replace the existing guidance, which makes it compulsory for pupils to attend faith-based classes (unless, of course, their parents have requested such an opt-out). Mr McLelland is deeply unhappy that Holyrood will not comply with his secular agenda, complaining, “The Scottish Government continues to drag its feet over children’s rights by not allowing senior pupils to opt out of religious observance – it really is time that we had a serious discussion about the place that religion has in Scottish education today”.

In spite of his determination to flood schools with humanist literature, and his demands for “children’s rights”, Mr McLelland appears intolerant of Christian books – even books containing only a proportion of Christian material – being distributed. Protesting about the religious content of a guidance book – which has a section recommending seeking guidance from God in prayer – and handed out at a Perthshire school leavers’ event in Scone, he claims, “As you know, many millions of Scots live life without religion. We believe that this material is not appropriate; it promotes one religious belief as more valid than the other and has the potential to cause distress for some

children". Objections by Mr McLelland, on behalf of a parent, resulted in the head teacher agreeing to withdraw the book completely. Such is the influence of humanism.

Humanists are also stepping up their efforts to have religious representatives on council education committees removed. The HSS expresses concern about "religious appointees who have full voting rights without ever seeking a mandate from the electorate". A recent HSS report, "Religion in Scots Law", concludes that while other areas of life, including marriage, have become more secular, education is the "major exception". Clearly education is firmly on the HSS radar.

The new "Enlighten Up" campaign by the HSS is closely focused on training humanist school visitors to take part in classes, group discussions and debates. Parents therefore need to be alert to this insidious infiltration of our schools. Tragically, far from "enlightening" children, it is leading them further into the kingdom of darkness. How solemn are the words of the Saviour, "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" (Mt 6:23). We need to pray for the young, exposed as they are to so many dangers and to the snares of a godless world. Above all we need the power of the Holy Spirit, who is so grieved by us, to return to our land and to our hearts. He alone can destroy every work of darkness. *KHM*

Church Information

Theological Conference

This year's Theological Conference will be held, God willing, in the Inverness Free Presbyterian Church, on Tuesday and Wednesday, October 25-26. Rev J R Tallach is to act as chairman. It is expected that the following papers will be read, all of which will be in public:

John Love in London

Mr Roy Middleton

Tuesday 2.30 pm

Spiritual Life

Rev Roderick MacLeod

Tuesday 7.00 pm

The Fossil Record and the Biblical Record

Dr A H Ross

Wednesday 10.00 am

Prayer

Rev Donald Macdonald

Wednesday 2.30 pm

John Hooper – the Puritan of the English Reformation

Rev K M Watkins

Wednesday 7.00 pm

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

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 Duirinish-Strath:** **Struan:** Sabbath 12 noon. **Vatten:** Sabbath 6pm. Thursday 7 pm (alternately in Struan and Vatten, fortnightly). Contact Rev I D MacDonald; tel: 0147861 2110.
- 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 Achany 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 pm; Thursday 7.30 pm. Rev D Campbell, 35B Barton 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:** Sabbath 2.30 pm, held in Free Church of Scotland Hall, 14 Jamaica Street, PA15 1XX. Sabbath 2.30 p.m.
- Halkirk:** Sabbath 11.30 am; Thursday 7.30 pm. Rev W A Weale, Bridge Street, KW12 6YG; tel: 01847 831758. **Thurso:** Sabbath 5 pm; **Wick:** Church; **Strathy:** 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.
- Kinlochberrie:** 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 7.30 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 I D MacDonald; tel: 01478 612110.
- 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. Manse tel: 01470 562243. Contact Rev I D MacDonald; tel: 01478 612110.
- 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 A W MacColl; tel: 01851 810228.
- Ullapool:** Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Manse: Quay Street, IV26 2UE; tel: 01854 612449.

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 BA, 252 Brierclyffe Road, Burnley, BB10 2DQ; tel: 01282 835800.
- 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. Contact Rev K M Watkins; tel: 01282 835800.

Canada

Chesley, Ontario: Church and Manse, 40 Fourth Street SW. Sabbath 10.30 am, 7.30 pm; Tuesday 8 pm. Contact: Manse tel: 519 363 2502.

Vancouver, British Columbia: Contact: Mr David Kuiper; tel: 519 363 0367; or Mr Gilbert Zekveld; tel: 519 363 5899.

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; 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, 3 Martin Crescent, Junction Hill, NSW 2460; tel: (02) 6644 6174; e-mail:grafton@internode.on.net.

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:sydneyfpcchurch@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. Rev C Hembd, 14 Thomson St, Gisborne 4010; tel: 06 863 3140.

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. Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Wednesday 6 pm. Rev D Levyskyi; tel: 00 38 048 785 19 24; e-mail: dlevysky@gmail.com; or contact Mr I Zadorozhnyi, P O Box 100, Odessa-91, 65091; e-mail: antipa@eurocom.od.ua.

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.

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

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

New Canaan: Church.

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

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The Doctrine of God by Herman Bavinck [translated by William Hendriksen]		
Banner of Truth, 2003 [1951], hbk, 407 pp	£16.00	£12.79
The Marvelous Riches of Savoring Christ: The Letters of Ruth Bryan		
Reformation Heritage Books, 2005 [c1865], pbk, 438pp	£14.99	£11.99
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